complemented by the anecdotal, refreshingly unpretentious quality of the coda, which animates and personalizes the act of literary criticism. *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* proves itself to be an urbane, graceful, and pointed study, one which regularly records the sort of appreciation for both the intricacy and the immediacy of Milton's prose which can be found in the work of Webber, Parker, Lewalski, and Corns.

Susannah Brietz Monta. *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. viii + 245 pp. + 4 illus. $75.00. Review by LISSA BEAUCHAMP, ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY.

The subject of martyrdom in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England has been largely dominated by studies of the various editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, also called the *Book of Martyrs*, due to recent and ongoing digital editions published by Oxford University Press (1583 edition, 2001) and Ohio State University Libraries (1563 edition, 2003). Susannah Monta's book, though it ranges through the martyrologies of the early and later volumes of Foxe's *Acts*, goes well beyond Foxe to consider the spectacular elements of English Protestant and Catholic recusant martyrdoms in narrative allegories, lyric poetry, drama, sermons, and prose polemics. In other words, Monta's study offers a much-needed religio-cultural context for Foxe's work, as well as delivering a focused consideration of how this sub-culture operates in literary and theatrical settings.

Monta's book is divided into two parts. In a brief introduction, she establishes the themes and "questions concerning authority and resistance, the nature of the church, religious subjectivity, justification and sacrament, and historical continuity (or discontinuity)" (1) that form the basis of her subsequent arguments in Part One, where she lays out the hermeneutics of martyrological discourses in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Despite the common proposition that "the cause, not the death, makes the martyr (*non poena sed causa*)" (9), religious affiliation as cause is a somewhat confused issue when the spectacle of death is presented using similar persuasive techniques, and as often as not, "The deaths are superior to discourse itself" (10). The three chapters of this section establish and discuss the issues of conscience as a determinant of truth and the problems associated with portraying in-

ward conviction outwardly, ecclesiastical authority both within Catholic and Protestant camps and between them, and the relationship between the testimonial voices of martyr and martyrologist.

Chapter One elaborates the theme of conscience "as an interface with the divine" and the difficulty of "rendering [such] interior constructs into discourse" (13). The important distinction that Monta identifies between Protestant and Catholic rhetorics of conscience is that while the Catholic martyr acts *in imitatio Christi*, the Protestant martyr acts as a model of faithful performance for the community of the faithful. Monta also discusses the issue of enforced silence for the martyr and the (usually male) martyrologist's task as one of opening discourse on behalf of the martyr (who is often female) but does not include any significant commentary on gender until later in the book. Chapter Two raises the issue of the problematic identification of the "true" Church, which is essentially, again, a matter of audience perspective. Seeing the truth of the martyr's cause depends on a common adherence of belief, which echoes the religious motif of interpenetrating or circular logic of faith to begin with: "He must be in Christes body that must receive Christes body" (38, qtg. Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, 1620). Indeed, "truth is visible only to those who already posses it" (37), both for Catholics and for Protestants in this period. In Chapter Three, Monta considers the surprisingly common use of wonders and miracles, and on the martyr's joyful acceptance of pain, suffering, and death, as indicators of the truth of his/her faith. Monta shows that despite Foxe's own rhetoric of rejecting the miraculous in Catholic martyrologies, he and other Protestant writers remained cautiously fascinated with wonders and recorded them as assiduously as Catholic writers did. Ultimately, Monta concludes that martyrologists of either faith "work to shape reading communities that will celebrate their martyrs, effecting a sort of evangelism of interpretation" (12). This conclusion with regard to martyrology suggests an interesting link to medieval and early modern exegesis, which uses similar rhetoric to convey the transporting power of reading scripture through an emphasis on the tropological sense of personal application in sense of everyday conduct, but such a comparison is beyond the scope of Monta's book.

