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## Introduction: The view from 1710

Mark Knights

**Abstract:** The essays in this volume, planned to mark the tercentenary of the impeachment of Dr Henry Sacheverell on 23 March 1710, reassess the importance of his trial. Sacheverell's attack on the revolution of 1688, and the principles which underpinned it, allows us to question how far, twenty years later, a Whig revolution had prevailed. The essays suggest that the revolution continued to be contested; that in 1710 the High Church Tory vision temporarily triumphed; that the flood of print showed the importance of religious dispute in shaping the public sphere; that the debate over Sacheverell connected Westminster and the public, not just in England but also in Ireland; that there was an important disagreement between High and Low Church about how to respond to the press's licentiousness, part of a story about the shift away from pre-publication censorship towards regulation of print and copyright; that the print controversy over the trial was vituperative, 'impolite' and traded lies and misrepresentations; that Sacheverell's critics sought to associate him with harlots in a bid to suggest that his strong influence over women was unhealthy; that Sacheverell, on the other hand, deliberately depicted himself as a martyr; and that, for all its religious heat, 1710 was also important for an early Enlightenment debate about political economy, since the Tory vision on church and state also embraced a reoriented foreign policy and that this contest over imperial visions had important consequences for the development of the colonies after 1714.

**Keywords** and phrases: Sacheverell; Glorious Revolution; public sphere; press; censorship; gender; moderation; political economy; empire; Ireland; ideology; early Enlightenment.

All but two of the essays in this volume were originally papers given at a conference, held at the Palace of Westminster, on the three hundredth anniversary of the verdict given against Dr Henry Sacheverell on 23 March 1710. Sacheverell's parliamentary trial was the sensation of its day. It provoked rioting in London and a huge flood of printed works, recounting the impeachment and debating the doctor's controversial views. 'Perhaps there never was an Instance, since our happy Constitution was in being, of such a Ferment as we have seen in our Days, raised upon such Grounds, and is so Critical a Time', remarked one pamphleteer.<sup>1</sup> Sacheverell's attack on 'Revolution principles' opened a wide-ranging review of the ideas and practices that had underpinned 1688-9: religious toleration and the legitimacy of resistance were the two most important themes but the debate widened to include issues of a free press, the financing and aims of war, the grounds of authority and the nature of monarchy. Indeed, the impeachment was also something of a turning point. In the short term, it led to the demise of the administration, headed by Godolphin and Marlborough in collaboration with the Whigs, and to a landslide Tory victory at the subsequent general election in October.<sup>2</sup> That victory brought an end to the long war against France, which had become increasingly to be seen as a Whig war, and Tories capitalised on Sacheverell's attack on the self-interested monied men who financed it. Victory also led to a revival of High Church Tory ideology. In 1711 legislation against 'occasional conformity' - the practice of occasionally attending a Church of England service in order to qualify for political office - which had proved so controversial in the first years of Anne's reign, was finally passed.<sup>3</sup> It looked as though the Whigs and Low Churchmen were not only on the defensive, but had

been routed. In the medium and longer term, however, 1710 looked to be the opposite: a temporary, pyrrhic victory for a High Church Tory ideology that was subordinated by the Hanoverian succession in 1714 and its long Whig legacy.

Looking back on 1710 is thus instructive in all sorts of ways. It allows us to re-examine what, twenty years on from 1688-9, the significance of that revolution had been for contemporaries and why it remained so contentious; and it allows us, from our vantage point three hundred years later, to assess how far the events and debates of 1710 marked continuity or change. What follows in this introduction is an attempt to sketch out both these dimensions, drawing on the essays in the collection in the process.

A secondary purpose of the volume is to embrace a broad definition of parliamentary history. The trial of Henry Sacheverell was very much a parliamentary event: it was initiated in Parliament, run by Parliament, conducted in Westminster Hall, and resulted in parliamentary elections and a change of government.<sup>4</sup> But it was also much more than that. The significance of the impeachment cannot be fully understood without seeing the parliamentary debates in conjunction with a much wider public debate, much of which commented on events at Westminster. That debate is in part recoverable from the huge amount of print and correspondence that the affair provoked, as well as from the visual and material culture it spawned.<sup>5</sup> And the public debate was wide-ranging, examining issues of ideological conflict in a wide context that included the informal and formal rules governing what it was tolerable or polite to say and write, the nature of 'moderation' as a cultural or political mode of behaviour, and the expected roles of women in relation to church and state. The essays that follow focus to a large degree on this extra-parliamentary dimension. This concern to link Parliament to its public through a cultural form of parliamentary history

is desirable because the significance of the trial lay outside Westminster as much as inside it. Moreover, such an approach can help relate parliamentary history to a wider historiography. Over the last twenty or thirty years we have been offered a history of political culture, of the way in which parliament acted as 'point of contact' with a wider public, as much as a history of an institution.<sup>6</sup> This has both stimulate and reflected an increased interest in the formation of popular political attitudes, the means by which contemporaries learnt of and engaged with the world of Westminster, the type of political discussions and discourse that ensued, and the part played by events at Westminster in a wider framework of an emerging empire.

I

What then, from the vantage point of 1710, had been the significance of the revolution of 1688-9? It is certainly clear what Sacheverell thought.<sup>7</sup> In his controversial sermon *The Perils of False Brethren* he argued that the period since the revolution had seen the Church thrust into danger by toleration, dissenters and lukewarm churchmen; and he believed that two central tenets of the church, passive obedience and non-resistance, had been subverted by resistance theories and the notion of popular sovereignty, both of which undermined that prop of the church, the monarchy. Sacheverell thus discerned - and protested against - a shift in religious and political culture and in the ideology that underpinned it.

