

**VISUALISING POLITENESS AND PATRIOTISM:**  
**THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN ENGLISH SATIRICAL PRINTS, 1745-84**

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I, Danielle Jean-Ellen Thom, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyses the relationship between polite and patriotic discourses, their critical development in satirical imagery, and the place of these concepts within the Habermasian public sphere 1745-84. In exploring the polyvalent nature of 'politeness' and 'patriotism' in this period, I undermine the implicitly simple dichotomy between these strands of social discourse, by considering their function as essential components of the public sphere and public identity. Satirical prints, being simultaneously a cultural product of the public sphere and a means of critiquing the culture of that sphere, are an important source for understanding the relationship between the social public sphere and public discourse, not only in a heuristic sense, but as a result of an entrenched system of shared codes and signs, which allowed the exchange of didactic, polemical and/or humorous messages between different public media. The ability of an image to convey the subtleties and ambiguities of an idea, in a way that written text cannot, makes satirical prints in particular a useful tool for understanding the complexities of politeness and of patriotism. By approaching public discourse through the medium of satirical prints, I explore the contradiction inherent in the production of images that critique and comment upon the commercial public sphere, while acknowledged as commodities in themselves.

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## NOTE ON THE TEXT

All print titles, captions, ‘speech bubbles’ and other quotations from eighteenth-century texts have been reproduced verbatim, without alteration to original spelling or grammar.

Where appropriate, the following abbreviations have been used:

BM	British Museum
BM Sat	British Museum Satires
Col.	Coloured
LWL	Lewis Walpole Library
Met.	Metropolitan Museum of Art
Pub.	Published by
RA	Royal Academy of Art

## PREFACE

This thesis analyses the role of satirical prints in the development and manifestation of an English ‘public sphere’ in the later eighteenth century. It focuses on the representation of polite and patriotic discourses in satire, and the relationship of this representational practice to contemporary understandings of ‘the public’. Using close reading of images and considering the semiotic framework of their representational practices, this thesis aims to explore a fundamental structural change in English society during the second half of the eighteenth century: a shift towards ‘public opinion’ as a key arbiter of cultural value and political legitimacy; and away from court and church.

A concept as broad as public opinion requires a working definition, and needs breaking down to identifiable thematic elements. With this in mind, I am considering satirical prints within the specific context of the public discursive conflict between ‘politeness’ and ‘patriotism’. In its simplest form – on which I will expand in the introduction – politeness constituted a set of behavioural rules emphasising polished external presentation of the individual, codified in conduct literature and periodicals; and privileged cosmopolitan and transnational cultural exchange. By contrast, patriotism in the eighteenth century was configured less formally, as a set of individual behavioural expectations which, practiced collectively, translated into a kind of uniquely British or English ‘national character’ founded upon notions of honesty, sincerity and plainness.<sup>1</sup> This formed an apparent dichotomy, between the ostentatious, false and foreign, on the one hand, and the authentic and robustly English on the other. There were, however, sufficient competing interpretations and practices of both politeness and of patriotism to fuel an ongoing debate as to their appropriate place in public life; which was manifested frequently in satirical prints. Their manifestation in satire permitted representation of their various, polyvalent interpretations and went some way towards resolving their apparent conflict.

Both politeness and patriotism, I will argue, were essential components of ‘publicness’ as an intellectual space, and as a behavioural practice. The emergence in Britain of ‘the public’ as a self-constituting body with distinct cultural and political interests, separate from those of the court and the church, has its roots in the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> The rejection of absolute, court-centred monarchy, in the 1640s and again in 1688; the consolidation of Protestant hegemony;

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis will be looking specifically at patriotism in the context of Englishness and English-produced prints, which established non-English ‘British’ identities as other, including Scottishness and Irishness. However, it is acknowledged that conceptions of Englishness and British overlapped in many cases.

<sup>2</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (London, 1989)

and the development of a mercantile economy based upon colonial expansion and trade – with India and the Americas, for example – enabled the development of a bourgeoisie anxious to articulate its difference from both the aristocratic and courtly elite, and from the demotic ‘mob’.<sup>3</sup> Politeness, a paradigm which had its basis in the Earl of Shaftesbury’s conception of aristocratic, disinterested ‘public service’, was co-opted by writers and commentators such as Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele on behalf of the emergent public as a framework. These writers codified politeness as a tool for enforcing distinction from other, competing and overlapping, social spheres such as the court.<sup>4</sup> Patriotism, at once a less formal and an older concept in terms of its manifestation in texts, was essential to the formation of public identity as both internally homogenous and distinct from external economic, political and cultural forces. It constituted a significant discursive strand in eighteenth-century public debates on the nature of English, or British, identity – to the point that it is difficult to extricate a sense of identity (with its connotations of passivity) from active patriotic discourse.

The co-opting of politeness and of patriotism into public discourse is relevant to satirical print culture; inasmuch as that culture functioned as both a commoditised form of public entertainment, and a didactic record of public life. Put simply, satirical prints were simultaneously critical of certain public practices and tendencies, and at the same time complicit in perpetuating those practices. For example, fashion satires mocked the frivolity and inauthenticity of a particular mode of conspicuous material consumption; while representing the fruits of that consumption as a publicly visible marker of status. This duality of function placed satirical print culture in the unique position of being capable to represent contradictions and conflicts in public life – including that between politeness and patriotism.

This dual functionality of satirical print culture, and the role it played in articulating publicness, was possible as a result of the very conditions that enabled the emergence of a bourgeois public in the first instance. Certain practical factors can be positively identified in the narrative of print culture leading up to the so-called ‘Golden Age’ of caricature; including the lapse of the Licensing of the Press Act in 1695, and the influx of skilled foreign-born engravers such as Hubert Gravelot during the first decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> The phenomenon of

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p.56-57

<sup>4</sup> Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3<sup>rd</sup> earl of, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge 2000)

<sup>5</sup> The definition of the ‘Golden Age’ of satirical prints varies: Diana Donald and Tamara Hunt both equate it with the reign of George III (1760-1820), whereas Vic Gatrell sees it as a later phenomenon, constituting approximately 1790-1825. Given the scholarly focus on named artists and the upper end of the market which they occupied, perhaps the ‘Golden Age’ ought to be reconfigured as the ‘Gillray’d Age’, spanning that



the publisher-cum-print-seller, producing and selling satirical works alongside books, maps and stationery, is less easily explained; although it is not hard to see parallels between the growth of printmaking and broader commercial developments in publishing and bookselling. The establishment of the subscription lending library, for example, mirrors the print hiring service offered by most sellers; whereby customers could borrow portfolios of satirical prints – as well as landscapes and art engravings – for an evening’s entertainment. The establishment of booksellers whose patronage effectively enabled the careers of many writers, such as Jacob Tonson, also foreshadowed the artist-publisher collaborations that produced much of the most commercially and critically successful satire: for example, that between Carington Bowles and John Collet, or (later) Hannah Humphrey and James Gillray. What is clear is that by the second half of the eighteenth century, several dozen specialist printshops were established in London, primarily in and around the City. These specialist establishments included both shops selling only satires, such as that of Matthew and Mary Darly, and those which sold satires alongside other printed products, such as the ‘Map and Print Warehouse’ of Carington Bowles. By the 1780s, the geographical sphere of the London print trade had spread westwards, to the elite residential and cultural spaces of Mayfair and St James’s, reconfiguring itself as a luxury trade and its shops as fashionable social spaces. At the same time, the trade continued to produce and sell images that mocked the very practices of material consumption and public social interaction upon which it depended.<sup>6</sup>

It is the notion of satirical print culture as a social practice, rather than a purely commercial enterprise or political phenomenon, which informs this thesis’ approach to satirical representation. A substantial amount of scholarly work has been undertaken with a view to analysing prints as political artefacts, and thus seeing them as representative of ‘the public’ as a force for political change and legitimation. Of the research that has been done into the social aspects of print culture and satirical representation, the majority of it focuses on the period covered by the long and prominent careers of James Gillray (fl. 1779-1809) and Thomas Rowlandson (fl. 1784-c.1825), mapping the so-called Golden Age of satire onto the three or four decades spanned by the Napoleonic wars and their associated political developments within Britain. With the exception of William Hogarth and his ‘modern moral subjects’, social satire produced before the late 1770s – that is to say, before Gillray – has been largely neglected; and it

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particular artist’s career (c.1775-1815). In this sense, the zenith of British visual satire is interpreted as marking a high point in both quality and quantity of print production. It also marks the period in which copperplate engraving/etching constituted the primary print medium, before the widespread use of lithography and steel-engraving from about 1820.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed overview of the satirical print trade in eighteenth-century London, see Donald, Diana, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT & London, 1996), pp.2-8

is for this reason that the chronological parameters of this work are limited to 1745-84.<sup>7</sup> Aside from marking the occasion of two significant social and political events which were addressed extensively in satirical prints – the Jacobite Rebellion and the ‘Duchess of Devonshire’s’ Westminster election – this period represents the development of satirical print culture as a broad and accessible public discourse. The establishment of new modes of viewing pictures – the printshop window as well as the public exhibition within a specialist print retail space – meant that satire now constituted a significant intervention in contemporary understandings of the public sphere.

This thesis is a hermeneutic process, unfolding within the categorical framework of ‘the social’ as it is understood historically. That is to say, semiotic analysis of satirical prints must be undertaken with a view to understanding those prints in the context of communal discourse and public behaviours – what might be called by Jürgen Habermas the ‘lifeworld’; or, with a broader emphasis, what Pierre Bourdieu terms the *habitus*; a system of subjective dispositions which produces behaviour in relation to the objective field of the social space.<sup>8</sup> Chapter one of this thesis will consider the question of print interpretation; both in terms of print culture as an institutionalised and commercial structure, and at the level of the individual print viewed as an agglomeration of difference symbolic and iconographic practices. This chapter will investigate key questions relating to the conceptual definition of ‘publicness’, and to theoretical frameworks for interrogating ‘the image’. It will also survey the current historiography on ‘politeness’ and ‘patriotism’ in their eighteenth-century contexts, as well as examining the debates surrounding humour theory and consumption of visual culture. In short, the first chapter will establish the contextual and theoretical framework within which subsequent, thematic chapters will consider satirical prints.

The first of these thematic chapters will look at the aesthetic and structural relationships between satirical and academic art. Significant developments in the accessibility of academic, ‘traditional’ art to a polite public were mirrored, and in some cases foreshadowed, by innovations in the satirical print trade. Sites of art-viewing, such as the Royal Academy or Vauxhall Gardens, became targets of satire in their own right; while at the same time satirical artists were appropriating motifs and compositions from academic ‘history’ painting. This hitherto

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<sup>7</sup> In many respects, Hogarth’s works do not fit the paradigm of the satirical print, having more in common with the narrative and compositional structures of the Dutch emblem tradition, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. However, they are relevant to the understanding of later satirical works, as they influenced satirists specialising in social narratives (such as John Collet); and Hogarthian tropes are replicated and referenced in many prints, as I will demonstrate throughout this thesis.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1977) pp.72-79

unexplored relationship between two apparently divergent modes of visual culture – one located in the polite sphere, the other rooted in patriotic and demotic culture – offers an insight into the centrality of satirical prints to visual and material manifestations of publicness.

Following on from this, chapter three will consider the role of satirical prints in the context of public, commercialised entertainment. This chapter has two purposes: to develop the analysis of print culture's dual function as both a form of public entertainment and a means of critiquing the public; and to consider representations of the polite public in its various collective iterations, including that of 'crowd', 'audience' and 'spectacle'. As a contrast to this analysis of a collective phenomenon, chapter four will look at the relationship between publicness and the individual body by examining fashion and costume in satire, and the means by which fashion orders and presents the body in terms of gender, class and other markers of identity. The fifth and final chapter will consider the case of Lord Bute, the unpopular Scottish Prime Minister, and his representation in satirical prints of the 1760s. This case study takes a corpus of satirical work heretofore studied only from the perspective of political history, and interrogates it with the aim of establishing the influence of social discourse and public norms on even this seemingly 'niche' political phenomenon. Bute's public persona – as both a polite, learned gentleman and an aristocratic Scottish politician – means that the prints produced in opposition to his period in office manifest the conflict between politeness and patriotism inherent in the most public of contexts.

This thesis will address some of the chronological and thematic omissions in current scholarship on eighteenth-century satirical prints. In particular, it is hoped that addressing prints as images that produce complex and dynamic meanings will counter the tendency of many historians to use them as epiphenomenal 'illustrations' of eighteenth-century life. The thesis will also show how the sharing of languages and tropes, assumptions relating to location of meaning, and the understanding of the productive meaning of these elaborated commodity forms, on which the confident discourse of the bourgeois public sphere depended, were mapped out and constructed in the commercial and political labour of a generation of visual artists and entrepreneurs.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION: POLITE DISCOURSE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

*By Politeness I do not mean a set of refined phrases, a certain number of postures and dispositions of body, nor the manoeuvres of sly dissimulation [...] but that temper of mind and tenour of conduct which make persons easy in their behaviour, conciliating in their affections, and promoting every one's benefit.*<sup>1</sup>

John Harris, *An Essay on Politeness*, 1775

Before looking at eighteenth-century satirical print culture in England, and at the approaches to image interpretation that will inform this thesis, it is necessary to explore the key concepts framing this approach. To begin with politeness; the Rev. John Harris' definition (1775) offers an indication of this concept in its idealised form as understood at the time. Were this to be taken at face value, either by contemporary readers or current historians, there would be minimal scholarly value in seeking to understand the concept through the medium of the satirical print. Despite Harris' rejection of outward 'postures and dispositions' in favour of an idealised 'temper of mind' as the key characteristic of a polite person, he does not reject performance as a legitimate component of politeness. Rather, his allusion to 'tenour of conduct' as being equal in importance to mental integrity implies an acceptance of politeness as an externally-performed identity incorporating actions as diverse as drinking tea, charitable giving and following fashion in dress. Such actions lent themselves to satirical mimicry, of course, in a way that mental integrity (or lack of integrity) could not. However, what Harris' idealising description does not take into account – and what satirical prints manage to represent and negotiate – is the conflict between legitimate/authentic polite performance, anchored in the appropriate mental state, and inauthentic polite performance disassociated from the latter state. Drinking tea and following fashions were not inherently polite actions. Rather, they were actions that could be performed politely, and by extension could be performed impolitely or incorrectly.

Performativity as a critical tool for reading and interpreting images will be expanded upon later in this introduction. The notion of politeness as performative, however, needs immediate examination. Performativity as conceptualised by Judith Butler derives from J.L. Austin's theory of the 'speech act' – that utterances constitute actions in their own right, rather individual speech acts constitute an integral part of the act. It provides a tool for understanding

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<sup>1</sup> Harris, John, *An essay on politeness; wherein the benefits arising from and the necessity of being polite are clearly proved and demonstrated from Reason*, (London, 1775), p.18

how a discourse such as politeness becomes central to the shared identity of a particular social group. Butler states that ‘attributes, however, are not expressive but performative [...] these attributes constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal.’<sup>2</sup> Looking at the contemporary semantic associations of politeness, it is clear, as in Harris’ text, that the concept was regarded as both lexis (discourse) and praxis (the performance of attributes). It emerged as a discourse, codified in conduct books and periodicals and subject to textual and visual intervention. At the same time, this discourse engendered social behaviours and practices which were enacted politely. It would be inaccurate to claim politeness as the inherent quality of any particular behaviour or act. Rather, politeness was produced and tested through practices which engaged with visual and textual discourses on the concept. Indeed, the very production of politeness literature might be considered as performance, reinforcing and repeating particular modes of writing and dissemination. As Lawrence Klein states, ‘the language of “politeness” acted as a master metaphor which brought to bear in different areas of discourse the expectations and standards of this vision [of sociability].’<sup>3</sup> In this instance, he is specifically discussing Shaftesbury’s *Characteristicks* of 1711, which attempted to codify politeness as a mode of behaviour which focused upon the sociability of a consciously elite political group.<sup>4</sup> Shaftesbury’s writings remained influential well into the later eighteenth century, judging by their frequent reprinting and the level of criticism they inspired.<sup>5</sup>

However, it was the contemporaneous *Spectator*, *Tatler*, and other works by Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, which were ultimately more relevant to the development of politeness as a broadly accessible mode of sociability. Conduct manuals were the other textual form contributing to the interpretation and practice of politeness as an accessible mode. These became aimed at a broader, bourgeois audience during the first half of the eighteenth century; and included such emulative titles as *The Lady’s Preceptor, Or, a Letter to a Lady of Distinction upon Politeness* (anon., 1743).<sup>6</sup> These texts were predicated more on leisure, comportment and material consumption than on a strictly political notion of elite service and Whig superiority. The Shaftesburian model of politeness derived from courtly Renaissance notions of decorum and *sprezzatura*, and from Lockean philosophy on the formation and maintenance of character

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<sup>2</sup> Butler, Judith, ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,’ in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore, MD, 1990), p.279

<sup>3</sup> Klein, Lawrence E., *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge 1994), p.8

<sup>4</sup> Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3<sup>rd</sup> earl of, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge 2000)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2

<sup>6</sup> Batchelor, Jennie, “Conduct Book,” *The Literary Encyclopaedia*. First published 09 July 2004 [<http://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=216>, accessed 19 October 2012.]

