

*Mastering Memory* is dense and complex, and it is difficult to do full justice to its richness here. This book raises provocative questions by illuminating the hidden gaps and tensions underlying French literary history and cultural identity.

David Colclough. *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xiii + 293pp + 3 illus. \$75.00. Review by JONATHAN WRIGHT, HARTLEPOOL, UNITED KINGDOM.

The offering of counsel to monarchs was at the heart of the early modern political system. Of course, the era had no shortage of haughty, headstrong princes who would have preferred to disregard dissenting opinions, but this only made the notion of freedom of speech all the more important. Provided they remained within the borders of decorous behaviour, political counsellors (at least in theory) had the opportunity to speak frankly and boldly to their rulers without running the risk of falling from favour. This was perceived as a keystone of civic life, and as a crucial antidote to the flattery and evil counsel which plagued so many early modern courts. This is, almost always, what contemporaries understood by “freedom of speech”: crucially, it was perceived as a duty—an obligation to courageously serve the commonwealth—rather than as a right. It was, in other words, a very long way from how we would understand the phrase today.

There has been much recent work on what might be termed the negative aspects of free/frank speech in Tudor and Stuart England: censorship being at the top of the current scholarly agenda. In his rewarding new study, David Colclough turns to its more positive role as “a significant civic virtue in the early years of the seventeenth century” (1). His route into the subject is via an analysis of the rhetorical figure of free speech, *parrhesia* (*licentia* in Latin). Colclough traces how the figure emerged in Greek and Roman culture, and then analyses how early modern scholars—Thomas Wilson, Abraham Fraunce and Henry Peacham among them—adopted and adapted it. Colclough makes it very clear that the term *parrhesia* had manifold meanings, ranging from bold speech itself to the rhetorical device of apologising for the unvarnished advice that invariably followed.

Colclough’s next task is to investigate how frank speech operated in prac-

tice. Firstly, he explores what might be termed religious *parrhesia*: the venerable tradition of preachers and divines proffering unpalatable counsel to their political masters. This phenomenon is traced from its biblical roots, via the encounter (famously analysed by Patrick Collinson) between Ambrose and the emperor Theodosius, into the early modern age. Figures such as Hugh Latimer and Edmund Grindal (as well as voluble, risk-taking martyrs) are seen as exemplars and inheritors of this tradition. Finally, we are shown how a sermoniser such as John Donne walked a tightrope between offering constructive criticism and showing the fawning deference that James I always expected. We also see how the strident pamphleteer Thomas Scott abandoned all pretence of decorum in his series of attacks on Stuart foreign and domestic policy. The treatment of Scott is very well rendered, although it is difficult to see how someone of such radical proclivities can be held up as representative of the wider culture that Colclough is seeking to anatomise.

Colclough next turns to the more predictable venue of Parliament: the only place in the Stuart world where a right to freedom of speech was explicitly demanded. He offers a blow-by-blow account of the various issues—ranging from foreign and fiscal policy to the royal prerogative—that provoked debates about frank speech. The famous moments when Parliament asserted its role with particular vim or offered trenchant criticism of the Stuart regime—the Form of Apology and Satisfaction of 1604, the Commons' Protestation of 1621, and the Petition of Right of 1628—naturally take centre stage.

In a final section Colclough strives to demonstrate how such tendencies seeped out of Parliament into the provinces. By analysing the widespread circulation of verse libels and the many efforts to assemble manuscript miscellanies of parliamentary debates and other political texts, Colclough paints a picture of a politically-curious Stuart populace, many of whom, even when they fell short of voicing their own criticism, were still groping towards the exercise of engaged citizenship. His account of the manuscript miscellany of the Shropshire minister Robert Horn is especially valuable, and this section as a whole adds to the recent work of scholars such as H. R. Woudhuysen and Harold Love by stressing the continued importance of manuscript culture in an age of print.