This shift had a long gestation but had accelerated in the period since the revolution of 1688. The change in religious culture, he feared, was profound. He saw many who equated the Church with 'Priestcraft and Popery in Masquerade'.<sup>8</sup> Such men, he thought, ridiculed and abused the Church. More than that, however, he identified a growing number of the lukewarm, those who were really of no religion, 'a secret sort of reserv'd Atheists'.<sup>9</sup> Thus he

talked of the threat from 'hypocrites, Deists, Socinians and Atheists'.<sup>10</sup> Toleration, too, had weakened the Church. The national church, he argued, was in grave danger from those who wanted to make it a 'heterogeneous mixture of all persons of what different faith soever', a soup of Protestants, '*Jews, Quakers, Mohometans* and anything', all allowed entry by a policy of 'moderation and occasional conformity'.<sup>11</sup> Such an enfeebled and incoherent institution, he warned, would fall prey to 'universal scepticism and infidelity', thereby ensuring the triumph of popery which had been working so long to defeat Protestantism.<sup>12</sup> Sacheverell's sermon thus brought together the fears underlying the potent rallying cry of 'the Church in danger'.

But he also attacked the ideology, 'the New-fangl'd Terms of Modern Philosophy', behind this threat.<sup>13</sup> One danger he identified was the doctrine of resistance, since this undermined the state. 'The Grand Security of our Government, and the very Pillar on which it stands', he thundered, 'is founded upon the steady belief of the Subject's Obligation to an Absolute and Unconditional Obedience to the Supreme Power, in all things lawful, and the utter Illegality of Resistance upon any pretence whatsoever'.<sup>14</sup> This doctrine of obedience, he lamented, had been displaced by ideas about the 'Right Liberty and Property of the PEOPLE' who, liberated from authority, could cancel their allegiance at will and call their sovereign to account. Sacheverell likened those who defended that principle of resistance to those who approved of 'the horrid Actions and Principles of Forty One', in other words to the 'Republican faction' who had brought about the civil war.<sup>15</sup> The 'New-fangl'd Notion of Self-Defence', Sacheverell claimed, would justify 'all the rebellions that ever were or can be'; and would reduce the monarch to 'the breath of his Subject's nostrils, to be blown in or out at their caprice and pleasure'.<sup>16</sup> The Government, he urged, should suppress such dangerous

ideas with the sword and condemn them through church and parliament. Otherwise republican notions amongst the dissenters would result in rebellion, just as they had done in 1642: 'the Old Leaven of their Fore-Fathers is still working in their present Generation' and their 'Poison still remains in this brood of Vipers, to Sting us to Death'.<sup>17</sup>

Sacheverell's indictment of the religious and political shifts since the Revolution nevertheless went much further. For as well as castigating dissenters for undermining both church and state, the doctor suggested that as great a danger came from the 'pretended friends and false brethren' of the church, the Low Churchmen who had espoused Whiggish political and cultural principles. The culture of 'moderation', a key plank of the Whig programme of toleration and one which related closely to the ideal of 'politeness', was thus, he suggested, a veil for those interested in 'nothing but Getting Money and Preferment'.<sup>18</sup> Subordinating their principles to self-advancement and material gain, such men were ready to 'Fall down and Worship the very Devil himself, for the Riches and Honours of this World'.<sup>19</sup> They turned all religion into 'State-Craft and Imposture' and destroyed 'All Common Honesty, Faith and Credit in the World', setting up in their place 'an Universal Trade of Cousenage, Sharping, Dissimulation and downright Knavery'.<sup>20</sup> Covering their treachery with 'Plausible Pretences of Friendship' they were thereby 'capable of doing much more Mischief than a bare-fac'd and professed Enemy'.<sup>21</sup> The Church was thus in danger from ranks of hypocrites who professed to uphold the church only as a cover to pursue their own self-interest.<sup>22</sup> Sacheverell saw a conspiracy afoot, involving catholics, dissenters, Low Churchmen and Whigs, who had joined forces to undermine church and state. Sacheverell's attack thus questioned the whole culture ushered in by the revolution, a shift, as he saw it, towards atheism, irreligion, republicanism, hypocrisy and self-advancement veiled by a

dangerous veneer of worldly 'moderation' that his own zeal and passion was intended to challenge.

Sacheverell thus challenged revolution principles head on and his parliamentary trial was an attempt to defend them from attack. The preamble to the articles of impeachment made it abundantly clear that he was being tried for slandering the revolution of 1688: 'Whereas his late Majesty King William the Third, then Prince of Orange, did, with an arm'd force, undertake a Glorious Enterprize, for delivering this Kingdom from Popery and arbitrary power', it began, 'and divers Subjects of this Realm, well affected to their Country, join'd with and assisted his late Majesty in the said Enterprize ...the happy and blessed Consequences of the said Revolution are the Enjoyment of the Right of God's True Religion establish'd among us, and of the Laws and Liberties of the Kingdom, the uniting her Majesty's Protestant Subjects in Interest and Affection by a legal Indulgence or Toleration, granted to Dissenters'.<sup>23</sup> The articles went on to list Sacheverell's seditious views: 'that the necessary means used to bring about the said happy Revolution were odious and unjustifiable' and that there had been no resistance in 1688; that Toleration was 'unreasonable' and 'unwarrantable'; 'that the Church of England is in a condition of great peril'; and that the Low Church and Whiggish administration of church and state 'tends to the destruction of the constitution'. Sacheverell was thus charged with possessing a 'wicked, malicious and seditious intention' to undermine the government, create division and incite rebellion. In explaining the charges, the prosecution stressed that the doctor was on trial because he aimed 'to Traduce and Condemn the late Happy Revolution' and its key doctrines of resistance against tyranny and religious toleration.<sup>24</sup>