through education.<sup>7</sup> *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, by contrast, used the recently-developed trope of the coffee-shop conversation as both structural conceit and intended audience, encoded into which were notions of urban sociability, consumption, and an informal sense of equality among members of the ‘polite community’. The Spectator Club, which might be taken as a microcosm of this community, comprised those fictional speakers who frequented London’s coffee houses for the purposes of discourse. In composing this fictional community of men from a variety of leisured and professional backgrounds, including Sir Roger de Coverley the squire and City merchant Andrew Freeport, Addison and Steele demonstrated the possibility of politeness being a mode of sociability practiced beyond the confines of Shaftesbury’s elite. Furthermore, the ‘conversations’ between members of the Spectator Club laid out a cultural framework for the growth of politeness into a discourse mapped, in part, onto the space of the emerging bourgeois public sphere. By discussing commercialised practices that could be performed politely and performed to produce politeness – such as fashionable dressing, or the participation of tradesmen in elite entertainments – the Spectator Club created an opportunity for the performance of politeness to be predicated upon the individual possession of economic, political and cultural autonomy.<sup>8</sup>

Klein has addressed this widening of politeness’ semantic associations<sup>9</sup>, acknowledging that the meanings of politeness in its ‘long eighteenth-century’ context encompassed behavioural, material, spatial and mental aspects. This analysis has considerable value when considering visualisations of politeness, satirical or otherwise. The development of politeness into a discourse that could be manifested via the acquisition of tangible objects, the inhabiting of specific places and the adoptions of particular postures and costumes, created a context in which it could be represented pictorially. Politeness was constituted via speech acts (declaring a preference for Ranelagh Gardens over Bagnigge Wells); transactions (paying the entrance fee for Ranelagh, purchasing new clothes to wear there or a politeness manual to inform one’s conduct there); and gestures (dancing, walking and conversing in a particular manner during one’s visit). Performativity enabled satire and critique; as well as positive representations, such as the ‘conversation piece’.<sup>10</sup> Through both the broader applications of politeness, and the

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<sup>7</sup> Castiglione, Baldassare, *The Book of the Courtier* (1528, trans. Thomas Hoby 1561) and Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690)

<sup>8</sup> *The Spectator*, nos. 21 (March 24 1711) and 435 (July 19 1712)

<sup>9</sup> Klein, Lawrence E., ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’ in *The Historical Journal*, no. 4, vol. 45 (2002), pp. 869-98

<sup>10</sup> As I will demonstrate later in the chapter, this creates the ‘double function’ of satirical prints already mentioned in the preface: prints represented performative utterances, and at the same time their production

dissemination of representations of the same, the practice and ‘ownership’ of polite culture ceased to be the exclusive preserve of an elite. Klein configures the polite society of the later eighteenth century as dominating public discourse, not because it maintained a strict distinction between the polite and the impolite, but because it extended the possibility of politeness to anyone who could fit its malleable criteria. For example, the phenomenon of the ‘club’ epitomised the relative widening of access to politeness: ‘Many clubs and associations were legitimated on polite grounds, as either tools for the enhancement of sociability or instruments of social improvement or efforts to refine the arts or the intellects and tastes of members [...] the situation is characterised by the participation of a range of social types.’<sup>11</sup> Klein’s assertion that politeness was dominant and accessible explains, in part, the presence of politeness-tropes in contemporary satirical prints. The broad understanding of, and engagement with, politeness among the majority of print viewers would give these tropes and narratives meaning in the eyes of those viewers.

Beyond the purely semantic associations of politeness, contemporary performative anxieties introduced an ethical dimension to the concept. An important concern for practitioners and observers of politeness was the possibility of estrangement between mentality and behaviour. As Philip Carter has pointed out, the earliest manifestations of polite sociability were based heavily upon the educational philosophy of John Locke, namely his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), which emphasised the importance of developing individual personal integrity before external manners – that is to say, polite behaviour.<sup>12</sup> These latter, external compartments were intended to function indexically as a signifier of the former, and were not supposed to exist in isolation. However, as Carter points out, it became apparent that the outward manifestation of inward politeness could easily be assumed for the purposes of personal gain, as explained systematically in the Earl of Chesterfield’s *Letters*.<sup>13</sup> The framework of signification within which politeness functioned was disrupted as the performance of politeness offered the possibility of being separate from the mental state it was supposed to signify. Not least among these disruptions and interventions was the shift from politeness as a masculine identity, signifying a state of mental integrity that could exist only among men (as established by Locke). As Carter writes in *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, the different manifestations of politeness, including the distinction between internal virtue and external veneer, was highly

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and perusal constituted a form of polite performance in its own right; thus prints are both ‘of’ and ‘about’ politeness.

<sup>11</sup> Klein, ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, pp.894

<sup>12</sup> Locke, John, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), eds. John W. and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford 1989)

<sup>13</sup> Carter, Philip, ‘Polite ‘Persons’: Character, Biography and the Gentleman’ in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (2002), pp.333-54, and *Lord Chesterfield’s Letters*, ed. David Roberts (Oxford 1992)

gendered: ‘gendering of a man’s polite actions also implied the possibility for certain forms of polite conduct, and those displaying such traits, to be judged as unmanly.’<sup>14</sup> There was an association between outward behaviour and femininity, as there was an association between mentality and masculinity.<sup>15</sup> Just as Klein points out the gendering of polite connoisseurship (as male) and artistic performance (as female), so it was possible to construe the potentially negative, ‘inauthentic’ aspects of performative politeness as being a result of the emphasis on female sociability, and the inner virtue of ‘authentic’ politeness as being the preserve of men.<sup>16</sup> Examining related visual satires, an example of which I will introduce later in this chapter, it would appear that the accusation of ‘effeminacy’ – or behaviour codified as feminine, performed by men – was virtually synonymous with the reproach of external, inauthentic politeness.

This shift in the signifying function of politeness, so that its connotations of inner benevolence and masculine integrity were weakened, raises the question of taste as a framework for polite signification. Sociability, the foundational element of politeness, intertwined with what has been recognised as the ‘commercialisation of leisure’ which developed during the eighteenth century.<sup>17</sup> As Pierre Bourdieu argues, commodity production enables hierarchies of taste, as ‘there is a fairly close homology between the specialised fields of production in which products are developed and the fields [...] in which tastes are determined.’<sup>18</sup> With respect to politeness, the ‘field’ of polite discourse and performance determined the status of commodities – objects and activities – as polite or impolite. Taste-makers could successfully apply ‘polite’ as a term of praise to commodities, either by consuming things and conferring their own polite status upon them, or by producing items which fulfilled a polite performative function. An example of the former might be the Duchess of Devonshire; the latter included potter Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Chippendale, whose *Gentlemen’s and Cabinet-Maker’s Director* breached the gap between artisanship and polite consumption.<sup>19</sup> This taste-making process problematised the performance and representation of politeness, as it opened up the concept to different iterations and

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<sup>14</sup> Carter, Philip, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society* (London 2000), p.7

<sup>15</sup> Bermingham, Ann, ‘The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship,’ in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 16 no. 2 (1993), pp.3-20

<sup>16</sup> Klein, ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, p.892

<sup>17</sup> Plumb, J.H., ‘The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century England’ in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. John Brewer, Neil Kendrick and J.H. Plumb (Bloomington, IN, 1982)

<sup>18</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London, 1985), p.230

<sup>19</sup> Though the Duchess inhabited polite social spaces and participated in polite events, it is acknowledged that much of her status as a tastemaker derived from ‘impolite’ aspects of her public character, particularly her propensity for excess in dress. The troubled relationship between polite taste and the idea of fashion will be explored in Chapter 4.



interpretations. The commercialisation and commodification of politeness disassociated it, in practice, from its Augustan roots of integrity and benevolence. As John Brewer has pointed out, this raises the question of whether politeness really can be understood as a paradigm in this later period, with recognisable parameters and behavioural or material attributes, or whether its multiplicity of potential interpretations prevented it from having any significant contextual meaning. Brewer argues for an interpretation of politeness as being synonymous with 'high culture'; the development of the latter being understood as a bourgeois strategy of distinction, as opposed to the courtly representational culture that constituted 'eliteness' before the development of politeness.<sup>20</sup>

Paul Langford has argued that the economic imperatives driving urbanisation, and the consumption of non-essential goods and services largely within urban spaces, created an environment in which politeness not only became a legitimating discourse for such consumption, but actually enabled it by facilitating greater and more effective interaction between providers and consumers.<sup>21</sup> For example, journalists, merchants and musicians all provided polite goods and services to individual consumers who might well be those same journalists, merchants and musicians. Furthermore, this reliance upon commercial activity contributed to the aforementioned issue of multiple interpretations:

The boundaries between the polite and impolite could vary to reflect localised patterns of wealth. What was polite in Berkeley Square was not necessarily what was polite in Finsbury or Hammersmith, let alone in Shadwell or Wapping. In the provinces still more diversity prevailed.<sup>22</sup>

Positing that politeness derived its meaning from an emphasis on informal sociability between socially stratified, geographically differentiated groups, Langford also makes the case for its function as a strategy of distinction. This is valuable for understanding the relationship between politeness and taste, inasmuch as the development and display of taste through material culture denoted status; building upon Brewer's assertion that politeness operated as a space for the performance of high culture. However, Langford's analysis rests upon an interpretation of politeness as exogenous; a structure that originates outside a social group rather than a practice developed by that group as a strategy for identifying its members. Regarding politeness primarily as a rhetoric anchored in an economic structure – Langford highlights 'the impact of affluence on manners' and equates this with 'the progress of politeness' – undermines the role of

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<sup>20</sup> Brewer, John, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York 1997)

<sup>21</sup> Langford, Paul, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Oxford 1998), pp.72-73

<sup>22</sup> Langford, Paul, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (2002), p.314

individual performance in sustaining and evolving politeness to its state of social dominance.<sup>23</sup> This thesis will be examining the conflict between politeness-as-structure and politeness-as-performance, using satirical prints as both evidence of structure and representation of performance.

Again, the material and commercial manifestations of polite culture offered a boon to visual satirists, not only in the practical sense of providing a context of representable objects and spaces, but also through the relative separation of material politeness from its ethical foundations, strengthening potential accusations of inauthenticity, frivolity, and corruption. At this point, it is useful to consider the dialogue between authenticity and inauthenticity manifested in satirical prints; given that it appears to shape so much of the criticism levelled against polite performance. The use of the word 'authentic' is contemporary to the period, and as Christine Roulston writes: 'in the eighteenth century it was tied to the idea of legal validity, and still encompassed earlier meanings such as "real, actual, genuine."' The word "authentic" also implies that which belongs or is proper to the self.<sup>24</sup> In relation to politeness and representations of politeness, it can be argued that authenticity is a tool for legitimating performance, where the performance 'belongs or is proper to' polite actors. Inauthenticity, though not a contemporary word, is a useful concept for understanding the anxiety and outrage directed at some aspects of polite performance. Amelia Rauser, for example, has constructed an analysis of the 'Macaroni' phenomenon of the 1770s which treats the extreme clothing and wigs worn by Macaroni men as inauthentic, and which takes contemporary perceptions of this inauthenticity as the catalyst for public reactions against the Macaroni trend.<sup>25</sup> The instrumentalisation of inauthenticity as a tool for framing the premium placed upon authenticity by discursive and performative polite actors is a useful scholarly shorthand. It provides a coherent framework in which many contemporary anxieties about politeness can be understood, particularly those relating to the adoption of polite material culture by impolite persons, such as instances of servants wearing their employers' cast-off clothing or prostitutes visiting fashionable assembly-rooms. Looking at politeness through an authenticity/inauthenticity framework goes some way towards reconciling the performative and structural interpretations of the concept, as it relates the propriety and truthfulness of performative utterances with a static sense of what constitutes 'proper' and 'true'.

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<sup>23</sup> Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p.71

<sup>24</sup> Roulston, Christine, *Virtue, Gender and the Authentic Self in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Gainesville, FL, 1998), p.xi

<sup>25</sup> Rauser, Amelia, 'Hair, Authenticity and the Self-Made Macaroni' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 38 no. 1 (2004), pp.101-17

At this point, it is worth briefly discussing the culture of sensibility inasmuch as it related to politeness and public discourse: a contemporary reaction against inauthenticity and an attempt to map ‘sincere’ emotional responses onto the material framework of polite taste. In historiographical terms, however, sensibility has been treated virtually as a synecdoche of politeness in the same period, based on the notion that both discourses could and did become manifest in the visual and literary arts, and formed part of the same socially stratified network of emulation. Only Carter has explicitly made the point that sensibility, in England at least, was a conscious attempt to ‘reinject integrity into a “polite” system whose historical legacy and contemporary value were exposed by episodes like the posthumous publication of Chesterfield’s correspondence in the mid-1770s.’<sup>26</sup> Northrop Frye has configured sensibility as existing in a dialectical relationship with politeness. The former offers a critique of the latter’s materiality and flexibility by contrasting those attributes with its own sincerity or, again, ‘authenticity’. In relation to politeness, sensibility is ‘its own opposite, a cultural climate concerned with solitude, melancholy, the pleasures of the imagination, meditations on death, and the like.’<sup>27</sup> However, sensibility, even in its material expression, did not appear to grip the satirical imagination (or the commercial needs of satire) in the same virulent manner as politeness. The exact relationship of sensibility to satire is beyond the remit of this thesis, though it deserves scholarly investigation elsewhere. Very briefly, I posit here that the lack of sensibility and representation of sentimental themes in contemporary satire might be explained by the conflict between the emotional sincerity demanded by sensibility, and the cynical mockery of satirical representational strategies. When sensibility did figure in satirical prints – for example, in Rowlandson’s *The Man of Feeling* (1:1, 1788) – they mocked the concept’s claim to moral authenticity; in this example juxtaposing the title of Henry Mackenzie’s sentimental novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771) with a representation of a country clergyman literally ‘feeling’ Nature’s bounty in the form of a girl’s bosom.

The history of politeness in all of its forms is inextricably linked with that of the bourgeois, commercial public sphere; and, thus, with the history of the satirical print. The concept of the bourgeois public sphere, as developed by Jürgen Habermas, was summarised by him as ‘the sphere of private people come together as a public,’ for the purpose of constructing an alternative commercial and – later – cultural power base to that of the pre-modern/feudal court.<sup>28</sup> Habermas determines Britain to be the location of the earliest public sphere to be

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<sup>26</sup> Carter, ‘Polite ‘Persons’’, p.336

<sup>27</sup> Frye, Northrop, ‘Varieties of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, no. 2 vol. 24 (1990), p.160

<sup>28</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: A Category of Bourgeois Enquiry*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (London, 1989), p.27

recognisable as such, citing the combined influence of the 1688 ‘Glorious Revolution’ and the lapse of the Licensing of the Press Act (1695) as the key factors in this change. The development of a Parliamentary polity, in the aftermath of William III’s accession, created the space for an authority base separate from that of church and crown. Meanwhile the relaxation of censorship laws allowed the ideas and opinions of the burgeoning bourgeoisie to be securely anchored in a commercial structure of publication and dissemination; thus creating new public stakeholders and ensuring the perpetuation of the space. Thus, the bourgeois public sphere constituted a physical and cultural space between formal state authority structures and local, familial and economic spaces such as the home and the workplace, existing for the articulation of what Habermas calls ‘rational-critical debate’ between mercantile-capitalist and manufacturing-capitalist interests. That debate was directed at the apparatus of state authority: legislature, executive and judiciary. It was directed with the hope of influencing the decisions of state authority in favour of one or the other interest group; and articulated largely by means of the press, as a means of legitimising political decisions with the sanction of ‘public opinion’.<sup>29</sup>

The bourgeois public sphere paradigm, in its classic Habermasian construction, is relevant to the history of politeness in that the aims and ideal practices of the latter are in many ways synonymous with those of the public sphere. The concepts are not entirely coterminous: politeness included private behaviours, such as comportment in marital relationships; while inhabiting the public sphere necessarily exposed the polite person to impolite behaviours and spaces, such as electoral hustings and executions. The notion of discourse is central to both, however: manifested as ‘rational-critical debate’ in the public sphere; and, less precisely, as ‘conversation’ in the polite world. Furthermore, the occupants of the public sphere, in eighteenth-century London, were more or less the same persons who practised and engaged with politeness in its various forms. The necessary condition of the polite person was relative personal autonomy; this being guaranteed by education, leisure and wealth. Relative autonomy – that is to say, freedom from poverty, freedom from the constraints of ignorance, and freedom from significant restrictions upon socialisation – allowed the individual to engage in the kind of pursuits, conversation and consumption that constituted politeness. This definition of relative autonomy, and its relationship to politeness, meant that occupancy of the public sphere was not limited to the independently wealthy or even to the ‘gentleman’. Rather, anyone with the means and leisure to frequent a coffee house or consume the contents of a newspaper was in some sense located within the public sphere. Similarly, this autonomy also guaranteed the polite person a place in the wider urban public that itself required informed participation in commercial and

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.56-57

social transactions. To a certain extent, Habermas' private persons were polite persons, and thus the act of 'coming together as a public' was politeness collectivised. In practice, the 'typical' polite person was an educated bourgeois male, just as the typical private person participating in the public sphere was an educated bourgeois male. Politeness, as a discourse, made some theoretical provision for female participation, emphasising the importance of female society for the improvement and softening of masculine manners; nonetheless, the imaginary individual addressed in the kind of conduct literature exhorting female company was generally male.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, as Habermas acknowledges, the imaginary public person was assumed to be a man.<sup>31</sup>

Habermas' critics, such as Nancy Fraser, have established that the public sphere was and is constructed around certain 'axes of exclusion', based upon notions of gender, economic status, traditional rank and ethnicity/nationality. Her work establishes the ironic paradox that 'a discourse of publicity touting accessibility, rationality and the suspension of status hierarchies is itself deployed as a strategy of distinction.'<sup>32</sup> The typical inhabitant of Habermas' public sphere was, he assumes, an educated, prosperous bourgeois male. It follows that the satirical print culture developed by the public as a didactic representative strategy contributed to the 'othering' and objectification of groups excluded from that space, and those whose social locations overlapped between the public sphere and other discursive spaces, such as the courtly or the criminal. As will become apparent throughout this thesis, satirical prints tended to conform to a paradigm of ideal social practices; and, conversely, the subjects of their mockery were those that subverted or flouted this paradigm. This social paradigm was, as might be expected, constructed largely around the interrelated social and cultural interests of a bourgeois male public: for example, the sanctity of private property ownership. Within the discursive space that constituted the public sphere, and the social locations in which discourse was produced and performed, actual inequalities of participants' status were 'bracketed', or suspended, though – importantly – not erased. The double function of satirical prints allowed for acknowledgement and representation of these differences (between, for example, an earl, a physician and a master artisan), even as the public sphere bracketed them out in practice. This reinscribes the legitimacy of their presence within the public sphere; or rather, the presence of the persons to whom the differences are both ascribed and tacitly ignored. The bracketing of inequality, vaunted by Addison and Steele as well as other contemporary theorists of the public sphere as evidence of

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Addison and Steele's 'Mr Spectator'. Where female audiences were addressed regarding politeness, conduct literature tended to specify this in the titles of such texts.

