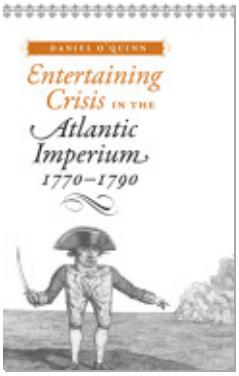
1 The Agents of Mars and the Temples of Venus: John Burgoyne's Remediated Pleasures



CHAPTER ONE

The Agents of Mars and the Temples of Venus

John Burgoyne's Remediated Pleasures

Diversionary Tactics and Coercive Acts: Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre

On Thursday, 9 June 1774, General John Burgoyne, of Saratoga fame, arranged an elaborate Fête Champêtre at the Oaks, in Surrey, to celebrate the wedding of his nephew Lord Edward Stanley and Lady Elizabeth Hamilton. The guests included the foremost men and women of the kingdom, and this seemingly trivial gathering of fashionable society was the subject of extensive reporting in the papers. Lengthy descriptions of the event were published under the title of "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" in the *Public Advertiser*, in the *Morning Chronicle*, and perhaps most importantly in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The title is important because the supplemental texts that were added to the papers as "Gazette Extraordinaries" were generally devoted to political or military news, and thus this text was signaling that something more than the pleasure of the elite was at stake on this evening. If the title implies that Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre is an event of some consequence, the final sentences of the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" speak directly to charges of triviality that, despite the infiltration of cultural analysis into all manner of practices, continues to inhere: "Those who may think the repetition of this rural festival beneath the notice of a periodical work intended to record the principal transactions of the times, will, perhaps, be of another opinion, when they recollect that it is from the gravest authors we learn the diversions of the ancients."[1] The editors of the *Gentleman's Magazine* are making an argument more specific and more profound than that simply implied by the title. To suggest that this report is comparable to similar passages in the ancients is to argue not only that the magazine itself is recording a history

comparable to that of the Roman Empire but also that this "diversion" tells us something about the current imperial situation.

The term *diversion* here is significant because, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates, it constitutes the "turning away of the thoughts, attention, etc., from fatiguing or sad occupations, with the implication of pleasurable excitement; distraction, recreation, amusement, entertainment." As Steele indicated in *Tatler*, no. 89, "Diversion, which is a kind of forgetting our selves, is but a mean Way of Entertainment."[2] Steele's usage emphasizes that a diversion is an entertainment, however facile, that instantiates forgetting. Implicit in these definitions is a recognition that diversion is fundamentally connected to sadness or aggravation and, even in its enactment, is but a temporary abatement of displeasure.[3] The *Gentleman's Magazine* text subtly reinforces this point when it emphasizes the relationship between accounts of diversion and the gravity of ancient authors. In that term *gravity* lurks a historical shadow.

The "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" makes a great deal of General Burgoyne's management of the Fête Champêtre, and I would argue that the reiteration of his involvement in the event immediately before the editorial argument for its historical importance is not coincidental. It is important to remember that during the months when this celebration was being organized Burgoyne was an active parliamentarian working with Lord North—a notable participant in the *fête*—to pass the Coercive Acts. When news of the Boston Tea Party reached Britain in January 1774, the Ministry moved quickly to punish the residents of Massachusetts by passing the Boston Port Act on 31 March, the Administration of Justice Act on 20 May, the Quartering Act on 2 June 1774, and the Quebec Act on 16 June. A quick glance at the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1774 or at any of the dailies in this period reveals that the press was overwhelmed with discussions of how best to discipline the American colonies. And these parliamentary measures, quickly renamed the Intolerable Acts by the colonists, not only instigated further insurrection and revolutionary organization among the residents of Massachusetts but also precipitated widespread resistance in the arena of colonial print culture.[4]

Burgoyne and Stanley were strident advocates for military intervention in America.[5] On 19 April 1774, in a widely reported speech, Burgoyne censured the colonies before the House of Commons in a symptomatic fashion: "I look upon America to be our child, which I think we have already spoiled by too much indulgence. . . . It is said, if you remove this duty, you will remove all grievances in America: but I am apprehensive that it is the right of taxation they contend about,

and not the tax. It is the independent state of that country upon the legislature of this, which is contended for."[6] Burgoyne supported the so-called Coercive Acts and the appointment of General Thomas Gage as military governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Yet he also found time to work with Robert Adam on the design of the "temporary building" at the Oaks, to build an *orangerie*, to write the lyrics for much of the music, and to draft the pantomime that would eventually be incorporated into a play at Drury Lane the following November under the title *The Maid of the Oaks*.[7] As the legislative timetable indicates, Burgoyne was working on both the passage of the Coercive Acts and the staging of the Fête Champêtre intermittently during the same period. Considering the fact that Burgoyne had only recently been involved, under the aegis of the Select Committee, in the acrimonious attempt to have Lord Clive impeached and to reform the East India Company, one could argue that the Fête Champêtre was a diversion charged with the very specific task of forgetting not only imperial crisis but also long-standing imperial mismanagement.[8]

In spite of the scholarly neglect of singular events such as this, the sheer cost of the Fête Champêtre and the extraordinarily detailed representation of the entertainment in the papers put it on par with any production at Drury Lane or Covent Garden. Sybil Rosenfeld made this point some time ago in her groundbreaking work on private theatricals, and Gillian Russell has demonstrated recently that these performances provide the opportunity for the detailed analysis of the interface between cultural dissemination and social practice.[9] Because of their lack of authorship, their intense topicality, and their formal variousness, diversionary extratheatrical performances have eluded cultural criticism and, hence, our understanding of enlightenment society. In this, they share a great deal with related performance practices, such as pasticcio and pantomime.[10] My intention here is to explore one example of these celebratory events and attempt to work through a style of cultural analysis that might reasonably account for the gravity of diversion. The Fête Champêtre offers a compelling example for analysis, in part because it is staged at such an important historical moment and in part because it demonstrates the combined power of formal hybridity and topicality not only to elicit pleasure but also to perform crucial historical work through mediated repetition.

Unpacking that complex sentence is the burden of the following paragraphs, but the first thing to recognize is that the Fête Champêtre incorporates formal elements of both pantomime and pasticcio. As the following account of the first masque indicates, the entertainment involves a complex theatricality:

On the right from the company, swains appeared in fancy dresses, amusing themselves at the game of nine-pins, whilst shepherdesses, neatly attired, were at the swing. On the left side were other swains with their bows and arrows, shooting at a bird which had perched itself upon a maypole; whilst others were shewing their agility by dancing and kicking at a *tambour de basque*, which hung, decorated with ribbands, from a bough of a tree.—In short, every rural pastime was exhibited.

In the centre of the *orangerie* sat Mrs. Barthelemon and Mr. Vernon, making wreaths of flowers, and continued in that employment till after the company had taken their seats upon the benches, placed in a circular form on the green. As soon as the ladies and gentlemen were thus arranged, two Cupids went round with a basket of the most rich flowers, and presented each lady with an elegant *bouquet*; the gentlemen had likewise a similar present.—When the Cupids had distributed the flowers, nimble shepherdesses supplied their baskets with fresh assortments.—Thus, whilst the attention of the company was taken up with admiring the agility and pretty manners of these little attendants accomodating the nobility and others with their nosegays, they were on a sudden surprized with the harmonious sound from the instrumental band, which being conveyed to the company through the orange plantation and shrubbery, created a most happy and pleasing effect—and which was still the more heightened by the company not being able to distinguish from what quarter it came.

This symphony, whose sweetness of sound had given every face a smile of approbation, being ended, Mr. Vernon got up, and with a light and rustic air called the nymphs and swains to celebrate the festivity of the day, informing them, that Stanley, as Lord of the Oaks, had given the invitation, and on that account he commanded their appearance to join the festive song and dance. After this air followed a grand chorus, which was composed in so remarkable a stile, and carried with it so much jollity, that the company could scarce be prevailed upon to keep their seats. Next followed a dance by Sylvans; then a song by Mrs. Barthelemon; afterwards a different dance by the whole assembly of *figurantes* was executed in a masterly stile, and was succeeded by a most elegant and pleasing duet by Mrs. Barthelemon and Mr. Vernon, which concluded with a dance. The next air consisted of four verses, sung by Mr. Vernon; at the end of each line was a chorus. The dance of the Sylvans continued during the whole time of the chorus, and had an excellent effect. (263–64)

The discourse here is typical of theatre reviews from the daily papers and informed readers would recognize the affiliations of the chief performers: both Mrs. Barthélemon and Mr. Vernon had notable London careers.[11] The event does not stage a harlequinade, but the daily papers refer to the elaborate Cupid and Hymen interlude that concludes the second masque as a pantomime.[12] And, as the *St. James Chronicle* is careful to point out, the dances, which constitute a significant portion of the entertainment, were "under the direction of Signor Lepy, the Opera House Ballet Master."[13] And yet, this is not simply a private theatrical in the sense of a play presented by and for a private audience outside the licensing of eighteenth-century theatre. These theatrical and operatic elements are mobilized within a much broader performance dynamic whose full implications require not only that we be attuned to a more various aesthetic field but also that we consider the larger physical spaces within which these more intimate performances occur.

Francophile Pleasures, or How to Read

Although not of the first rank, Burgoyne was an experienced impresario of aristocratic entertainment who had firsthand experience with continental art and sociability. In fact, his relationship with the architect and designer Robert Adam was first established in France and Italy in the mid-1750s. The Fête Champêtre was not Burgoyne's first collaboration with Adam: a year earlier, they worked together on an equally extravagant ball and supper to celebrate the coming-of-age of Lord Stanley.[14] But the Fête Champêtre marks a significant magnification of scale. The temporary building alluded to in the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" was a completely realized pavilion, whose stateroom alone was over 120 feet long, that could accommodate more than 300 people.[15] Adam's building was reported to cost five thousand pounds and was apparently dismantled immediately after the event.[16] Furthermore, the Fête Champêtre also marks a palpable increase in aesthetic ambition because it is a complex engagement with an entire history of aristocratic sociability. One avenue for analysis would be to trace the motifs and architectural semiotics of Burgoyne's entertainment to the English court masques of King Charles 1 and Queen Henrietta Maria staged by Inigo Jones in the 1630s. Thomas Carew's masque *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) is particularly relevant because, like Burgoyne's *fête*, it also deploys the pagan British past.[17] But this chapter pursues a different line of affiliation. The title of Burgoyne's entertainment and many of its internal details evoke the actual practice of *fêtes galantes* in early eighteenth-century France and, perhaps more importantly,

the complex representation of these forms of elite sociability in Watteau's *fêtes galantes* paintings.[18]

Specific elements of the first masque are highly reminiscent both of the self-conscious theatricality of these events and of Watteau's images.[19] The *St. James Chronicle* emphasizes that "its Name was truly characteristic, as every fanciful rustic Sport and Game was introduced; there were Groupes of Shepherds and Shepherdesses variously attired, who skipped about, kicking at the Tambourines which were pendant from the Trees, and an infinite number of persons habited as Peasants who attended Swings and other Amusements."[20] The swing, of course, is particularly iconic and, when combined with the kicking of the tambourines, activates, as Donald Posner has argued, an entire erotic economy.[21] Furthermore, the integration of pantomimical interludes into the overall proceedings goes directly to the genesis of these countertheatres.[22] Burgoyne, either through contact with the myriad reproductions of Watteau's imagery or through the dissemination of past aristocratic social practices, is staging a highly artificial form of entertainment, which despite its apparent frivolity is fundamentally connected to the recalibration of aristocratic identity during a period of increasing state absolutism.

