

Cyndia Susan Clegg. *Press Censorship in Jacobean England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp xii, 286.

As Whig history and assumptions about the Jacobean state based on that history continue to dissolve in the face of revisionist and post-revisionist studies, and as we revisit the conditions of early modern printing practices and the material book, we need a new understanding of Stuart censorship practices. Cyndia Susan Clegg's *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* is therefore especially welcome. This nuanced reading of the mechanisms regulating what books made it into print under James VI/I destabilizes the previous view (held by Christopher Hill and Annabel Patterson, among others) of a monolithic, oppressive, and interventionist state apparatus intimately involved in the printing practices of early Stuart England, and offers instead a multifaceted and dynamic censorship matrix, one that evolved and changed over the course of the two decades of James' rule. In essence, Clegg argues that as the ways to censor texts proliferated under James, the actual practice became increasingly inconsistent and idiosyncratic, motivated less by a unified policy and more often by specific historical circumstances. This important study opens new avenues of inquiry to us and significantly revises our understanding of printing controls in the early Stuart era.

Clegg builds upon her influential *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, 1997), extending her survey of official mechanisms for censoring books to the end of James' reign. She points to the economic concerns behind the Stationers' Company's efforts to regulate printing, arguing that the Company functioned less as a means of censorship than as a cartel protecting members' interests. Similar analysis of other levers of censorship – the Privy Council, the High Commission – suggests that James inherited and maintained Elizabeth's *ad hoc* practices. Carefully attuned to material concerns, Clegg explores the practices of the repatented Stationers' Company under James, highlighting its efforts to protect its publishing privileges, even to the extent of challenging the king's patents to favourites or individual printers, infringing on the Company's purview. The increased power of the High Commission – extended through letters patent in 1611 – and the development of additional means of ecclesiastical authorization resulted, Clegg suggests, in the illusion of multiple layers of official machinery for controlling the appearance of books in print under James. She concludes, however, that such mechanisms may not have been more efficient, that in the end these layers may have created gaps through which to avoid censorship, and that ultimately 'potentially oppressive institutions engaged in fairly mild practices' (67).

Turning from an overview of Jacobean censorship practices, Clegg foregrounds specific concerns that caused books to suffer the censors' wrath. The most dramatic of these, public book burnings at Paul's Cross and in Oxford and Cambridge, heads this list. Clegg argues that such public acts were in fact highly symbolic, signaling official displeasure and allowing James to express his own ideological ends. Burning books in such public displays distanced the king from the ideas of such books and announced his personal disfavour. Specific issues early in James' reign motivated his intervention in the public arena. As his own responses to religious and political controversies – defending his political authority or his irenic vision for Europe's peace, and refuting Conrad Vorstius's Arminian teachings – entangled James in increasingly complex and contradictory positions, burning his critics' books became an option of last resort. But even as he consigned such books to the flames, the act of burning did not necessarily prevent the circulation of offensive texts.

Personality, rather than policy, prompted many other instances of Jacobean press censorship. Thus Clegg suggests that James' own irrational fears may stand behind a confluence of events surrounding the 1615 suppression of Raleigh's *History of the World*. Though Raleigh's treatment of providential history, as God's visitation of punishment on tyrants and their issue, would not have upset James, Clegg argues, the events immediately surrounding this book's printing may have prejudiced the king's opinion. She suggests that James may have associated Peacham's 'Balaam's Asse', a manuscript prognostication of the king's death, with Raleigh's *History*, resulting in the suppression of Raleigh's text and the close examination of several other histories that appeared in 1615. Here, as elsewhere, Clegg's careful attention to the material conditions of the book trade provides new insight into understanding the dynamics of Jacobean culture. Though Raleigh's book might have disturbed James in 1615, circumstances had changed by 1617, and renewed interest in Raleigh may have permitted a book prohibited only two years earlier to be reprinted. A similarly intimate understanding of the particular conditions of disparate moments of mid-Jacobean history allows Clegg to explain the censorship of Mocket's *Doctrina et Politia* in terms of personal prejudices then developing among factions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. As Clegg concludes, censorship was not always a matter of royal displeasure; powerful individuals could also exercise means of preventing or repressing books in order to protect private interests.

