The Rule of Moderation

Why was it that, whenever the Tudor-Stuart regime most loudly trumpeted its moderation, that regime was at its most vicious?

This ground-breaking book argues that the ideal of moderation, so central to English history and identity, functioned as a tool of social, religious and political power. Thus The Rule of Moderation rewrites the history of early modern England, showing that many of its key developments – the via media of Anglicanism, political liberty, the development of empire and even religious toleration – were defined and defended as instances of coercive moderation, producing the ‘middle way’ through the forcible restraint of apparently dangerous excesses in Church, state and society. By showing that the quintessentially English quality of moderation was at heart an ideology of control, Ethan Shagan illuminates the subtle violence of English history and explains how, paradoxically, England came to represent reason, civility and moderation to a world it slowly conquered.

ETHAN H. SHAGAN is Professor of History and Director of the Center for British Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of Popular Politics and the English Reformation (Cambridge, 2002), which won numerous prizes including the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize and the American Historical Association's Morris Forkosch Prize, and is editor of Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England (2005).
The Rule of Moderation

Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England

Ethan H. Shagan
For Hannah and Noah
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3 M. R., *The Mothers Counsell or, Liue within Compasse Being the Last Will and Testament to Her Dearest Daughter* (London, 1630), title page. © The British Library Board. (Huth128.)


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8 Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (London, 1622), title page: allegorical image of the Church with a bridle. G.9.15. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University. 137

Acknowledgements

Near the beginning of Woody Allen’s 1980 film *Stardust Memories*, a fan tells the newly middle-aged film director played by Allen that she really loves his films, especially the ‘early, funny ones’. This comment is much on my mind as this book goes to press, since readers who enjoyed my first book, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, may be puzzled to find such a different work in their hands now. One reader who emphatically did not enjoy that earlier book described me in a review as the ‘*enfant terrible*’ of early modern British history, so perhaps in an autobiographical sense this new book, like Allen’s film, is about the very ungolden mean of incipient middle age and the desire to do something different and larger than the work of one’s youth. What lies between *enfant terrible* and *éménice grise*? In my case, apparently, an obsessive rejection of mediocrity.

My first book was so narrowly focused on the ‘voices of the people’ that I emerged from its publication as a gainfully employed historian of early modern Britain who had never read Hobbes’s *Leviathan* or Hooker’s *Lawes*, not to mention Aristotle’s *Politics*. At a personal level, then, the goal of this second project was to write a learned book, to read deeply in the cultural and intellectual production of early modern England in order to make sense of the largest problem that I had discovered in my encounter with the subject: the apparent contradiction between England’s obsession with moderation and its violent national history. The result, for good or ill, is a Big Book in a way that *Popular Politics* was not: it spans more years and more subjects over more pages using more methodologies, and it makes large arguments about the cultural dynamics and fault lines of early modern England. That is not to say that this book represents the final word. I am painfully aware of how much more remains to be said on so capacious a subject; my only excuse is that I hope this book opens more doors than it closes.

Given the many different issues at stake in this book, I have necessarily sought advice and criticism from a wide range of scholars who have been kind enough to offer their comments. Robert Harkins, Peter Marshall,
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to make this the best book it could be. The images are reproduced by
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Figure 9, which is reproduced by permission of the Library of Congress.

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Academic books take so many years that while you are writing them,
life happens to you; in my case, since I started work on this project
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Sarah Paul for her love and patience; the late Mike Shagan for a lifetime
of love and support; and my children Hannah Shagan and Noah Shagan
for reminding me of the joys of excess. Hannah and Noah, this book is
for you.
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AHR</td>
<td>The American Historical Review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL</td>
<td>Cambridge University Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHR</td>
<td>The English Historical Review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HJ</td>
<td>The Historical Journal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBS</td>
<td>Journal of British Studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPL</td>
<td>Lambeth Palace Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P</td>
<td>Past &amp; Present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>The National Archives, Public Record Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCJ</td>
<td>The Sixteenth Century Journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMQ</td>
<td>The William and Mary Quarterly.</td>
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