In pressing home these charges, the Whig prosecution inevitably put forward a vigorous defence of their own values. This led to a type of double trial: an explicit one of the doctor and another implicit one of revolution principles and revolutionary culture. The impeachment presented two very starkly different accounts of the Revolution and its achievements. This was nowhere more apparent than over the central question of resistance. Countering Sacheverell's attack on resistance theory, Robert Walpole argued that 'to plead for Resistance' was 'to assert and maintain the very Being of our present Government and Constitution; and to assert Non-resistance, in that boundless and unlimited sense in which Doctor Sacheverell presumes to assert it, is to Sap and Undermine the very Foundations of the Government'.<sup>25</sup> Establishing a right of resistance was so important because a good deal more flowed from it, including the protestant succession and the war against France. Denying a right of resistance, the managers of the prosecution argued, questioned the Queen's own right to sit on the throne and implied that she owed it to an usurpation of the crown.<sup>26</sup> It also questioned the direction of foreign policy. The military hero General Stanhope, in attacking the High Church Tory principles of 'Passive Obedience, Jus Divinum, an Hereditary Indefeasible Right of Succession', argued that, far from undermining the state and church, as Sacheverell had alleged, the ministry had funded a necessary, 'long and expensive war' against Catholic France which aspired to be 'the Universal Monarchy of Europe'.<sup>27</sup> Managers also queued up to uphold another key revolution principle, the Toleration of 1689, in the plainest terms. Lord William Paulet asserted that 'the good Effects of the Wisdom of the Legislature in making that Act had been seen' and Spencer Cowper insisted that 'Indulgence was requir'd from them as Christians and as men professing Humanity and Good Will towards one another'.<sup>28</sup> Whereas Sacheverell and his High Church brethren defined a false churchman as one who *upheld* the

Toleration, it was the doctor, the prosecution maintained, who was unchristian in his intolerance, desiring 'nothing more at heart than to destroy the present Church'.<sup>29</sup> The doctor, they suggested, wanted a 'Church that would destroy all those who brought about, and had since supported, the happy Revolution. A Church, which upon Anti-Christian principles, profess'd Burning for Conscience-sake ... A Church that would turn all the Blessings they enjoy'd under the present Administration into all those Miseries they had got rid of by the late glorious Revolution'.<sup>30</sup> The High Churchmen, the prosecution alleged, were the real false brethren.

Sacheverell was also said to have breached the culture of politeness and moderation that the Whigs sought to promote. He had, the prosecution alleged, delivered a 'harangue' full of 'Malice, Bitterness, Reviling, Insolence, endeavouring to raise in his Auditors the Passions [he] himself put on'.<sup>31</sup> He had 'instilled groundless Fears and Jealousies', stigmatised his enemies with 'opprobrious titles', and used 'Passion, Heat and Violence' to spread 'Hideous Representations of an Evil Government'.<sup>32</sup> He 'fir'd the Zeal of the People, alarm'd their Passions', spoke 'a bold Falshood' and indulged in 'Bitterness, Reviling, Wrath, Clamour and Evil-Speaking'.<sup>33</sup> He was a trumpet of sedition. Sacheverell thus violated the cultural norms of polite, moderate, sober, rational discourse that the Whigs had sought to instil in order to quell religious persecution and to promote a more civil and commercial society.

The trial thus presented two very polarised positions - essentially two rival conspiracy theories in which the church and state were either the victims of an unholy alliance of dissenters, atheists, republicans and self-advancing hypocrites or, alternatively, of bigoted High Church zealots who wanted to revive persecution, tyranny and possibly a Stuart restoration. 1710, with its white heat of ideological conflict, was thus the apex of the

'rage of party'. That rage was so bitter because Low Church, 'revolution' principles were pitted against remarkably resurgent High Church ones. Daniel Szechi's transcription and discussion of Lord North and Grey's notes for a speech during the trial show how ardently one High Church Tory subscribed to the traditional notions of non-resistance and passive obedience as the guarantor of church and state. He was far from being alone. The vehemence of the High Church Tory reaction, which eventually led to the collapse of the government and victory at the subsequent election, was testament to the strength of the enduring popular adherence to the Church of England that John Morrill found for the 1650s, and John Spurr found for the restoration period, and what was morphing into, for the other end of the eighteenth century, what Mark Philp has called 'vulgar conservatism'.<sup>34</sup> But as the latter suggests, this was not so much godly politics as a politically charged mindset shaped by religious ideas and civil war myths. This was abundantly clear in the flood of addresses presented to the Queen in the immediate aftermath of the trial where it is clear that loyalty to the established church fused with love of the monarchy and hatred of republicanism. Many of these read as lessons in political and religious loyalism. Thus the address from St Albans abhorred 'schismatical, anti-monarchical and republican principles' and promised to 'curb and suppress all irreligious, immoral, seditious and rebellious tenets'.<sup>35</sup> The address from Cirencester, where some townsmen had burnt an effigy of King William, defended passive obedience as a fundamental and essential part of the constitution.<sup>36</sup> Minehead's address condemned 'how the Republican principle of resistance is of late openly taught', a notion that was 'inconsistent with reason and scripture' and Denbighshire's attacked the 'traiterous and damnable positions which assert the legality of deposing or resisting princes'.<sup>37</sup> Helston, which claimed not to have a single dissenter in its midst, attacked the 'popish, schismatical and fanatical doctrines of resisting lawful

princes'.<sup>38</sup> Hindon's referred to 'antimonarchical principles in every corner of this kingdom'; Fowey's attacked those who derived the Queen's title 'from the sole gift of the people'; and Newcastle upon Tyne's condemned the 'original power and right of resistance in subjects'.<sup>39</sup> The address from Essex attacked also the trilogy of anti-monarchical, atheistical and republican principles, and condemned men who tried 'to render the Imperial crown of these realms precarious by insinuating that when your Majesty or your successors shall do what they shall construe to be a breach of an Imaginary contract, the subjects are discharged from their allegiance'.<sup>40</sup> The addresses are proof both of how far Whig revolution principles had penetrated and also how far, in some quarters, they were consequently resented, resisted and refuted.<sup>41</sup>

