

*Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama* seems not only a culmination of Straznický's work to this point, but also a part of a much larger work she has not yet written. It would be difficult to disagree with any part of Straznický's impressively erudite argument when each well-researched paragraph is mortared into the whole structure like a granite block. Despite this, however, the book feels unfinished. It is only in the concluding chapter, for example, that Straznický confronts the subject of gender and discusses the literal closets that constituted the private living spaces of early modern women, where among other activities they would have read and entertained intimates. Although the authorial subjects of her investigation are all members of an educated elite, the texture of their lives defined by 'social, economic, and political exclusion' (5), there are several points throughout the book where Straznický's refusal 'to focus consistently on the issue of class' (5) deprives the reader of valuable context.

Despite its coherence and up-to-the-minute rhetoric, *Privacy, Playwriting, and Women's Closet Drama* hints at the sweep of an old-fashioned, multiply-authored literary history. It's unfortunate that Straznický's extensive knowledge and catholic interests are shoehorned into this slim book, whose organization does not always serve its material well. Straznický never justifies her exclusion of a chapter devoted to Mary Sidney Herbert, and her discussion of Katherine Philips' work, which deserves a chapter of its own, is squeezed into the chapter on Anne Finch. More curiously, despite the title's insistence on women's closet drama, far more male than female dramatists are discussed at considerable length. I look forward to Straznický's next book for all the history, ideas, and speculation that did not fit into this one.

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Garret A. Sullivan, Jr. *Memory and Forgetting in English Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp vii, 184.

Scholarship on memory in the Renaissance, particularly the art of memory, is plentiful. Frances Yates's magisterial work is a prime example; work by Lina Bolzoni, Stephen Greenblatt, and William Engel also comes to mind. In many

ways, Sullivan's book continues critical work on early modern mnemonic culture: for example, in its close reading of selected plays alongside a range of literary and non-literary texts on and/or underpinned by early modern discourses of memory, including Pierre de la Primaudaye's *The Second Part of the French Academy*, Gulielmus Bergomatis's *Castel of Memorie*, and John Willis's *Mnemonic*. As the book's title suggests, however, Sullivan offers an in-depth examination of memory *and* forgetting in the English Renaissance drama of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Webster. Just a few pages into the book, the reader learns that the author is not really interested in the art of memory, for, as he notes, early modern playwrights themselves show little interest in it. At the risk of eliding the fully dialectical nature of memory and forgetting—Sullivan describes memory and forgetting as 'conceptually inseparable' (46)—it is safe to say that this book attends more to forgetting than to memory. Given the recent critical attention to memory, his turn to forgetting is welcome. In a book that inserts forgetting into current discussions of subjectivity, embodiment, and early modern drama with remarkable success, Sullivan provides us with a fuller understanding of memory and, especially, forgetting as dynamic cultural forces

By no means is Sullivan's work restricted to characters who remember and/or forget on the early modern stage. His exploration of memory and forgetting is informed by recent advances in cultural studies; that is, he offers a historical and theoretical study of memory and forgetting as cultural discourses. This is particularly registered in the Introduction's call for an examination of memory and forgetting as somatic, not simply cognitive, activities: a move which allows Sullivan to locate memory and forgetting in bodies and, furthermore, in relation to subjectivity as well as to a variety of social practices and performances. Again and again, the reader is told that 'memory and forgetting [in the early modern period] prescribe particular modes of behaviour and specify kinds of action' (7). For instance, memory is associated with 'normative models for behaviour' (1), and 'memory is integral to various valorized models of selfhood' (4). Forgetting, on the other hand, 'connotes the non-normative; this mode of being is routinely understood as erosive of one's identity' (13). If memory manifests itself—discursively, culturally, physically—in the active, vigorous (male) subject, forgetting manifests itself in sick, slothful (effeminate) bodies. What Sullivan uncovers in early modern literature and culture, therefore, is not only forgetful minds but also forgetful bodies. But rather than echoing moral philosophy's pronouncements, Sullivan ingeniously sees in forgetting (or in dramatists's depictions of forgetting)

a productive, liberatory force. The book's central argument is that 'forgetting both undergirds the representation of specific somatic states and modes of action, and is central to the dramatic depiction of subjectivity' (2). It is precisely in his exploration of subjectivity in relation to various forms of self-forgetting—erotic, spiritual, national—on the early modern stage that Sullivan's contributions to the field are most pronounced.

According to Sullivan, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Webster 'turn to forgetting (as well as its cousins, lethargy and sleep) to construe differently relations between the subject and his social world' (6). The example of *Hamlet*, discussed in both the introduction and the first chapter, provides a useful gloss on the previous quotation. The Ghost's imperative – 'Remember me' – is very much a social imperative, calling for mental as well as physical action. A conventional reading of the play, one committed to the Ghost's valorization of memory, would see in Hamlet's Lethean delay a failure to act, a failure to perform a certain socially (and generically) prescribed role. As Sullivan puts it, 'from the point of view of memory, forgetting connotes erasure and erosion; its perceived destructive capacity makes it a threat to memory's idealizations' (14). But instead of chastizing Hamlet for being idle, as so many critics have, Sullivan argues forcefully and persuasively that Hamlet's subjectivity emerges through lethargic forgetfulness. By treating forgetfulness as 'generative of dramatic character' (43), Sullivan makes crucial contributions to our ever-evolving understanding of subjectivity and early modern drama.