<sup>31</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp.43-47. See also Nicholson, Eirwen, 'Consumers and Spectators: the Public of the Political Print in Eighteenth-Century England,' in *History*, vol. 81 no. 261 (1996), pp.5-21

<sup>32</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.60

its liberality and inclusivity, in fact applied only to those who met the basic criteria of entry: disposable income, leisure, education and masculinity. Fraser has developed this critique by delineating the idea of ‘counterpublics’: namely, antithetical spheres of interest forming discursive networks with a view to establishing and reiterating their interests in opposition to that of the bourgeois public. This builds upon Richard Terdiman’s conception of ‘culture as a field of struggle’, which derives from his reading of semiology – influenced by Derrida – as a hierarchal system in which *différance* displaces and prioritises one element of a sign’s binary composition.<sup>33</sup> As Terdiman puts it, ‘in its temporal dynamism and its inscription of social power, the sign begins to figure something like an elemental *machine for domination*.’<sup>34</sup> As I will demonstrate in the next section, counterpublics could be seen as spaces for the expression of alternative lexicons, challenging the bourgeois public sphere’s discursive paradigm. By acting as a site of intersection between dominant bourgeois public and counterpublics, satirical prints constructed a dialogic relationship between the referential matrices of these social and cultural spaces.

There are problems with Fraser’s conception of the counterpublic, not least the fact that it automatically situates the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere in a position of dominance. Furthermore, it fails to clarify whether this dominance is the province of the individual public actor, or of the public space as an entity. The very nomenclature of the counterpublic places it in the position of ‘other’, from which is inferred the hegemonic and normative status of the bourgeois public sphere. This ignored the possibility of overlap between publics, and the possibility of an individual meeting the theoretical criterion of inclusion for more than one sphere. Here it is useful to return to Terdiman for an answer, as he constructs the possibility of a public willing to criticise itself and thus ‘exclude itself from dominant value systems.’<sup>35</sup> Only this flexibility of discourse, of which satirical prints constitute the most visible embodiment, could permit individual actors in the public space to perform alternative roles that conflicted with the ostensible conditions of publicness. The role of women in bourgeois public life, for example, and the opportunities for autonomy this afforded some women, engendered a status- and morality-based conflict which was represented in numerous satirical prints.

Fraser’s construction of the public/counterpublic antagonism also implies a kind of diachronic stasis, in which both public and counterpublic are historically constant as social and cultural structures. This approach, which is Foucauldian in its ahistorical implications, contrasts

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<sup>33</sup> Terdiman, Richard, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca NY, 1985)

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p.33

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* pp.143

with Raymond Williams' categorisation of cultural groups as 'emergent', 'dominant' and 'residual'. This would theoretically locate the public sphere in the 'dominant' category, while acknowledging the changing status not only of marginalised counterpublics, but also of other 'residual' elite groups existing outside the parameters of the public sphere, particularly the courtly 'representative public'.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, from the standpoint of this thesis, it is necessary to engage with the public sphere as a relatively constant construct within the period studied (1745-84), due to the overlap between its typical inhabitants and the typical polite print viewer; and that between the concerns and discursive standards of rational-critical debate, and the subjects and tropes employed in visual satire.<sup>37</sup> As Gatrell has highlighted, the 'typical' print purchaser, if not print viewer, was an educated, politically-aware bourgeois and/or gentlemanly male.<sup>38</sup> The demographics of print consumers mirrored those of the bourgeois public sphere, albeit imprecisely; hence the apparent concern of satirical print culture for the polite public.

### **Contesting the Polite Paradigm: low humour and the carnivalesque**

Considering satirical prints in relation to this 'polite public' introduces an important caveat into the relationship, destabilising the apparent reciprocity between (public) sphere and (polite) practice. In accepting the position of satirical prints as a key tool for the public sphere's process of definition and self-reflexion, used in order to differentiate the public *qua* public from the traditional apparatuses of cultural and political power, it is important to accept that the public sphere made use of the visual dialects of emblem, grotesquerie and 'low' humour, while acknowledging that this usage came into conflict with the ideals of politeness.<sup>39</sup> How, then, do we explain not only the co-existence of satirical print culture with the dominant social discourse of politeness, but the commercial success and cultural visibility of the former within the public sphere? It is necessary to consider two important factors in this apparently impossible relationship: firstly, the semiotic and functional flexibility of satirical print culture; and, secondly, patriotic discourse and its potential status as the foundation of a 'counterpublic' that existed in relation to the dominant paradigm of the bourgeois public sphere.

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<sup>36</sup> Williams, Raymond, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977)

<sup>37</sup> A note on chronology: as intimated in the preface to this thesis, the emphasis is on a thematic rather than a diachronic approach. The time period under consideration is treated as a distinct 'moment' in both the development of satirical print culture prior to the 'Golden Age', and in the existence of the bourgeois public sphere. However, the possibilities of change across this period will be considered in more detail by the concluding chapter.

<sup>38</sup> Gatrell, Vic, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London 2006), p.7

<sup>39</sup> On the impoliteness of emblematic satire see Donald, Diana, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT & London, 1996), pp.44

Visual satire was inextricably engaged with the concept of publicness, both in its commercial availability and its articulation of rational-critical debate. Satirical print culture was also – paradoxically – dependent upon the ability to represent the carnivalesque. As Mikhail Bakhtin posits, the discourse of ‘the marketplace’, under which category I include satirical prints, enjoyed an extraordinary degree of social license and hierarchical inversion of a kind that would in theory undermine the commercial and social status of the public sphere. Bakhtin writes: ‘this temporary suspension, both ideal and real, of hierarchical rank created during carnival time a special type of communication impossible in everyday life. This led to the creation of special forms of marketplace speech and gesture, frank and free, permitting no distance between those who came into contact with one another and liberating from norms of etiquette and decency imposed at other times.’<sup>40</sup> In this respect, therefore, the satirical aspect of public discourse and debate was not necessarily compatible with polite practice, in that it contested the notions of ease, complaisance and refinement that enabled polite discourse to operate within the public sphere.

The status of satirical prints as ‘public’ is further complicated by tensions between them and other linguistic and discursive aspects of publicness. As a site of carnival and suspended hierarchy, the satirical print was theoretically not a viable component of ‘discourse’ in strictly Habermasian terms. As Michael Gardiner argues, ‘Habermas privileges clarity, in terms of both the intentions of speaking subjects and the semantic content of signs [whereas] for Bakhtin, a particular utterance is only part of a potentially endless chain of signification.’<sup>41</sup> That is to say, the uncertainties and deliberate ambiguities of visual satire, particularly the emblematic style of satire (as opposed to figurative caricature), were incompatible with the rigorous monological standards of discourse required by rational-critical debate. In semiotic terms, the perpetuation of the public sphere was dependent upon all instances of debate – that is to say, all utterances or *parole* – to be instantly recognisable by persons occupying the public space as belonging to debate; where ‘debate’ was understood as a cohesive, rational concept.. By contrast, the frame of linguistic reference within which satirical imagery operated was dialogic – conversational, broader and less precise; drawing upon superstition, ambiguous symbolism and the ‘life-world’ of mental and corporeal experience. Thus, we have a scenario in which, theoretically, satirical prints were incompatible with both politeness and publicness, which in turn were not entirely compatible with one another.

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<sup>40</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN, 1984)

<sup>41</sup> Gardiner, Michael E., ‘Wild Publics and Grotesque Symposiums: Habermas and Bakhtin on dialogue, everyday life and the public sphere,’ in *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, ed. Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts (Oxford, 2004), pp.35-6



Though representations of humour, particularly of the grotesque or ‘immoral’ variety, were not compatible with politeness as it was ideally performed, visual satire nonetheless required a mimetic relationship with the materiality of polite culture. As iterations of the carnivalesque, satirical prints acted not as tools for inverting and overthrowing established social modes, but as ‘safety valves’, representing inversion as a means of expressing discontent and criticism within set boundaries. In order to test and contest politeness’ claims to authenticity and value, it was necessary for satirical imagery to visualise politeness in its material form, in order to construct a trope against which to assert its criticisms. This was the case whether the subject of a print’s humour was the tasteless *arriviste* interpreting polite taste incorrectly, or the actual discourse and materiality of politeness itself. Let me introduce a print to act as an exemplar: *Master Lavender Qualifying Himself for the Army* (1:2, 1781); a coloured mezzotint sold by the publisher Carington Bowles from his shop in St Paul’s Churchyard. This image is sufficiently typical of the surviving corpus of English social satires – sold by a prolific publisher located in the ‘bourgeois’ City rather than the ‘elite’ West End, and representative of the type of prints known as ‘drolls’, which approached generic social scenes with humour rather than vitriol. In this image, it is possible to recognise the mark of politeness in all aspects of the scene, despite the critical and mocking overtones of the print being directed against particular aspects of polite socialisation, such as the emphasis upon female company for the polite man, and upon fashionable dress for both sexes. The setting in which the two figures are located is a domestic interior decorated in accordance with contemporary notions of polite ‘taste’ – neat, harmonious, comfortable and prosperous without ostentation. A silver coffee service and fashionable porcelain cups are material manifestations of polite sociability, while the stylish dress of both figures emphasises the importance of presenting the ‘self’ appropriately in polite company. In short, politeness is reinforced and made visible in this print, even as its effects are mocked. It is implied that key aspects of this discourse, particularly material consumption and public social interaction between the sexes, are inimical to the notion of masculine integrity that was supposed to form the basis of all polite behaviour and interaction. The Master Lavender of the title, in his military uniform, epitomises Britain’s moral and physical strength corrupted by luxury pursued in the name of politeness. His name carries connotations of floral delicacy and perfume, and also carries the archaic (for the period) meaning of ‘a male laundry person’, an occupation usually associated with women.<sup>42</sup> This relationship of the image to the text or caption, on which I will expand in due course, reinforces the implication that Master Lavender performs politeness in

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<sup>42</sup> ‘lavender, *n.*’ OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. Accessed 26 June 2012 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/106368?rkey=5Dq7Du&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

such a way as to undermine his masculinity and patriotic role. This critique, however, is not possible without the print's mimetic engagement with the latter concept, reinforcing politeness' paradigmatic status even as it criticised that status.

The function of this mimetic relationship becomes clearer when considering the place of satirical print culture within the public sphere. Looking at *Master Lavender Qualifying Himself for the Army*, it is possible to regard this image as a participating event/utterance in public rational-critical debate, which simultaneously represents and critiques that debate as a social process. This image exemplifies two fundamental aspects of the relationship between print and public: firstly, that of prints' 'double function'; and secondly that of their relationship to/representation of 'counterpublics' existing beyond the parameters of Habermas' bourgeois construct. The double function, to begin with, is predicated upon the mimetic relationship discussed previously. *Master Lavender* exists, in one sense, firmly within public discourse as a representation of a particular kind of taste, and a particular kind of interaction; and the rational implications of these for social propriety and cohesion. It is *of* the public sphere, in that it represents modes of behaviour and materiality associated with that sphere, and offers that representation to viewers as a prompt for debate. Simultaneously, however, the image is outside, or at least on the discursive boundaries, of the public sphere, representing modes of behaviour and materiality that can and may be read as seductive or titillating; prompting the viewer not to debate the rationality of the scene according to a set of universal public standards, but to be attracted by the deviant aspects of the image, and to embrace the carnivalesque (the emasculated male, the powerful female). From the perspective of 'the public' as an abstract hypothetical group, the print has the power to corrupt as well as to instruct. In short, the satirical print functions inside the public sphere as the mimetic representative of that sphere and its values, while at the same time functioning beyond it as a kind of policing agent, patrolling the boundaries of publicness and recalling to viewers the problematic existence of failings and corruptions within public discourse.

Connected to this duality is the engagement of satirical prints with culture and social interactions existing beyond the acknowledged borders of the public sphere, and of politeness. Returning to the notion of 'counterpublics', the status of the female figure in the scene is automatically problematised. The polite/public context of the print, and its critical overtones, strongly imply that this figure functions outside the boundaries of acceptability established by that contextual discourse. Her masculine dress, assertive posture and unchaperoned situation in the company of a young bourgeois man all point towards her status as a women of dubious morals, possibly a prostitute or kept mistress. From the perspective of the bourgeois male

viewer, this figure, representative not only of a general ‘female’ counterpublic, but specifically that of prostitutes and unchaste women living outside the patriarchal paradigm of feminine virtue, is simultaneously a warning and an invitation. Again, this highlights the double function of satirical imagery – the ‘fallen woman’ trope patrolling and reinforcing the discursive common ground of the public sphere by offering a representation of deviation from prescribed gender roles and the negative effects of this. At the same time, it is offering the imagined viewer the attractive possibilities of stepping outside the confines of idealised behaviour as determined by the public sphere. This raises the question: does this process of ‘stepping outside’ constitute an undermining of public sphere hegemony and an engagement with a counterpublic; or does it merely highlight the elasticity of the public sphere? Is the tolerance of moral failure within the public sphere another example of the ‘bracketing of inequalities’ process instigated by discourse? If the latter, the relationship between publicness and politeness becomes even more entwined. Master Lavender’s implied moral lapse simultaneously falls below the standards of personal integrity codified by Augustan politeness while performing politeness in a way that suggests the flexibility of the concept, tactfully ignoring moral lapses in the interests of easy sociability.

### **Contesting the Polite Paradigm: patriotism**

It was the task of patriotic discourse, as it has normally been understood in secondary historical literature, to attempt a systematic interrogation of politeness and its potential as a framework for luxury and inauthenticity. Patriotism appears to have operated as a framework within which the relationship of Englishness to Britishness could be negotiated, and an attempt made at defining and reconciling their differences. Furthermore, patriotism offered a justification for the consumption and commercialisation inherent in performing politeness; by construing such actions as beneficial to the national economy and to collective manners and sociability. It was a framework which could be used to negate accusations of politeness as foreign and other, and at the same time it structured critical responses to politeness on the grounds of the latter’s perceived foreignness. However, it rarely underwent textual formalisation, in contrast to the enormous quantity of advice literature and courtesy manuals published by eighteenth-century practitioners and advocates of politeness. Those few texts that did engage with patriotic behaviour, such as *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*,<sup>43</sup> did so in a negative, pessimistic fashion which conflated patriotism with any action that was antithetical to ‘inauthentic’ politeness, rather than as a discourse in its own right with specific behaviours and

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<sup>43</sup> Brown, John, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, 1757)

expectations. Only Samuel Johnson produced anything akin to a written delineation of the ‘ideal’ patriot, in contrast to his well-known assertion that in practice ‘patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel;’ and even that pamphlet focused specifically upon patriotic discourse within a Parliamentary context.<sup>44</sup> It is clear that the concept of patriotism did have distinctive semantic associations during the eighteenth century, as evinced from the ubiquity of indirect references to it in pamphlets, ballads and, indeed, satirical prints. However, the lack of contemporary exegesis makes it difficult to examine what these semantic associations were, and by what cultural processes they were established.