The basis for this latter claim lies in the important work of Thomas Crow, Julie Anne Plax, and Sarah R. Cohen on Watteau's *fêtes galantes*. All three scholars have demonstrated that the intermixture of "peasants," commedia figures, and aristocrats in some apparently arcadian scene is not, pace Posner, simply a matter of invention but a complex response to the performance of aristocratic identity during a period when elite constituencies were both recognizing and strangely embracing their marginalization in the state. Citing numerous examples of elaborate country entertainments, which in their broad contours sound remarkably like Burgoyne's extravaganza, these scholars have resuscitated a performance culture that borrowed extensively from popular fair entertainments and commedia dell'arte but which was fundamentally invested in the articulation of aristocratic exclusivity and sociability beyond the immediate dictates of the king or his ministers. As Plax argues,

> Elite behaviour at *fêtes* was marked by a refusal to succumb to the liberating nature of a *fête*. . . . To do this required a distancing from and mediation of experiences that were raw and erotic. This mediation was accomplished through a highly ritualized and artificial mode of behaviour, one that masked sexual tactics. Under the guise of an artificial second self, the individual was free to enjoy the erotic pleasures and

> dangers of a *fête* indirectly, filtered through an aestheticizing refinement and distancing.[23]

The complexity of the transmission and adoption of these behaviors cannot be underestimated, and it would be an error to simply read Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre as the importation of the *fête galante* not only because there are internal discrepancies in both form and content that make the party at The Oaks unique but also because such a replication would be counter to the very playfulness that Watteau's paintings reveal.[24] The relationship between Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre and these earlier *fêtes* is far more ironic than it would first appear, and I would suggest that it is the very ambivalence of Watteau's representations that gives Burgoyne the aesthetic room to develop a critical relation to the practices ostensibly celebrated at The Oaks on 9 June 1774.

That ambivalence is nowhere more palpable than in the play of desire in all of these scenes. The erotic economies of Watteau's *fêtes galantes* are famously difficult to read and thus subject to interpolation of all kinds. The long-standing controversy over the *Pilgrimage to Cythera* is only the most notable example.[25] But this is precisely the point, because Watteau is developing a kind of representation that calls the viewer to account. To borrow a phrase from Plax, the "disguised nonsignaling bodies" of Watteau's paintings test the very status of the viewer, because only the elect can recognize the code of artifice and when it is being adhered to and when it is not. As she states, "Watteau's figures send out contradictory signals and provide incomplete information in a way that visually articulates the underlying assumptions and outward forms of elite social practice. . . . The artist's visual economy and structuring of the scene reproduces in many ways the processes by which the elite play operates and produces larger meanings in real life."[26] At the risk of comparing great things to small, could we not argue that the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" works in much the same way that Plax suggests Watteau's *fêtes galantes* paintings "represent" social practice? After all, the description of Burgoyne's extravaganza has no shortage of explicit references not only to these images but to the erotic practices carefully coded therein. The swing comes immediately to mind, as does the complex Hymeneal pantomime. For the reader well versed in these signs, the entire evening resolves into a scene of erotic play, but the specific erotic investments of the guests are indeterminate. We have a rather prominent homage to Venus, but does this imply that England, or at least this little part of it, is allegorically related to the island of Cythera? And does it imply, as in Watteau's treatment of this topos, that we are in retreat from the Temple of Mars, with all its implication of

martial subjectivity and state power? These are ultimately unanswerable questions. At the representational remove of this newspaper account, what comes to the fore is not any particular erotic encounter but the movement of the entire company through a field of sexualized signs. In other words, the social identity of the guests lies not only in their facility as a collective to inhabit this space of indirection, disguise, and dissimulation but also in their capacity to read the carefully coded textualization of it. Significantly, the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" emphasizes the exclusivity of this reading practice through a rhetoric of elision: passages such as "Thus ended the second part; of which, by this description, the reader will judge of the elegance and grandeur" simultaneously withhold information and declare that at least some part of the readership is fully capable of filling in the blanks.

But if the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary," like many of Watteau's paintings, puts the reader into a subject position wherein his or her social affiliation will be tested, there are also indications that, through the careful regulation of the flow of desire and social circulation, the event builds an argument about the relationship between elite sociability and the practices of the state. Put simply in the form of a question, what are we to make of Burgoyne staging an event that would allow the social elite to enact both its exclusivity and its distinction from the state, when he himself and many of the guests were so deeply involved in its affairs—all this at a time when the luxury and dissipation of the upper orders were the subject of intense political scrutiny and recrimination? Is this a celebration of exclusivity and aristocratic identity, or a demonstration of the dangers of licentiousness? Or both? I would suggest that a careful reading of how the events unfold indicates that Burgoyne is staging an argument about aristocratic sociability that has important implications for the martial identity of the nation.

Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre is divided into two distinct sections defined largely by their environs. The first masque takes place on the back lawn of the park, whose oak groves gave their name to the estate. The second phase of the evening, which is broken into two "masques," takes place inside Robert Adam's neoclassical pavilion, which is itself surrounded by the park. Before discussing the relationship between the distinct performances staged in these two spaces, it is important to recognize, as the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" does, that aside from the invited guests there was a "concourse of people on each side of the road [leading into the park]," and that "the branches of the trees [were] bending with the weight of heads that appeared as thick as codlings on a tree in a plentiful season" (263). Later in the text, these observers are referred to explicitly as a "public": "Thus ended the first *masque*, which the public had an opportunity of

seeing in some degree as well as the visitors; and the loud acclamations of joy at the conclusion, was a convincing proof of the high opinion entertained by the nobility and gentry of this rural festival" (264). Because this statement carefully maintains some ambiguity about who precisely breaks into applause at the end of the first masque, the "high opinion" in the final clause can be interpreted both as the approbation of the visitors with the entertainment and as the approbation of those excluded from the *fête* for the leisure activities of their superiors. At one level, it would appear that the public is presented here to simply forestall charges of excess by stating that those excluded approved of their exclusion. This ambiguity not only performs a double legitimation of the *fête* but also raises the question of the relationship between the partial view of the "codlings" and the necessarily mediated relation of the readers to the event.

If the codlings in the trees constitute a public, then what is its relation to the print public rhetorically figured forth from the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary?" The partiality of the codlings' view is important, because, despite readers' efforts to distance themselves from those physically excluded from the event, it captures the predicament of reading. The text, like the trees that give the codlings some vantage point on the action, allows the reader partial access to the world of elite leisure. But this is true only of the first masque: it is directly experienced by the guests, partially observed by the codlings, and indirectly presented to the readers. Regardless of who they are, this means that the readers are structurally aligned with the codlings aspiring to both "see" the *fête* and descend from the trees to engage in the games of love presented before them. This subtle rhetorical gesture instantiates the desire to get beyond the privation of reading and enter into the plenitude of performance—to leave the tree-like restriction of textuality. This may sound odd, but it is crucial to both the performative and textual tactics of the *fête*'s second half. The second portion of the evening is fully ensconced within Robert Adam's pavilion, and thus it cannot be observed by the public lining the road and perched in the trees. When the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" goes on to describe the events inside the building, the reading public gains access denied to those with whom they were previously aligned. In other words, the reader is hailed into a privileged position that structurally—or, should we say, architecturally—excludes the codlings. This not only fulfills the desire generated in the first masque but also marks a distinction between this reading public and the local observers of the *fête*, whose approbation was so carefully staged.

Because everything about the account and the codlings metaphor itself renders the excluded local observers as some sort of dispossessed tenants or even

peasants whose interpretive skills are so limited that they merely recognize the superiority of their betters, this invention of readerly privilege both provides a comfortable social space for the reader of the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" and opens up a potentially critical relation to the represented practices. By asserting the approbation of the codlings and then conferring privilege to the reader, there is an opportunity afforded for the reader to own up to that privilege by exercising his or her aesthetic and moral judgment with more sophistication. In short, to now read the scene with all of one's aesthetic skill and critically engage with the performance, one will demonstrate whether one truly deserves to be among the elect. However, this also implies that election and distinction will be grounded on a critique of the practices arranged by Burgoyne.

Paradoxically, the *fête* provides an opportunity for both its participants and those reading about it to subtly distance themselves from the roles performed therein. But this act of distancing is itself carefully regulated, so that this distinction represents a very specific manifestation of aristocratic power. This is why the event is broken into an inside-outside structure, and why the Francophile *fête galante* is staged in plein air and the entertainments contained within the pavilion allegorically migrate to fantasies of British national supremacy. My contention is that the first masque is explicitly staged to encapsulate the forms of Francophile elite leisure that, despite the codlings approbation, were regularly used as examples of aristocratic dissipation. The second section of the evening rescues its elite guests—and the readers—from these charges by suggesting that to imagine that the pleasure afforded by these events somehow captures the truth of aristocratic bearing is simply another instance of the "partiality" of such a reading practice. Those invited into Adam's pavilion, including the readers of the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary," are thus privileged because they are able to read the libertine excess of the first masque as a pose or a performance that is staged in order to be both enjoyed and resisted. It is the capacity for this resistance among guests and readers alike that makes them able protectors of "the oak, its prosperity and advantage" (265). And this question of protection is not only a matter of nativism but also one of patrician military rule.

National Fantasy, or How to Feel

The spatial distinction between the first masque and the events in the pavilion can be understood via the contrasting erotic economies associated with each space. From the beginning of the first masque to its end, the guests are involved in what amounts to a pilgrimage to Adam's Temple of Love. In this sense, the

first masque is a variation on the myriad pilgrimages to Cythera that preoccupied not only Watteau and other painters but also a host of French poets in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. While the direction of the movement of the guests here has none of the ambiguity of Watteau's famous painting, the space itself is replete with the signs of erotic engagement. We have already noted the prominence of the shepherdesses occupied with the swing, and how this signifies both the motion of sexual intercourse and, more subtly, female inconstancy.[27] And this well-worn figure is supplemented with the arguably even more strenuous metaphor of tambourine kicking; the text is careful not to specify the sex of those kicking at the suspended tambour, thus allowing the reader to imagine the view afforded by shepherdesses at this sport. From here the signs of sexual practice become both more chaste and more perverse.

By setting all this in a very quickly assembled orangery,[28] Burgoyne not only made yet another reference to the leisure practices of the French elite—the *orangerie* at the Palais de Louvre was replicated throughout the century—but also surrounded the visitors with orange blossoms that, because they were white, represent innocence at the same time that the oranges, like the gourds in Watteau, emblematize fecundity. But this backdrop of chastity only serves to highlight the availability of those around them. The cupids and shepherdesses unleashed on the guests draw them into their world of erotic inconstancy first by flirting with them and second by festooning them with flowers, such that the participants are swirled into an arabesque of promiscuous association—both at the level of bodily performance and at the level of signs. I am using the term arabesque here in the decorative sense. Thomas Crow has argued very persuasively that many of Watteau's key gestures in the *fêtes galantes* come from his experience producing arabesques that featured figures interacting with their decorative ground.[29] This has important resonances for Adam's design of the pavilion because his celebrated decorative insets eschew this kind of promiscuity. As we will see, Adam's pavilion is not a Temple of Venus but rather a Temple of Hymen, with all the erotic restraint implied by this evocation of conjugal marriage. In contrast, everything in the first masque—the sylvan dancers, the operatic performances, the poses of the figurantes—enacts the frequent allusions to music, dance, and theatre in the *fêtes galantes*. The artificiality of these erotic exchanges is emphasized by the almost magical concealment of the source of the music, and it should come as no surprise that Mr. Vernon both sings and manipulates the very flowers that mark the guests' role in the erotic simulation.

But there is one chain of signification that runs counter to this seeming enactment of Watteau but which actually engages with and alters one of Watteau's

persistent thematics. I am referring to the King and Queen of the Oaks, who seem to operate alongside the dominant erotic economy of the first masque. In this context, the specification of these roles does not seem particularly important: it is merely another element of the sylvan topos that dominates this section of the performance. But it is important to recognize that they are not the king and queen of the *orangerie* and that therefore they move separate from the others. The scholarship on the *fêtes galantes* is in general agreement about their direct debt to the forms of commedia and pantomime practices in the fairs in Paris. In fact, it is the artifice of these theatrical forms that provides the model for the ambiguous subjectification both at the heart of the social performance of the *fêtes galantes* and at the core of Watteau's practice. Lord Stanley's and Lady Elizabeth Hamilton's appearance in the first masque as the King and Queen of the Oaks is comparable to stock roles, such as those performed by Harlequin and Columbine, in that, while they may involve themselves in the erotic lives of the inamorata, they are subtly aligned, not with the erotic world of orange blossoms and nosegays, but rather with the oaks that not only contain this artificial world but also support the lower orders, the codlings who watch the festivities from outside. As we have already noted, these codlings are invoked in order to declare their loyalty to their king and queen, and thus there is the subtle suggestion, simply in their specification, that the matrimonial couple is distinct from the erotic play of the guests. The symbolic link between the conjugal fidelity of the King and Queen of the Oaks, the loyal but excluded viewers, and the nation both metaphorically and metonymically invoked by the oaks themselves emerges as an important counterdiscourse that will eventually dominate the *fête*.

