



Forgetting to Remember: Religious Remembrance and the Literary Response to the Holocaust

Sheridan Marshall

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Forgetting to Remember examines the remembrance of the Holocaust in literary texts by six European writers: Paul Celan, Geoffrey Hill, Gunter Grass, Imre Kertesz, Peter Weiss, and Samuel Beckett. Close readings of canonical texts - such as Grass's *The Tin Drum* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in conjunction with less well-known works, like Kertesz's *Kaddish for a Child Not Born* - reveal fresh insights about the ethical and aesthetic challenges of representing the Holocaust. The reader will see how the simultaneous reliance upon and rejection of religious forms of remembrance in the literary texts results in a disconsolate remembrance of the Holocaust which is sensitive to the impossibility of adequately remembering the millions of victims. Drawing upon a wide range of scholarship, *Forgetting to Remember* considers the longstanding relationship between remembrance and religion. It proposes correspondences between the remembrance of the Holocaust in different literary genres - poetry, prose, and drama - and various ritual forms of Judaeo-Christian remembrance - confession, anamnesis, and testament. While religious remembrance occurs in relation to God, the authors of literary texts, written in response to the Holocaust, commonly reject the possibility of a theological address after Auschwitz. The perceived failure of religious remembrance during and after the Holocaust offers a way of remembering which remains conscious of its own insufficiency in relation to the sufferings and deaths of the victims. Emmanuel Levinas's work on intersubjective ethical relations provides insights into how the literary acts of address function, offering a residual hope for ethical and political transformation after the Holocaust. *Forgetting to Remember* presents new comparative analyses of literary texts, as well as being the first sustained examination of the formal associations between religious remembrance and the literary remembrance of the Holocaust. Its wide-ranging conclusions will be significant for researchers in Holocaust Studies and will also interest those working in the fields of modern languages, English literature, and theology. [Subject: Holocaust Studies, Literary Criticism, Religious Studies, Jewish Studies, Christianity, History]

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