John Odmixon and Daniel Defoe tried to explain these addresses away as an example of what the latter called the people 'playing Bo-Peep with their Sovereign', making meaningless professions of opinion.<sup>42</sup> There may well be something in the idea that the addresses were inconstant panegyrics; but the articulation of High Church Tory public sentiment could not be so easily brushed aside. That Defoe felt compelled to write a 91 page tract attacking the addresses and Oldmixon a two volume history of addresses was testament to the perceived need to counter their impact. The Sacheverell trial thus revealed both an enduring and passionate loyalty to the Church and the doctrines of obedience to authority and non-resistance, often articulated through a visceral hatred of 'republicans' and 'atheists', and an equally ardent desire by their opponents to defend, justify and even to impose revolution principles. What 1710 suggests, then, and this is a prominent theme in Bill Speck's essay, is not a revolution complete but a revolution that was still contested twenty years after its central event of the flight of one king and the crowning of another.<sup>43</sup>

In the short-term 1710-1714 seemed like a Tory reaction on a par with that of 1681-5, a reassertion of High Church Tory values in Church and State.<sup>44</sup> With hindsight, of course, the High Church tide was unable to sweep all before it for long; but between 1710 and 1714 to many Whigs it seemed as though it might.

## II

Sacheverell's impeachment was a moment when contemporaries assessed and contested the impact of the revolution of 1688-9. What, then, do we as historians make of the furore of 1710 and its significance?

The impeachment has important things to tell us about print and the public sphere, two themes which have generated much discussion over recent years.<sup>45</sup> Several contributions to this volume focus on the national debate surrounding the impeachment, expressed through a vibrant print and material culture. Bill Speck's chapter analyses the bibliographical work of the Madans (to which he has himself added considerably) in cataloguing the outpouring of print, from which we have a very clear idea of the extraordinary magnitude, diversity and range of the printed controversy. With over a thousand items of print, and with some huge print runs - Sacheverell's sermon was itself a publishing sensation, selling hundreds of thousands of copies - it outnumbered earlier print debates.<sup>46</sup> Arguably the first major flexing of the press's muscles after the expiry of the licensing act in 1695, 1710 was nevertheless important for debates over censorship and regulation of the press. Sacheverell was himself prosecuted for what he had said and then silenced after the judgement against him, but he also sought to attack what he saw as the press's attacks on the church and even to reanimate the 1683 Oxford University decree which had burnt a number of offending works. Seeing censorship debates through the lens of the Sacheverell controversy, Geoff Kemp's

chapter suggests, highlights differences within the clerical response to the lapse of licensing. While some, such as Sacheverell himself, clearly thought the press had become a danger to the church - and his defence catalogued the pamphlets that sought to undermine it - others within the church sought regulation rather than censorship. Thus one of Sacheverell's 'perfidious prelates', Archbishop Tenison, sought to tackle heresy not through the restoration of pre-publication licensing but through regulation of imprints, a deliberate ploy to frustrate the intolerance of the High Churchmen, and this policy was closer to the landmark press legislation of 1710, the passage of the copyright law. Kemp thus suggests that debates between the different wings of the church over the press to some extent mirrored the Low church-High Church divide that characterised the Sacheverell controversy.

The debates also shed interesting light on the nature of the public sphere, which could be manipulated for partisan advantage. Brian Cowan shows how Sacheverell was skilful in presenting himself as a persecuted, censored martyr, drawing on older memories of another martyr for the church, Charles I.<sup>47</sup> Cowan stresses how much of the later Stuart period could be seen in terms of rival martyrologies - even if Sacheverell's pretensions as a martyr were ridiculed by his critics who condemned his hypocritical and theatrical posturing. Cowan also explores how the doctor's affecting impeachment defence, his apologetic oratory, his conduct when travelling to the trial and his publications worked carefully to generate public sympathy. He was deliberately playing to the gallery, cultivating and milking the widespread sympathy for the church and depicting himself as entirely orthodox in order to defuse the central charge that he was a seditious incendiary. For Cowan, the impeachment became a spectacle, a piece of public theatre using Westminster as the stage, and one in which the audience were as much participants and judges as the Lord Chancellor and the other peers

who had formal votes.<sup>48</sup> The public sphere was thus a theatrical one, one in which players could even be given lines by others (many thought Sacheverell's defence speech was not his own work), and one that could be manipulated by clever rhetorics and representations that could be used both to deepen and to undercut partisan attacks so long as they tugged on deeply felt heartstrings of the audience.

Cowan notes how the doctor was able to move his female auditors to tears, and his ambiguous 'appeal' to women is explored more fully in Eirwen Nicholson's chapter.<sup>49</sup> She highlights how the public discussion of Sacheverell had deeply sexualised overtones: to his detractors, the doctor's 'appeal' to female 'admirers' was more than ideological and he became a dangerously charged, adored idol. His portraits were bought and revered; consumer items, such as fans, were produced that were aimed at women buyers; women attended his trial; and they followed his progresses. As an object of female fascination and worship - and in a culture in which partisanship was increasingly sexualised for the scandal that could be thrown at opponents - Sacheverell became associated in prints - visual as well as verbal - with prostitution. This endured, so that Hogarth's harlot has a portrait of the doctor on her wall. The participation of women in the consumer culture generated by Sacheverell's celebrity suggests a public sphere in which women could participate but at risk of their reputations.