The broadest historiographical treatment of eighteenth-century patriotism has been provided by Linda Colley’s *Britons*.<sup>45</sup> Colley focuses on the development of British – as opposed to English – national identity in this period, and posits that the former was shaped in direct response to an ‘Other’; specifically, Catholicism and France. The effect of constructing ‘Britishness’ on the basis of Protestant conflict with Catholic power and influence was, according to Colley, a sense of national, British unity, encompassing the Protestant elements of Scotland and (to a lesser extent) Ireland. She has argued that the conscious exceptionalism of Britain as a relatively stable Protestant state, contrasted with the context of predominantly Catholic mainland Europe, offered the opportunity for a unifying dialogue of uniquely British tolerance and liberty.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, by constructing France as an ‘other’, not only in confessional but also in social and cultural terms, it was possible to create a broad definition of the British national character as ‘essentially masculine [...] bluff, forthright, rational, down-to-earth to the extent of being philistine – caught up in an eternal rivalry with an essentially ‘effeminate’ France [...] preoccupied with high fashion, fine cuisine and etiquette.’<sup>47</sup> According to this view, the epitome of the ideal Briton was a proto-John Bull figure, masculine and opposed to the typically feminine, performative aspects of politeness, which was in turn configured as suspiciously cosmopolitan. This simple dichotomy has some credibility, in as much as satirical prints and other forms of cultural output could and did reference and contrast the ‘stereotypical’ patriot or polite person, for the purposes of critiquing one or the other discourse with recognisable, sometimes grotesque, tropes.

However, the reality of patriotic practice, and patriotic engagement with polite culture, was far more complex. The most obvious objection to the argument made in *Britons* is that the

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<sup>44</sup> Johnson, Samuel, *The Patriot. Addressed to the Electors of Great Britain* (London, 1774)

<sup>45</sup> Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New Haven, CT & London, 2005)

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.20-28

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252

apparent unity of British culture, and the development of a distinct British identity, could in fact be seen as a manifestation of greater Anglocentrism, rather than an acceptance of peripheral cultural modes under the banner of 'Britishness'. The spread of increasingly homogenised standards of behaviour, consumption and discourse to the geographical locations furthest from London and its environs could be construed, ironically, as the triumph of politeness over patriotism. Indeed, as Amanda Vickery has shown, polite behaviours and consumption acted as a tool of social interaction across great distances within Britain, originating largely from London but finding significant expression in, for example, the northernmost counties of England.<sup>48</sup> Certainly the evidence of satirical prints and their distinction between England, Scotland and Ireland as political and cultural entities suggests that they were produced by and for a London public that maintained a sense of itself as English first, and British only in response to external threat.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, Colley does not give credence to the possibility that patriotism could encompass polite behaviours, instead dismissing, for example, the art-consuming practices of the elite as almost exclusively orientated towards continental 'Old Masters'.<sup>50</sup> In the face of this assertion, it is worth citing the examples of English art practice and English charity, as analysed by Jonathan Conlin and Sarah Lloyd, respectively. These can be seen as overtly patriotic expressions of national achievement and social benevolence, located within a framework of polite urban interaction.<sup>51</sup> Finally, it should be noted that Colley's approach to the subject of British national identity has a tendency to treat it as being synonymous with 'patriotism'. This is problematic, not least because the emergence of patriotism as a political and social discourse in this period saw a divergence in interpretations of the concept. As I will demonstrate in this thesis, patriotism – like politeness – was interpreted and performed in a variety of modes, often contesting one another. 'National identity' implies both cohesiveness and an element of passivity, inasmuch as most individual actors could not make a significant contribution to the construction of said identity. By contrast, patriotism in all its iterations comprised discursive activity, often verbally or physically aggressive in its manifestation and representation – see, for example, the 'Wilkes and Liberty' movement of the 1760s.

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<sup>48</sup> Vickery, Amanda, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, CT & London 1998)

<sup>49</sup> This will be developed in Chapter 5's discussion of anti-Bute satires.

<sup>50</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.174-75

<sup>51</sup> Conlin, Jonathan, 'High Art and Low Politics: A New Perspective on John Wilkes' in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, no.3 vol. 64 (2001), pp.357-81, and Lloyd, Sarah, 'Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners: Conviviality, Benevolence and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London' in *The Journal of British Studies*, no. 1 vol. 41 (2002), pp.23-57

Colley does acknowledge a certain internalisation of patriotic sentiment, namely in her discussion of John Wilkes' contribution to anti-Scottish sentiment and a strictly 'English' identity. She interprets the activities of Wilkes and the Society for the Supporters of the Bill of Rights as evidence that Scots had been successfully accepted by a newly British, rather than English establishment – with Wilkes etc. honouring this acceptance in the breach rather than in the observance. However, there is a failure to discuss the notion of internalised patriotism outside the context of anti-Scottishness. Perceptions of political and constitutional corruption, particularly with reference to the war in America (1775-83), created an arena in which patriotism could be constructed as a resistance to malign influences in Westminster and the Court, rather than to French cultural and religious incursions. Of course, internalised patriotism could and did draw upon the notion of an 'Other' – for example, by comparing the supposed 'secret influences' surrounding George III at the beginning of his reign with the perceived pattern of French despotism. Nonetheless, the critical emphasis of this patriotic mode remained firmly within British geographical and political borders. As Colin Kidd has written in his study of 'North British' patriotism, the Anglocentric nature of elite patriotic engagement in Scotland and Ireland during this period focused upon winning and preserving the rights and civil liberties of the English.<sup>52</sup> The emphasis upon internal political participation, rather than ethnocentric, anti-French conceptions of patriotism, underlines the polyvalence of the patriotic concept throughout the eighteenth century. It is for this reason that secondary analyses of nationalist discourse have failed to provide any adequately comprehensive explanation of eighteenth-century English and British patriotism. For example, Benedict Anderson's notion of the 'imagined community' in the nineteenth century, based upon disparate social groups forming a 'national' network of shared language, ideas and identity, may have some antecedents in the spread of polite discourse among the previous century's bourgeois public.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the production and consumption of satirical prints arguably played a role in disseminating and reinforcing aspects of public discourse. However, the fact that politeness – strongly associated with publicness – so often transcended national borders in this period undermines a potential causal relationship between the hegemonic status of the bourgeois public and the development of a national identity defined against a foreign other. Furthermore, the emphasis of patriotism on internal political rights during the eighteenth century, rather than on ethnic unity against an 'other', undermines the idea that patriotism was coterminous with nationalism.

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<sup>52</sup> Kidd, Colin, 'North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms' in *The Historical Journal*, no. 2 vol. 39, pp.361-82

<sup>53</sup> Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London 2006)

Where, then, does this situate patriotism in relation to the public sphere? As a significant strand of rational-critical debate, the concept of patriotism was clearly a primary concern in British public discourse, both as a guarantor of commercial stability, and as a key component of the public's identity. Patriotism was used as a legitimating tool, in much the same manner as politeness, for various 'public' projects; such as the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768. Interpreted as being synonymous with the public good, patriotic sentiment was as important as polite behaviour in the functioning of the public sphere's quotidian concerns; despite the potential for tension between the two discourses. Nonetheless, as with politeness, patriotism was manifested in ways inimical to the common concerns of the public sphere; and these were of course represented in satirical prints, fulfilling once again their double function as a prompt for public debate, and a visualisation of that which was beyond the boundaries of acceptability. In *The Patriot* (1:3, 1776), the concept of patriotism is located within the context of the non-bourgeois 'poor' counterpublic. The Patriot of the title is represented as a working man, haranguing other working people on the topic of his patriotic sentiment. The text inscribed at the bottom of the print is intended to be read as the Patriot's speech:

I am a Patriot d- me Sir and I will be a Patriot & what of that & pray G- D- me Sir what do you mean by asking my Reasons did you ever know a Patriot that could give a Reason – only D- me I hate every thing thats done by any body that could or would do good to their Country and so d- me Sir that's what we call Patriotism.

From this can be inferred that his particular expression of patriotism is aggressive, inarticulate, jingoistic and unenlightened – precisely the opposite of rational-critical debate and its abstract universal standards. Furthermore, in his vehemence the Patriot is shown to neglect his work and family – denoted by the figure of his young son pulling at his coat and uttering, in a speech bubble: 'Daddy I wish you'd let the Patriots alone & give my Mammy some money to buy a Calfs Head for Dinner for I'm sure the Patriots wont'. In doing so, the Patriot neglects crucial structures underpinning the bourgeois public sphere – namely, commercial interest, and the traditional patriarchal family structure – indicating that he is socially situated outside that sphere. Again, this reinforces the notion of satirical prints functioning according to two separate imperatives, simultaneously constructing the 'poor' Patriot as 'other' according to bourgeois, polite notions of class distinction and impolite, unpolished masculinity; and at the same time creating a discursive intervention in the ongoing debate over the propriety of patriotism and how it should or should not be manifested by a polite public.

## Print Culture: making, viewing, interpreting

*There is nothing new but what the pamphlet shops produce; however it is pleasant to have a new print or ballad every day – I never had an aversion to living in a Fronde. The enclosed cards are the freshest treason; the portraits by George Townshend are droll – the other is a dull obscure thing as can be.*<sup>54</sup>

Sir Horace Walpole to George Montagu, Esq., August 1757

This extract from a letter written by the collector and connoisseur Horace Walpole alludes to many of the issues and questions present in the practices of satirical print culture during the later eighteenth century. The status and, indeed, the very definition of the satirical print at this time was open to debate, as the cultural location of satirical prints as a genre straddled a variety of semiotic and social contexts. Considering Walpole's words as just one example of a response to the genre, it is clear that a number of systematic contrasts were manifested in and by satirical prints – hence, the focus of this thesis on the notion of 'dichotomy' as a central component of prints' construction and reception. Politeness influences not only the framing of the response in terms of pleasantry and drollery derived from the consumption of prints, but also its very form as a structured letter written according to the 'polite' conventions of the period, and integrating the topic of prints within that structure. Similarly, patriotism, and its associations with national and political identities, is expressed through the metaphorical use of the *Fronde* and a reference to 'freshest treason' to convey a sense of the controversial and disputatious nature of satirical prints. The very simple contrast between the apparent consensual formality of politeness, and the potentially chaotic nature of patriotism, belies the greater discursive divide between the two discourses which has been discussed. Before developing an analysis of how this polite-patriotic dichotomy affected satire's location in the bourgeois public sphere, however, it is first necessary to ask one simple but fundamental question. What is, or was, a satirical print?

The term 'satirical print' is both vague and problematic from a historiographical point of view, as it fails to denote the breadth of media, subject matter and humour practices encompassed by the genre. Indeed, even considering the 'satirical print' as a genre is problematic in itself, implying as it does a rigidity of definition that belies the liminal cultural location of such images on the borders between various structural and discursive contexts – for example, polite art and 'low' humour. Images which could be defined as satirical also operated in other representational contexts, such as fashion satires. Nonetheless, the concept of the satirical print has been used without substantial criticism or exegesis as a framing device for discussions of eighteenth-century humorous and/or polemical engraved images in contemporary and recent

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<sup>54</sup> Walpole, Sir Horace, *The Letters of Sir Horace Walpole*, ed. Peter Cunningham (London, 1857), vol. 3, p.26



scholarship. This tendency derives from the work of F.G. Stephens and, later, M. Dorothy George; whose endeavours in cataloguing the British Museum's collection of such images resulted in the adoption and somewhat indiscriminate application of the categories 'social satire' and 'political satire'.<sup>55</sup> As I will demonstrate, 'the satirical print' is a term of scholarly convenience, and anachronistic inasmuch as it was not used by artists, publishers, critics or viewers in the period 1745-84. It is, however, a necessary convenience, allowing current art historians to bypass the numerous contemporary descriptions for these style of humorous images ('drolls', 'caricatures' and 'cards' being but several); as well as acknowledging the genre's embrace of a variety of humour types, all of which can be related in some way to the category of 'satire'. In this thesis, the satirical print is understood to mean a print which provides public commentary, often but not necessarily in a humorous manner. 'Public commentary' constitutes both the publicness of prints' production and consumption, and the subject matter or topic of prints as those relate to issues of public interest and behaviour.

In attempting to understand what is meant by 'the satirical print', it is necessary to engage both with satire as a category of humour, and the materiality implied in the term 'print'. In dealing with the former, the use of satire as a key descriptor implicitly excludes (or at least marginalises) other, related but distinct forms of humour practice, such as parody and burlesque. In reality, however, any particular image categorised as a satirical print in this period, selected at random, would contain elements of parody, burlesque, the lampoon, scatology and/or innuendo. Though the category of satire is clearly relevant in terms of its Latin etymology of *satira* – referring, for example, to the scathing ridicule of Juvenal, or to gentle mockery in the Horatian tradition – its manifestation in eighteenth-century commercial prints encompasses a broader range of humour not exclusively concerned with attacking 'prevalent follies or vices [...] with ridicule or with serious denunciation'.<sup>56</sup> For example, *The Parricide: A Sketch of Modern Patriotism* (1:4, 1776) fulfils the satirical function of mocking a controversial political position of the day; that of supporting the independence of the American colonies from the Crown. Depicting a recumbent, semi-nude female figure in the guise of Britannia, being attacked by the allegorical figure of America while various pro-independence figures look on, *The Parricide* uses satirical irony to present a scene in which those latter figures – ostensibly gentlemen and public servants, such as Charles James Fox, the Duke of Grafton and the Earl of Chatham – complacently encourage the betrayal and 'murder' of Britain by its metaphorical colonial offspring.

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<sup>55</sup> Stephens, F.G. and George, M. Dorothy, *Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires in the British Museum*, XI vols. (London, 1870-1944)

<sup>56</sup> 'satire, *n.*' OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. Accessed 27 June 2012  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/171207?rskey=Kg69vp&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

Going beyond this immediate critical representation, however, it is possible to interpret *The Parricide* within a broader framework of humour, emphasising parody and burlesque, if one recognises the similarity between it and *The Death of General Wolfe* (1:5, 1770). In constructing a composition that directly references that of West's grand canvas (with Britannia in place of Wolfe), the creator of *The Parricide* offers his audience a parody of a well-known history painting, which uses its overt similarity to the latter to highlight the difference in circumstances between the heroic Wolfe, dying at the point of a British victory in North America, and the helpless Britannia, about to cede her hard-won sovereignty with the complicity of British political interests. In this case, the satirical image relates to the painting insofar as it constitutes 'a cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice.'<sup>57</sup> In addition to this parodic practice, *The Parricide* also engages with notions of burlesque as a mode of humour, referencing the elevated heroic and patriotic discourses encoded within West's composition and applying that compositional form to a scenario which depends upon 'low' violence, titillation and chaos for its resonance. In this sense, the ideals implicit in West's image, which was categorised by contemporaries as a 'history painting' despite its relatively contemporary subject matter and costuming, are simultaneously ridiculed and used as a means of ridiculing the subject of the print.

In a similar fashion, *Pug the Painter* (1:6, c.1757) is a 'satirical' print which relies more upon alternate forms of humour than satire alone. In this case, parody plays a role, but more important is the concept of the lampoon, or personal attack. The print is both a direct assault upon the abilities of William Hogarth, and a specific parody of his self-portrait *Hogarth Painting the Comic Muse* (1:7, 1757). It also pastiches the *peintre singe* trope developed by Jean Baptiste Chardin, which in itself was a form of satire mocking connoisseurial pretensions.<sup>58</sup> It represents a grotesque, simian figure engaged in the act of painting at an easel, in imitation of the original Hogarthian composition and denoting a comparison between the simian, and Hogarth himself.<sup>59</sup> Surrounded by symbolic and textual references to Hogarth's artistic practice, and criticisms of the same, this image explicitly functions as a lampoon, the humour of which is predicated upon the viewer's familiarity with the target of the lampoon, and their practice. Even elements of the image which might be taken as a more general parody of academic artistic mores – for example, the deliberately overwrought, dramatic 'history painting' situated on the easel – can be related directly back to Hogarth, the lampoon target, as criticisms of his work. In this instance, the

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<sup>57</sup> Dentith, Simon, *Parody* (London and New York, 2000), p.9

<sup>58</sup> See Chardin, *Le Singe Peintre* (1740, oil on canvas, 73 x 59 cm, Louvre) and *Le Singe Antiquaire* (1740, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm, Louvre)

<sup>59</sup> *Singerie*, or the 'dressed monkey' trope will be addressed in Chapter 4.

image-within-an-image upon the easel is a reference to Hogarth's various attempts at academically-sanctioned 'history painting', a genre he simultaneously attempted and parodied for its excessive formality and 'foreign' associations.<sup>60</sup> In particular, his last major historical commission, *Sigismunda Mourning Over the Heart of Guiscardo*, attracted significant opprobrium from critics and patrons (including Walpole) when it was exhibited in 1761. This, in conjunction with Hogarth's support for the unpopular Lord Bute, was the catalyst for Sandby's attack, rather than any desire to critique and/or correct a wider social folly. Ironically, this form of vicious personal attack was in total contrast to Hogarth's own conception of the 'modern moral subject', an approach to visual humour in keeping with the specific aims of satire (i.e. general social criticism aimed at improving behaviour), and with the polite belief that satire should not attack the individual without opportunity of rebuttal.<sup>61</sup>

The function and manifestation of humour in satirical print culture goes far beyond the conceptual limitations of satire as a form of humour-discourse. In attempting to arrive at some kind of understanding as to what constitutes a satirical print, therefore, it is necessary to examine the materiality of print culture; its physical forms, distribution and handling/viewing practices. Considered very generally, the material form of the 'satirical print' considered in this thesis is that of a single-sheet image, printed via the medium of copperplate engraving, etching or mezzotint; or on occasion a mixture of these media. During the period considered by this thesis, developments in the technical production of prints meant that the material on offer by 1784 was in some respects very different from that available in 1745. By the latter date, for example, the use of mezzotint had become commonplace in the production of social satire – and indeed, the production of social satire itself had become more commonplace. The many mezzotint 'drolls' published by Carington Bowles from the 1760s onwards constitute a commercially significant example of this new style of decorative, polite and gently humorous satire; which was generic in that it tended not to refer to specific social or political scandals, and self-referential in its representations of London commercialism and the social consumption of luxury products such as prints themselves. The painterly qualities of mezzotint and, later, aquatint, aligned the consumption of satires produced in these media with the emerging discursive space of the public art exhibition; while these exhibitions and the objects displayed within them constituted a field of reference for satire in turn.<sup>62</sup> In comparison with political prints, these new modes of social satire

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<sup>60</sup> Paulson, Ronald, *Hogarth*, vol. III *Art and Politics 1750-1764*, (Cambridge and New York, 1993), pp.42-43

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> The first public exhibition to have been described as such was that held by the Society of Artists in 1757; the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768 added impetus to this phenomenon. The satire/academy relationship will be explored in the following chapter.

were figurative and ‘realistic’ in their appearance, rather than emblematic. As I have demonstrated in discussing *Master Lavender*, these mezzotint social satires still functioned according to a semiotic logic – a referential matrix which I will discuss in more detail in this chapter’s final section – but this matrix had expanded to incorporate what Habermas calls ‘the lifeworld’.<sup>63</sup> By the end of this thesis, I will have shown how chronological developments in the production and distribution of satirical prints were both constitutive and symptomatic of wider changes in the bourgeois public sphere.

