

that Britain's need to incur huge debts to win the Seven Years' War and then service those debts after the war by raising taxes on the Americans provoked the war of independence. Both wars were global struggles fought in regions of North America, Europe, the West Indies, the East Indies, Latin America, and even the Far East. A treaty of Paris settled both wars. With the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Britain won Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent, and Tobago in the West Indies, East and West Florida, and most of Bengal. With the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Britain lost the thirteen American colonies, and East and West Florida.

Foreign policy involves seizing opportunities and thwarting threats to one's national interests. To understand how and why policies were made, Black analyzes the dynamic relationship among the king, a succession of prime ministers, other members of the Privy Council and cabinet, parties, factions, interest groups, financiers, army, navy, newspapers, and public opinion along with those of one's foreign enemies, allies, and fence sitters. Along the way he provides insights into the character, values, and ambitions that shaped the decisions of George III, William Pitt, James Harris, Lord Malmesbury, Frederick, Lord North, William, Duke Cumberland, William, Earl Shelburne, and scores of other leaders.

A key ongoing debate was whether Whitehall should emphasize a continental strategy for defeating one's enemies in Europe or maritime or blue-water strategy for defeating one's enemies and taking their colonies overseas either permanently or as bargaining chips for other interests. Complicating foreign policy was the king's second title as Elector of Hanover. Defending Hanover's interests was at once a political imperative and strategic dead-end. On the European mainland, the strategic priority was ensuring no enemy controlled the Low Countries just across the North Sea from Britain.

*To Lose an Empire's* most touching passage involves George III's conciliatory words to John Adams, an American revolutionary leader who in 1785 became ambassador to Britain: "I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do by the duty which I owed to my people . . . I was the last to consent to the separation, but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent power . . . let the circumstances of language, religion, and blood have their natural and full effect" (157). The most prescient words come from Napoleon Bonaparte to Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Wilks, Saint Helena's governor, in 1816: "your manufacturers are emigrating to America . . . In a century or perhaps half a century more: it will give a new character to the affairs of the world. It has thriven upon our follies" (163).

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MATTIE BURKERT. *Speculative Enterprise: Public Theaters and Financial Markets in London, 1688–1763*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2021. Pp. 296. \$95.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.21

In 1696, when the English government attempted to realign the face value of silver coins with their actual worth, it set off a nationwide depression, throwing into doubt the stability of value itself. The simultaneous explosive growth of the stock market left London awash in paper and varying degrees of faith in credit. The crucial years of this financial revolution saw similarly striking changes in print culture and in the business of theater. In *Speculative Enterprise: Public Theaters and Financial Markets in London, 1688–1763*, Mattie Burkert explores these intersections, arguing that the public theater "played a key role in debates over new financial

instruments and institutions . . . addressing audience members as economic subjects within complex webs of interdependence and conflict” (3). Indeed, in focusing on the theater as both a physical profit-centered space and a location for the public circulation of ideas, Burkert brings a new concreteness to the conception of theater as its own kind of public sphere, an unruly, less homogenous public space than generally understood by the term, with competing voices and demands. Burkert explores comedies by Colley Cibber, Susannah Centlivre, and Richard Steele, playwrights who were also involved in the business of theater as actors (Cibber and Centlivre), as theater patentees or managers (Cibber and Steele), and as commentators. She brings a layered approach to her reading, building on the politico-economic subtext and explicit analogies in the plays, reading a range of public paratextual documents such as prologues and epilogues, poetry and periodicals, to make audience knowledge itself a central context.

The first part of *Speculative Enterprise* situates Colley Cibber’s debut comedy *Love’s Last Shift* (1696) in the debate over debased value—of women, of plays, of coins, of men. Written when the Drury Lane company’s greatest actors had rebelled against their manager, Christopher Rich, for, among other things, debasing the quality of the theater by treating it as an investment above all else, Cibber’s play, its performance and its narrative, appeared amidst a spirited public debate about value and worth, tradition and novelty. Appropriately, speculation in novelty for its own sake, typified by the character Cibber wrote for himself, Sir Novelty Fashion, produces only a cycle of exploitation and emptiness. Burkert argues that using “the tropes of bullion and specie as metaphors for virtue,” Cibber “explores issues of historical continuity and change . . . in order to ask whether his society is actually progressing” or whether “the cultural obsession with reform (of financial institutions, of public morality, of dramatic genres) may be seen as . . . playing to a less virtuous impulse” (26, 25). Burkert’s excellent reading of the play is supplemented, in another chapter, by her research on prologues and epilogues. She demonstrates how specific prologues function as marketing devices, mediating “between the repertory and the moment of performance,” thus “play [ing] a key role in conversations about what it means for cultural markets to operate according to the same rule as financial markets” (55). Cibber could indeed expect audiences to apply the critical commentary of his play to those financial and cultural markets whose currents so affected a Londoner’s life.

