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Cyndia Susan Clegg. *Press Censorship in Jacobean England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. xi + 286 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-78243-2.

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Cyndia Clegg introduces *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* with a paradox: "[e]mploying the most conservative estimate of the number of books that issued from England's presses between 1603 and 1625, fewer than 1 percent were in any way involved with efforts to suppress them or punish their authors and printers." To examine this less-than-one-percent phenomenon is, nonetheless, to discover the issues "that provoked ... the greatest interest–and ... the greatest anxieties" of the men and women of the age (p. 19). To study censorship is not, as has generally been seen by historians and literary critics, to trace the ongoing battle between individual freedom and governmental repression. It is, simply and straightforwardly, to find out and understand "where power resides" in any particular age.

Clegg concentrates on the reign of James I for two reasons: to pay tribute to a wonderfully logocentric age and to correct the forward chronological drift of most studies of seventeenth-century political culture. Arguably, King James was a monarch whose authority was created by and dependent upon the written word. Besotted with his own government by pen, James not only wrote volumes, but also commandeered the religious and political polemics of other authors in support of his policies and pet projects. The fact that these works were often issued *cum privilegio* ought then to direct our attention to those other, unauthorized works that, as it were, made up a shadow cabinet to Jacobean government. Historians and even new historicists, however, can be distracted from words by deeds, as Clegg points out. Earlier treatments of print control in the seventeenth century inevitably shift focus, lured to flash points on the high road to Civil War in the age of James's successor.

Eschewing whiggish anticipation of the reign of Charles I, Clegg focuses instead on "loci of power" in James's reign only. That she characterizes this power as deceptively consensual should not surprise any academic reader familiar with trends in the field. Unless, of course, the field in which the particular reader searched for trends was the field of early modern English literature (of which Clegg is Distinguished Professor at Pepperdine University). As her disdain for Whig interpretations so clearly announces, Clegg's contexts are largely historiographic, despite occasional citations of theorists like Foucault and frequent employment of literary-critical catchphrases such as "discourses of authority." (Kevin Sharpe has been doing the same thing for years, after all.) *Press Censorship* thus makes a substantial contribution to the field of early modern cultural history (in which, it is fairer to say, this brand of literary scholarship has played a

founding part) and, especially, to its recently emergent and high-profile subsidiary, the history of the book.

Clegg begins her argument with a succinct survey of the instruments of press control, tracing them from their establishment in the reign of Elizabeth I (the subject of Clegg's 1997 companion book, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England*) to their subsequent "institutionalization" in the reign of her successor. Her examination of the High Commission is especially revealing, focussing on the vitally important role played by Archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot. Clegg points to the widening gap between the King and his evangelical-Calvinist clergy (a divide that can be ascribed to the increasing royal susceptibility to anti-"puritan" rhetoric aimed at Calvinists like Abbot from detractors within the ecclesiastical establishment). While strengthening the High Commission and the repressive potential of its "ecclesiastical authorizers," the Archbishop winked at certain puritanical books in much the same way he winked at certain puritanical practices in his dioceses (p. 67). This strategy was characteristic of the Jacobean Church of England and also of the governing style of its king for most of his reign.

Continuing to focus attention to the ecclesiastical policies of James I, Clegg then analyzes the "performativity" of the book burnings at Paul's Cross. Building upon and reconciling the theories of Jonathan Goldberg, Ken Fincham, and Peter Lake (no mean feat), Clegg sees James as a ruler self-fashioned in what would appear to be self-contradictory roles: public actor and private protector of *arcana imperii*. Building upon Fincham and Lake, Clegg argues that James' need to perform this balancing act explains why he would choose the very public dais of a Paul's Cross bonfire to manifest his distaste for impertinent and intrusive texts.

Censorship in this age was not only a public act. The chapter on private censorship and royal prerogative may well be the best in what is always a good book, as it allows Clegg to step away from the overworked theme of early modern performance and discuss in detail several case studies of privately-pursued censorship by the king. Here Clegg's familiarity with a range of English literatures dovetails nicely with her knack for historical narrative. This attention to individual cases fills the balance of her book and makes for absorbing reading. The centerpiece of the chapter on the struggle between Crown, Church, Parliament, and common-law–a nuanced analysis of the fate of John Selden's *History of Tithes*–does much to illuminate what Clegg calls these institutions' "serious anxieties" (p. 159) over the bounds of their authority.

The "sacrifice to institutional rivalr[y]" is a sad story that continues to be played out in a chapter on the press during the tense years 1619-24. In Clegg's treatment, the furor over William Whately's well-known marriage manual *A Bride-bush* in 1621 reveals both the inherently radical and challenging sentiments an enterprising Calvinist minister could pack into a book of domestic science (not all that surprising a provocation, perhaps, given the king's penchant for the marriage trope in political rhetoric), and the consequences of Archbishop Abbot's fall from favor. By 1624 a once avant-garde, always anti-Calvinist ecclesiastical regime claimed power after years of shrill (if we consider the crude bombast of a John Buckeridge) or elegant (if we consider the sermonic pyrotechnics of a Lancelot Andrewes) courtship of the king. And so Clegg concludes with the attempt to censor Richard Mountagu's infamously anti-Calvinist *A gagg for the new gospell?* and the effect of Durham house politics on late Jacobean press control. Her observation that the rise of Laudianism also signals the rise of an effective political strategy of "silence and silencing" offers an intriguing prequel to Charles I's governing strategy. (That the Caroline silent treatment was made possible by Abbot's "empower[ment]" of High Commission in indirect aid of evangelical Calvinism is historical irony.)

With this nod towards the next age, Clegg wisely ends, not only making good on her promise to concentrate on the reign of James I, but also quite possibly preparing her readers for a sequel. She's certainly earned the right to this particular monopoly. I for one look forward in future to reading *Press Censorship in Caroline England*.