Of course, there were exceptions to the general concept of the single-sheet print, whether political or social in its subject. A significant number of images could be purchased together as part of a narrative or thematic series (for example, Hogarth’s *Marriage a la Mode*, or the ‘Macaroni’ images produced and sold by Matthew and Mary Darly). In addition, satirical prints often appeared as topical illustrations within news publications, appearing frequently in *The Westminster Magazine* and *Town and Country Magazine*; the latter being the home of the long-running *Tête à Tête* series of gossip prints. Prints forming part of a larger series, or incorporated within written publications, were dependent upon the circumstances of their context for their ‘complete’ meaning; however, this was merely an extrapolation of the contextual dependence of all images published within the parameters of satirical print culture. That is to say, all images, even if ostensibly produced to stand alone as a vehicle for a specific humorous, polemical and/or didactic statement, nonetheless functioned within a shared referential matrix consisting of allusion, symbolism and allegory drawn from a number of recognisable contemporary and historical visual sources. Before examining this referential matrix, and its role in the construction of meaning in images, it is necessary to examine the material distribution of satirical images, and how this distribution informed viewing practices, in order to understand how the structures of reference and meaning were created and shared among print audiences.

### **Satirical Print Culture and Consuming Practices**

The distribution of satirical prints – that is to say, their location of sale or hire, their price, their availability and their display – naturally affected practices of consumption and subsequent image-interpretation. Within London itself, distribution occurred initially via specialist publisher-

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<sup>63</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol.II *Lifeworld and System: a Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge MA, 1987) p.131

retailers, as previously mentioned. A number of print publishers (such as the Darlys and, later, S. W. Fores) sold only satirical material, with many of Fores' wares bearing the inscription 'Caricature Warehouse'. Most, however, sold such images in conjunction with other paper products, including books and stationery. The shop of Carington Bowles had 'Map and Print Warehouse' inscribed on many of its wares; similarly, that of Robert Sayer sold maps, charts and portrait reproductions in addition to satires.<sup>64</sup> This integration of satire within the wider arena of publishing highlights its visibility and prominence as an aspect of London's commercial culture and public discourse; as does the increasing presence of printsellers in 'fashionable' locations by the last quarter of the century. The economics and logistics of printselling have been comprehensively documented by Diana Donald; her work, and that of Tim Clayton, indicates a migration of sellers from the commercial precincts of the City and around the traditional publishing locale of St Paul's Churchyard, to the recently-developed aristocratic estates around St James's, Piccadilly and in Mayfair.<sup>65</sup>

This spatial shift also marked a cultural shift, as visual satire became absorbed into the network of luxury trades that proliferated in the fashionable West End. It was thus classed as a mode of entertainment and commentary sanctioned by polite tastemakers and by the political class, rather than as vulgar ephemera, and thus it more frequently represented the 'polite' concerns of this environment.<sup>66</sup> In this respect, visual satire functioned as both discursive and as commercial, making it in a sense truly public. Returning to the notion of the satirical print as 'public commentary', its increasing engagement with the West End oligarchic sphere marks the anchoring of political discourse and opposition within a commercial market. The opportunity offered by print culture to represent political persons and events enabled a reification of political activity; and the developing of a distance between those persons/events constituted a form of power reinforcement in relation to existing political structures. Again, this emphasises prints' carnivalesque role as a subversive, rather than inversive, 'safety valve'; expressing criticism of political persons and events in a manner that upheld the status of those same persons and events.

The relationship between prints and the public was predicated upon a mode of viewing which necessitated some degree of active engagement with the humorous and/or critical meanings constructed by, and encoded within, prints' composition. The process of interpretation and decoding was not unique to satirical prints as a genre of visual culture; however, the

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<sup>64</sup> Susanna Fisher, 'Sayer, Robert (1724/5–1794)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50893>, accessed 21 Jan 2013]

<sup>65</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, p.3

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

extensive use of allegory and symbolism, coupled with the overt purpose of satire as a didactic or polemical tool, rendered visual satire more open to the process of decoding as a conscious practice and a form of entertainment. As such, common viewing practices for satirical prints tended to focus around the shared and the social. The process of consuming satirical prints, whether in front of a shop window or by way of a portfolio hired for home-based entertainment, anchored public perceptions and understanding of contemporary political and social events; prompting discursive interactions through collaborative consuming practices. In a way, such prints actually anticipated ‘academic’ art in terms of developing a public presence, being widely available for sale and consumption in the decades before the establishment of formal public art exhibitions during the 1750s and 1760s.

It is important to recall that viewing was not necessarily synonymous with purchasing and that the accessibility of satirical prints was enhanced by display practices that occurred before and after the point of private acquisition. It is more accurate to talk of ‘consumption’, as this concept allows for a broader interpretation of how prints might trigger discourse. Whereas ‘viewing’ implies the physical presence of the consumer in front of the image, consumption allows the image to have a discursive impact beyond its spatial location – for example, in letters such as that written by Walpole, quoted above. It should be said that viewing does not cease to be a meaningful concept in relation to print culture, but its meaning is circumscribed to a specific aspect of consumption. To attempt some kind of chronology of consumption, it is first worth considering the importance of the print shop window as a location of transaction between print and audience, as the initial stage in the public life of a satirical image. The shop window, both in its physical reality and in its representation within prints, was configured as a site of cultural exchange: facilitating display, promotion, viewing and public commentary. Printsellers and publishers, particularly those who specialised in satirical images rather than other paper products, filled their windows with examples of their wares in order to advertise and attract custom. This in turn became a satirical trope in its own right, with sellers such as the Darlys commissioning representations of their own shop frontages, populated by a group of viewers and passers-by admiring the images on display. Of course, the commercial and promotional imperatives prompting the production of these images make it necessary to treat their claims of public engagement with a degree of scepticism; however, contemporary accounts of London street life do support the notion of the print shop as a kind of informal public gallery, open to even the least privileged members of urban society.<sup>67</sup> For example, Francis Place recalled his poor London childhood of the 1770s:

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<sup>67</sup> On the print shop window see Donald, *Age of Caricature*, pp.5-7 and Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p.235

At Roach's – in Russell Court where play books and school books and stationary were sold, Mrs Roach used to open a portfolio to any boy and to any maid servant who came to buy a penny or other book or a sheet of paper, the portfolio contained a multitude of obscene prints [...] and this was done by many others.<sup>68</sup>

In this kind of commercial setting, either in portfolios or window displays, the individual image was subsumed within the broader category of satire. It was presented for public consumption as one example among many of visual humour, in a manner that did not necessarily permit the kind of in-depth hermeneutical engagement that would normally be associated with the practice of viewing prints. The print shop window encouraged engagement with satire as a category of humour, rather than with individual satirical utterances; as such, these displays can be regarded as instances of satirical *langue*, with the individual prints of which they were comprised having the status of *parole*.

As window displays iterated the status of satire as a discrete genre, they simultaneously instituted a comparison with the public exhibition; a means of displaying academic painting and sculpture that developed during the 1750s and 1760s. This juxtaposition of 'polite' art practice and humorous imagery emphasises the liminal position of visual satire in the public culture of eighteenth-century London: integrated with the social locations and cultural behaviours that constituted 'politeness' as it was understood in this period, but simultaneously representing tropes and practices considered inimical to politeness within this integrated context.

This juxtaposition remains apparent in the various modes of display and viewing encountered by prints subsequent to their acquisition. Wall displays, hired portfolios and optical devices such as the zograscope or perspective glass all engaged with polite conceptions of discourse; locating the humorous print (and the process of decoding associated with it) within the framework of social and intellectual exchange that characterised the urban 'public sphere' in eighteenth-century London. Simultaneously, these modes of display introduced the frequently bawdy, crude and vulgar aspects of satirical print culture into this refined and idealised sphere, calling the cohesiveness and identity of the latter into question. Wall displays, for example, could be constructed in both public and private spaces, formally framed or pinned or pasted and mounted.<sup>69</sup> In public spaces, such as the walls of a coffee house or tavern, a display of satirical prints functioned in a manner similar to that of the print shop window in some respects, expanding the potential audience for an image beyond those who purchased it directly. Considering the politically partisan or profession-specific nature of many coffee houses and

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<sup>68</sup> Place, Francis, *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, ed. Mary Thale (Cambridge, 1972) p.51

<sup>69</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p.235

taverns, it can be inferred that the selection of images on the walls of individual establishments tended to reflect (and, perhaps, ironise) the preoccupations of their patrons. Furthermore, the importance of such establishments as locations of club meetings, formal debates and informal discussions, created a milieu in which satirical prints and other images on display became enmeshed in the wider context of public discourse as it unfolded on a quotidian basis.

Within the confines of the home, the wall display crossed the boundary between private enjoyment and public display; functioning as a mode of entertainment as well as interior décor, and thus a means of mediating between the privacy of the home and the public nature of socialising. Notable examples of 'print rooms', dedicated to the display of printed images pasted to walls, include those at Calke Abbey and Strawberry Hill, the latter developed by Horace Walpole c. 1750.<sup>70</sup> The urban homes of 'middling' merchants and gentry also maintained displays, mounted (or in some cases framed and then mounted) upon the wall of a dining room or parlour.<sup>71</sup> As in the public arena of the tavern or coffee house, not all images selected for display were necessarily satirical; and the limitations of communal 'taste' and 'decency' would in many cases preclude the inclusion of satirical prints that embraced pornographic, scatological or other offensive tropes. In this respect, the ideals and expectations of the public sphere played a role in filtering the discursive impact of the most scurrilous and 'low' satire. However, political and social print-motifs could also be displayed on household and personal objects, such as fans or ceramics. Objects such as fans, which functioned as elements of personal display and presentation, carried political discourse into a predominantly feminine and polite sphere.<sup>72</sup> Ceramics also held this potential, although their wider range of uses meant that they could alter the meaning of a print motif by way of their function, such as a punch-bowl decorated with an anti-Jacobite image, which might well have been used to toast and celebrate loyalty to the Hanoverian monarchy.<sup>73</sup> While political prints undoubtedly occupied wall space in some homes, functioning as constructors of the inhabitants' identities, this mode of display was more suited to decorative humorous mezzotints depicting generic social foibles, such as *Master Lavender Qualifying Himself for the Army* and others of the type published in abundance by Carington Bowles. Not only were such mezzotints prized for their decorative qualities and as a sign of

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<sup>70</sup> 'Antique Prints and Print Rooms' at the MusEYEum, Royal College of Optometrists [http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/museyeum/online\\_exhibitions/printroom/antiquepr.cfm](http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/museyeum/online_exhibitions/printroom/antiquepr.cfm) accessed 28 June 2012

<sup>71</sup> A reconstructed example from 1790 is displayed in the Geffrye Museum, London.

<sup>72</sup> For example, fans decorated with prints of characters from John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, which was itself a satire against political corruption, were a popular female accessory in the 1720s and 1730s. See McKenzie, Andrea, 'The Real Macheath: Social Satire, Appropriation and Eighteenth-Century Criminal Biography' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 69 no. 4 (2006), pp.581-605

<sup>73</sup> Satirical punch-bowl, depicting a copy of an anti-Jacobite engraving, 'Sauney's Mistake', 1785 (porcelain), British Museum. Produced in Jianxi, China, for the export market.



prosperity – being more expensive than most engravings – they also depicted the kind of generically instructive scenes deemed as a suitable form of humour by theorists of politeness.

The print portfolio, which might be hired from a print shop for the purposes of entertainment, occupied a similar position to that of the wall display; in that it was a site of public-private interaction and a means of representing status, taste and awareness of social discourse.<sup>74</sup> Unlike the wall display, however, the presentation of prints in a portfolio offered the hirer the opportunity to selectively view and share images representing tropes that were not ‘polite’ or ‘genteel’ – including the pornographic, scatological and grotesque. The portfolio theoretically precluded access to such images by those for whom it was deemed unsuitable, within the parameters of the bourgeois public sphere – namely, women, children, and possibly domestic servants (though, if Place’s account is to be believed, this exclusion was not practiced thoroughly). Ironically, while the portfolio enabled a viewing practice that was most explicitly concerned with entertaining and polite socialisation, it simultaneously offered viewers sufficient privacy and discretion to explore the liminality of prints’ location between the polite and the impolite.

Finally, the perspective glass, a device used to view images in three-dimensional aspect, was not ostensibly associated with satirical viewing practices. Images prepared and sold as *vues d’optiques*, with the perspective glass in mind as the intended viewing apparatus, tended to be topographical representations of notable locations in Britain and Europe; rendered in such a way that observing them through the angled lens of the perspective glass provided a ‘realistic’ sense of depth and space. The association of the *vue d’optique* with travel and topography, and its status as a private and genteel version of the itinerant peep show, located it firmly within the context of polite entertainment; while the association of the perspective glass apparatus with scientific display and optical manipulation denoted its application as an instrument of refinement and learning.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, this polite instrument could be used for viewing images that embraced humour discourse, again reiterating the liminal position of satirical print culture between the polite and the vulgar or ‘low’. There are, for example, a number of prints depicting topographical views of London which incorporate instances of satire in their composition and/or their textual accompaniment. *The Jubilee Ball or The Venetian Manner* (1:8, 1749), for example, is a depiction of Ranelagh pleasure gardens in Chelsea which purports to show a masquerade ball in progress in the gardens; the buildings and trees represented in a perspective consistent with that of the typical *vue d’optique*. This apparently neutral representation of a

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<sup>74</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p.235

<sup>75</sup> Whalen, Catherine, ‘From the Collection: The Pickman Family ‘Vues d’Optique’’ in *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 33 no. 1 (1998), pp.75-88

fashionable event becomes a humorous polemic when the viewer takes into account the verses appended below the image. This interaction of image and text, as explored by Peter Wagner, was crucial to the interpretation of ‘meaning’ in most, if not all, satirical prints; and will be discussed in due course.<sup>76</sup> For now, however, it suffices to point out that the addition of verse, caption or ‘speech’ bubbles could drastically alter the meaning of an image such as a *vue d’optique*, with its critically neutral stance and impeccable polite credentials, into a satirical, polemical representation of a place or event.

### **Creating Meaning: satirical language and interpretation**

Thus far, satirical prints have been considered from a structural perspective. The public sphere, while being a useful exegetic tool for examining the relationship between prints and particular discourses, is a historical construct applied with hindsight, and as such can shed little light on the particulars of print interpretation and reception. While it is beyond the ability of the historian to reconstruct the reactions of individual actors to individual images, it is certainly possible to consider the creation of ‘meaning’ in satirical images in a theoretical manner. So far, the consideration of satirical print culture as part of a social structure has been accepted without question; it is necessary to test this assumption using tools derived from critical theory relating to language and interpretation, in order to establish a hermeneutics of visual satire.

Language is crucial to understanding prints’ function in a historical context. Considering satirical images as ‘texts’, with each composition operating as a specific utterance, renders it necessary to consider how these texts are indeed structurally incorporated into a comprehensible satirical language with its own visual grammar and vocabulary. A heuristic approach would imply that the interpretation of satirical prints ‘must’ operate according to a form of shared, relatively accessible humour-discourse, in order for such prints to enjoy the broad commercial success that they did – after all, an unreadable or incomprehensible print was both a commercial and discursive failure. Examples of prints which ‘fail to mean’ will be examined throughout this thesis, and the space between their representation and readability will be considered as having implications for rational-critical public discourse.