The King and Queen of the Oaks play a crucial role, because they are the ones who lead the company from the free-flowing erotic economy of the first masque into the neoclassical pavilion away from the view of their loyal but limited codling subjects. Lord Stanley and Lady Hamilton literally move the guests from one erotic realm to another, and this involves, as we will see, a shift in the dynamics of sociability, the emergence of the pavilion as an actor in its own right, and a radical reconfiguration of the symbolic economy of the staged performances. The oaks, which were partially occluded by the *orangerie* and thus consigned to the status of decorative backdrop, now emerge as the subject of repeated encomiums. The Francophilia that marginalized the oaks in the first masque dissolves, and the oak, with all its patriotic significations, becomes the dominant figure for both aristocratic and national distinction.

However, the way that shift takes place is vitally important. As the guests move from outside to inside, they find themselves in a highly regulated architec-

tural space. Adam's pavilion features an octagonal vestibule that leads into a grand ballroom. Around the ballroom is a vast semicircular supper room, which gives the building its semicircular shape (fig. 1.1). But the floor plan does not correspond to the guests' experience of the space. The game of concealment, which saw the music hidden from view in the first masque, is here repeated but on the level of visual ornamentation and architectural space. Extensive draperies concealed the supper room and thus established the desire to see what was hidden behind these vast curtains of damask. As the entertainment progressed, these concealed zones were progressively and sometimes suddenly revealed. The second masque, therefore, moves from a restricted to an increasingly expansive space, from a state of constriction to one of increased mobility and exchange. In other words, the social territory, at first cramped, goes through a series of campaigns, as it were, until finally the company comes into full possession of Adam's building.

The shift into military and mercantile language here is intended to capture the most important aspect of the gradual revelation of the pavilion's architecture. Each moment of revelation is conducted by martial means, and thus this Temple of Hymen is fully permeated by the agents of Mars. The King and Queen of the Oaks deliver the guests two by two, saving them, much like animals in the ark, from the dangerous flow of desire on the back lawn, into the octagonal space of the vestibule:

> The noble visitors were first conducted through a beautiful and magnificent octagon hall, with transparent windows, painted suitable to the occasion: at the end of the great room hung six superb curtains, supposed to cover the same number of large windows; they were of crimson colour, richly ornamented with deep gold fringe. Colonades appeared on each side the room, with wreaths of flowers running up the columns; and the whole building was lined chair back high with white Persian and gold fringe; the seats around were covered with deep crimson. The company amused themselves with dancing minuets and cotillons, till half past eleven, when an explosion, similar to the going off of a large number of rockets, put the whole lively group into a consternation. This was occasioned by a signal given for the curtains, which we have before described, to fly up and exhibit to the company a large supper-room, with tables spread with the most costly dainties, all hot and tempting. (264)

According to Adam's drawing for the pavilion, the octagonal vestibule was no wider than thirty feet and the central ballroom was roughly thirty by sixty feet.

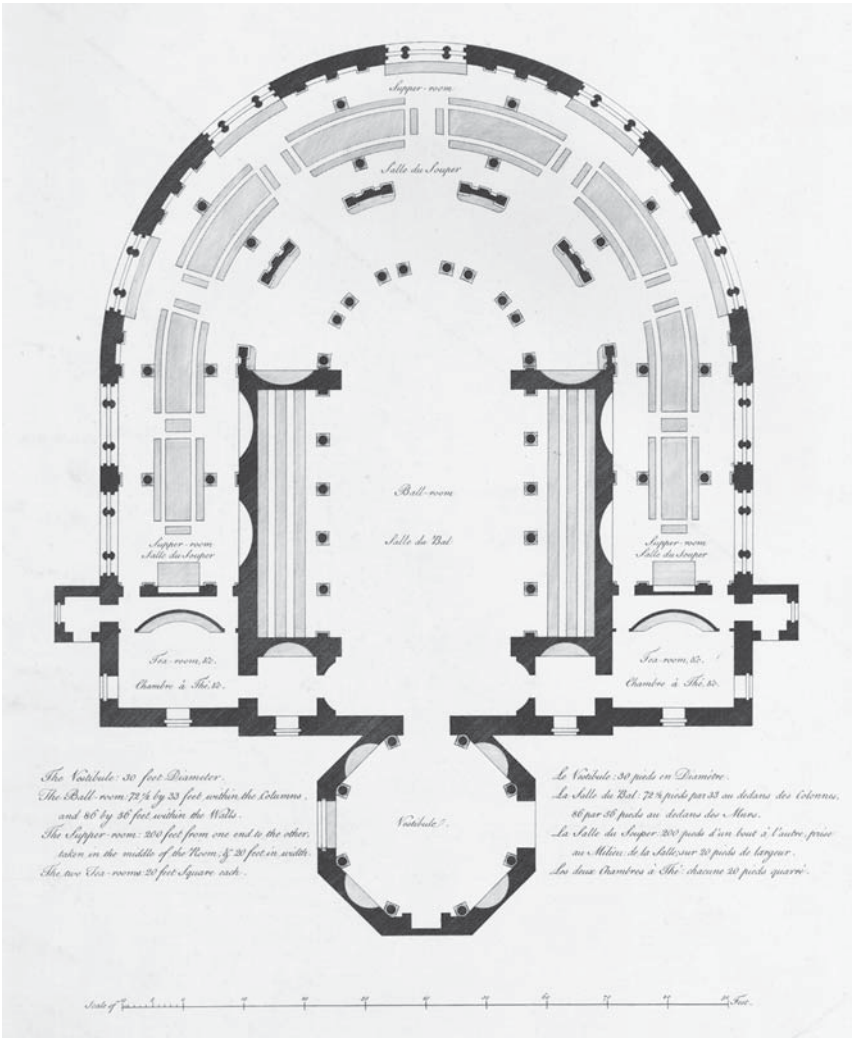


Figure 1.1. John Roberts, "Architectural plan of a pavilion erected for a Fête Champètre in the garden of the Earl of Derby at the Oaks in Surrey, with a ballroom in the centre, a supper-room surrounding and octagonal vestibule at the south entrance," engraving (1780). Reprinted in *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, vol. 3 (1822), pl. xx. BM 1917,1208.2905. Department of Prints and Drawings © Trustees of the British Museum.

The company of roughly three hundred persons dancing in this space would be experiencing bodily intimacy of a different kind from that of the open exchange on the back lawn. After this close confinement, it is no surprise that the guests acted with consternation when the explosions signaled the rising of the curtains to reveal the supper room. They were the object of a kind of tactical maneuver aimed not only at eliciting the sublime but also at controlling their social circulation. The explosions are reminiscent of Edmund Burke's discussion of loudness and suddenness in the *Philosophical Enquiry*, but they are also textbook examples of logistical signs used to control the motion of armies. And General Burgoyne was well versed in both the aesthetic and martial effects generated here. This explosion should give us pause precisely because it is so overdetermined. As a signal for lifting the curtains, it seems somewhat extreme, but it activates a chain of martial associations that accelerate from this point onward. The explosion results in the expansion of social territory and sudden access to "the most costly dainties, all hot and tempting." It all unfolds into an apt allegory for imperial expansion: the general commands the explosion, territory is gained, and luxuries become suddenly available. In this context, the close confines of the vestibule and the ballroom, their very intimacy, constitute a kind of national space from which the guests are led to an ever more elaborate and luxurious imperium. Adam's conspicuous use of columns and classical motifs keeps the entire affair allegorically adjacent to the obvious forebears—precisely that empire referred to when the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" refers to the gravest authors (fig. 1.2).

With this none-too-subtle invocation of empire, however, the Fête Champêtre addresses the historical significance of aristocratic leisure head on, because much of the debate surrounding the fate of the empire explicitly drew on the example of Rome to warn against excess and expansion. As much as this allegory calls up the history of Roman imperial disintegration at precisely the moment when the American colonies are in the process of dismantling Britain's Atlantic empire, it is important to recognize that Burgoyne's explosions are both tactically and logistically effective. The fear they elicit opens onto pleasure, and thus they constitute a carefully managed overcoming of social insecurity. Each spatial transition from this point onward builds on this aesthetic and tactical effect, for it unites the company and places it under the control of Burgoyne and his officers. When the curtains concealing the ballroom are drawn, "the ceremony of arranging the company next took place, and was executed by the General" (264). Burgoyne is now referred to solely by his rank, and even the King and Queen of the Oaks are under his command. The entertainment is now assigned

Figure 1.2. Robert Caldwell, after Antonio Zucchi and Robert Adam, "Inside view of the Supper-room & part of the Ball-room in a Pavilion erected for a Fête Champètre in the Garden of the Earl of Derby at the Oaks in Surry, the 9th of June, 1774," engraving (1780). BM 1917,1208.2903. Department of Prints and Drawings © Trustees of the British Museum.

to one of Burgoyne's officers. In a powerful gesture of antiquarian possession of a national prehistory, Captain Pigott comes forward as a Druid and introduces a series of songs, recitatives, and dances all "in praise of the oak, its advantage and prosperity" (265). Under military control, the oak, which was once vestigial in the performance, becomes the central sign of national and personal prosperity. Significantly, the primary agents of the erotic performance in the first masque, Mrs. Barthélémon, Mr. Vernon, and the dancers, are all recast as wood nymphs and fawns and are called into the pavilion by the Druid. This effectively reconfigures the outside erotic world of the first masque into one that is controlled by the agents of Mars. The erotic force of the songs and dances is funneled toward a fantasy of nativist national election, and thus the Cytherean script is transformed into a patriotic one.

This is nowhere more evident than in the climactic moment of the second masque, the pantomime between two Cupids that shifts the erotic narrative from scenes of inconstancy and promiscuity to one of acquisition and conjugal fidelity. Details not presented in the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" but which surface in the papers are extremely resonant:

> A scene was also introduced exhibiting a large Groupe of Fauns and Dryads, about 30 in Number, in picturesque Habits of Tyger Skins ornamented with Oak Leaves over a fine Rose coloured Silk; these entertained the Company with a serious Dance, under the Direction of Signor Lepy, the Opera House Ballet Master. There was a Pantomime Story told by the Dance, in which Cupid and Hymen were introduced as principal characters; the little blind God was robbed of his Wings by Hymen, by way of expressing his Wish that such a Fate should ever attend his Victims.[30]

In the phantasmatic space of empire, the conjunction of oak leaves and tyger skins resolves into a fleeting expression of the Indian acquisitions that would eventually supersede the American colonies in the British imperial imaginary. But this is only a momentary allusion. The pantomime itself is arguably the evening's most important political intervention. Hymen, the god of marriage, deprives Cupid of his mobility in order to express his desire that Cupid's victims—those touched by love—would remain similarly fixed in their affections. Cupid, who is so omnipresent in the iconography of the *fêtes galantes*,[31] is here, at the Druid's request, disciplined by Hymen, such that the entire practice of love is subsumed into the institution of marriage. Patrician military rule, conjugal fidelity, and mythic figures for the longevity and endurance of the British constitution are all conjoined into a distinct fantasy of national election that is explicitly pitched as a counterperformance to the fantasy of aristocratic sociability articulated in the first masque. It is this declaration of the guests' capacity—or should we say, in light of the tactical maneuvers of the second masque, their necessity—to recognize and celebrate this conjunction that constitutes Burgoyne's articulation of an aristocratic performance suited to the historical moment. It is why this diversion is but the flip side of the coercion he was seeking to enact in the realm of policy.[32]

As we move to the end of the evening, it becomes clear that the entire event has a roughly dialectical structure. The free flow of the first masque is set in contrast to the rigorous drill-like discipline of the second masque. And Captain Pigott, in his role as the Druid, has the magical ability to effect a synthesis by transforming the outside space such that it can be united with the disciplined

sociability inaugurated in the pavilion. This is hinted at when he calls the principal performers, now subtly transformed, in from the garden, but it reaches its full manifestation in the third masque. After the Hymeneal pantomime, the company is released into the ballroom where it pursues its desires first in the highly structured form of the minuet and then in the more exuberant form of the country dance (fig. 1.3). But at the very time that this is happening, the outside space is itself visually transformed:

> The Company were highly entertained with the illuminations in the gardens, which had a fine effect from the front wing of the house. Facing the temporary room was erected a large Ionic portico, supported by four large transparent columns of a bright pink colour. On a scroll on the pediment were the following words, "Sacred to propitious Venus." In the center of the pediment was a shield, with the Hamilton and Stanley arms quartered, the whole supported by a band of Cupids, who appeared to great advantage by the assistance of four pyramids of lights. (265)

The illuminations transform the outside space into another classical architectural figure, but significantly the house becomes the Temple of Venus and the pavilion, by a subtle act of subsumption, emerges as the Temple of Mars. The transit across the lawn from pavilion to house, now illuminated by pyramids of light, is no longer a self-testing journey through a dangerous space of erotic promiscuity and elite dissipation, but rather a self-consolidating exercise in fantasized election. The key word here is "propitious." By declaring the house "Sacred to propitious Venus," Burgoyne and his illuminators have entered into the realm of prophecy. And I would argue that they are suggesting that this is not simply a propitious union of husband and wife. The union effected in this synthesis of martial and marital signs generates an omen "of favourable import; regarded as indicative of the favourable disposition of God."[33] As an example of wishful thinking in its most naked form, Burgoyne's intervention invests in a fantasy of future imperial hegemony.