The public sphere was also capable of extending across borders and boundaries, as David Hayton's chapter shows. Coming only two years after union with Scotland, the Sacheverell controversy united England and Ireland through a common set of responses. Hayton shows that although in Ireland references to Sacheverell himself were relatively rare, the Dublin press reprinted a good deal of English Sacheverellania and, in part as a result of this, two

partisan proxies caused similar waves. The High Church cleric Francis Higgins and Sir Constantine Phipps, one of the doctor's defence counsel and from 1710 a Whig-hating lord chancellor of Ireland, became the focus of controversy not just in England but also in Dublin. Both, like Sacheverell himself, depicted themselves as champions (and martyrs) for the church, tapping into the same values in Ireland as the doctor had done in England.

The graphic prints used by Hayton, Nicholson and Cowan also suggest that the public sphere was innovating in terms of its appropriation of visual emblems and material culture.<sup>50</sup> Sympathetic portraits were an intrinsic part of the publishing strategy adopted for Sacheverell's sermon and subsequently for his defence. These provoked hostile portraits and satirical images of the doctor in what was becoming an increasingly dialogic visual debate. Half a century before Wilkes's more famous use of topical prints and consumables, visual and material propaganda was being used to construct and undermine public, controversial images.

The chapters by Hayton, Nicholson and Cowan also problematise the secular nature of the Habermasian public sphere. They show that in England and Ireland, the emerging public sphere could be strengthened and shaped by religiously-inflected debate, even if it was also highly politicised. The highly charged and contested nature of belief and forms of worship necessarily swelled and at times triggered extensive public discussion. Similarly, Habermas's stress on the *rational* nature of the public sphere is questionable, given the zeal and passion generated by the controversy.<sup>51</sup> Sacheverell disliked dissenting zeal; but he sought to replace it with zeal for the established church, a type of emotional piety that was to recur in the eighteenth century as a reaction to the attempts to make religion sober and reasonable. Bill Speck also reminds us about the riots that occurred during the trial - the most serious



disorder on London's streets since the revolution. So we have a public sphere that was full of passionate, furious, railing and sometimes violent debate (prompting ever more calls for a more polite form of interaction); one which was about religion, or at least about the political and cultural implications stemming from a religious controversy; one which was highly aware of the gendered or even sexualised nature of public 'conversation'; and one which sought to make use of images and material culture as well as words. This is not quite the public sphere that Habermas conceptualised but it is recognisable throughout the eighteenth century and arguably a good deal earlier than that.

Steve Pincus' chapter nevertheless suggests that the public sphere also embraced a vigorous and contested debate about political economy (state policy towards wealth creation) and empire.<sup>52</sup> His piece is a salutary reminder about the importance of a more secular set of debates that nevertheless intersected with the more religiously and politically inspired ones. The controversies of 1710 and the years that immediately followed were as much (Pincus might argue 'more') about the nature of wealth and how best to promote it as they were about religion. Pincus argues that there were competing Tory and Whig conceptions of wealth, the economy and empire, leading to radically different visions of Britain's national interest and strategic aims. For the Tories, for whom he suggests wealth was finite, extending an empire that could embrace the gold mines of Spanish America was highly attractive. For the Whigs, by contrast, such a vision was a chimera; wealth was not finite because it was founded in labour and commerce not conquest was the key to national prosperity. Pincus suggests that these contrasting viewpoints were in sharp conflict in Anne's reign and that 1710 marked an important point in the competition between these visions of empire. The Tory backlash after the Sacheverell trial led to the abandonment of a

Whig war that had sought to militarily defeat and economically restrict France in favour of schemes of South American conquest and peace with France, even if that meant sacrificing commercial advantages won during the war. Pincus thus reminds us that foreign and economic policy was contested; that these contests can be mapped on to the bitter partisanship of the period; and that the results of the contests, particularly after a return to Whig policies in 1714, helped to shape the development of a North America and West Indian empire. He adds a useful corrective to the idea that the rage of party and the Sacheverell controversy should simply be viewed in terms of religious and constitutional conflict; rather, the ideological debates reflected in the Sacheverell controversy also found expression in competing economic visions.

The public debates about political economy, about the role of the church and monarchy, about the nature of resistance and the origins of political authority also suggest that we might consider 1710 as part of an early Enlightenment.<sup>53</sup> At first sight this does not seem a promising line of enquiry. A furore about a cleric who promoted religious intolerance and a defence of an 'ancien regime' yoking of church and state does not sound likely terrain in which to find Enlightenment ideals. Nevertheless, the use of the press to popularise and disseminate ideas; a keen debate about the nature of wealth, foreign policy and the national interest; the invocation and participation of the public in debates which contested religion, politics, and the place of women; the attack on the 'priestcraft' of the High Churchmen and the defence of toleration; the justification of popular sovereignty and a right to resist tyranny; a debate over censorship; and the idealisation of rational, moderate, discourse amid the clamour and railing of zealous, prejudiced fanatics are all recognisable features of an early Enlightenment. The Sacheverell affair reminds us that the early Enlightenment was

a process of contestation – the revolution principles valued by the Low Churchmen and Whigs were vigorously contested as part of an ongoing struggle, a process in which statements of principle provoked challenge and counter-attack, which in turn stimulated restatement or refinement of ideas in a process that was difficult to close down. The lively intellectual and cultural contests triggered by Sacheverell were part of a dialectical Enlightenment in which two sides participated, shaping the arguments of the other as they engaged with them.