Burkert’s articulation of a theatrical public sphere is expanded in the second half of the book, which details the interconnected nature of theater, print culture, opera, and the stock market, particularly in public discourse. Focusing on the South Sea Bubble of 1720, Burkert explores continuities between Steele’s short-lived periodical *Theatre* (1720), and his 1722 play *The Conscious Lovers*, set among merchants whose colonial trade has become the basis of English financial stability. Steele’s opposition to the Tories, who controlled both government and the South Sea Company, led the Lord Chamberlain to interfere with his privileges and duties as a theater patentee. In the periodical, Steele frequently parallels the frenzy for stock in the South Sea Company and the “predatory aesthetics” of the opera craze explicitly and in satire, presenting a narrative of cynical manipulation of the public by those in power, be they purveyors of mindless spectacle, the managers of joint-stock companies, or government officials (135). In *The Conscious Lovers*, one character asserts that “all great Men know, if you can command absolutely the Toys of little people, you will . . . come into the Possession and Direction of the Goods and chattels of the rest of the World” (quoted at 136). Burkert persuasively argues that “the theatrical media landscape interacted with financial news and opinion at this tumultuous moment when the trustworthiness of institutions and the rationality of the masses were very much in question” (126). The strength of *Speculative Enterprise* comes through most clearly here, where she explores an abundant “theatrical media landscape” at its many points of contact with a tumultuous public.

*Speculative Enterprise* explores other moments, including the ginned-up debate about plagiarism in Cibber’s adaptation of *Les Femmes Savantes* in his *The Refusal* (1721), the Half-Price

Riots, in 1763, when an angry public shut down the theaters for several days, and Centlivre's business acumen in marketing her plays and her persona, balancing the demands of the competing theaters throughout her career. These chapters, convincing in themselves, are less closely aligned with the larger argument that the dynamics in the plays participate in the interplay between theatrical business, economic crisis, and the counterpublic sphere Burkert evokes so well.

Throughout, Burkert supports her bold claims about the knowledge and consciousness of the London audiences in these years, demonstrating thoroughly what writers could confidently assume about audience knowledge, desire, and expectations. Her methodology, as much as her conclusions, will certainly enrich the field of eighteenth-century theater studies.

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SUSAN M. COGAN. *Catholic Social Networks in Early Modern England: Kinship, Gender, and Coexistence*. Gendering the Late Medieval and Early Modern World. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021. Pp. 296. €138.00 (cloth).  
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Recent studies of Catholic families in early modern England has drawn attention to the ways in which they navigated the political problems associated with their religion by drawing on the social and familial capital they had accrued among their non-Catholic neighbors and from the support of their co-religionists. This reflects two important shifts in the relevant historiography. First, there has been a move away from a recusant history, which emphasized the Catholic character of their lives at the expense of discussing relations with non-Catholic neighbors and kin, as revealed in the influential and important work of John Aveling, a close reading of which shows the Yorkshire families he studied to be deeply involved with their Protestant neighbors, though he tended to downplay this, focusing instead on the conflicts between them in matters of local politics. Second, the growth of women's history has accorded Catholic women a proper place in the history of these families and opened up a wider understanding of the networks and strategies of Catholic households, shown for example in the work of Michael Questier on the Montagues and in Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott, eds., *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton Hall from Reformation to Emancipation* (2009). Each of these works informs Susan Cogan's *Catholic Social Networks in Early Modern England: Kinship, Gender, and Coexistence*. Cogan also focuses on the greater landowners, cutting through the usual county parameters and tracing connections of several households across the midlands, chiefly between 1570 and 1640. Her study opens up a much wider context as families like the Catesby's owned extensive estates throughout Warwickshire and Northamptonshire with an extensive kinship group in both counties, which in 1605 lay at the heart of the Gunpowder conspiracy, though it may be too strong on Cogan's part to say that it was from this that the plot was born (94).

Elsewhere the wide regional links of Catholic families also reflected wide devotional links, as in the case of the Throckmorton family, which included several Protestant members, one of whom, Sir Arthur, was charged with returning confiscated recusant property in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, receiving "the outcries of my unkind kindred" for his pains (212). What these examples reveal is the persistent way that politics intruded on social and kinship networks in this period and disrupted their long-standing stability. The antiquity of these