And yet for all this declaration of the propitiousness of the historical moment, there are figures lurking in the shadows that are not folded into the dialectical synthesis but which in fundamental ways allow for its sublation. The illumination of the garden in the third masque is clearly staged for the viewers in the pavilion, but the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" subtly indicates that the "view" offered by the text comes from a different vantage point: "The Company were highly entertained with the illuminations in the gardens, which had a fine effect from the front wing of the house" (265). By bringing the reader momentarily to

Figure 1.3. Robert Caldwell, after Antonio Zucchi and Robert Adam, "Inside view of the Ball-room in a Pavilion erected for a Fête Champètre in the Garden of the Earl of Derby at the Oaks in Surry, the 9th of June, 1774," engraving (1780). BM 1917,1208.2904. Department of Prints and Drawings © Trustees of the British Museum.

the front wing of the house, the text does not reactivate but discretely reminds us of the former vantage point of those physically excluded from the Fête Champêtre. This reminder of the social remainder is crucial, because it emphasizes that the complex consolidation of the conjugal, national, and martial identities of the elite within the illumined confines of the garden and its pavilion is surrounded by a no-less-coercive invention of a public in the surrounding darkness. In this particular time and place, both publics, the one in the light and the one in the dark, are subject to the actual and representational discipline of the military. At the same time that Burgoyne and Captain Pigott are managing the carnivalesque potential of aristocratic celebrants, we should not be surprised to find that "A Troop of Burgoyne's Light Horse attended to prevent Disorder" in the outside world.[34] In other words, the social and aesthetic synthesis

achieved in the third masque relies upon the ever-present but shadowy threat of physical force. When we remember the importance of the "consternation" generated by the explosions in the second masque, it should become clear that it is fear above all else that both makes room for and conditions Burgoyne's stylization of aristocratic sociability in the Fête Champêtre. It is confidence in military force that undergirds the celebration's certitude regarding Britain's ability to retain the American colonies.

Topicality and Repetition: *The Maid of the Oaks*

Could we not argue, though, that the readers of the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" are relatively free of this coercion and that, in the accession to this freedom, the reading public partakes of a form of counterleisure?[35] Within the republic of letters there would appear to be a possibility, indeed a necessity, for critique. This is an important question because the mediation and dissemination of the event only becomes more complex when we follow the replication of the Fête Champêtre in the ensuing months and years.[36] Aside from myriad topical poems and satirical remarks in the papers, Burgoyne's diversion at The Oaks generated three further representations beyond the textual accounts in the newspapers and the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary": two theatrical entertainments and a set of remarkable paintings.[37] And it may well be the starting point for one of the most infamous celebratory moments in the 1770s: the Mischianza staged by Captain John André to mark General William Howe's departure from occupied Philadelphia in the spring of 1778.

The most notable of the theatrical treatments was a much-debated "Dramatic Entertainment" entitled *The Maid of the Oaks* that was written by Burgoyne himself, altered by Garrick, and staged at Drury Lane on 5 November 1774.[38] Numerous biographical sources on Burgoyne state that the play was performed at the Fête Champêtre, but I can find no evidence of this.[39] In fact, both the printed editions of the play and the smaller collection of the songs and choruses emphasize otherwise: "Considerable parts of the poetry, musick, and scenery, of the Maid of the Oaks, have been taken (by permission) from an entertainment given by a noble Lord, last summer, . . . [but] As to the piece, into which these parts are now introduced, and which bears no reference to the entertainment alluded to, it is the first attempt of the author in dramatic writing."[40] The play clearly incorporated elements of the performances from the Fête Champêtre, but these are both truncated and framed by a protocomedy clearly designed for theatrical exhibition in a licensed theatre. The play is replete with references to

the performers and designers of the Drury Lane production, so what we have is a play that takes as its topic not only the earlier performance at The Oaks but also its mediation both in the papers and in the theatrical production itself.

What interests me about this situation is that an already self-referential event has been reframed for yet another consideration by the public, but now in the context of theatrical representation. The interplay between the topical knowledge of the Fête Champêtre derived from the papers—or, in a few cases, from actually being at the event—and the performance of the players becomes here a crucial element of the play's reception. "The plot," according to every review of the play, "in a great measure closes in the fourth act, and the fifth is chiefly compounded of scenery, music, and dancing introduced as a celebration of the wedding of the Maid of the Oaks, but the idea of this act is taken in many parts from a masque at the famous Fête Champêtre given by a noble Lord last summer."[41] What we have then here is a particularly rich example of the tight relationship not only between social practice and theatrical sociability but also between what I would argue are two fundamentally complementary media: the newspapers and the theatre. The subtle distinctions between the earlier representations of the event and the Drury Lane production offer a valuable site for considering the relationship between repetition and topicality in eighteenth-century theatrical experience. And I would argue that this relationship is crucial to how I want to think about theatre as a social practice in this historical moment.

Topicality, although largely untheorized, has been an issue of some concern for critics of eighteenth-century theatre because it is often simultaneously a fundamental component of a play's success in its initial productions and the very quality that compromises the ostensible aesthetic value of the play with the passage of time. This becomes a key methodological problem because most of the axiological principles that motivate literary study, and which tend to infuse cultural criticism in general, are intimately connected to notions of aesthetic autonomy that do not apply to many artistic productions in the period we are discussing. If we restrict our discussion to the theatre, one would expect that, with the monopoly afforded by the Licensing Act, the patent houses, especially in the '50s, '60s, and '70s, were in a position to categorically protect the integrity of legitimate tragedy and comedy. But, as the endless debates in the papers regarding the nefarious influence of pantomime and the roster of playbills indicate, this was precisely not the case.[42] At every juncture, one finds hybrid forms whose success depends on spectacle or topicality, asserting their palpable audience appeal in the seasons of the patent houses. And even on evenings ostensibly

devoted to tragedy or five-act comedy, one is confronted with afterpieces, inserted songs, dances, and the like that compete internally with the mainpiece not only for audience attention but also for commentary in the papers. Furthermore, tried and true stock pieces were consistently, and partially, allegorized by managers and audiences alike in order to fit current and passing events.

It is not enough to simply state that these developments were driven by receipts, although that is no doubt part of the issue. The sheer expansion of commercial entertainment generated hitherto unseen social and cultural effects. Topical entertainment is part of a larger cultural development whose most obvious avatar is the newspapers. With the century's progressive expansion of daily, triweekly, and monthly venues for the discussion of social, political, and cultural affairs came new possibilities for representational pleasure. It has rarely been asked what kind of pleasure is afforded by the papers, but I would argue that the answer to this question is important to how we think about theatrical reception. A typical eighteenth-century daily prints advertising on the first page and then offers a jumble of political, social, and theatrical intelligence across the remaining three pages. Theatrical news is generally divided into three set formats: advertisements for upcoming performances; reviews and prologues and/or epilogues immediately after the first performance; and then inserted gossip about the world of the theatre, which sometimes takes the form of editorial letters. Society news often follows the same structure: key events are noted in advance, reviewed as it were, and then gossip proliferates in myriad forms.[43] What we would conventionally call "hard news" takes the form of dispatches from various parts of the globe, parliamentary reporting (after 1764), or formalized accounts of shipping, military activity, and the like.[44]

Cowper's treatment of this mélange is perhaps the most important period discussion of this representational dynamic, and much has been made of his analysis of the spatial dynamics of newspaper reading. In *The Task*, he talks of the thrill not only of transporting himself all over the globe via the papers but also of the strange frisson of finding important political news immediately adjacent to accounts of ballooning and the magician–quack scientist Katterfelto.[45] We can discern two pleasures here: that of the fantasy of unrestricted movement, and that of a carnivalesque jumbling of social hierarchies. The former seems particularly well suited to a culture involved in massive imperial expansion, and the latter captures well the emergent capacity of the middle classes to reconfigure the social field in the latter part of the century. I have argued elsewhere that these fantasies have their theatrical attendants as well, but there are other pleasures, undiscussed by Cowper, which are perhaps even more fundamental.[46]

The more that one reads the daily newspapers in this period, the more one is struck by how they play a complex epistemological game with their readers. This is most apparent in the way society news is presented. Using strategies pioneered in the *Town and Country Magazine* and then popularized by the *Morning Post*, reports of scandalous behavior, including massive losses at the gaming tables, adulterous and sodomitical affairs, dueling, and certain economic misbehaviors—in short, public representations of failures in private character—are repeatedly presented with various levels of circumlocution, euphemism, and ellipsis. This means that the reader is simultaneously put in the position of a moral judge squarely outside this realm of largely aristocratic vice and in the position of one sufficiently in the know to actually comprehend the narrative. In other words, the newspapers carefully cast the reader both inside and outside the scene of scandal and thus allow the reader to pursue his or her prurient interests, at the same time that he or she enjoys both the moral superiority and schadenfreude continually made available by the world of fashion.[47] I would argue that this feeling of being in the know, and yet somehow free of scrutiny, is one of the great inventions of the age, because it allows for a remarkable consolidation of community. To be able to piece together from ellipses and circumlocutions who did what to whom carries not only the pleasure of epistemophilia—I know the world well enough to "read" this—but also the pleasure of fictional intimacy—there is a subset of readers sufficiently in the know to understand this, and they are like me. The newspapers, with their vast market, worked out very early on how to generate a technology of intimacy that allowed individual readers to fantasize that they were part of a social circle beyond themselves, but which was nevertheless deemed exclusive. And this inculcation of faux exclusivity paradoxically relied on the mass circulation of the papers themselves.

