map, showing the location of houses left empty by the plague, is a visual reminder of this loss of place and of past glories.


*Imagination and Politics* proposes a tantalizing corrective to the increasingly voluminous body of scholarship on political rhetoric in seventeenth-century England: shift our focus from the spectacle of power to the imaginative faculties that produce and process that spectacle and we allow for a wider “range of relationships among political actors” than is generally currently available (5). Rather than studying either language or visual rhetoric in relative isolation, Butler urges, we must remember that for the seventeenth century the mere act of thinking constituted political action—as witnessed by arguments in the trial of the Caroline regicides. In grounding politics in the imagination, a faculty which both produces images and enables a corresponding belief in those images, we reject “a bipolar and fundamentally repressive model of subjectivity for a more interdependent relationship between a nation’s political actors” (12). Power, thus rightly conceived, does not inhere in control of a material infrastructure for image production and dissemination, but rather is negotiated between an authoring subjectivity that seeks to exert its political will by creating images of power and the corresponding imagination of an audience that can choose to invest in those images or create its own, alternative, political action. The fact that images are produced, that is, does not necessarily mean that they are believed, and it is the dynamics of that disjunction that Butler seeks to trace through four important seventeenth-century bodies of work: the writings of Francis Bacon, the masques of the Caroline court, the dramatic and political works of John Milton, and the historical and philosophical writings of Thomas Hobbes.

The volume’s revisionist claims to demonstrate that imagination and belief, rather than reason, are the keys to understanding political rhetoric in the seventeenth century may seem somewhat overstated
in an examination of a period that produced the likes of Herbert, Milton, and Browne, but generally speaking a study able to rigorously expound and concretize a faculty psychology model of seventeenth political rhetoric would be a welcome addition to the literature, promising as it does to recover an experience of readership and resistance hitherto largely unexplored. As a promising step in that direction, Butler engages in a thorough review of the conceptualization of the imagination in seventeenth-century England: he teases useful models of faculty psychology out of the various texts he examines, and the volume successfully traces both the rise of skepticism regarding the utility of political rhetoric and the authorial strategies that developed for reclaiming the authority thus lost, particularly during the personal rule, and during and after the civil wars. A first chapter outlines Bacon’s explanation of the role of the imagination in converting thought into political action, allowing a single individual to shape the thoughts and actions of others to his or her own ends. A second chapter traces the application of the imagination in the rise and fall of the Caroline masque, a form at first confident in its ability to exert political control through the production of imagery, yet later forced to admit and even dramatize its own failure to eradicate interpretative instability. Chapter three details Milton’s distrust of the imagination as an instrument of political control, largely focused in the figure of Comus, as well as that writer’s simultaneous, if somewhat paradoxical, efforts to create his own imaginative imagery, particularly in the more apocalyptic moments of his political pieces. A final chapter demonstrates that Hobbes as well at once seeks to restrain and control the unpredictable imagination even while attempting to use it to his own political purposes.

While Butler’s premise and his readings have significant potential, however, the volume as a whole tends to back away from the model of rhetoric founded on interdependence and negotiation promised by the introduction and instead slips into a rather simpler equation of imagination with the production of images: the Caroline masques, Comus the magician, and the court itself become imaginative projectors of words and images that invariably seek to control the minds and actions of a generally figured populace. Resistance, when it does occur, is examined as the production of competing images by alterna-
tive sources of authority—the antimasque figures of Carew and Jones and the Lady of Milton’s *Comus*, and the masses, when they appear, do so as a receptive audience with imaginations easily swayed by the rhetoric of power. The closest Butler does come to a truly alternative model of political rhetoric is in his analysis of Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, as he acknowledges Hobbes’s recognition that it is impossible to force belief upon another, but the potential of that recognition is forestalled as it is quickly subsumed by the textual strategies Hobbes consequently adopts to effectively trick his readers into accepting his imaginative vision. Such analysis is not in itself unuseful, but it does lead the reader to question why so much energy has been expended in foregrounding the imagination when the conclusions reached are still very much about the mechanisms of imagery production and equation of rhetorical persuasion and power.

All of that having been said, Butler does make a compelling argument for the prevalence of imagination as an instrument of political control in the seventeenth century, and he suggests important possibilities for reconfiguring our conceptualization of the dynamics of rhetoric in that period. If the reader ultimately feels that the volume has not lived up to its full potential, that reaction is in part merely a testimony to the revisionist power of the model it so promisingly posits, and Butler should be praised for daring to rewrite our understanding of the relationship between authorship and audience in the seventeenth century.


Glozier and Onnekink have edited a volume of stimulating essays covering the Huguenots who served in the militaries of several European powers before and following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The book adds to our knowledge of professional soldiers of early modern Europe, specifically those motivated (like Scots Protestants and Irish Roman Catholics) to pursue military ca-