It is tempting to consider satirical prints as historical artefacts of the period in which they were produced. An analysis of prints, produced on the assumption that all prints functioned within a shared framework of representational modes, would therefore offer a means of

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<sup>76</sup> Wagner, Peter, *Reading Iconotexts: from Swift to the French Revolution* (London, 1995), p.24

understanding the epistemic conditions of possibility unconsciously bounding the knowledge and actions of late eighteenth-century bourgeois society. This approach, however, rests upon a Foucauldian view of culture as ‘archaeological’: fossilised, static and reconstructable.<sup>77</sup> This ahistorical approach uses the notion of the artefact as a kind of clue in aiding the archaeological reconstruction of a past cultural moment. It fails to take into account the possibility of performance and of change within a dynamic cultural space – in this instance for example, the divergent and conflicting ways in which politeness was perceived and performed throughout the eighteenth century. Indeed, Foucault consciously distances himself from speech act theory, from which the concept of performativity is derived, claiming that the individual *énoncé* or statement did not constitute a performed speech act, but rather contributed towards the linguistic framework which rendered speech acts meaningful.<sup>78</sup> From this perspective, the print-as-artefact becomes a tool only for establishing ‘the rules’ of the eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere; and can offer no insight into the ‘lifeworld’ or ‘experience’ of existing in or near that social space. Furthermore, the notion of the print-as-artefact, stuck in the metaphorical soil layers which Foucault regards as constituting ‘the past’, implies that the meaning of a print is fixed and immutable, pointing always to the same ‘idea’ without the possibility of difference.

The anonymity of many prints’ makers, however, undermines the impulse to consider prints as having a meaning that is immutable, and transmissible without alteration to its audience. As Roland Barthes writes, ‘a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.’<sup>79</sup> This statement, which criticises scholarly attention upon ‘the author’ as a locus of interpretive activity, provides a basis upon which to examine satirical prints, many of which were produced anonymously and few of which were purchased in response to the perceived ‘genius’ of the individual artist.<sup>80</sup> The analysis of a large number of satirical prints in this thesis is intended to draw out what Barthes dubs the ‘variety of writings’ to be found in them, looking at the process of signification that was integral to the process of viewing and interpretation – or, in other words, looking for the sources of their tropes, symbols, allegories and other forms of humorous, didactic and polemical allusion. As has been shown,

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<sup>77</sup> Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London, 1972)

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Barthes, Roland, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London, 1977), p.146

<sup>80</sup> Perhaps the only exception, in this pre-1784 period, was Hogarth, and this is borne out by the attempts to read his work within the framework of literary criticism. See Paulson, Roland, *Hogarth*, III vols. (Cambridge, 1991-3). Later in the century Gillray was sufficiently respected to be regarded as an artistic ‘personality’ with a known political agenda. See Gatrell, pp. 267-68

these sources were frequently to be found outside the social and linguistic structures of the bourgeois public sphere (for example, scatological humour or representations of irrational violence); which points more to the cultural porousness and flexibility of the supposedly ‘polite’ society that constituted the public sphere, than to an implied incomprehension on the part of the polite public.

So, if prints-as-texts did not signify a fixed meaning that could be transmitted, intact, to viewers in a cohesive and consistent fashion, what was their status as texts, both from a linguistic perspective and a socio-historical one? To return to Barthes, it is useful to consider his treatment of ‘idiolect’ and ‘sociolect’, and their relationship to one another, in order to better understand the position of prints as linguistic utterances. For Barthes, texts exist within an ‘architecture of signs drawn from a variable depth of lexicons (of idiolects),’<sup>81</sup> an idiolect being an individual consumer’s collected understanding of lexicons, which are in turn ‘portion[s] of the symbolic plane (of language) which corresponds to a body and practice of techniques.’<sup>82</sup> By contrast, the ‘sociolect’ is the wider collection of potential lexicons from which individual idiolects are derived; conceptually having much in common with Foucault’s *episteme*. This seems to offer a satisfactory basis for understanding satirical prints as neither anarchic signifiers, nor as utterances existing within an arbitrarily fixed frame of reference; but rather as texts drawing upon a variety of cultural modes, and thus interpretable according to the varying cultural understanding (i.e. idiolect) of the individual viewer.

Inherent in this analysis is the notion that ‘meaning’ in satirical prints is not rooted in the image itself, but rather is the product of signification, itself in turn the process by which viewers observe and interpret the image. Here, too, it is necessary to be specific about ‘signification’ as a process, based upon Barthes’ assertion that ‘in the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled*, nothing *deciphered*; [...] the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced’.<sup>83</sup> This denial of absolute meaning is further explored in the work of Peter Wagner, who argues that the satirical image should be regarded ‘not as a sign (which would run aground because of its linguistic model) but as an intermedial fabric established by allusions.’<sup>84</sup> Wagner refers to prints as ‘iconotexts’, and considers them as ‘enunciations with iconic and linguistic backgrounds – with the stress on the “listener” making sense.’<sup>85</sup> For him, signification in satirical prints can

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<sup>81</sup> Barthes, Roland, ‘The Rhetoric of the Image,’ in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London, 1977), p.47

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46

<sup>83</sup> Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ p.147

<sup>84</sup> Wagner, *Iconotexts*, p.23

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24

never be complete, subject as they are to the Derridan notion of *différance*, or the ‘meaning’ of individual instances of allusion constantly deferred to other instances of the same.<sup>86</sup>

While the concepts of idiolect and *différance* are necessary to a theoretical analysis of satirical prints, it must be recalled that the interpretive process of the contemporary consumer was not engaging consciously with these concepts. Rather, the situation of satirical prints within the structures of the polite public sphere pointed to an expectation on the part of viewers that there was some kind of meaning to be uncovered – not ‘deciphered [...] not pierced’ as Barthes puts it, but revealed through reference to known events, persons and public behaviours. From this it is possible to understand the use of prints as a form of entertainment, with the emphasis on the reception of humour and the process of decoding as the key sources of that entertainment. Integral to these attempts to find and fix ‘meaning’ to satirical prints was the relationship of image to actual written text, in the form of titles, verses, captions and ‘speech’. Ostensibly, such text functioned as exegesis, even *ekphrasis*, as it made the ‘meaning’ of any given image apparent to contemporary viewers. Ironically, however, much of this exegetical text in fact functioned as counter-text to the primary image, in many cases anchoring the image in a series of allusive lexicons that would not be relevant or possible without the interplay of text and image. For example, *The Patriot* (1:3) signifies patriotic discourse primarily through the appended verses and speech bubbles that allude to the Patriot’s opinions and condition. The hypothetical removal of this written text would leave *The Patriot* as a representation of figures resembling ‘poor’ or working people, located in an uncertain environment, their relationships to one another equally uncertain. The image would not cease to signify, but it would signify in a different manner, and drawing upon a reduced range of allusive lexicons. Similarly, Wagner highlights the use of the *parergon* (or marginalia subordinate to the primary image) and ‘insincere rhetoric’ to add yet more layers of intermedial allusion to prints; citing as an example the use of sanctimonious moral language to add an air of tongue-in-cheek respectability to illustrated representations of aristocratic adultery.<sup>87</sup>

In trying to reconcile the theoretical analysis of prints as iconotexts, with the reality of eighteenth-century viewing practices, it is worthwhile recalling Bourdieu’s discussion of social interest. Bourdieu posits that social practices (for example, viewing and interpreting prints) can be viewed as ‘games’, and that as games, they have stakes and outcomes that prompt interest. To participate in the game is to be located within the *habitus*, or system of dispositions and

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<sup>86</sup> Derrida, Jacques, ‘Différance’ in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, IL, 1982)

<sup>87</sup> Wagner, *Iconotexts*, p.97

behaviours that are acquired from existing within the objective conditions of the field of culture.<sup>88</sup> Within the *habitus*, social practices – or ‘game participation’ – are not consciously artificial on the part of the participant; rather, as Bourdieu remarks, ‘social games are games that are forgotten *qua* games, [...] the product of a relation of ontological complicity and the objective structures of social space.’<sup>89</sup> That is to say, print consumers engaging in the processes of purchasing, display and shared interpretation were functioning within the linguistic and behavioural rules of the discursive sphere. These rules consisted of the sociolects and intermedial allusions which comprised satirical signification. Having entered the game unconsciously – that is to say, having forgotten that their interpretation is a game, rather than being unconscious of the interpretive process – the viewer simultaneously directs their powers of interpretation at the elucidation of fixed meaning(s), and at the same time is unwittingly constrained by their own idiolect, their ability to recognise different intermedial allusions constrained by conditions of possibility. With reference to satirical prints, this notion of ‘the game’ can be seen as a way of understanding the space between prints-as-performance, both in terms of what they represent and how they are consumed; and prints-as-discourse. This thesis aims to demonstrate, with reference to politeness and patriotism within the framework of the bourgeois public sphere, that satirical prints could both inhabit and represent the dichotomy between discourse as a structure, and discourse as it was performed and as it pertained to individual experience.

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<sup>88</sup> Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, trans. Randall Johnson (Stanford, CA, 1998), p.77

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### IMPOLITE INTERVENTIONS? SATIRE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ACADEMY, 1740-1784

The history of public image-making in eighteenth-century London is dominated by two narratives: that of the academy, and that of the satirical print. At first glance, these narratives appear to have nothing in common other than a shared public that was itself disparate and ill-defined. The academy, particularly the Royal Academy (established 1769), introduced the aesthetic hierarchy and representative practices of a cultural and economic ‘elite’ to a broader public. This latter was predominantly bourgeois in composition, and ostensibly ‘polite’ in its values and material consumption – which is to say that it embraced an idealised mode of social interaction which placed a premium upon external comportment and a kind of paradoxically structured informality.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, satirical print culture was a commercial enterprise rooted in atavistic and carnivalesque practices; its success ensured by appealing to public demands for grotesque humor, mockery and political diatribe. The demands of this public, and the polite values of the academy’s public, seem to be at odds with one another. As Jonathan Conlin remarks: “The world of renowned aesthete and art collector Horace Walpole has indeed seemed far removed from that of the demagogue John Wilkes, the leering rake captured in William Hogarth’s caricature of 1763.”<sup>2</sup>

The notion of multiple publics in eighteenth-century London is a valid one, as this chapter will demonstrate; however, this pluralism should not be mistaken for discreteness. Rather, multiple publics overlapped one another in their cultural practices, discourse, and frames of semiotic reference. It is therefore possible – and legitimate – to investigate the idea that two modes of image-making so apparently different from each other were, in fact, consumed and critiqued by individuals located within multiple publics. This chapter focuses upon the reciprocal relationship between satirical and academic modes of image-making, and the role played by that relationship in the emergence of an English public sphere. To date, historians of the academy – and the Academy – have overlooked the presence of satirical art in the same sphere; perhaps unconsciously absorbing some of the academy’s own hierarchical prejudices against ‘low’

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<sup>1</sup> Langford, Paul, ‘The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness’ in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (1997), pp.311-331

<sup>2</sup> Conlin, Jonathan, ‘High Art and Low Politics: A New Perspective on John Wilkes’ in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 64 no. 3 (2001), pp.357-81

imagery.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, historians of satirical print culture have paid minimal attention to the influence of academic practice on satirical output; with the partial exception of Diana Donald.<sup>4</sup> Donald has examined the aspects of the relationship between satirical and academic art after 1780, with an emphasis on antiquity and classical tropes. However, no broad scholarly synthesis of satirical interventions in public, polite art has yet been developed – which this chapter aims to rectify.

Satirical prints engaged with the academy and its visual output in two ways of importance to the argument of this chapter. First, and primarily, they characterised the academy and its art as symbolic of absolutist cultural control and foreign artistic influence. Second, and in some sense paradoxically, given this primary animus, they characterised the academy and its art as symbolic of institutionalised national publicness and thus of valid liberal and patriotic intentions. These can be further divided into two representative topics: the academic institution itself as satirical subject, and the satirical appropriation of academic techniques and tropes. This chapter focuses primarily on the latter – though there is a large and interesting body of satirical prints relating specifically to the formation and practices of the Royal Academy, addressed here in relation to publicness, which deserves future attention as a discrete corpus of images. Satirical prints regularly appropriated allegorical figures, tropes and subjects from contemporary academic art, and from the art of ‘old Masters’; and can therefore be seen as replicating the academy’s function as a framework for disseminating didactic images. However, satire depended upon and energised a symbolic field of reference beyond the academic, i.e. the grotesque and carnivalesque.

### **The Academy as Satirical Subject**

An early representation of the Royal Academy (RA), *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Painting in the Year 1771* (2:1, 1772), offers a view of one of the first annual Exhibitions, reconstructing the original ‘hang’ of the paintings, as well as an imagined audience. In this respect, it can be related to the concept of *mise en abyme* as formulated by André Gide: ‘in a work of art I rather like to find transposed, on the scale of the characters, the very subject of that work’.<sup>5</sup> Gide’s conception of *mise en abyme* was specific, locating a recursive replica of an artwork – be it a novel, a painting or a play – within itself. Its development as a critical tool by Lucien Dällenbach and, later, by Mieke Bal, has broadened it into a means of analysing representations of the

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<sup>3</sup> The term ‘academy’ is used generally; however, when capitalised (‘Academy’) it refers specifically to the RA.

<sup>4</sup> Donald, Diana, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT & London, 1996)

<sup>5</sup> Gide, André, *Journals: Vol. I 1889-1913*, ed. and trans. Justin O’Brien (Illinois, 2000), p.29



representational process, rather than the literal reproduction in miniature of a work within a work. As Dällenbach states ‘*mise en abyme* is any internal mirror reflecting the narrative as a whole by simple, repetitive or specious duplication.’<sup>6</sup> Bal expands upon this, invoking ‘*la puissance du sujet narrant, puissance qui paraît s’accroître quand le sujet se dédouble.*’<sup>7</sup> In this respect, it is possible to see *The Exhibition* as a representation of behaviours clustered around looking at art; a representation which itself would have been subject to the same behaviours. The acts of looking at art, discussing art, and the performance of different roles and identities completely or partially predicated upon a relationship with art (the connoisseur, for example) – all of these acts are encoded into this image, both as possible responses and as mimesis. The idea of *mise en abyme* is crucial to prints’ satirical function – particularly prints relating to art as commodity and discursive subject, as it enables self-reflexivity on the part of the viewing public. In so doing, it provokes the questioning of dominant narratives of academic worth and the hierarchy of artistic genres inscribed into academic teaching and presentation.

Returning to *The Exhibition*: the satirical slant of this image does not present itself to casual observation: however, upon examination it becomes apparent that the audience is composed of stock figures – such as the aristocrat, the old crone, the flirtatious woman and the vulgar ‘cit’ couple – of the kind found in caricatures and mezzotint ‘drolls’. Holger Hoock has identified one of the figures in the crowd as John Wilkes (standing to the left of the fan-wielding woman near the center), and on the basis of this argues that this print symbolised an ideological victory for those who opposed the RA: either ‘Wilkes, the man of cultural interests, is being embraced by the ascending Academy, or [...] the radical opponent of monarchy is infiltrating and subverting the establishment which he despised as a Butean conspiracy.’<sup>8</sup> Wilkes’ presence connotes not only the impact of his own controversial reputation, but also, in a wider sense, the contentious relationship between academy and public. As the figurehead of a very specific subsection of the bourgeois public – composed of male, London-based artisans and merchants with an anti-foreign, pro-‘liberty’ agenda – Wilkes imposes the concerns of this group into both the physical and the discursive space of the Academy, with its display of artworks influenced by foreign aesthetics and thematic tropes that had their roots in absolutist representative strategy.

This imposition raises a question: if Wilkes and his sympathisers constituted a public, in that they formed a distinct discursive sphere of ‘private persons come together as a public’, in what sense did this sphere relate to that of the polite persons comprising the audience of the

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<sup>6</sup> Dällenbach, Lucien, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whitely (Chicago, IL, 1989), p.52

<sup>7</sup> Bal, Mieke, ‘*Mise en Abyme et Iconicité*’, *Littérature*, vol. 29 no.1 (1978), pp.116-28

<sup>8</sup> Hoock, Holger, *The King’s Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840*, (Oxford, Oxford Univ. 2003), p. 150

Exhibition?<sup>9</sup> Addressing this question requires a brief overview of the structure and aims of British academic art in this period, so as to better understand the polite aesthetic agenda with which the academy concerned itself, and against which critics of the academy directed their attacks. The notion of an academic institution dedicated to the study, practice and professionalisation of the visual arts was not unique to Britain in the eighteenth century. The relationship between the British academy and the public sphere, and the problematic nature of the academy's links to its absolutist associations, are relevant to understanding the relationship between academic art and satirical prints as critical manifestations of public discourse.