Refinement, Remediation, Renunciation

We have to consider the possibility that a similar dynamic is at work in the audience of many eighteenth-century plays. Topical references are frequently mobilized in the theatre to generate a fantasy of either exclusive or mutual recognition. For example, according to the printed version of *The Maid of the Oaks*, the final scene in the fourth act takes place in front of a painting "taken from a Portico in the Gardens of Lord Stanley, as illuminated at his entertainment last summer." Similarly, act 5 is set in a saloon that the printed version of the play indicates is "a representation of the temporary saloon, as designed by Mr. Adam, and erected at Lord Stanley's."[48] The printed version of the play makes this explicit,

but in production a significant element of the pleasure afforded by the play relies on the audience's being able to recognize these scenes. And that recognition depends not simply on—in this case—Philippe Jacques De Loutherbourg's scenic accuracy, as Allen suggests,[49] but also on the audience's memory of the reports of the Fête Champêtre six months earlier. But this rememorative act is quite complex. On opening night, before the circulation of the reviews and the publication of the play, the audience would have to make the connection to the earlier event using evidence internal to the play itself. For subsequent audiences, the reference to the earlier event would have been well enough in circulation to allow the vast majority of viewers to "recognize" the Fête Champêtre's lurking presence. So on its initial production, *The Maid of the Oaks* effectively distills its audience into a public sufficiently in the know to recognize the rehearsal of the Fête Champêtre and a counterpublic temporarily unaware of the topical reference and, thus, suddenly cast as the fluid media from which the other "exclusive" group is refined by the play. This inculcates the desire to "refine" oneself, as it were, to become the element of the mixed solution that the theatrical mechanism is pursuing. And it propagates the fantasy that such a transgression of social boundaries is possible. This means that one of the pleasures afforded by the play is that of overcoming the privation that comes with social and epistemological exclusivity. And it is this dynamic, above all, that is repeated from the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary." Remember that text performed precisely this rhetorical game with inside and outside perspectives. So, at its deepest level, the play activates a complex negotiation with notions of social and cultural inclusion.[50]

It is therefore exceedingly difficult to consider the performance as aesthetically autonomous from the social world in which it is embedded. And it is not enough to say that we need to understand the social and historical context to understand audience reception, because the distinction between representation and "context" simply does not hold. This play, and many others like it that do not fall into the generic categories of tragedy or comedy, generates pleasure by virtue of its capacity to operate on the actions and desires of its immediate and mediated audiences. This is a complex situation because the structural relationship between the play and its lightly veiled topic is always already tied to the mediascape of the daily papers and the ethnoscape of social exchange and conversation.[51] Arjun Appadurai uses these terms to account for how information flows impinge upon community formation and interaction, and what I want to argue here is that *The Maid of the Oaks* subtly explores and articulates the relationship between media and ethnicity in remarkably explicit ways.

Now it may seem odd to be importing critical terms from the study of globalization to deal with a seemingly minor play, but this production, like many others in the 1770s, is very much in dialogue with the social, economic, and cultural fallout of Britain's recent emergence as a global power after the Seven Years' War. And it is haunted by the first, and arguably the most important, threat to imperial self-definition—namely, the ongoing crisis over the governance of Britain's Atlantic empire. The key recognition here, as in the preceding analysis of the Fête Champêtre, is that aristocratic sociability, which is the topic of the play, is inexorably tied to the audience's faith in patrician governance of both the imperial state and its military avatars. If that connection seems strained, then we need to recognize that the subject is being handled not directly but through a remarkably sophisticated engagement with the public's relation to information. We should not be surprised therefore to discover that the most successful elements of the "plot" that Burgoyne and Garrick contrived to frame the topical references actually focus on the relationship between social practice and its representation in the papers. Furthermore, the paratheatrical materials—especially the prologue and the generic debate instantiated by Burgoyne's preface to the play—explicitly address the interrelationship between mediation and the desire for social refinement. As we have already noted, the Fête Champêtre was also involved in a form of refinement—its audience was refined by martial tactics to exemplify styles of normative patriotic power whose most visible elements impinged on questions of sexuality. What we need to ask is what kind of refinement is effected by this play and its remediation in the papers? Is there a theatrical equivalent to the explosions set off within Robert Adam's pavilion?

The question of refinement became a subject of explicit debate in the papers, but before we look at this we need a stronger sense of the play's implicit staging of the Fête Champêtre, along with the world of the newspapers and of aristocratic sociability in general. As all the reviewers emphasized, the plot of *The Maid of the Oaks* was neither original nor compelling, but they offered unusually detailed accounts of the "fable." As many of the papers indicated, the play resembles the kind of three-act entertainment staged by Samuel Foote at the Haymarket during this period but now inflated into five acts by the addition of extensive musical interludes and dancing. It is helpful to have Foote's *The Nabob* in mind, because it shares a great deal with this production. The play is set on The Oaks, Mr. Oldworth's estate, on the day of his elaborate celebration of the marriage of Sir Harry Groveby and his ward Maria, the eponymous Maid of the Oaks. Oldworth is clearly a thinly veiled Burgoyne, and Sir Harry and Maria correspond to Lord Stanley and Lady Elizabeth Hamilton respectively. The first

act opens with the introduction of a young macaroni named Dupeley, recently arrived from the continent: "Full of all the fashionable prejudices in favour of foreign education, and above all, conceited with his knowledge of womankind, and convinced that there is not one of the sex cunning enough to impose upon him."[52] During this opening scene, Sir Harry, Dupeley, and Oldworth with his bustling servant Hurry quickly sketch in the broad contours of the day's pastoral entertainment, and the references to the Fête Champêtre are legion. It will take place at The Oaks, a pavilion and an orangerie are being hastily constructed, locals will play shepherds and shepherdesses, and by the end of the scene, Hurry even refers to the event as a "Sham-Peter" (1.1.10). With the topical reference well enough established, the scene shifts to a seemingly unnecessary burlesque of the preparations, which follows the tribulations of the architect with an Irish painter named O'Daub, whose primary function is, predictably, to drink, sing, and ridicule De Loutherbourg, who designed and executed the sets for the Drury Lane production. The reviews were generally quite harsh about this scene, but its metatheatricality is important because, like the first scene, it asks the audience not only to question the relationship of the representation to the preceding event but also to consider the artifice of representation itself.[53]

The rest of the play deals with two sexual narratives. The second act introduces us to the two principal women in the play. In an explicit contrast to O'Daub's drinking song, which closes the first act, Maria opens act 2 beneath a great oak singing a chaste song of pastoral romance. If the song has not already convinced the audience of her innocence and rectitude, the play emphasizes her modesty by contrasting her with Lady Bab Lardoon, a female gamester and scandalous member of the bon ton, played to great acclaim by Fanny Abington. As Gillian Russell states, Lady Bab is the play's finest construction.[54] Her primary function is to regale Oldworth and Maria with an account of the sexual and social dynamics of fashionable life and to carefully explicate their representation in the papers. After telling Oldworth and Maria that her visit to The Oaks is a welcome respite from a "horrid run" of gambling losses in Town, which were the subject of much public discussion, she informs Maria that she too will be the object of the papers' attentions:

LADY BAB: Oh, but you will have it [your name in the papers]—the Fête Champétre will be a delightful subject!—To be complimented one day, laugh'd at the next, and abused the third; you can't imagine how amusing it is to read one's own name at breakfast in a morning paper.

MARIA: Pray, how long may your ladyship have been accustomed to this pleasure?

LADY BAB: Lord, a great while, and in all its stages: They first begin with a modest innuendo, "*we hear a certain Lady, not a hundred miles from Hanoversquare, lost, at one sitting, some nights ago, two thousand guineas*—O tempora! O mores!"

OLDWORTH: (*laughing*) Pray, Lady Bab, is this concluding ejaculation your own, or was it the Printers?

LADY BAB: His, you may be sure; a dab of Latin adds surprizing force to a paragraph, besides shewing the learning of the author.

OLDWORTH: Well, but really I don't see such a great matter in this; why should you suppose any body applied this paragraph to you?

LADY BAB: None but my intimates did, for it was applicable to half St. George's parish; but about a week after they honoured me with initials and italicks: "It is said, Lady B. L's ill success still continues at the quinze table: it was observed, the same Lady appeared yesterday at court, in a *ribband collier*, having laid aside her *diamond* necklace, (diamond in italicks) as totally bourgeoise and unnecessary for the dress of a woman of fashion."

OLDWORTH: To be sure this *was* advancing a little in *familiarity*.

LADY BAB: At last, to my infinite amusement, out I came at full length: "*Lady Bab. Lardoon has tumbled down three nights successively; a certain colonel has done the same, and we hear that both parties keep house with sprained ancles.*" (2.1.24–26)

Lady Bab's attention to the materiality of print, to the way italics and initials activate both epistomophilia and moral remonstrance, is matched by a precise understanding of the pleasures afforded by rhetorical strategies of inclusion and exclusion. Lady Bab's discussion of journalistic prurience allows Burgoyne not only to stage a debate regarding representation and reputation but also to underline the importance of reading and artifice to both the pleasures of elite sociability and the pleasures afforded by topical theatrical representation. That she emphasizes that the Fête Champêtre, will—and, of course, already has—become a topic for such careful reading in the daily papers, signals the play's explicit engagement with the flow of information in the mediascape. Lady Bab's analysis of topical references in the papers shows that she is theoretically cognizant of the way reputation and desire rely on the artifice of representation.

The audience is hailed repeatedly into a similar analytical position, and the play stages a scene that demonstrates how such analytical tools are crucial for regulating social performance. Lady Bab's second set piece is easily the most theatrically satisfying scene in the play and shows her putting her analytical skills into practice. Upon being informed of Dupeley's transformation abroad, Lady Bab, with Oldworth's and Sir Harry's blessing, undertakes to entrap Dupeley by playing a bashful shepherdess in various states of undress. Her performance as "Philly Nettletop, of the vale" completely overwhelms Dupeley, who is convinced not only that she is a rustic innocent but that she is held in thrall by Oldworth, who has established a rural seraglio on his estate. Significantly, the entire scene is closely pegged to key elements of the first masque of the Fête Champêtre reported in the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" and other papers. "Philly" pins a nosegay to Dupeley in a direct rehearsal of the shepherdesses, but unlike the guests of Burgoyne's *fête galante*, Dupeley fails to recognize the theatricality of the scene and thus demonstrates to both Oldworth and Sir Harry, who are hiding behind a tree, and the entire audience, that he lacks the capacity to manage the artificial games that characterize elite sociability and sexual exchange. Lady Bab's manipulation of signs, through its topicality and the mechanism of dramatic irony, casts the audience members as knowing and subtle readers of elite sociability and thus places them in the exclusive position—like that of Oldworth and Sir Harry, who are watching from the wings—of those capable of reading the moral dangers of aristocratic artifice. The shaming of Dupeley is great fun, but it is also the play's most acute satirical scene because it is part of a larger trend across a wide range of media to critique macaroni, or foppish, masculinity. Lady Bab, at the behest of Oldworth and Sir Harry, reforms Dupeley and, in doing so, also reforms herself. The Lady Bab–Dupeley plot concludes with Dupeley renouncing his "foreign"—read Francophile—ways, with Lady Bab renouncing gambling, and with the suggestion that they, like Maria and Sir Harry, will embrace matrimony. In other words, suspect forms of identity and exchange are reformed by staging the Fête Champêtre, and like a *fête galante*, the representational games test the characters' ability to read the scene of performance.

The second sexual narrative is less complex and less entertaining but, in its sheer predictability, is arguably no less important. We are introduced to Maria and Lady Bab in the same scene, and their progress is intertwined in intriguing ways. As Lady Bab educates Dupeley, Maria slowly learns who she is. Early in the play, it is hinted that Maria is not simply Oldworth's ward, and that the Fête Champêtre is being staged to enact a revelation. Maria is, of course,

Mr. Oldworth's daughter. But she is unaware of the fact because he has secreted her with a friend to raise her at a distance from the corrupting influence of fashion. Maria's hidden status as heiress is such a hackneyed device that Burgoyne was taken to task by almost all the reviews. Nevertheless, all the reviews go on at considerable length to separate Maria from Oldworth's name and thus to preserve her from inevitable corruption at the hands of fashionable fortune hunters.[55] With the eventual revelation of Oldworth's paternity, and the inevitable resolution of Groveby's disapproval of the match, Maria becomes the recipient of not only her father's but her father-in-law's fortune. Groveby, who is based on Lord Stanley's uncle Lord Strange, threatens to disinherit his nephew in part for not informing him of the marriage and in part because he immediately assumes that he has been duped by a fortune-hunting woman. When he discovers that Maria is the woman in question, he decides to both disinherit and reinherit his nephew by willing his property to Maria *and* sanctioning their marriage. Thus, Sir Harry's love is both radically "disinterested" (it involves no design on his fiancé's fortune and a seeming disconnection from his own) and doubly rewarded (he acquires two estates and Oldworth's foreign holdings, which are subtly implied to come from India) because Maria for her part is not a "designing woman."

So both Sir Harry and Maria's desire for each other is ostensibly separate from the pecuniary calculations that usually structure aristocratic engagements, and yet, through no effort of their own, they become the ideal union of domestic and imperial accumulation. The play has a number of asides that imply that Oldworth could be considered a Nabob; this helps to explain why Dupeley can be persuaded that Oldworth has a country seraglio: he has misread Oldworth as Sir Matthew Mite.[56] This brings the whole extravagance of the celebration into an existing discourse on imperial excess, but this issue, perhaps because of Foote's prior treatment of it in *The Nabob,* is rigorously contained before the end of the fourth act. After Maria's paternity is revealed, Groveby once again reconfigures his will:

GROVEBY: Ay, I must alter the disposition of my acres once more—I will have no Nabobs nor Nabobbesses in my family.