The historicized and theorized reflections on memory and forgetting in the introduction and in the first chapter are extended in the next four chapters, which focus on individual plays, two by Shakespeare and one by Marlowe and Webster respectively. Chapter Two focuses on 'erotic forgetting' in *All's Well That Ends Well*. After tracing ideas on the prevention of forgetting in period psychological discourse, Sullivan turns to Montaigne's 'Of Lyers' in order to detail the French writer's 'insight that forgetting is a potent subjective force' (48): an insight, we are told, shared by Shakespeare. While Sullivan does well to give forgetting agency (and to reveal how early modern authors do), by no means does he do so in a naïve manner; indeed, his choice of *All's Well* forces him to consider the ways in which forgetting's potency is limited by genre as well as by social institutions and practices. In his introduction, Sullivan notes that 'while forgetting is often productive, it does not necessarily have a liberatory force. Indeed, the call to forget can function in the service of a sinister restructuring of the social order' (21). While erotic self-forgetting in *All's Well* helps to reconstitute both Helena and, to a lesser extent, Bertram

as subjects, this problematic play is by no means simply given over to forgiveness and forgetfulness.

The subject of 'spiritual self-forgetting' in *Doctor Faustus* is taken up in Chapter Three. That Faustus is forgetful is evinced immediately in the play: witness his incomplete citation of Romans 6: 23: 'The reward of sin is death'. This citation signifies both Faustus's forgetting of Christian doctrine and of what he, as a divine, already knows. Sullivan uses this moment in the text to explore the allure of self-forgetting as manifested in the play and on the early modern stage in general. He sets up his reading of *Faustus* with a sermon preached by John Donne at Lincoln's Inn in 1618, in which Donne states that 'The art of salvation, is but the art of memory'. The centrepiece of Donne's sermon, both in terms of its structure and purpose, is self-recollection of both sin and grace. Faustus, on the other hand, is committed to forgetting his sins; in fact, as Sullivan notes, Faustus's moments of self-forgetting often surface in the wake of glimpses of self-recollection. 'Faustus,' he remarks, 'is a kind of inverted Everyman whose fate functions as an exhortation to audience members to reform their behavior through self-remembrance' (84). But he also qualifies this phrase, warning us that reading Donne's sermon into *Faustus* runs the risk of eliding the affective power of this complex play. Purely conservative readings of the play fail to account for how 'the allure of the theatre and the energies it mobilizes make it an agent, and perhaps an advocate, of self-forgetting' (86).

Sullivan returns to Shakespeare in Chapter Four, focusing on the intersection of erotic self-forgetting and national self-forgetting in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Whereas previous chapters were concerned with the physical and social placement of the subject, this chapter is concerned with a cultural identity formed in a cross-cultural environment (familial identity, central in *All's Well*, gives way to an identity delimited by one's country in *Antony and Cleopatra*). Antony's self-forgetting, variously celebrated and lamented throughout the play, is, of course, a forgetting of his country, his masculine Roman identity. While Sullivan foregrounds the presence of the Circean narrative of the female temptress as the source of oblivion and threat to cultural identity, he also highlights the ways in which self- and national-forgetting serve to consolidate a heroic, masculine identity. The crucial figure here is Cleopatra, who 'transforms the discontinuities generative of self-forgetting into a prerequisite for heroic masculinity, and thus into an alternative to Rome's (or Caesar's) conception of fame' (107).

In the final chapter, Sullivan turns to the subject of immoderate sleep in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Sleep, closely linked to lethargy and forgetting in the period, signifies on various levels in Webster's play, and Sullivan intelligently fleshes out the ways in which different characters in the play (notably the Duchess, Ferdinand, and the Cardinal) draw upon sleep in order to define their dramatic subjectivities as well as those around them. If Ferdinand and the Cardinal use a discourse of sleep to condemn and control their sister, the Duchess uses sleep throughout the play to counter her brothers' representations of her and, at the conclusion of the play, to signal her resignation to death and spiritual peace. As Sullivan makes clear, the language of sleep in *The Duchess of Malfi* is used not only to confirm patriarchal discourse but also to trouble it: 'the Duchess's "heavy sleeps" are less troubling than her brothers' efforts to police her sexuality'. 'If forgetting,' Sullivan writes, 'is generally devalued in early modern England—as in its association with effeminization—Renaissance dramatists nevertheless locate in it powerful representational possibilities that raise questions about the terms of Renaissance misogyny' (20). Excluding the chapter on *Doctor Faustus*, this book's attention to forgetting and dramatic subjectivity also marks a strong contribution to recent reassessments of gender ideology and female agency in the period.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'to forget oneself' involves losing 'remembrance of one's station, position, or character; to lose sight of the requirements of dignity, propriety, or decorum; to behave unbecomingly'. In many ways, this book, with its rich, informative notes, is a long, insightful meditation on this definition. But Sullivan's contribution to Renaissance scholarship on memory and forgetting is not only that he reveals just how deeply embedded this concept of forgetting oneself is in early modern literature and culture; he also forces us to rethink this definition, highlighting the crucial role forgetting oneself can play in advancing one's station, position, or character. This book has its limitations. Focusing on three dramatists and a select number of plays written in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods, it does not provide comprehensive coverage of 'English Renaissance Drama'; restricted to the individual subject, it has little to say about the collective subject. But these limitations do not detract from the book's critical impact. Indeed, Sullivan's groundbreaking work deserves ample praise for opening up and defining fruitful avenues of study.

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