One key Enlightenment debate concerned the nature and demonstrability of truth; and the Sacheverell affair – symptomatic of partisanship more generally - raised this concern very forcibly. The verse under one of the most popular images of the doctor, which depicts him holding a portrait of Charles I, reads:

To preach up Truth, some say tis not a time

False Brethren allwaies think ye Truth a Crime

But since ye Truth offends, I'll vex you more

And shew ye Face of Truth you've wrong'd before'.<sup>54</sup>

The image and its text thus suggested that Charles I had been martyred for adhering to the 'Truth' and that Sacheverell, too, was its martyr.<sup>55</sup> But both Charles I and Sacheverell could be seen as perverters of the truth and the hail of criticism directed at Sacheverell fundamentally questioned the truth of his assertions. The doctor could be seen in two diametrically opposed ways: as a valiant defender of the church and state or, quite the reverse, as a fanatic and trumpet of sedition. Determining truth in a polarised polemical battle was no easy task. Moreover, not only was the true ideology or even the true

character of any politician or cleric difficult to discern; the debate over Sacheverell also destabilised the capacity of language to convey truth. To return for a moment to the addresses presented to the Queen, Defoe thought that they were a mere 'rhapsody of words' that had no meaning, rendering all language useless as a signifier of things. He argued that the addresses threatened the meaning of words to the point of 'non-signification'.<sup>56</sup> 'This new system of having No Meaning at all, brings em off as clever as a gun, and washes them as white from the scandal of talking nonsense to the Queen as can be. For having only muster'd up a Rhapsody of Words, which they meant for nothing; and which they hoped no doubt that her Majesty wou'd take for nothing; the want of truth in them was a thing of no signification, for what can it signify whether words that have no meaning have any truth in them or no?'.<sup>57</sup> Truth and meaning had so disappeared from the 'common conversation of men' that they had become like 'froth upon your drink'. As another pamphlet put it, the addresses contained 'false stories invented, persons and actions misrepresented, charges of disloyalty, heresy, disaffection to the church, or whatever implied reproach, whether true or false'.<sup>58</sup>

Identifying truth and sincerity was also apparent in the debate about the culture of self-interest that Sacheverell had identified as pervading attitudes to religion and politics. The Whigs and Low Churchmen, he claimed, proceeded 'upon no Principle, but meer Interest and Ambition'.<sup>59</sup> His supporters agreed. 'It is as plain as the Sun', wrote one High church pamphleteer, 'that they are for no others Interest but their own'.<sup>60</sup> Another pro-Sacheverell pamphlet depicted a dream (or nightmare) in which a devilish (Whig) beast was accompanied by 'a powerful man ... with a huge Purse hanging by his side ... a true servant unto the Idol Mammon', clearly attacking Lord Treasurer Godolphin (as Sacheverell had) as

the leader of a system of corruption.<sup>61</sup> On the other side, Sacheverell's prosecution and critics alleged that it was Sacheverell and the High Churchmen who were self-interested. The doctor, they said, was a man interested in power who used religion as a tool to oust the Whig government and undermine the national interest, engaging in a form of 'priestcraft'.<sup>62</sup> The 'ferment' whipped up by the sermon 'could tend to nothing but the ruin of the Protestant Interest', fumed one pamphleteer.<sup>63</sup> Sarah Cowper, mother of the Lord Chancellor who presided over the doctor's trial, believed that Sacheverell and his fellow High Churchmen wore a 'mask' or 'vizard' which obscured 'a Mercenary Sort of people without Conscience'. Indeed, she was so disillusioned by High Church self-interest that her allegiances began to shift. She had 'never felt so Bitter Zeal against any, as These [Sa]cheverell Miscreants: who make me that was a Staunch Church:Woman become one of the Staggering Party'.<sup>64</sup>

Unmasking or drawing back the curtain to reveal the true selfish and sinister intent of partisan rivals thus became a vital task in order to undeceive the people about hypocrites who threatened them. This, again, was what Sacheverell thought he was doing.<sup>65</sup> The 'false brethren' that he attacked were a dangerous self-contradiction, 'maintaining an irreconcilable war betwixt the outward and inward man', a mixture of 'inconsistency and nonsense' whose 'habitual hypocrisy' would undermine religion, society and the state. The false brethren, he urged, should 'throw off the mask' or be unmasked by others.<sup>66</sup> The hypocrite was often thought of as masked or cloaked or hidden behind a curtain (a visual code that can be found in many of the images of the period). Unmasking, uncloaking, pulling back the curtain were all ways in which 'truth' or the true self could be uncovered. And that act was often a dramatic, even theatrical one—on which many a play, plot, or image turned.

Dror Wahrman has located the birth of the 'modern self' in the later eighteenth century and related it to a sudden revolution in the theatricality of outer selves; but we can find this masked self alive and embedded in politico-religious culture very much earlier.<sup>67</sup>

As a high-point in the rage of party, the parliamentary impeachment of Henry Sacheverell thus throws light on the nature of partisanship, popular loyalties to church and state, a revised notion of the public sphere, a gendered culture of moderation and politeness, competing visions of political economy, and some of the preoccupations about truth and selfhood of the early Enlightenment. If the Sacheverell trial is not an event to 'celebrate' it is nevertheless an important one to mark and remember.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Voice of the Addressers* (1710), p.5

<sup>2</sup> M. E Ransome, "The general election of 1710," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 17, no. 50 (1939): 95-7. David William Hayton, Eveline Cruickshanks, and Stuart Handley, *The House of Commons, 1690-1715*, History of Parliament (London: Cambridge University Press for the History of Parliament Trust, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> John Flaningham, "The Occasional Conformity controversy : ideology and party politics, 1697-1711," *Journal of British Studies* 17, no. 1 (1977): 38-62; Mark Knights, "Occasional conformity and the representation of dissent : hypocrisy, sincerity, moderation and zeal," *Parliamentary History* 24, no. 1 (2005): 41-57.

<sup>4</sup> The best introduction to the trial remains Geoffrey S. Holmes, *The trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, 1973.

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<sup>5</sup> Francis Falconer Madan and William Arthur Speck, *A critical bibliography of Dr Henry Sacheverell*, University of Kansas pubns., Library ser., 43 (Lawrence (KA), 1978); Mark Knights, 'Possessing the Visual: The Materiality of Visual Print Culture in Later Stuart Britain', in James Daybell and Peter Hinds (eds), *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture* (2010).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Miles Taylor, "British politics in the age of revolution and reform, 1789-1867," *Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (2002): 661-77; Michael J Braddick and John Walter, *Negotiating power in early modern society : order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Michael J Braddick, *State formation in early modern England, ca. 1550-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Joanna Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (OUP Oxford, 2009). The notion of parliament as a point of contact was used by Elton in "Tudor government, the points of contact, 1 : Parliament," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 24 (1974): 183-200.