LADY BAB: The females would be the better of the two, for all that; they would not be guilty of so much rapacity to acquire a fortune, and they would spend it to better purposes.

DUPELEY: By as much as a province is better disposed of it in a jewel at the breast of a Cleopatra, than when it is melted down in the fat guts of mayors and burgesses of country corporations.

> GROVEBY: I agree in your preference between the two; but an honest country gentleman, and a plain English wife, is more respectable and useful than both—so do you hear, Madam, take care to provide me with a second son, fit for that sort of family—let him be an honest fellow, and a jolly fellow, and in every respect a proper representative for Gloomstock-hall [Groveby's seat]. (4.2.62)

Like the repeated panegyrics to the Oak and the taming of Cupid by Hymen in the second masque of the Fête Champêtre, Groveby's literal investment in the offspring of Sir Harry and Maria's union reactivates a fantasy of country gentility, which is quite explicitly contrived to gloss over the fact that the economic convergence represented in the play is rigorously global in scope. In this regard, the play is fully in accordance with Thomas Oldham's solution to the threat of global capital to landed money in *The Nabob* (1772).[57] Both Foote and Burgoyne end up accepting the economic spoils of empire at the same time that they pilloried those who secured the empire in India. Furthermore, audience members would have been acutely aware that Burgoyne spent considerable time in 1772 and 1773 pursuing Lord Clive with charges of rapacity and misgovernment in India. This whole segment of the narrative amounts to not only another level of topicality, which has been carefully woven into the play, but also a retroactive exculpation of the extravagance of Burgoyne's own Fête Champêtre.[58] At a time when erstwhile "nabobs" were being taken to task because their excessive expenditure threatened the domestic economy and the established social hierarchies of Britain, *The Maid of the Oaks* attempts to argue for a contrasting style of extravagance that reinvigorates not only aristocratic rule but also the nation itself.

And this concern is not merely thematic; the question of expenditure is addressed in the very material processes of the production. It is worth noting that the mode of matrimonial accumulation celebrated in the play is explicitly set in contrast to the perpetual losses associated with Lady Bab's gaming and Dupeley's extravagance. So the celebration of conjugal normativity comes with a corresponding ejection or shaming of gender and economic insubordination. That celebration is itself a scene of unrestrained expenditure both in its initial model of the Fête Champêtre and in the theatre itself. A letter to the *Morning Chronicle* made much of Garrick's extravagance:

> I am told that the scenery only, which has been painted on purpose for the MAID OF THE OAKS, cost 1500*l*. This is a prodigious sum, yet it will not

> appear in the least extravagant to any body who sees it. The landscapes of Claud are scarcely equal to some of the views exhibited; and if nothing beyond the bare merit of the paintings was held forth to attract the town, I should not be surprised at its bringing twenty crouded audiences. Mr. Garrick's care however has not been confined to the scenery, it has extended to the minutest object that could encrease either the beauty or the magnificence of the entertainment. The number of singers and dancers who are pastorally habited on the occasion is incredible, and the engagement of SLINGSBY and HIDOU, the two greatest performers in the stile perhaps on earth, is a circumstance that deserves the highest approbation.[59]

For this letter writer, Garrick's expense was justified because he and Burgoyne were attempting to purvey a "very refined dish, which is only just come into fashion with our nobility."[60]

But this same expense was also an occasion for criticism and satire. A letter to the printer of the *London Evening Post* used the same details to suggest that there was something amiss:

> I made one at the first *route* of the "Maid of the Oaks" on Saturday night last. Notwithstanding all that has been previously said of her by *flatterers* and *admirers*, and that notwithstanding 1500 l. has been actually laid out in *bringing her up*, she, by no means answers public expectation; her conversation is little *snip snap* dialogue; her manners are *outré*, and, in every part of her deportment, she shews such an *ignorance* of *essentials*, that, on the whole, I think she may be truly denominated a *modern fine lady*, whose accomplishments consist in *music, dancing, paint, fine cloaths,* &c.—but *no mind*.[61]

By feminizing Burgoyne's play, this letter writer cleverly contrasts the production with Maria's ostensibly natural nobility and good sense and suggests that its real merits are those of Lady Bab Lardoon. The play is a product of fashion, therefore ultimately corrupt, and (like Lady Bab) most likely to start losing money. The satire has real bite because it suggests that Burgoyne and Garrick fail to see that the play's attempt to advocate for Maria's sexual normativity, which underpins the play's nationalist agenda, is undercut by the entertainment afforded not only by the spectacle, the dancing, and the music but also by Fanny Abington's erotic and comic attractions. The implication is either that the play's and, by extension, the Fête Champêtre's attempt to refine aristocratic sociability is merely a pretense for purveying more dissipation or, worse, that the play's

producers are so "ignorant of essentials" that they cannot see the contradiction that undermines both their moral and patriotic objectives.[62]

The "essentials" referred to here are both the essential elements of good character, in the moral sense, and the fundamental elements of good comedy, in the aesthetic sense. In other words, the status of both the Fête Champêtre represented in the play and the play itself comes down to a generic debate that erupted in the papers, and which was addressed by Burgoyne in the printed version of the play. Five-act comedy is supposed to have a moral purpose, and the question posed by Burgoyne's preface to *The Maid of the Oaks* is whether this new kind of "Dramatic Entertainment," as it was called, could not only aspire to but supersede the ethical claims of comedy. His argument goes directly to the question of the balance between plot and exhibitions of refined elegance through music and dance "acquired" from the Fête Champêtre. After introducing the strange fiction of gaining permission from himself to replicate the elegance of the Fête Champêtre (i), Burgoyne polemically states that he wishes to join the "energy, spirit, sublimity, force of character, and of expression," which he associates with the English stage, to the "art, regularity, elegance, delicacy, touches of sentiment, adapted only to the most polished manners, [which] distinguish [French] Theatres" (ii–iii). The hybrid "species of entertainment" Burgoyne is projecting combines the performance of genteel accomplishments suited to the taste of the fashionable elite with simple, spirited expressions of British strength. As he states, "In literary warfare, we call their [French] compositions insipid; they describe ours as barbarous—both are unjust—all will agree, that to blend strength and refinement would be to attain perfection" (iii).

The theatrical hybrid Burgoyne presents here shares a great deal with the cultural hybridity of the Fête Champêtre. Remember that performance staged plein air pastoral scenes derived from Watteau in the first masque and held them in dialectical tension with the martial manipulation of signs of British national election in the second masque. The resolution of this dialectic was achieved by allegorically aligning the estate building with an Ionic temple "Sacred to propitious Venus," through the optical technology of illumination, and by subtly reconfiguring Adam's pavilion as the Temple of Mars. If we look closely at *The Maid of the Oaks*, we find a similar tension between the plot of the first four acts—which consistently disciplines, yet benefits from, the actions of characters like Dupeley and Lady Bab, whose manners are too foreign; lauds the native simplicity of Maria and Groveby and the disinterestedness of Sir Harry; and indulges in the digressions of O'Daub and Hurry, which would have been entirely

at home in any of Foote's Haymarket comedies—and the elaborate dances and masques that dominate the fifth act, and which were performed by continental performers. What is curious is that the play significantly alters the way these divergent elements come together, and these alterations in how space is deployed, and in the order of spatial disclosure, should give us pause, because there is no internal resolution of the dialectic as in the Fête Champêtre. The resolution of the two strands of entertainment that combine to form Burgoyne's hybrid "Dramatic Entertainment" is hinted at by a kind of internal interweaving. Elements of the "French" entertainment are threaded through the "English" plot, and similarly, the final bits of plot business interrupt the songs and dances in the fifth act. Likewise, the spaces of the Fête Champêtre are interwoven, in reverse order, across the fourth and fifth acts.

As we come to the end of act 4, basically all of the plot complications have been resolved, the marriage procession of Maria and Sir Harry has taken place, and Lady Bab and Dupeley are left alone on the stage. Suddenly Lady Bab spots "a country cousin" dressed as Actaea approaching from offstage. Dupeley refers to her as a "barbarian," using the very term Burgoyne uses to signify Englishness in the preface. When she finally enters, Actaea offers to practice her song for Lady Bab before being called upon to sing in public. Lady Bab agrees to be her audience, but she and Dupeley steal off as soon as Actaea and her six hunters start to perform. In this context, the song suddenly becomes detached from the action: an ostensibly private performance that ends up being witnessed only by the audience. In this moment, the play's artifice is palpable because Actaea and her hunter companion play no role in the drama; they are an interruption pure and simple. The audience is left to sort out the place of this song in relation to the overall play, and there is little to do but recognize that it is a gratuitous insertion.

Here we have an interruption in the plot that explicitly moves the entertainment away from the traditional strategies of comedy toward a different kind of aesthetic experience. This is the first in a series of such distractions that move the entertainment not only toward increasingly distinct performances of dance and music but also toward increasingly specific replications of the spaces of the Fête Champêtre reported upon in the papers. It is this hailing of elements from the mediascape that I think warrants particular attention. Immediately after Actaea's song, the scene opens and discovers "The Gardens illuminated," and the text indicates that the scene painting is of the illuminated Portico from the Fête Champêtre. Actaea and her followers join the play's primary characters, but

a country dance suddenly overwhelms the stage. At one level, the reference to the illuminated portico would seem to signal that the resolution of the dialectic between plot and spectacle or dance has been achieved, but Oldworth and Hurry take charge of the situation and direct the guests to the internal space of the pavilion:

OLDWORTH: This is as it should be—a dance, or a song, or a shout of joy, meets me at every turn; but come, ladies, I shall trust you no more in the gardens; at least not my fair dancers; though the evening is fine it may be deceitful, we have prepared a place under cover for the rest of the entertainment.

HURRY: Gentlemen, nobility, ladies and gentry, you are all wanted in the Temple of Venice, to—but I'll not say what, that you may be more surpriz'd; and if you are surpriz'd here, you'll be more surpriz'd there, and we shan't have done with you there neither—pray make haste or you'll get no places. (*They all croud off.*) (4.2.58)[63]

For audience members familiar with the reporting of the Fête Champêtre, Oldworth and Hurry effectively become a composite portrait of Burgoyne himself—directing the entertainment from above and below. But there are important gestures here for those capable of reading the scene. Oldworth indicates that this moment in the evening is comparable to the end of the first masque where the company left the dangerous erotic play of the plein air world and entered the more erotically safe, because regulated, space of Adam's pavilion. In other words, regardless of the fact that the marriage of Maria and Sir Harry has occurred and the garden has been illuminated, the company has not entered a space where the resolution of the tension between plot and spectacle or dance has been achieved. On the contrary, as Hurry emphasizes, surprises lie in store for both the players and the audience, who end up in a remarkably similar place as the grand ballets of the fifth act take over the representational economy. The implication is that Burgoyne is not done with his English audiences.

Like the second masque in the Fête Champêtre, the fifth act opens in a saloon, explicitly modeled by De Loutherbourg on Adam's pavilion.[64] And the events staged in this space bear a close resemblance to those of the second masque: the space contains curtained-off areas that are opened to reveal the supper room, a Druid interrupts the scene to redirect the entertainment toward an explicit celebration of British militarism, and the scene closes with a grand dance that was

either the very epitome of elegance or a grand exercise in tedium.[65] The explosions that surprised the guests of the Fête Champêtre are notably absent, but they are replaced by an elaborate song by the character of Folly that interrupts a chain of pastoral songs and dances. Folly's song was not among the frequently reprinted songs, but its words explicitly relate to the critique of fashion and politics that operates both inside and outside the play:

> From country elections, I gallop post haste,
> For there, I am always the most busy guest;
> And whether it be in the country or town,
> I'm hugg'd very close, by the cit and the clown:
> The courtier, the patriot, the turn-coat and all,
> If I do not sweeten—breed nothing but gall.
> I'm here, and there, &c. &c.
>
> The statesman, without me, unhappy wou'd be;
> No lady, so chaste, but gallants it with me;
> The gravest of faces, who physick the land,
> For all of their grimaces, shake me by the hand;
> At the play-house, a friend to the author, I sit,
> And clap in the gallery, the boxes and pit. (5.1.62)[66]

Folly's declaration of his omnipresence would appear to provide one kind of apology for Burgoyne's actions in Parliament, in the Fête Champêtre, and in this play.

