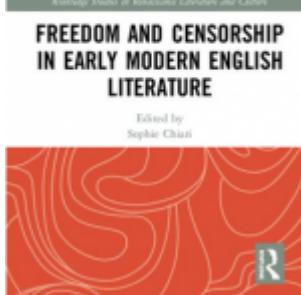


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odern English Literature, New



Broadening the notion of censorship, this volume explores the transformative role played by early modern censors in the fashioning of a distinct English literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In early modern England, the Privy Council, the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Stationers' Company, and the Master of the Revels each dealt with their own prerogatives and implemented different forms of censorship, with the result that authors penning both plays and satires had to juggle with various authorities and unequal degrees of freedom from one sector to the other. Text and press control thus did not give way to systematic intervention but to particular responses adapted to specific texts in a specific time.

If the restrictions imposed by regulation practices are duly acknowledged in this edited collection, the different contributors are also keen to enhance the positive impact of censorship on early modern literature. The most difficult task consists in finding the exact moment when the balance tips in favour of creativity, and the zone where, in matters of artistic freedom, the disadvantages outweigh the benefits. This is what the twelve chapters of the volume proceed to do. Thanks to a wide variety of examples, they show that, in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, regulations seldom prevented writers to make themselves heard, albeit through indirect channels. By contrast, in the 1630s, the increased supremacy of the Church seemed to tip the balance the other way.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Table of illustrations

Textual Note

Notes on Contributors

Sophie Chiari (Clermont Auvergne University), General Introduction : "To be seen and allowed" : Early Modern Regulation Practices'

### **I. Burning, Forbidding, Controlling : The Power of Censors**

1. Edward Paleit (City University, London), 'An Incident in the History of English Book Burning'
2. Per Sivefors (Linnaeus University, Sweden), 'Satire, Immoderation and the Bishops' Ban of 1599'
3. Janet Clare (University of Hull), "I like not this" : Censorship, Self-Censorship and Collaboration in Early Modern Dramatic Manuscripts'
4. Richard Dutton (Queen's University, Belfast), 'The Limits of a Censor's Authority : The Case of the Masters of the Revels'

### **II. Dramatic Constraints, Dramatic Freedom : Case Studies**

5. Roy Eriksen (University of Agder), 'Revisiting an Old Controversy : Censorship in Doctor Faustus'
6. Dympna Callaghan (Syracuse University), "An you talk in blank verse" : the Poetics of Liberty in As You Like It'
7. Pelin Dogan (Ankara University), 'The Malcontent's Fool, Censorship, and the Construction of the Subject'
8. Joseph Sterrett (Aarhus University), "Let him speak no more" : Trust, Censorship, and Early Modern Anti-Confession'

### **III. Censorship on the Page : Translation, Poetry, and Editorial Practices**

9. Jonathan Pollock (Université de Perpignan-Via Domitia), 'What Florio did not Translate : the Return of the Repressed in the English Rendering of Montaigne's Essays'
10. Laetitia Sansonetti (Université Paris Nanterre), 'Spenser's Strategies of Indirect Representation in The Faerie Queene (1590)'

11. Aurélie Griffin (Université Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle), '(Self-)Censorship in Lady Mary Wroth's The Countess of Montgomery's *Urania* (1621-1630)'

12. Line Cottegnies (Sorbonne Université), '"No cloudy stuff to puzzle the brain" : 'Fair Editing' and Censorship in John Benson's Edition of Shakespeare's Poems (1640)'

Roger Chartier (Collège de France and University of Pennsylvania), Coda : 'Early Modern English Censorship in European Context'

## General Bibliography

### *Index*

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