<sup>7</sup> For the high church context see Gareth Vaughan Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688-1730 : the career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford, 1975).

<sup>8</sup> Henry Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren* (1709, ESTC T164159), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.14

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.24

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.26

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 12. For the political thought of the period see Justin A. I Champion, "Political Thinking between Restoration and Hanoverian Succession," in *A companion to Stuart Britain*. Ed. Coward, Barry, Blackwell Companions to British History (Oxford: Blackwell

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Publishers, 2003), 474-91; Justin A. I Champion, *Republican learning : John Toland and the crisis of Christian culture, 1696-1722*, Politics, culture, and society in early modern Britain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); John Greville Agard Pocock, *Virtue, commerce, and history : essays on political thought and history, chiefly in the eighteenth century* (Cambridge and New York, 1985); John Marshall, *John Locke, toleration and early Enlightenment culture : religious intolerance and arguments for religious toleration in early modern and "early Enlightenment" Europe*, Cambridge studies in early modern British history (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler, *The Cambridge history of eighteenth-century political thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.17

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pp.17-18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp. 19-20

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.18

<sup>18</sup> Perils, p.14. For the culture of politeness see A.Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998); N. Phillipson, 'Politics and Politeness in the Reigns of Anne and the early Hanoverians' in J.G.A. Pocock (ed.), *The Varieties of British Political Thought 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1993); L. Klein, 'The Political Significance of "Politeness" in Early Eighteenth Century Britain', in *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism* ed. G. Schochet (Folger Institute Center for the History of British Political Thought Proceedings vol. 5, Washington, 1993); Klein, 'Coffee-house Civility, 1660-1714: An Aspect of Post-Courtly Culture in England,' *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 59 (1997), 30-51; Klein, 'Liberty, Manners and Politeness in Early Eighteenth Century England', *HJ* 32 (1989), 583-



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604; Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (Cambridge, 1994); Klein, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury and the Progress of Politeness', *Eighteenth Century Studies* (1984-5), 186-214; Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *HJ* 45 (2002), 869-98; Marku Peltonen, 'Politeness and Whiggism, 1688-1732', *HJ* 48:2 (2005) 391-414. For a literary dimension on the creation of Whig culture see Abigail Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714* (Oxford 2005) and D. Womersley (ed.), *Augustan Critical Writing* (London, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> *Perils*, p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p.33

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.33

<sup>22</sup> This theme is explored in more depth in my *The Devil in Disguise. Deception, Delusion and Fanaticism in the Early English Enlightenment* (2011), which has a chapter on the Sacheverell affair.

<sup>23</sup> *A Compleat History of the Whole Proceedings ... against Dr Henry Sacheverell* (1710), pp. 11-12. It passed no one's notice that the doctor had chosen 5 November, the anniversary of William's landing, 'to preach against the Revolution', [p. 37]

<sup>24</sup> *Compleat History*, p.32

<sup>25</sup> *Complete History*, p.69. The grounds on which resistance could be justified did vary. General Stanhope argued 'that there was not, at that Time, any Nation or Government in the World, whose first Original had not receiv'd its Foundation either from Resistance or Compact' and that the latter implied a right to the former [p.84] but not everyone subscribed to that view.

<sup>26</sup> *Compleat History*, pp. 83-4 for Stanhope on this point.

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<sup>27</sup> *Compleat History*, pp. 88, 91. A High Church Tory printed image celebrated Stanhope's victory in the summer of 1710 but contrasted that with his role as a manager for the prosecution, suggesting that the former had 'Regain'd that Honour which they Tongue had lost' ['To the Immortal Memory of that Renowned Manager', BM Sat. 1530].

<sup>28</sup> *Compleat History*, pp. 110-111

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 127

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 127

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 142-4

<sup>34</sup> John Morrill, 'The Church in England, 1642-49', in *idem*, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (Harlow: Longman, 1993), pp. 148-75; John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689*; Mark Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism 1792-3', *EHR* (1995) CX (435): 42-69.

See also Gregory, J. "Transforming the Age of Reason into an Age of Faiths: or, putting Religions and Beliefs (back) into the eighteenth century." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 3(2009) : 287-305. See also Lee Horsley, 'Vox populi in the political literature of 1710', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 38 (1975), 335-353.

<sup>35</sup> John Oldmixon, *History of Addresses*, ii. 156-9

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 170-1

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 176, 202

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 212

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 235, 243, 292

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 254

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<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Huntington Library Stowe MSS 57, James Brydges to Drummond, 15 July 1710; 'the republican notions that were so openly asserted and maintained upon the late tryall have allarmed to ye highest degree ye whole kingdom, and you may see their sense from the addresses that have been sent up from all parts of it, which are ye strongest in their expressions and ye most numerous I remember to have read'.

<sup>42</sup> Defoe, *A New Test of the Sence of the Nation* (1710), pp.2-7, 89

<sup>43</sup> Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (2009), chapter 14, suggests that from the perspective of 1696 a Whig revolution looked complete.

<sup>44</sup> The period is explored by Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics 1710-1714* (Edinburgh, 1984).