But in a turn that is structurally comparable to the explosion in the Fête Champêtre, the curtains of the saloon are drawn up, the Druid enters, and Folly is banished from the feast. The message is clear: the entertainment at hand, like Burgoyne's earlier entertainment at The Oaks, has a serious objective. Then the Druid waves his wand: "The scene breaks away, and discovers the PALACE OF CELESTIAL LOVE" (5.1.63). According to the *London Magazine*, this transformation of the saloon into "one of the most beautiful scenes ever exhibited, representing a coelestial garden, terminated by a prospect of the Temple of Love, in which the statue of the Cyprian goddess appears in the attitude of the Venus of Medicis. The background is illuminated by the rays of the sun, which have a most splendid and astonishing effect."[67]

No image of De Loutherbourg's design survives, but its iconography is distinct from the image of Hymen in the supper room of Adam's pavilion. The specification of the statue's attitude links it both to one of the key examples of

classicism for the eighteenth century and to the very epitome of a form of sensuality that threatens civic virtue. John Barrell's essay on the Venus de Medici is extraordinarily helpful here because he demonstrates that for

> the generation after Shaftesbury, the civic discourse appears to have found a way of embracing exactly what it was developed to denounce. The sexuality which is constituted in that discourse, and repressed in the public level of content, of narrative, returns at the private level of aesthetic form and of aesthetic response. It is because . . . the aesthetic discourse is understood as situated within a private sphere, that it is available to be appropriated by the sexuality that speaks through it. And the return of sexuality is enthusiastically welcomed, in a private celebration of sexual license, the prior and necessary condition of which is a public renunciation of sexuality. The prestige of the male ruling-class, it is claimed by the civic discourse on the fine arts, has to be earned by that act of renunciation; but the prestige of the middle-class critic and connoisseur comes to be earned in a more complicated fashion. It is won by a public *display* of renunciation, which by granting a legitimacy to an interest in the aesthetic, gives a license to exactly what it appears to have renounced.[68]

This display of renunciation is crucial to both *The Maid of the Oaks* and the Fête Champêtre, for it underpins the spatial logic of display. Here in the playhouse, De Loutherbourg has fashioned a prospect of a Temple of Venus at a distance from the scene of marriage enacted in front of his painted scenery. I would argue that the exhibition of this Temple of Venus is cognate to the illumination in the third masque of the Fête Champêtre: an ideal image of love that operates distinct from the interior hymeneal world of the pavilion. What this means is that the threatening spectacle of sensual pleasure is figured forth as the constitutive outside of the phantasmatic union of martial rule and conjugal marriage enclosed in Adam's pavilion and Garrick's theatre. It also helps us understand why the play needs Fanny Abington in the role of Lady Bab—by renouncing the woman of fashion, the play and the audience are allowed to consume her.

With the sudden projection, both psychic and material, of this Temple of Venus, the characters of the play are reintegrated back into the spectacle. It is as though the very presence of Art has the power not only to banish Folly but also to reactivate the place of reason in the consolidation of British national character.

Much as in the second masque, the Druid praises the Maid of the Oaks, and the oak figure begins to take on a life of its own. The first character to feel the effect of figuration is Groveby:

> GROVEBY: . . . this reverend old gentleman Druid has charmed me, and I hope we shall have more of his company—A contempt for old times may be fashionable, but I am pleas'd with every thing that brings them to my remembrance—I love an old oak at my heart, and can sit under its shade 'till I dream of Cressy and Agincourt; it is the emblem of British fortitude, and like the heroic spirits of the island, while it o'ertops, it protects the undergrowth—And now, old son of Mistletoe, set that sentiment to music. (5.1.64)[69]

Groveby is an important index here, because earlier in the play he recommends that Oldworth's celebration be modeled on the royal pageantry staged for Queen Elizabeth by the Duke of Leicester at Kenilworth in 1575. As the icon of British tradition, Groveby's function in the play is to repeatedly figure the entertainment in national terms. The Druid immediately complies with Groveby's request and signals for the following song for two voices:

> Grace and strength of Britain's isle,
> Mayst thou long thy glories keep,
> Make her hills with verdure smile,
> Bear her triumphs o'er the deep.
> CHORUS. Grace and Strength, &c. (5.1.65)

The combination of Groveby's memory of victories at Cressy and Agincourt and the explicit invocation of British naval victory abroad not only replicates the martial patriotism of the second masque of the Fête Champêtre but also prompts the final reform of Lady Bab and Dupeley. It is not an exaggeration to state that the ejection of Folly and the introduction of the Druid reveal the power of Art, here figured by the Temple of Venus itself—that is, by the physical space of the theatre as rendered by De Loutherbourg—to reform both the nation and its elite constituents into a cohesive social entity capable of addressing the moral and military challenges of imperial rule. In light of the preceding Fête Champêtre, we should not be surprised that the target of this reform is patrician martial masculinity and elite sexual exchange. Nor should we be surprised that the play concludes with a largely detachable ballet that stands as a further declaration of

the power of elite taste to unite the company—now defined as the entire social world of the theatre—in a fantasy of political and aesthetic election. What would appear to be a demonstration of the power of autonomous art turns out to be a further sign of its deep imbrication in the social world of the audience and the political world of the nation.

Proliferating Claims on the Future

By the end of act 5, Burgoyne and Garrick had at least broached, and may have achieved, all of the ideological work of the second masque of the Fête Champêtre, but the ultimate resolution of the dialectical tension between the two strands of entertainment drawn together in this "Dramatick Entertainment" relies on a far more profound projection into the outer world of theatrical sociability and mediation. As Burgoyne states in his preface, the play is aimed at generating a new species of entertainment even if in its failure "it excites others, who may be better qualified, to pursue the same ideas" (iii). Like the Fête Champêtre's repetition of past cultural models, the play is meant not only to entertain by activating the cultural memory of the audience but also to generate further repetition and emulation.

But where that repetition takes place is important. The play's prologue, written by Garrick and widely acclaimed and reprinted in the papers, emphasizes the mutual importance of the papers and theatrical performance to the cultural dissemination that is achieved through remediation. The sense of mutuality is achieved by having Mr. King—the actor who played Groveby—speak the poem "equipped with a post-horn, and a jacket composed of the fragments of various news-papers, with Fête Champêtre labelled on the front of his cap."[70] Here was print come alive: the very figure of the interdependence of the newspapers and the theatres in the propagation of topical pleasure. And what Mr. King has to say is worth our closest attention. The poem's first two sections address the representation and remediation of the Fête Champêtre in the papers and the theatre respectively. Fame's account of the papers' mediation of the event emphasizes not only the ubiquity of its dissemination but also the tendency of even the highest forms of social practice to be replicated and eventually parodied at every level of social interaction:

> *Unlike to* ancient Fame, *all eyes, tongues, ears,*
> *See* Modern Fame, *dress'd cap-a-pee, appears*
> *In* Ledgers, Chronicles, Gazettes, *and* Gazetteers:

My soaring wings are fine Election Speeches,
And puffs of Candidates supply my breeches:[71]
My Cap is Satire, Criticism, Wit;
Is there a head that wants it in the Pit? [Offering it.
No flowing robe and trumpet me adorn;
I wear a jacket, *and I wind* a horn,
Pipe, Song, and Pastoral, for five months past,
Puff'd well by me, have been the gen'ral taste.
Now Marybone shines forth to gaping crouds!
Now Highgate glitters from her hill of clouds!
St. George's Fields, with taste and fashion struck,
Display Arcadia at the Dog and Duck!
And Drury Misses—" here in carmine pride,
"Are there Pastoras by the fountain side!"
To frouzy bow'rs they reel thro' midnight damps,
With Fauns half drunk, and Driads breaking lamps;
Both far and near did this new whimsy run,
One night it frisk'd, forsooth, at Islington:
And now, as for the public bound to cater,
Our Manager must have his Fête Champétre— (1–23)[72]

The transmission of "Arcadian" pleasures from The Oaks to Marylebone Gardens to Highgate to St. George's Fields to the Dog and Duck and finally to the world of the "Drury Lane Misses" charts a progression from zones of exclusivity to the least discriminating of venues.[73] And with that descent through the classed spaces of London comes an ancillary corruption of the sexual and national ideals articulated in Burgoyne's original event. But significantly, it is precisely the Fête Champêtre's permeation of the social landscape, to the point of even sparking a new fashion in prostitution, that prompts Garrick to bring it out of the streets and into the theatre proper.

Fame's description of the play's intent is interesting because it retains the multifariousness of this chain of replication. And, in a crucial move, the prologue aligns the production with a prior adaptation of a social celebration:

How is the weather? pretty clear and bright? [Looking about]
A storm's the devil on Champétre night!
Lest is should fall to spoil the Author's scenes,
I'll catch this gleam to tell you what he means: (24–27)

Tom King's fleeting reference to Garrick's rain-soaked Stratford Jubilee implies that *The Maid of the Oaks*'s relation to the original party is akin to the relationship between Garrick's *The Jubilee* and the failed commemoration of Shakespeare in the town of Stratford five years earlier. The choice of King here is significant because he was employed by Garrick to interrupt the celebration in the guise of a macaroni to denounce Shakespeare. Here his appearance as Fame, like his role in the Stratford Jubilee, is aimed at establishing a kind of devolution of culture against which Garrick and Burgoyne are operating.[74]

However, when Fame goes on to describe the play's particulars, he does not align its pleasures with those of elite retirement in the country:

> *He means a show, as brilliant as at Cox's—*
> *Laugh for the Pit—and may be* at *the Boxes—*
> *Touches of passion, tender, though not tragic,*
> *Strokes at the times—a kind of Lantern Magic;*
> *Song, chorus, frolic, dance, and rural play,*
> *The merry-making of a wedding day;* (28–34)

The references to Cox's Museum of mechanical exhibitions and to magic lantern shows retain the sense that the original Fête Champêtre can afford the topic for all manner of pleasures. But it is also clear that these "low" pleasures are being brought into the theatre in a way that attempts to give them moral purpose. Just as the newspapers allow their readers the dual pleasure of reading about scandal and judging the scandalous, so too will this play afford the audience all the brilliance of Cox's, and all the higher pleasures associated with "Touches of passion" and "Strokes at the times." In this light, Fame here is charting the Fête Champêtre's progress from a form of entertainment initially aimed at reforming the social and cultural elite, to a more malleable form of representation capable of entertaining even the most debased or unrefined tastes, to a new theatrical form that is attempting to reactivate the reformist agenda of the initial event while retaining its capacity to interest a mass audience. In other words, the play draws on both the initial Fête Champêtre and its less exclusive repetitions in the social world at large. And it is this duality that pushes the play into a new and, for some, a worrisome state of generic hybridity.

One could argue that the prologue itself enacts the anxiety of the social and generic hybridity instantiated by topical pleasure when Fame asks, "Whose is this piece?" It is as though ascertaining authorship will stabilize the relationship

between the play and the surrounding social world. But this occasions only further questions, presented in a fashion that the audience and Lady Bab Lardoon were well acquainted with:

> *Whose is this piece?—'tis all surmise—suggestion—*
> *Is't* his?—*or* her's?—*or* your's, *Sir?—that's the question:*
> *The parent, bashful, whimsical, or poor,*
> *Left it a puling infant at the door:*
> *'Twas laid on flow'rs, and wrapt in fancied cloaks,*
> *And on the breast was written—*MAID O' TH' OAKS.
> *The actors crouded round; the girls caress'd it,*
> *"Lord! The sweet pretty babe!"—they prais'd and bless'd it,*
> *The Master peep'd—smil'd—took it in and dress'd it.* (35–43)

The sudden proliferation of indefinite pronouns and the figuration of the play as an abandoned child generates an enigma whose resolution is both the topic and the chief source of theatrical pleasure in the play. Who is who? Is that bit referring to who I think it is? And doesn't this remind you of something so and so said after reading about it in the morning paper? But this enigma is activated as a prelude to Mr. King's pro forma request for the audience's kind judgment of the play: "*As you're* kind, *rear it—if you're* curious, *praise it, / And ten to one but vanity betrays it*" (46–47). The capacity to generate curiosity is presented as the measure of this hybrid play's value, and that curiosity is not a simple interest in what a small group of aristocrats did at General Burgoyne's party last summer. The curiosity fostered here arises from the suturing of disjunctive modes of entertainment and of normally separate social fields. And it is this coming together of disparate elements in the theatre that drives interpretation and, hence, further dissemination in the social and cultural field. That commercial dissemination is figured as a species of "kindness," here understood as a kind of surrogate parentage. This parental metaphor is apt because at this stage in the repetition of the Fête Champêtre, the singular events of June 1774 are as much the property of original guests as they are of the culture at large. As we track the movement of the memory of the Fête Champêtre from individual witnesses to a broadly based and repeatedly mediated element of cultural memory, I think we can discern not only the very real pleasure afforded by this permeation of the social but also the tangible need to address the play's hybridity, not simply as an aesthetic question but as a matter of social and political concern.

