

Mary Morrissey. *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. xiv + 257 pp. \$110.00. Review by JEANNE SHAMI, UNIVERSITY OF REGINA.

In a series of articles, book chapters, and review essays over the past decade, Mary Morrissey has established herself as the pre-eminent scholar of the Paul's Cross sermons. *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* brings to fruition her reading of hundreds of sermons and her examination of important new primary sources not consulted by earlier scholars (most notably, by Millar MacLure, whose *The Paul's Cross Sermons, 1534-1642* [Toronto, 1958] is the only other monograph on the subject). Since MacLure's study, the study of sermons as cultural historical artefacts of the early modern period has developed in many directions, most significantly in literary studies of particular authors (e.g. John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes) and in literary and historical studies of post-Reformation religious and ecclesiastical politics. The greatest strength of Morrissey's book is its strong commitment to two areas of "disciplinary" focus—historical and literary. The first—the historical—elucidates over time the material conditions associated with the Cross, changes to the Cross and the sermons preached there, and the Cross's place not simply as an institution of the Church of England, but, more particularly, as an institution of the City of London, and a site where the competing claims of the authorities (royal, ecclesiastical, and civic) jostled for pre-eminence. The second—the literary—builds on this profoundly historical foundation and analysis (the monograph's concern with politics, controversy, censorship, and authority), so much so that while attention to language, rhetoric, and texts understood as literary documents is not its primary mode of analysis, the study will be read eagerly by literary scholars, as well as by historians (of religion, of London, of the book, of culture, of politics), and will be useful to them precisely because it is so thoroughly grounded in and shaped by the tools of the historical discipline, while maintaining a strong generic focus that links the historical and literary thrusts of the project.

The first two chapters are excellent examples of sophisticated historical analysis of these materials. Of special importance is the monograph's understanding of the Paul's Cross sermons as occasional

(both when preached and, later, when printed). The first chapter, in particular, makes for compelling reading. The deft assurance with which Morrissey handles the genealogy of Paul's Cross, and her evocation of its physical presence and the audiences it drew, all contribute to a richly detailed and nuanced account of the pulpit's history and its connections to the Corporation of London, the bishop of London, and the royal government. In particular, Morrissey's mining of the records of the Corporation of London provides original scholarship on such matters as the uses to which the pulpit was put, selection of preachers, methods and amounts of payment for preaching services, audiences for sermons, seating arrangements, and the impact of inclement weather on the open-air pulpit. The detail is impressive, as is the degree to which Morrissey has synthesized and extended the boundaries of scholarship on many of these issues.

The second chapter is equally accomplished, drawing together material on conventions of sermon composition (in particular, the relation between sermons as preached and printed), including a wealth of hitherto unpublished archival material. One senses that constraints of space prevented further elaboration and analysis of aspects of sermon composition and the kinds of differences one can note between sermons as preached and as printed, to the extent that these differences can be determined, but the main outlines are firmly drawn. Morrissey has paid close attention—quite rightly—to the differences preachers noted in their introductions to printed works, but comparison of manuscript with printed versions in some cases might provide more concrete examples of the kinds of differences she outlines, and contribute more fully to the book's interdisciplinary analysis.

This study moves logically from a history of the Paul's Cross sermons through an account of the dissemination of these sermons to a discussion of censorship and control of sermons. Chapters four and five shift from these matters to analyze how anti-Catholic and anti-Puritan sermons in particular contributed to the complex identity of the Church of England by the 1630s. The next chapter explores the fascinating topic of how monarchs used this pulpit to project public images, exercising a kind of control here, too, over the identity of the Church of England. Finally, the epilogue charts the fate of Paul's

Cross after it was closed in 1633, and seeks to explain its role in the transition from “public” to “civic” preaching that began in the 1630s.

Morrissey traces the changing fashion for anti-Catholic preaching and anti-Puritan preaching at Paul’s Cross in response to particular historical contexts, occasions, and moments of crisis over the period under examination. The monograph argues that the function of sermons at Paul’s Cross changed over time: from the early years of Elizabeth’s reign when bishops of London used it to reconcile ordinary Londoners to the emerging religious settlement, through the reign of James I by which time confessional lines had hardened and Paul’s Cross was no longer considered useful in converting real recusants; from a time when puritans and bishops were vying for control of the pulpit at key moments of crisis, to the time when Laud’s tenure as bishop of London (supported by a religious and conservative Corporation of London) led to a more consistent, but perhaps less engaging, message from Paul’s Cross. The historical narrative Morrissey constructs shapes the large body of materials under examination, and lays the foundation for examination of the more complex religious and political controversies that went beyond the broad categories of anti-Catholic and anti-Puritan material, thus contributing to the complex religious identity of the English church into the 1620s and 1630s. Morrissey’s published scholarship indicates that she is well aware of these complexities, although one senses that, for the purposes of this book, she had less space to focus on cases that are the exceptions to these general statements, and that complicate the picture of the cultures that developed over time at Paul’s Cross.

In its meticulous attention to the details of its primary sources, and in the scope of its historical reach, this monograph offers a thorough rethinking of Paul’s Cross and the sermons preached there and contributes in significant ways to our understanding not only of these sermons, but of the larger sermon culture of London through the reigns of Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I when sermons reached their greatest audiences and when the Church of England’s reformed identity was being established. A lively and intelligent account of its subjects, it is essential reading for anyone working on sermons (especially their religious politics), not only those preached at Paul’s

Cross, but those that flourished in the rich sermon culture of post-Reformation Church of England.

Ryan Netzley, *Reading, Desire, and the Eucharist in Early Modern Religious Poetry*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. 287 pp. \$70.00. Review by NANCY MOHRLOCK BUNKER, MACON STATE COLLEGE.

In Ryan Netzley's fresh perspective on Christian life and devotional verse, Netzley argues that early modern religious lyrics teach about the "appropriate approach to an immanent divinity" and the "manner and practice of desiring God" (3). *Reading, Desire, and the Eucharist in Early Modern Religious Poetry* highlights correspondences between the aspects of seeking God and the comprehension of written texts. The Introduction, "Desiring Sacraments and Reading Real Presence in Seventeenth-Century Religious Poetry," positions The Lord's Supper for investigation because the ceremony itself insists on a "Real Presence in the elements" of the sacraments, and because of the event's ties to "controversies surrounding the operation of metaphor, signification, and words in general" (3). Netzley explores works of George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, John Donne, and John Milton, suggesting that religious desire is not based upon lack or absence. Each poet clearly articulates God's presence within the gift of the Eucharist and affirms that desire for His presence is something one already has. The author also identifies resonances between the Lord's Supper and poetry through discussions of the proper interpretation of signs. An important challenge to the world of literary scholarship courses through each poetic commentary as Netzley argues that neither God's gift of the Eucharist nor the activity of reading are to be engaged as instruments for a purpose. Rather, instructions for loving God, attending to devotional practices, and reframing reading pedagogy, activities engaged for their own sake, belong to a liberating dynamic distinct from the aim of establishing meaning.

In the first chapter, "Take and Taste, Take and Read: Desiring, Reading, and Taking Presence in George Herbert's *The Temple*," Netzley advocates for the poem's instruction regarding the taking of the sacrament, and validates the poet's plain speech for devotion. Ritual and words serve as signs; to that end, communicants and readers must