<sup>45</sup> Both themes have generated voluminous literatures. For discussion of print culture see Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2005); Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003); Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (2004); Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730* (Oxford, 1998). For discussions of the public sphere in this period see my 'How Rational was the later Stuart Public Sphere?' in Lake, Peter; Pincus, Steven C. A. (ed.), *The politics of the public sphere in early modern England* (Manchester, 2007); my 'Public politics in England c. 1675-c. 1715' in N. Tyacke (ed.), *The English Revolution c.1590-1720 : politics, religion and communities* (Manchester, 2007); Lake and Pincus, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England', *JBS* 45:2 (2006) 270-92; Brian Cowan, 'Mr Spectator and the Coffee House Public Sphere', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 37 (2004), 345-366; Cowan, 'What was masculine

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about the public sphere? : Gender and the coffeehouse milieu in post-Restoration England', *History Workshop Journal* 51 (2001), 127-57; Cowan, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the Public Sphere : Augustan Historiography from Post-Namierite to the Post-Habermasian', in *British politics in the age of Holmes : Geoffrey Holmes's British Politics in the Age of Anne 40 years on*, ed. Clyve Jones (Oxford, 2009)

<sup>46</sup> There were 192 tracts published 1689-1692 over the 'allegiance controversy', though the total volume of print relating to the revolution was much larger than that; there were 215 anti-papal tracts published in the reign of James II [Mark Goldie, 'The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument', *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 83 (1980), 473-564]

<sup>47</sup> There were at least four different versions of a print depicting Sacheverell holding a portrait of Charles I ['Possessing the Visual', p.110]

<sup>48</sup> One visual satire of the period, *Faults on Both Sides*, depicts Hoadly astride an ass on stage. Sacheverell's sermon had assured any 'turn-coat' who had 'got upon the stage' that, after acting his part he would be 'hiss'd off' [*The Perils*, p. 41]

<sup>49</sup> Politics were infused by gender issues, as Rachel Weil has shown [*Political Passions: Gender, the family and Political Argument in England 1680-1714* (Manchester, 1999)]. For the association between prostitution and politics see also Melissa Mowry, *The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England 1660-1714: Political Pornography and Prostitution* (2004); Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue: women, writing, and politics in seventeenth century England* (Oxford, 2006); Laura Rosenthal, *Infamous commerce: prostitution in eighteenth-century British literature and culture* (Cornell, 2006); Sophie Carter, *Purchasing power: representing prostitution in eighteenth-century English popular print culture* (Ashgate, 2004).

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<sup>50</sup> I have also explored this in 'Possessing the Visual' and *The Devil in Disguise*, chapter 5.

Brian Cowan's *The State Trial of Dr Sacheverell* (Parliamentary History Texts and Studies Series, 2012) also contains a discussion of a volume into which a contemporary inserted visual material.

<sup>51</sup> Knights, 'How Rational was the later Stuart Public Sphere?'

<sup>52</sup> For discussions of political economy see Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (2009); Julian Hoppit, 'The contexts and contours of British economic literature 1660-1760', *Historical Journal* 49 (2006), 79-110; Hoppit, 'Checking the leviathan, 1688-1832' in Donald Winch, Donald Norman and Patrick O'Brien (ed.), *The political economy of British historical experience, 1688-1914* (Oxford, 2002) ; Hoppit, 'The myths of the South Sea Bubble' in *TRHS* 6th ser., 12 (2002) 141-65; Hoppit, 'Political arithmetic in eighteenth-century England', *EcHR*, 2nd ser., 49 (1996) 516-40; Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of trade : international competition and the nation-state in historical perspective* (2005); Ted McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (2010); Perry Gauci, 'The Clash of Interests : Commerce and the Politics of Trade in the Age of Anne', *Parliamentary History* 28:1 (2009) 115-25; Thomas Leng, 'Commercial conflict and regulation in the discourse of trade in seventeenth-century England', *HJ* 48:4 (2005) 933-54

<sup>53</sup> I explore this theme at greater length in *The Devil in Disguise: Deception, Delusion and Fanaticism in the Early English Enlightenment* (2011), especially chapter 5. See also Champion, *Republican learning*; Champion, "Political Thinking between Restoration and Hanoverian Succession."; Champion and Lee McNulty, "Making orthodoxy in late Restoration England : the trials of Edmund Hickerlingill, 1662-1710," in *Negotiating power in early modern society : order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland*. Ed.

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Braddick, Michael J.; Walter, John, 1948- (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 227-48, 302-5; Marshall, John Locke, *toleration and early Enlightenment culture*.

<sup>54</sup> See above

<sup>55</sup> This paragraph highlights themes explored at more length in my *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (2005) and in *The Devil in Disguise*

<sup>56</sup> Defoe, *A New Test of the Sence of the Nation* (1710), pp. 3, 7, 13, 17. The BL copy at 101.c.44 has a manuscript date of 3 Aug. 1710

<sup>57</sup> Defoe, *A New Test*, p.55. cf Hoadly, 'Queries of the Utmost Importance' in *A Collection of Several Papers printed in the Year 1710* (1718), p.88

<sup>58</sup> *The High Church Mask Pull'd off or modern addresses anatomized. Designed chiefly for the information of the common people* (1710), p.3

<sup>59</sup> *The Perils of False Brethren* (1709), p.33

<sup>60</sup> Patrick Drewe, *The church of England's late conflict with, and triumph over the spirit of fanaticism* (1710), p.53

<sup>61</sup> *Aminadab: or, the Quaker's vision* (1710), pp.5-6

<sup>62</sup> William Bisset, *Modern Fanatick* (1710)- a work which had three parts; *A character of Don Sacheverellio* (1710)

<sup>63</sup> Arthur Maynwaring, *Four letters to a friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the tryal of Dr. Sacheverell* (1710), p.17

<sup>64</sup> Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, DE/P F33, p.190, 20 Jul. 1710

<sup>65</sup> See also Mark Knights, 'Occasional conformity and the representation of Dissent: Hypocrisy, sincerity, moderation and zeal' in Stephen Taylor and David Wykes (eds.),

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*Parliament and Dissent* (Edinburgh, 2005).

<sup>66</sup> *The perils of false brethren*, pp. 42-4.

<sup>67</sup> Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Individualist self* (2004)