As it turns out, the curiosity elicited by the play did generate a need to address the moral implications of the play's social intervention. The papers took up the challenge and generated a considerable discussion about the generic innovations of the production, and in each case the formal problems posed by the play become indistinguishable from the social dynamics of their reception. The *Morning Chronicle*, as if in explicit response, staged a debate, which ran almost a full month, between those for "refinement" and those who saw the play as an aesthetic and moral failure. The chain of letters to the printer of the paper is so carefully orchestrated that the entire debate may well be artificially propagated by the editors themselves. But that, if anything, would only make it more intriguing. The play's ostensible proponents explicitly argue that the play's elegance morally reforms the audience by bringing the socially mixed audience of the theatre into contact with levels of dance performance and visual representation normally reserved for elite consumption at the Opera House or the Academy Exhibition.[75] These arguments tend to figure the play as a "secular masque"[76] or emphasize that the play explicitly demarcates itself as something other than comedy, and therefore should not be judged as one. The play's detractors argue that the same spectacle undermines character, both on and off the stage. The generic point is akin to the argument against pantomime: that the increasing production of spectacle undermines the audience's ability to appreciate true comedy.

One could argue that both sides of this debate have merit, but what I want to stress is that the propensity to extrapolate outward to the health of the nation deserves particular attention, for precisely this desire is being resuscitated from the original Fête Champêtre and cast forward for further consideration. Here is a sample of the kind of engagement elicited in favor of the play:

> For my part, Mr. Printer, I hear your declaimers against these exhibitions . . . with the same contempt I do the crudities of unfledged City patriots, who are continually tiring us with political virtue, freedom of election, and English liberty. Let those who blame Mr. Garrick for producing these elegant spectacles, not only tell us that dramatic taste is perverted, and dramatic authors neglected, but point out to us those plays which ought to be acted, and which still lie dormant.[77]

The letter writer then goes through an extensive survey of the stock repertoire arguing that there is an ample propensity for vice in legitimate tragedy and comedy, and he rejoices that his daughters have

> an opportunity of being surprized and pleased by the finest scenery and dances, without being shocked with the wriggles of a Harlequin, or taught disobedience by the preposterous character of Columbine, whose constant plan is to cheat her father, and run away with a monster. In short, Mr. Printer, I could heartily wish, both for the credit and morals of the nation, that such pieces as the Beggar's Opera, Provoked Wife, Love for Love, &c were banished the stage, and many more such pieces as the Maid of the Oaks introduced. Not that I deny those pieces to be excellent in their kind, if morals were of no manner of consequence; as I once heard a companion of Mr. Wilkes say, that gentleman (now our present worthy Lord Mayor) would be the best company in the world, if he did not blaspheme quite so much.[78]

This is only a small portion of the letter, and even this small sample could generate considerable discussion. All I wish to draw attention to is how these remarks replicate the very strategies of the play by defending Burgoyne and Garrick's generic innovations by thoroughly embedding them not simply in the realm of dramatic criticism but within the political debates regarding what is best for the nation. For this letter writer, there is no autonomy for the world of art. The paper ultimately comes down on the side of the detractors, but I would argue that it is in the back and forth of public opinion as fictionally articulated in the papers that the resolution of the dialectical tension between divergent strands of entertainment takes place. For it is here that the full integration of social and aesthetic practice is made fleetingly manifest.

But this dialectical resolution is only fleeting. The synthesis prompts both more replication and further contradiction. And this evanescence is in part a function of the economics of entertainment itself. Perhaps the most prescient indication of the success of *The Maid of the Oaks* as a medium for social and cultural repetition can be found in a brief report in the *St. James Chronicle*:

> *Covent Garden Theatre.*—The Managers here are all asleep, but it is thought that the Noise occasioned by the Maid of the Oaks will rouse them. After letting off their two great Guns, the Barry's, and Mr. Dee's Twelve Pounder, they thought their business done, and that it was Time to take a Nap.[79]

Recognizing almost immediately that *The Maid of the Oaks*'s topicality has the potential to generate repetition and thus receipts, the paper is literally projecting the need for Drury Lane's only real competitor to enter the fray. The martial

metaphor is interesting because it suggests that the internal generic conflict that drives the interest in *The Maid of the Oaks* could be subsumed into the long-standing and mutually beneficial conflict between the playhouses. Not to be outdone by the success and notoriety of *The Maid of the Oaks*, Covent Garden quickly responded with its own hybrid production entitled *The Druids*. *The Druids* combines a traditional pantomime harlequinade with clearly recognizable elements from the masques reported to have taken place at the Fête Champêtre. Referred to as a "new Pastoral Masque (with Pantomime interspersed) in two parts," the newspaper accounts of the production carefully tie key scenes to events narrated in the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary."[80] But no mention is made in any of the papers of Burgoyne or the Fête Champêtre, because the entire assemblage of figures and references is now in general circulation. Here repetition has been overtaken by a level of despecification that is crucial to the dissemination of cultural memory but detrimental to the performative thrill of topicality.

This despecification is matched by a further complication. One of the chief problems with topicality is that the unfolding of historical events has the capacity to alter meaning so radically that the initial pleasures afforded by recognition can be transformed into quite painful forms of reckoning. As we have seen, diversion generates repetition, but repetition need not retain the intention of the initial event. In the late fall of 1774, the remediation of the Fête Champêtre in both patent houses engaged the public imagination in ways similar to the reception of the initial event. Even the most critical remarks on the plays stop well short of satirizing Burgoyne and at most cite the production as evidence of the degradation of fashionable taste. As we have seen, the Fête Champêtre and *The Maid of the Oaks* regulate conjugal sexuality and martial masculinity in order to generate a fantasy of national and imperial election. In the short passage of time from 1774 to the fall of Saratoga in 1777, both elements of this phantasmatic consolidation would be quite literally in tatters. But I guess we could also say that Burgoyne was by then a changed man.

We can trace the shredding of this fantasy by looking at two large paintings by Antonio Zucchi that were produced between 1775 and 1778 for Robert Adam's elaborate renovation of Derby House. These paintings, each measuring roughly five by six feet, were prominently incorporated into the luxurious dining room and thus were permanent fixtures in what would become one of the focal points of fashionable diversion in London.[81] Lord Stanley, soon to become the 12th Earl of Derby, and his young bride, Lady Elizabeth Hamilton, as Eileen Harris states,

"were full of fun and vitality, and enormously extravagant. They wanted suites of the most dazzling reception rooms in town, fashionably got up for great assemblies, gaming, balls and suppers—a house that came to life at night, and reflected and enhanced the gaiety of their lives."[82] Their continual exhibition in this space gives the Fête Champêtre and Adam's temporary pavilion a rather strange endurance that militates against the transitoriness of the original performance and building. Their almost immediate engraving and publication as part of *The Architectural Works of Robert and James Adam* meant that this visualization of the event gained an even wider circulation. Although these images are clearly part of the dissemination and celebration of Adam's own work, Zucchi's paintings of *The Supper Room* and *The Ball Room* correspond to the moments immediately after the explosion in the second masque and to the inception of the minuets in the third masque respectively.[83] (See figs. 1.2 and 1.3.) As our preceding reading of the *fête* has argued, these moments are arguably those in which the bodily dispositions of the guests are under the most assured control. In the first instance, the painting presents the guests immediately after the sublime activation of an allegory of imperial luxury. The colonnades, the statuary, and above all the inset circular lozenge depicting Venus and Cupid both structure the pictorial space and make the allegory manifest. As noted earlier, this moment is of crucial political importance because it poses a problem for reading. Is this allegorical gesture aimed at equating Roman excess with aristocratic vice and thus involved in a critique of empire? Or is it a simple confirmation of Britain's imperial power?

The answer to these questions can be broached only by looking closely at how the figures are presented and then comparing them to the later picture. *The Supper Room* is quite literally dominated by Venus and Cupid (fig. 1.2). From the lozenge in the background to the masquing guests in the foreground, the painting insinuates the flow of sexual desire. In the left foreground, an attendant in Venetian garb is leading a smartly dressed woman directly into the waiting lap of a seated gentleman. Across the table, a man dressed *a la turque* is conversing with one woman and fondling another. And in the direct foreground, two dogs—a lap dog and small hound—are engaged in some sort of frolic. In the terms set out by the larger trajectory of the Fête Champêtre, Zucchi's painting everywhere alludes to how the promiscuous exchange staged in the garden inheres well into the second masque. However, when we shift our attention to *The Ball Room*, and thus to the period following Captain Pigott's intervention and the Hymeneal pantomime, we see not only a transformation in pictorial space

but also a far more restrained treatment of erotic exchange (fig. 1.3). The semicircular space of Adam's building and the regularly spaced columns allow Zucchi to separate the company into discrete parties, and to contain all of the erotic energy of the dancing within the architecture of the pavilion. The strict regimen of the minuet, which now takes over the center of the picture plane, replaces the static potentiality of the Venus and Cupid lozenge with the air of formalized gesture and carefully scripted movement. The formalized and complex movements of the minuet are a site of both controlled erotic exchange and elite performance. To be able to dance the minuet was a kind of social test.[84] The Turkish habits remain, but there are no explicitly sexual invocations as in the foreground of *The Supper Room*. Instead, the frolicking dogs in the earlier picture are replaced by a single hunting dog, which seems to preside over the proceedings, and a mother conversing with her child about the ball. In light of the preceding reading of the Fête Champêtre, it is difficult not to read the hunting dog and the mother-child pairing as Zucchi's rendering of the conjunction of martial and marital control that preoccupied the second masque. If the lone dog is a figure for Captain Pigott, or perhaps even Burgoyne himself, then the mother and child stand for the reproductive imperative implied in the masque's celebration of conjugal fidelity. As these paintings were composed and hung, Lady Hamilton would have borne three children, so it is difficult not to read this foreground figure as her representative.

Zucchi's paintings, and the related engravings, repeat and thus shore up the argument of the Fête Champêtre in part because the very transitoriness of the event means that it requires continual reiteration. With each reiteration comes a consolidation of meaning and the potential for signification to go awry. For Derby, the paintings must have been eventually permeated with irony. In light of the fact that in 1779 Lady Elizabeth Hamilton left Lord Stanley, now Lord Derby, for John Frederick Sackville, the most notorious rake of the day, these paintings must have been subject to counterreadings that would have effectively undone the complex social synthesis figured forth in the Fête Champêtre. But the corresponding dismantling of patrician military prowess would have already taken place. By the fall of 1777, Burgoyne himself would have surrendered at Saratoga and British rule in the American colonies would look anything but propitious. Most historians of the American war see the loss at Saratoga in October 1777 as the turning point in the war.[85] George Germain, the secretary of state, and the Ministry quickly closed ranks to make Burgoyne the scapegoat for the reverses in British fortune.[86] After a humiliating imprisonment in Boston, Burgoyne arrived back in London in May 1778 to answer charges against him in

Parliament.[87] At some point, in the course of his social affairs, he would have sat in Derby's dining room to contemplate the meaning of Zucchi's paintings. In this context, the paintings would have figured forth a past state of social and sexual equilibrium, whose very obsolescence would shake the foundations of Burgoyne's fantasy of patrician rule.