In the subsequent survey of the more celebrated instances of books running afoul of different authorities – Cowell's *Interpreter*, Selden's *History of Tithes*, Coke's *Reports*, and Fuller's *Argument* – Clegg finds the ways these texts, while appealing to the authority of one element of the English state, trespassed on

the powers of some other element and ignited its wrath. Fuller's book championing the common law, for instance, did so at the expense of the powers of the High Commission. Similarly, Selden's treatment of tithing undermined the authority of the Church when faced with the encroachment of the common law, bringing him to the attention of the High Commission as well. In two even more famous instances, Cowell's and Cook's publications created numerous difficulties for their authors, displeasing James for different reasons at different times in the reign. For Cowell, an advocate of the king's absolute sovereignty over the common law, James' reaction must have come as a surprise. But as Clegg suggests, the volatile climate into which Cowell's book entered necessitated the king's repudiation of Cowell to palliate a disgruntled Parliament. Only a few years later, however, Coke's *Reports* would incur the ire of a more confident king, whose agents would force Coke to temporarily relinquish his offices and to hold back planned editions of the *Reports*. These instances demonstrate the various political interests that could evoke the censor's power.

In the book's final two chapters, focusing on the end of James' reign, Clegg addresses the issues of foreign policy and ecclesiastical splintering, offering one very provocative claim and surveying some old ground with new eyes. In her chapter on newsbooks and the Thirty Years' War, Clegg persuasively contends that the public sphere begins to emerge in England at this early date. Revising the ideas of Habermas and numerous other historians, Clegg rightly argues that the crisis in Bohemia and its treatment in England's first newspapers mark an important turning point in English political life. Moreover, she deftly brings to bear a remarkable amount of information regarding the licensing and publication of newsbooks during this critical moment in European history. Her analysis of events, of changing percentages of licensed news (and other texts) from one year to the next, of market forces and official appointments, of printers involved in these publications and their sympathies, and incidentally of the complex printing history of Middleton's *A Game at Chesse*, coheres authoritatively to pinpoint a dramatic shift in Jacobean political culture, one that created a market for news and opened a space for an emergent public sphere. It is perhaps the most compelling section of Clegg's work.

Clegg concludes with a solid chapter on factions within the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the waning days of James' reign. While the story of Richard Montagu's *New gagg* and *Appello Caesarem* will likely be familiar to those who know the work of Nicholas Tyacke, Peter Lake, and Kenneth Fincham, there are several important insights here. Most importantly, Clegg recounts the printing history of Montagu's texts and the texts to which this Arminian responded, initiating a rift within the church that contributed to the events

that ended Charles' reign. And most interestingly, Clegg illustrates how the ideological factions that rent the church, and that are commonly associated with powerful personalities occupying Durham House and Lambeth Palace, created means for very different and controversial views to avoid censorship and see print. This attention to matters of licensing represents Clegg's thoughtful contribution to an important historiographical debate.

*Press Censorship in Jacobean England* is a very strong book. Clegg knows the STC, the records of the Stationers' Company, and the records in Lambeth Palace and the PRO in such minute detail that she can carefully assemble a substantial context for dozens of controversial and censored books. In each instance, one is confident of her occasionally speculative conclusions and impressed by the depth of material she has at her command. Clegg also clearly understands the state of current historiographical debate and dexterously negotiates between the lines of revisionist and post-revisionist historians, suggesting that in the end the larger outlines of the Whig historical arc and the fine local knowledge of the revisionists may both have something worthwhile to say about Jacobean culture. Rejecting the supposedly uniform practices of the State, Clegg considers individual acts of censorship within localized, specific conditions and in turn opens a new perspective on significant aspects of early modern England. In this way Clegg's work is certain to leave its imprint on the study of Jacobean culture for years to come.

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Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp xxix, 539.

*The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* is the third new book in two years to lay claim to a bosom relationship with Shakespeare, following those edited by David Scott Kastan for Blackwell (1999) and by Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells for Cambridge (2001). All three are reference books, but the Oxford venture differs markedly from the other two in its conception of what that means, so this might be an opportune moment to give some consideration to the theory and economics of Shakespeare 'companions', especially as regards the assumptions they imply about the needs of their readership.

Both the Kastan and the Cambridge companions bring together a number of extended and specialist essays by different hands with the intention of giving 'state of the art' coverage of relevant topics ranging from Shakespeare's life and