The first academy in London to be recognised as such by the contemporary art world was the St Martin's Lane Academy, established in 1735 by William Hogarth. Its structure was informal in comparison with that of the French *Académie*, with all members given a vote on the executive committee. In this respect, there was a parallel between the 'liberty' of the St Martin's Lane Academy, and the efforts by many of its members to found an 'English' school of art.<sup>10</sup> This highlights an attempt to establish an artistic practice that was not only divergent from Continental teaching models, but from Continental aesthetic values, including the hierarchical values ascribed to different genres of painting. This hierarchy originated in neo-Platonic discourse in sixteenth century Italy, and was formalised in 1667 by André Félibien, secretary to the *Académie*.<sup>11</sup> This formulation graded genres according to their moral integrity. Thus, the representation of still-life objects languished at the bottom, whereas that of Man – God's creation – flourished near the top. The only genre more elevated than that of portraiture was the 'heroic' or 'history' painting, which depicted mankind in pursuit of abstract virtue.

The St Martin's Lane Academy operated as a teaching institution and site of professional networking. It was not, however, an exhibiting society, and no body of professional artists collaborated for this purpose until the Society of Artists of Great Britain, in 1760. This body exhibited the work of many artists active in St Martin's Lane, including Francis Hayman and Thomas Gainsborough; but split as a result of disagreement over charging for admission to exhibitions. From this, the Free Society of Artists (those opposed to charging) emerged, while the original Society continued staging annual fee-paying exhibitions. However, dispute over the composition of the executive committee, and the resignation of several directors in protest, led to negotiations between these former directors and George III to establish a 'Royal Academy', in

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<sup>9</sup> Habermas, Jürgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, 1989), p.57

<sup>10</sup> Ogée, Frédéric, 'British Art and the Social World,' in *The History of British Art, 1600-1870*, ed. David Bindman (New Haven, CT & London, 2008), p.164

<sup>11</sup> Duro, Paul, 'Imitation and Authority: The Creation of the Academic Canon in French Art, 1648-1870' in *Partisan Canons*, ed. Anna Brzyski (Durham NC, 2007)

1768. Those who remained with the Society of Artists formulated their opposition to the RA in political terms, using the language of Wilkes and his supporters to construe themselves as defenders of liberty, and the RA as despotic.<sup>12</sup> The RA and its founding committee were themselves attacked in satirical prints (examples of which I will examine later in this chapter); emphasising the new institution's location within the framework of public discourse.

The RA represented artistic practice both as a commercial profession, and as a philosophical quest for aesthetic perfection. In establishing its own exhibition, drawing classes and lectures, it dominated the practice and interpretation of art in the late eighteenth-century metropolis. Despite its proclaimed Britishness, the RA emulated Continental academies in terms of organisation as well as aesthetics (both of which subscribed to distinct hierarchies), protecting its prestige by limiting membership to forty artists. To return to *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Painting in the Year 1771*, the material manifestation of the RA's prestige can be observed; in the paintings represented on the walls, and in the characterisation of the crowd. The scene is dominated by James Barry's *The Temptation of Adam*, reproduced on the rear wall of the exhibition. Barry's Biblical scene is congruent with the academic emphasis on 'history' painting, as are many of the other, smaller, paintings which depict classical scenes. The crowd observing the paintings also displays signs of prestige – for example, the central figure of a man holding a fashionable 'quizzing glass' to his eye and wearing a sash denoting aristocratic or courtly rank. These visual signs reference the situating of the Academy on top of a pre-existing artistic sphere which functioned according to the demands of a predominantly elite clientele.

Thus, the Academy continued in theory to promote the established aesthetic and social hierarchy that privileged the historical and the classical above the everyday. Despite these elevated concerns, however, the Academy of necessity engaged with commercial art markets. This in turn necessitated the Academy's exposing itself to the critical discourse of persons employed in, and adjacent to, such markets. In short, London's eighteenth-century art public was not coterminous with the polite public idealised by proponents of academic exhibition. While the practice of viewing exhibitions formed part of the polite, bourgeois public sphere, many commercial and private aspects of bourgeois culture were at odds with politeness and/or publicness (just as the public sphere managed to accommodate non-bourgeois cultures in many respects). The consequential social mixing found within exhibition audiences is perhaps best expressed, therefore, by an outsider to the English bourgeoisie, the French critic Pidansat de Mairobert. Speaking of the Paris *Salon* exhibitions, he claims that

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<sup>12</sup> Hargraves, Matthew, 'Society of Artists of Great Britain (act. 1760–1791)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press; online edn., May 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/96318>, accessed 2 July 2010]

'Here nevertheless is a thing to delight the eye of an Englishman: the mixing, men and women together, of all the orders and all the ranks of the state... This is perhaps the only public place in France where he could find that precious liberty visible everywhere in London.'<sup>13</sup>

Though de Mairobert characterises London as displaying liberty 'everywhere', it is clear that the forum of a public exhibition offers a particularly diverse experience in that respect. As such, satirical representations of public exhibitions emphasise the challenge issued to the protectors of academic hierarchy by the latter's choice to engage the public. The social mixing of figures depicted in front of print shop windows, such as that represented in Matthew and Mary Darly's *The Macaroni Print Shop* (2:2, 1772), and in *Miss Macaroni and her Gallant at a Print-Shop* (2:3, 1773), illustrates this challenge.

*The Macaroni Print Shop* offers a parallel to Brandoin's *The Exhibition*, by representing a crowd of prosperous men in the act of gazing upon a window hung with prints, resembling an exhibition 'hang'. The men in this image are, collectively, symbolic of the Macaroni phenomena satirised by the Darlys in a series of prints, and as such the print serves not only to advertise the Darlys' shop (the address is visible on the door), but specifically their satirical engagement with fashion and polite sociability.<sup>14</sup> Contemplating the parallels between this image and Brandoin's, it is clear that Macaronies are being mocked for their pretensions to politeness, and that their social activities can be mocked on the same terms. Thus, the construction of academic exhibitions as polite events ties them into the same critical framework of 'luxury', 'effeminacy' and national decline to which politeness was subject. Furthermore, the similarities between the Exhibition and this representation of a commercial enterprise (itself intended to function as 'promotional' material) grounded the practice of exhibiting within the narrative of commercial interest. By drawing attention to the commercial aspect of academic practice – the necessity for artists to sell their works and receive further commissions – exhibitions retained the potential to undermine the aesthetic and philosophical concerns of academic art by prioritising financial imperatives and 'popular' criticisms.

The commercial aspect of academic art is further alluded to in *Miss Macaroni and her Gallant at a Print Shop*, which depicts a couple in fashionable dress as the most prominent figures among those assembled in front of another window hung with prints. It is suggested that the figure of Miss Macaroni is a prostitute, particularly as the verses below the image refer to her as a

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Crow, Thomas, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (New Haven, CT & London., 2000), p.4

<sup>14</sup> West, Shearer 'The Darly Macaroni Prints and the Politics of "Private Man"', in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 25 (2001), pp.170-182

'Mistress'. Thus, the transactional nature of her profession and her relationship with the 'Gallant' are compared to that of images displayed for sale; implying that the practice of exhibiting art can be compared to a woman who displays her body to the (male) public for the purposes of trading that body for money. The gesture of her male companion, pointing to a print of a woman in similar clothing and pose to Miss Macaroni, underlines this commercial parallel. Furthermore, as the ability of the prostitute to adorn herself with fashionable clothing comes from the success of her previous sexual transactions, so it is suggested that the artist who exhibits his work for money and fame is again susceptible to undue influence from public demands.

A related reading of *Miss Macaroni* connects the figures in the print, not to academic artists, but to their audiences. It is clear that the creator of this image was joking at the expense of the satirical print trade. By identifying that trade with an audience of fops and whores, however, the obvious parallels drawn between print shop windows and academic exhibitions created a simultaneous parallel between audiences. Once again, *mise en abyme* plays a prominent role, highlighting the performative nature of the act of looking and its connotations by, as Bal puts it, increasing the 'narrative power' of the image through the process of doubling. Playing on the knowledge that a lord was as liable to purchase a print in a shop, as a successful prostitute was to visit a polite exhibition, these images mocked the claims of academicians that their exhibitions excluded the vulgar, uneducated or disreputable members of urban society. In doing so, they redrew the acknowledged boundaries of politeness, taking into account the porous nature of the concept and the ability of impolite persons to assume the external attributes of politeness (as with Miss Macaroni), thus turning politeness into pure performance, lacking the Augustan moral anchor of internal integrity and benevolence. The Exhibition as an artistic or even as a commercial venture becomes secondary to the social concerns of its audience, who themselves perform numerous 'transactions' of politeness, such as those of conversation, gesture, dress, observation and being observed. Thus, the Exhibition is located in the commercial narrative of politeness, which itself forms part of the critical framework of luxury and artifice.

In a related but separate critique of polite culture, the accusations of corruption and despotism surrounding the administrative practices of academies, particularly the Royal Academy, were not immune from satirical intervention. The establishment of the Academy, and the organisation of its membership and executive structures, was subject to extensive criticism by artists and political commentators alike. In part a result of the Academy's royal sponsorship, and in part a result of the strategy employed in order to secure this sponsorship, the Academy was construed by many contemporary commentators as the pet project of a despotic King, given

impetus and structure by the machinations of petty tyrants seeking preferment. The controversy surrounding the Academy's establishment was publicly aligned with Wilkes' anti-monarchical polemics, coming at a time shortly after the latter's election as MP for Middlesex and subsequent imprisonment for obscenity. The so-called St George's Fields Massacre, occurring after troops fired on a crowd protesting Wilkes' imprisonment, was construed by him and his acolytes as the manifestation of a tyrannical monarchy desperate to preserve its absolute ascendancy over a people hungry for liberty; the same narrative pattern could easily be transposed onto the establishment of the Royal Academy. Indeed, much of the symbolic content evident in general anti-monarchical and anti-Bute prints of the 1760s is visible in satires alluding specifically to the Academy.

A satire entitled *The Secret Council of the Heads* (2:4, 1768) purports to show the founding members of the Royal Academy meeting at the Turk's Head Tavern, discussing the advantages and preferment they may expect as Fellows of the new institution. An abundance of speech bubbles convey the thoughts of the various members, most of which focus upon said advantages, such as 'We conductors shall certainly be made professors and have good salleries,' and 'I hate a luke warm Chairman. I'll mount the Rostrum & give new spirit to the Cause,' the latter uttered by a figure representing Reynolds. A few figures express concern for the secrecy of the discussions ('Should we not send to the rest, to come & consent to this?'), or dissent from the desire for advantage ('I think they seem not to have sence enough to know what they are about'), giving voice to the implied critical 'message' of the print. Three face-masks hang upon the wall of the tavern, labelled 'Unanimity,' 'Candour,' and 'Disinterestedness,' respectively; the three are superseded by the motto 'To be used Occasionally'. The presence of the masks recalls the practice of masquerading, and the virtuous qualities associated with these masks reinforce the stereotype of polite behaviour as a 'mask', assuming the outward appearance of morality and integrity without practicing it. Another mask, or head, represented in this image is that of a moustachioed, turbaned man with a crescent surmounting his headgear. At first glance this vignette identifies the location of the scene as the Turk's Head Tavern; however, it also associates this image with a later one, *Ecce Homo* (2:5, 1779), which depicts George III in similar Turkish headgear and dress, imputing that he is an 'Oriental' tyrant. Despite these overt references to implicitly unpatriotic despotic despotism and knowing artifice, one of the figures in the crowd states that 'We cannot fail now of having a public Accademy'. This creates an ironic alignment between the Academy as an institution operating in the public sphere, wearing the masks of 'unanimity, candour and disinterestedness', and the Academy as an apparatus of royal representative publicness.

This satirical engagement with the relationship between the Academy and the public sphere is further elaborated in *The Usurping Professor in the Chair* (2:6, 1768). Representing the same event as that depicted in *The Secret Council of the Heads*, this image focuses upon the differences of opinion between the founders of the Academy and their former colleagues in the Society of Artists. Again, Reynolds is located as the central figure in the scene, both literally and metaphorically, as his utterances encapsulate the supposed attitude of the Academy founders to their detractors: ‘The paper now signing is not of any business belonging to the Society [of Artists],’ and ‘As to the Question [of who should belong to the Academy], I as Chairman have a right to put what Question I please and I will.’ By turning away from the Society of Artists in pursuit of royal patronage, it is implied that Reynolds and his supporters have eschewed the support of the bourgeois public sphere, who were the intended audience of the Society’s original exhibitions, in favour of upholding the representative publicness of George III. Again, they have embraced artificial politeness in order to carry their point, as one figure remarks, ‘What a Lye is the Chairman.’ The ostensible intention of the Academy’s founders, to obtain royal patronage as a means of raising the professional status of artists and encouraging high-mindedness among them, is construed in this and in the previous image as a scramble for advantage and ennoblement by duplicitous and undemocratic means. The insidiousness of the founders’ actions is highlighted, in both prints, by the location of their discussions in a convivial tavern setting; contrasting the manifestations of benevolent masculine sociability so important to ‘true’ politeness, with the discussion and machinations, of those persons supposedly involved in duplicitousness and unpatriotic despotism. The point is further emphasised, in *The Usurping Professor*, by the depiction of Satan above the chair of Reynolds, offering assistance to the Academy. It should be noted that the Devil was often represented as attending the King or, more commonly, Lord Bute, in previous ‘Wilkesite’ satires, reinforcing the connection between criticism of the Royal Academy, and broader contemporary narratives of despotism.

The remark uttered by Satan, that he would ‘hang [...] on the hooks’ any artists who continued to exhibit with the Society of Artists, is not only an indicator of animosity between the two bodies, but an important reference to the effect of satirical intervention in the Royal Academy’s politics. Within the boundaries of the print, a number of hooks are represented on the rear wall of the tavern, one occupied by the figure of a painter hanging ignominiously by his coat-tails, the others left empty but reserved for specific occupants. This composition at once recalls the ‘hang’ of an exhibition, with the artist standing proxy for his work to be subject to scrutiny and criticism. This arrangement of exhibit-like hooks also recalls the importance of the spatial relationship between different works on display in any one Exhibition, which, Mark

Hallett has argued, was indicative of the social status of the subject of a work, and participated in social narratives beyond the parameters of the exhibition space.<sup>15</sup> In satirical terms, this ‘hanging’ of recalcitrant artists, recalling not only public exhibitions but also public executions, treats the examination of the Royal Academy’s practices and organisation as if it was itself an object to be exhibited and critically examined by a crowd seeking entertainment.

This interpretation of the academy as a performative site for professional artists – rather than for the exhibition-visiting polite public – was an obvious subject for contemporary satirical artists, whose works represented the institutions of the public sphere as a kind of urban theatre. This style of representation is given its most literal rendering in *A Scene in a Pantomime Entertainment Recently Exhibited* (2:7, 1768), which imagines the controversy over the establishment of the Royal Academy as a theatrical performance, complete with stage, audience and costumes. The composition of the scene also recalls the composition of many classical history paintings, thus equating the theatrical nature of the Academy with that of the style of painting it espoused; and, perhaps, making an imputation of artifice and transience with regard to both. At the centre of this image, the leading supporters and figures in the establishment of the Academy are imagined as the heads of a Hydra, including Hogarth, Samuel Johnson and Benjamin West, while the main trunk of the former is labelled ‘These are No Body’. The heads emit speech-bubbles denoting their viewpoints (such as ‘I shall be a Professor and have a good Salary,’ and ‘Oh! Spare the Politer Arts!’), while the Hydra is driven back by anti-Academicians brandishing swords and a palette-as-shield. One head has been lopped from the Hydra, that of a turbaned Turk. Next to it is inscribed the motto ‘Silenc’d’, implying that the dissenting voices of those artists not wishing to form a Royal Academy were ignored by those who met at the Turk’s Head Tavern with the intention of creating it.

To return to the classical implications of the Hydra, it would appear that this image focuses on the aesthetic aspects of the Academic controversy, rather than its political or constitutional associations. It configures the controversy as one between ‘ancients’ (supporters of the Academy, and of its history-painting agenda), and ‘moderns’ (supporters of a distinct ‘English’ style of painting, free from Continental influence), as evinced by the utterance of the figure driving back the Hydra with a sword: ‘I’ll do for the Moderns’. One of the figures in the theatrical box to the right of the stage also states: ‘By G\_d this is a fine Exhibition, but those Moderns want keeping.’ This framework of opposition recalls the literary ‘Battle of the Ancients

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<sup>15</sup> Hallett, Mark, ‘Reading the Walls: Pictorial Dialogue at the British Royal Academy’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 37 no. 4, pp.581-604



and Moderns' fought at the end of the previous century, and Jonathan Swift's *The Battle of the Books* (1707). By focusing on the aesthetic arguments surrounding the Academy, and the theatrical nature of its practices, *A Scene in a Pantomime Entertainment* locates the Academy within the public sphere as a form of entertainment, rather than as an explicitly political institution. To an extent, there is some justice in this interpretation, given the self-aggrandising reputation of its President, Reynolds; his self-portraits helping to cultivate a 'gentlemanly' persona, and his annual *Discourses* forming a polite spectacle, as well as an aesthetic agenda.

### Satirising Genres: history painting and genre scenes

An ironic parallel existed between academic history painting and 'social' satirical scenes such as *Miss Macaroni*, in that both sought to depict subjects that were simultaneously extreme and generic. As the exponent of history painting was 'desirous to raise and improve his subject [by] no other means than by approaching it to a general idea,'<sup>16</sup> for the moral benefit of his audience, so too was the satirical artist anxious to represent the worst follies and failings of *his* audience, by producing generalised humorous scenes. History painting was a fertile source of inspiration to satirical artists, as conscious emulation of such images not only skewered the polite pretensions of academic artists, but paradoxically heightened the status of satirists, by highlighting the familiarity of the latter with the iconography and practices of polite art.