Part Two consists of four chapters, each using a comparative method to examine significant Protestant and Catholic texts (allegorical narrative, lyric poetry, sermons, prose polemic, and drama) that "use martyrological texts

and controversies as source materials, subtexts, or points of departure" (79) in order to demonstrate the more theoretical points of Part One. In Chapter Five, Spenser's Book One of the *Faerie Queene* is compared to Anthony Copley's *A Fig for Fortune*, a Catholic allegorical response to Spenser's Protestant allegory. Copley's Catholic knight not only displaces the allegory of Queen Elizabeth with the Virgin Mary, as we might expect; he also weds earth to heaven in the medium of the Mass and achieves his wedding rather than deferring it perpetually as Spenser's Red Crosse Knight does. In Chapter Six, Robert Southwell and John Donne are shown to offer competing discourses of suffering and religious confidence. While Southwell and Donne both promote self-integration as a desirable result from suffering, Southwell insists on martyrdom as a literal, physical act that confers the oxymoronic certainty of belief; Donne, on the other hand, insists that suffering is itself a kind of martyrdom, however figuratively, and that the certainty of belief is attainable without the suicidal connotations of literal martyrdom. Theatrical representation of the martyr's spectacle is considered in Anthony Munday's *The Book of Sir Thomas More* and in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* in Chapter Seven. In both plays, "To enact interiority on stage is to risk an infinite regress, an endless series of performances" (158): Munday capitalizes on More's famous wit to defer stating his "cause," and thus the play perpetually reserves judgement on his status as martyr; Shakespeare multiplies the causes in *Henry VIII*, staging Catholic and Protestant convictions side by side and, like *Thomas More*, "make[s] room for potentially divided theatrical audiences" (186). And in Chapter Eight, the collaborative play *The Virgin Martyr* demonstrates the later shifts of the 1620s onward, where the analogy of an early Catholic martyr (St. Dorothy) works to spur English Protestant resistance to increasingly political Catholic recusants and priests. It is here that gender suddenly becomes part of Monta's argument, and it is rather too late in the book to develop it fully. Still, she does point out that the perception of female "weakness" makes for more powerful testimony and demonstrates how emphasizing weakness paradoxically conveys greater strength in martyrological rhetoric, just as Christina Luckyj has argued recently in *'A moving Rhetoricke': Gender and silence in early modern England* (2002).

Monta builds on recent scholarship with regard to how the cultures of martyrdom in Reformation England draw on performative as well as literary tropes, and, as she argues persuasively, Protestant and Catholic rhetorics

draw out each other's shifting figures and themes with an almost alarming versatility: "Martyrologies … demonstrate that religious beliefs and representational practices were not neatly aligned in the period but were in flux. Virginity was not an ideal which only Catholic writers deployed; miracles were not eliminated in Protestant martyrological writing; Catholic writers reworked and relied upon the language of inwardness and conscience" (235). Indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish between Protestant and Catholic depictions of martyrs, and it is sometimes unfortunate that Monta's uneven treatment occasionally obscures this fascinating and difficult topic. While it is critically useful to blur categorical distinctions in order to draw out points of similarity, Monta could have established clearer lines of discursive organization to better identify variations. She has a habit of insisting on both similarity and difference between Protestant and Catholic practices at the same time, such that it is often difficult to follow her otherwise very interesting arguments about how Protestant and Catholic writers use the discourses of martyrdom to characterize religious virtues as performative ideals. At other points, the effect of extensive examples is that of repetition, and the sense of an expanding argument falls quite flat. For instance, after an ingenious reading of how *The Virgin Martyr* evokes an active engagement in the politics of religion in the final chapter, five examples of Catholic texts, some at length, are used to make a single point of comparison (that Catholic priests in the 1640s embraced a patriotic position, claiming sympathy for a politically fraught country and potentially compromising their statuses as martyrs). Though occasionally difficult to follow, this contribution to scholarship on early modern literature, drama, and religious history is knowledgeable and insightful.

Reid Barbour. *Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. viii + 282 pp. £45.00. Review by HOLLY FAITH NELSON, TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY.

Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth-Century England is a welcome addition to the field of early modern cultural studies. Reid Barbour has produced an original and meticulously researched book that demonstrates the complexity of religious stocktaking in Caroline England. Barbour interrogates the traditional metanarratives applied to the Caroline church, eschew-