It is always perilous for historians of early modern England to write about so loaded a concept as freedom of speech. By searching for the roots

of modern-day notions they open themselves up to charges of Whiggish teleology or of investing the construct of freedom of speech with an ahistorical, immutable nature that it has never possessed. Colclough is aware of all this and, for the most part, he proceeds with due caution. He is careful not to assume (as Conrad Russell long ago taught us) that the parliamentary debates of the 1620s were nothing more than precursors of the Civil War's ideological battles. He is also (a few overly-zealous moments aside) suitably circumspect when attempting to recruit such debates as predecessors of modern articulations of the right to freedom of speech. That said, he also refuses to allow revisionism or relativism to hem in his analysis to a point where it ceases to have a resonance beyond the political circumstances of Jacobean England. "What they were referring to was very different from anything we might recognise as freedom of speech today," Colclough concedes, but we are still entitled to "see how our own notions of freedom of speech are formed by the debates in which these people were involved, the choices they made, and the linguistic changes that they provoked" (124). This is a very level-headed proposition. If we try too hard to treat every era as a discrete historical phenomenon then the possibilities of a larger narrative about freedom of speech all but vanish.

Perhaps, though, Colclough goes a little too far in his search for the watershed moment when freedom of speech moved beyond a pragmatic mechanism for sustaining political life to become a fiercely-defended right. His final pages, in which he announces striking coincidences between Stuart political discourse and the wording of the European Convention on Human Rights, will jar with many readers. It is the oldest mistake in the historiographical book to confuse similarities of language with similarities of meaning and intention, and Colclough should know better: indeed, throughout these pages, he proves that he *does* know better. His enthusiasm presumably got the better of him because he wants to pin down the moment when modern ideas about free expression had their genesis. This (the bold stuff of which historical monographs are, perhaps regrettably, obliged to be made, these days) inevitably invites scepticism or, at least, a host of alternative theories about when, where, and why this happened.

Not that any of this should detract from the fact that Colclough has written a nuanced, well-researched book that will be of great interest to all scholars of Stuart political, philosophical and literary history. He takes several

risks, applying a veneer of interpretation that doesn't always work to the book's advantage, but at least, in the very tradition that he is discussing, he opts to be bold. He also makes you wonder if, against your better judgement, he might be correct, and this can only serve to revitalise the creaky old debate about where our notion of freedom of speech came from. It should also be mentioned that the book is very well written.

Diana Newton. *North-East England 1569-1625: Governance, Culture and Identity*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006. x + 214 pp. £50.00 / \$85.00. Review by MARTYN BENNETT, NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY.

Dr. Newton's book deals with a significant region of the kingdom of England. She rightly places this geographic part as centrally important to the union of crowns in 1603. To people both sides of the border in the later years of Elizabeth I's reign, the question of succession was important. No one was allowed to speculate publicly on what would happen: Elizabeth disliked mention of the issue, not for fear of death, but for fear of drifting from the centre of political attention once her successor was named and confirmed. James VI was frustrated by the constant avoidance of the question and sought confirmation and solace in international expressions of support (as well as the more dubious support offered by the failure of a diabolic attempt on his life at the beginning of the 1590s).

In the borderlands, the issue of succession had a double edge. The borders were culturally diverse, and they were unruly. There were special jurisdictions in place, and the rule of law could be flouted by gangs, or more precisely clans of criminals known as the "surnames." These lawless families raided rival groups and their tenants periodically and violently, precisely because they were on a border where cultures, legal principles and jurisdiction met untidily. If the crowns were united then these border shires would stop being the rough edges of two kingdoms jostling against each other and become the centre of a new, rebalanced nation. Thus the questions of culture, order and lawlessness could be thrown into very different lights whenever succession was mentioned. Borders and fringes were important to Tudor and Stuart monarchs in their respective kingdoms; governance in these areas threw into relief the ability of a monarch to rule their entire kingdom. James