Before examining specific parodic images, it is worth considering the broader influence of historical iconography on satirical prints. The deliberate use of allegorical figures such as 'Liberty', and of characters from classical and Biblical narratives, imbued satirical images with didactic purpose. This suggests that the audience for these images was a politely educated one, conversant with classical history and literature. This polite public echoes the composition of the ideal audience for academic exhibitions; which was anxious to derive moral instruction from images. The obvious difference between the two modes of application – satirical and academic – was that the former sought to introduce covert humor and titillation alongside moral didacticism. Furthermore, the notion that satirical prints' employment of historical iconography restricted their interpretation to the 'politely' educated is undermined by the possibility of prints being understood on a more immediate, less textually involved level by those lacking classical and historical knowledge.

By introducing academic iconography to satirical prints, artists significantly manipulated the academic sign-system. Derived from a historical/mythological *langue*, the

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<sup>16</sup> Reynolds, Sir Joshua, *Seven Discourses on Art*, ed. Henry Morley (London, 1901) <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2176/2176-h/2176-h.htm>, accessed 20 August 2010

satirical uses of academic symbols and allusions (that is to say, instances of *parole*) removed these allusions from their heroic context for the purposes of humour and incongruity. This was accomplished through inclusion and, in many cases, allusion. With regard to the former, for example, an early Gillray entitled *Apollo and the Muses Inflicting Penance on Dr Pomposo Round Parnassus* (2:8, 1783) contrasts the graceful figures of the god and his Muses with that of Samuel Johnson, imagined as ‘Dr Pomposo’, who is represented as an obese figure, shirtless and in dunce-cap. The physical dissonance between the Muses and Pomposo mirrors the disconnect between the generic ideal of academic art, and the grotesque realism of satire and caricature, removing Pomposo from the polite public sphere to the realm of the carnivalesque. More pertinent to the message of the print, which was intended as a criticism of Johnson for his own remarks in his *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779-81), is the connotation of the mythological figures as arbiters of cultural excellence. Their persecution of him is the ultimate critique that can be offered by the polite public sphere, in the form of a ‘public’ print, for it carries the authority of that sphere’s cultural engagement with classicism as an aesthetic, political and moral discourse, and raises the tone of criticism from the commercial to the abstract and mythological.

The benefit of abstraction and authority conferred by the instances of academic classicism in satire could be used in order to support the subject of a print, as well as to criticise. In *John Wilkes Esq. Making his Defence Before Britannia and Liberty* (2:9, 1763), the inclusion of ‘Liberty’ and ‘Britannia’ as allegorical figures allows the artist of this image to clearly convey support for Wilkes’ actions, who is represented defending his publication of the inflammatory ‘Number 45’ issue of *The North Briton* to these figures. Again, the homogeneity and physical ‘perfection’ of the allegorical figures mirrors the preoccupation of historical and *gusta grande* painters with emphasising didacticism at the expense of physical singularity. Furthermore, by associating Wilkes with these generic figures, the creator of this image references the cultural and moral authority vested in abstract conceptions of liberty and Britishness, rather than establishing a potentially contentious association with a specific figure. Indeed, the inclusion of authoritative abstract figures can be seen as a means of neutralising the contentiousness of Wilkes himself by implicitly acknowledging the controversy surrounding the publication of the ‘Number 45’ (the very catalyst for publishing this defensive image in the first instance), and the incongruity between the rakish, infamous Wilkes and the two traditionally virtuous female figures taken from classical iconography.

The exemplary morality of history painting was manifested not only in the inclusion of symbolic figures, but also in the deliberate comparisons drawn between contemporary social

behaviour, and well-known classical or historical texts. *The Modern Ephesian Matron* (2:10, 1772) is one such example of this, where the image owes little to history painting in terms of composition, but a great deal in terms of its moral didacticism. The scene depicts a woman in mourning dress accepting the amorous attentions of a parson or lawyer (in gown and bands), while her maid is accosted by another man. On the rear wall of the room in which they are situated, a framed picture shows a crocodile weeping, which implies that the insincerity of the widow's mourning stands proxy for the general fickleness of women, as expressed in *Othello*: 'If that the earth could teem with woman's tears, Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.'<sup>17</sup> The scene references both the contemporary style of humorous social mezzotints, and the earlier genre of 'modern moral subjects' as defined by Hogarth.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the representation of the widow and her suitor is possibly inspired by Hogarth's depiction of the Countess and the lawyer Silvertongue in Plate IV of *Marriage A-la-Mode*, which is an allusion, not to the iconography of history painting, but certainly to the work of an established artist with academic connections.

It is the titling of *The Modern Ephesian Matron* that locates the image in relation to canonical classical texts, thus emulating the practice of history painters by taking visual inspiration from such texts. The original 'Ephesian matron' was the protagonist of an episode in the *Satyricon* of Petronius, in which a widow, overcome with grief at the death of her husband and fasting by his tomb, permits a soldier to bring her food and (eventually) to seduce her. After a body is stolen from the site of a crucifixion that the soldier had neglected to guard, the widow offers the body of her dead husband as a replacement in order to save the soldier from punishment.<sup>19</sup> However, this image bears out the assertion that polite classical allusions did not prevent prints from being understood and enjoyed by a broader, impolite public. Familiarity with the *Satyricon* would have been unnecessary to the merchant who enjoyed Shakespeare at the theatre and possessed reproductions of *Marriage A-la-Mode*. The merchant or artisan's apprentice, who may never have looked at a Hogarth or watched a performance of *Othello*, would still be aware of the connotations of the widow's mourning dress and the attentiveness of her male companion. The moral of the tale, and of the satirical image associated with it, clearly centers on the supposed fickleness and lack of chastity inherent in femininity; thus, the satirical print fulfills a function prized by history painters, of presenting its audience with moral instruction by way of a historical myth or fable. Paradoxically, however, the satirical print derives its moral force from

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<sup>17</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act IV, Scene 1

<sup>18</sup> Bindman, David, 'Hogarth,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford Univ.; online edn. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/view/article/13464?docPos=1> first accessed 28 September 2010

<sup>19</sup> *Satyricon*, trans. M. Heseltine, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA., 1913), pp.111-12 and 229-35

the representation of ‘that which should not be’ and that which is to be avoided, rather than ‘that which should be’.

Of course, by depicting non-ideal behaviour, the satirical image also embraces the possibility of this behaviour being regarded by audiences as titillating and/or amusing, rather than strictly in the light of a warning. It is not a coincidence that *The Modern Ephesian Matron* derives from the *Satyricon*, the probable author of which was a close associate of the Emperor Nero. By contrast, the texts favoured by academic history painters as sources of inspiration were those that represented the classical world as worthy of modern emulation. Homer’s *Iliad*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and tales taken from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* were especially popular, as were episodes from the historical works of Livy and Plutarch. Satirical allusions to classical texts inverted and subverted the moral priorities of history painters, taking the concept of instruction through genericised representations of antique virtue and using this style of representation as a framework for critical commentary on contemporary virtue.

Beyond the framework of classical and historical reference, which served as a source of inspiration to both historical and satirical artists, there were satirical interventions which comprised direct compositional copies of existing academic paintings. The notion of ‘copying’ from another artwork existed within the academy itself, with antique and Renaissance compositions becoming familiar tropes in later artworks. The idealised physicality of *Laocoön and his Sons* (c. 42 BC, rediscovered in 1506), or *The Dying Gaul* (c. 220 BC) inspired the posing of figures in many academic images, again drawing upon the importance of generic physical perfection as a tool to promote morality.

One history painting which received a notable share of satirical attention was West’s *The Death of General Wolfe* (1:5), painted to commemorate Wolfe’s death at the moment of British victory at Quebec in 1759. It is interesting to note that, firstly, the original painting itself makes use of compositional emulation (the position of Wolfe recalls Michelangelo’s *Pietà*), and secondly, it is distinct from the classical style of other academic images of the period. The representation of an event occurring only eleven years prior to the image’s creation, and the controversial use of eighteenth-century dress, made *The Death of Wolfe* peculiarly suited to adoption by satirists, whose concern was the critique of contemporary norms. The controversy and publicity surrounding West’s image ensured that any reference to it would be recognised by a polite, artistically literate viewer. Two satirical prints produced after the exhibiting of *The Death of Wolfe* exemplify the use made of academic art by satirists as a tool for rooting their critiques in a recognisable context. The earliest, *The Parricide: A Sketch of Modern Patriotism* (1:4) depicts the recumbent figure of Britannia in place of the dying Wolfe, about to be stabbed by an allegorical

representation of America in 'native' dress. The second, *General Blackbeard Wounded at the Battle of Leadenhall* (2:11, 1784) purports to show Charles James Fox in the position of Wolfe, attended by political supporters proffering smelling salts and prayers. Both *The Parricide* and *General Blackbeard* are responses to specific political events occurring at the time of publication; namely, the American Declaration of Independence and the Westminster election in which Fox stood as a candidate, respectively. With reference to their visual relationship with West's painting, both images used *The Death of Wolfe* not only as a compositional inspiration, but as a tool for associating and contrasting their satirical subject(s) with the virtue and heroism conveyed by the painting.

Like *The Death of Wolfe*, *The Parricide* must be viewed in relation to British engagement in North America. The replacement of Wolfe with Britannia not only draws attention to the occurrence of the latter's 'death', but consciously inverts the heroic implications of the general's death at the crucial moment of victory into a scenario symbolising the defeat and death of British influence in North America. The officers surrounding Wolfe, also, are replaced with political figures known for their support of American independence. This image, in its capacity as a response to fast-changing events, overturns the stasis of West's composition; the clearest evidence of which is the breaking up of the 'W-shape' separating West's three groups of figures. Furthermore, the placement of the murderous 'America' on the left-hand side of the image implies that this figure replaces West's contemplative, kneeling Iroquois 'native', whose axe rests upon the floor. Vivien Green Fryd has noted that the presence and disposition of the native in *The Death of Wolfe* is connected to eighteenth-century narratives of American identity, which regarded the land as a place of uncorrupted, exotic nature, and its natives as 'noble savages'. Fryd argues that the native's place in the painting serves as a symbolic claim of British dominance over America, and his pose – itself modelled on Durer's *Melancholia* – represents an understanding that his people have begun their demise.<sup>20</sup> In light of this argument, it is possible to see the representative shift in *The Parricide* as the corollary of West's portrayal of dignified submission, with the violent attitude of 'America' in the former pointing to a belief that submissive natives would reject their submission if the influence of British colonial rule was removed.

It is also worth considering the relationship of the various native figures to the other, white persons in both images. West's Iroquois looks upwards to Wolfe, and is connected to his figure by the shared axis of their legs. In contrast to this composition, which implies a symbiotic relationship of mutual respect between conquered and conqueror, the female native in *The*

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<sup>20</sup>Fryd, Vivien Green, 'Rereading the Indian in Benjamin West's "Death of General Wolfe"' in *American Art*, vol. 9 (1995), pp.73-85

*Parricide* advances towards Britannia in an attitude of dominant menace. The physical connection between the two female figures is the arm of Wilkes (the figure copied from Hogarth's 'cross-eyed' portrait), which gestures towards Britannia in apparent encouragement of the attack. This necessitates a more complex reading of the shift from West's native to this, as the relationship can no longer be read merely as one of a people throwing off their oppression and becoming dangerous in the process. Rather, the shift needs to be understood in light of contemporary discourses on politeness and 'civilisation', and the connection between British intellectual notions of self-identity, and the so-called 'noble savage'. Wilkes' gesture of encouragement is a corrupting gesture, bringing America into contact with Old World political processes, and poisoning her natural harmony. It is implied that the concept of liberty, as defined by Wilkes and other 'Patriot' supporters of independence, has itself been corrupted, and that a 'natural' hierarchy (that is to say, a monarchy) is the constituent mode of true liberty. By extension, the practices and discourses of the Whig social milieu from which the most prominent 'Patriots' came were discredited. Politeness, already castigated by many critics as artificial, is implicitly cast as the corrupting influence upon the previously pure natives of America. By extension, the Patriots' artificial behaviour rendered their patriotism equally inauthentic. The point was reinforced in other prints published in the same year, notably *The Female Combatants* (2:12, 1776), which depicts a fight between a personification of America, again in native garb, and Britannia, the latter imagined not as a classical figure but as a woman dressed in the latest and most expensive polite fashion.

*The Parricide* makes use of *The Death of Wolfe* as a framework for discussing antithetical notions of virtue and artifice, referencing Wolfe's sacrifice in the portrayal of Britannia's death. This can be seen as an attempt to reclaim the concept of liberty from those who would use the term to reverse the gains made by Wolfe and undermine his role in a specific narrative of Britishness. *General Blackbeard* also references the painting from a political standpoint; however, rather than drawing a contrast between two opposing conceptions of patriotism, this print emphasises the difference between the two individual men at the center of each image – the patriotic hero and the unprincipled opportunist. Amelia Rauser has argued that the production of *General Blackbeard* was intended as a satire on the grandiose pretensions of West's painting, as well as a satire on Fox's failings as a politician.<sup>21</sup> However, the critique of Fox embedded in this print functions more effectively if the original image with which it is being compared is assigned the position of an ideal. By casting the dying Wolfe as the archetypal British hero, the moral and

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<sup>21</sup> Rauser, Amelia, *Caricature Unmasked* (Cranbury NJ., 2008), p.71

political failings of Fox are made manifest, and his representation in a pose modeled on that of Wolfe emphasises his comparative inadequacy.

The representation of Fox and his followers in *General Blackbeard* offers several conscious contrasts with West's scene, all of which highlight the perceived moral and patriotic distance between them. The very title of the print identifies Fox by the distinctive unshaven chin that made him recognisable in a variety of caricatures. The singularity of his appearance is at odds with the academic emphasis on depicting human physicality generically, and thus Fox's beard locates him outside the realm of the classically virtuous. Furthermore, the use of the name 'Blackbeard' associates Fox with the well-known pirate captain Edward Teach (also known as Blackbeard). This reference casts Fox in the role of a 'pirate', implying that he is opportunistic, greedy and ruthless. Thus, he stands in direct opposition to Wolfe who, as has been noted, reposes in a Christ-like position, emphasising his virtuous sacrifice. Fox is criticised as self-aggrandising, whereas Wolfe is a disinterested patriot.

The figures surrounding the recumbent Fox strengthen this comparison between the selfish anti-hero and the patriot. Unlike the men who surround Wolfe, Fox's companions embody characteristics that were considered antithetical to patriotism, strength and virtue. For example, the female figure kneeling directly behind Fox, identifiable as the courtesan Perdita Robinson, symbolises feminine duplicity and vice, looking upon Fox with concern while permitting the Prince of Wales to bestow amorous attentions on her. In more specific terms, her personal relationship with the Prince, and the rumor that she had been 'shared' between Fox and the Prince as a mistress, references the criticisms made of Fox and his circle with regard to morality and debauchery.<sup>22</sup> A similar symbolic function was assigned to the figures of Richard Sheridan and Edmund Burke, depicted kneeling before Fox in monk-like garb. Sheridan is shown with his hands clasped as if in prayer, and Burke holds a cup in a manner recalling Extreme Unction. This alludes to Fox's tolerance of Catholicism (only four years after the anti-emancipation Gordon Riots) and his embrace of cosmopolitan culture. The casting of Burke and Sheridan in these roles may also allude to their Irish origins, again connoting Catholicism. With regard to Sheridan in particular, his reputation as a writer of satirical plays and pamphlets (he wears a sword inscribed 'Satire') is another means of emphasising the flamboyant artifice inherent in Foxite circles. The representation of Perdita Robinson, again, can be seen as a reference to the theatricality and falseness of that circle, given that her initial contact with the Prince of Wales came as a result of her appearance on stage. Just as the demeanor of Wolfe's companions locates his death in a narrative of patriotic masculinity, the acolytes of Fox imply

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<sup>22</sup> Mitchell, Leslie George, *Charles James Fox* (Oxford, 1992)

that his fictional death is the result of a debauched and perverted mode of masculinity. Indeed, it is conceivable, given Fox's reputation, that his portrayal at the moment of death would call the attention of contemporary audiences to the metaphorical use of 'death' in relation to sexual climax.

Other paintings that enjoyed widespread recognition among London's polite public also underwent a degree of satirical adaptation and transformation. *The See-Saw* (2:13, c.1742) had a satirical legacy similar to that of *The Death of Wolfe*. Painted for display as one of a series of polite moral scenes in Vauxhall Gardens, including history paintings and 'genre' images, *The See-Saw* and its companion paintings – most of which are now lost – would have been among the most familiar of images to the urban public, prior to the staging of academic exhibitions. The painting represents a group of children sitting around, and on, a makeshift see-saw, before a backdrop of classical ruins. The girl on the lowered end of the see-saw appears to fall into the arms of a youth, whose dress implies a higher social status than that of the other children in the scene; provoking an angry gesture from a boy situated at the right hand side of the canvas. David Solkin has discussed the moral implications of *The See-Saw* in the context of grotesque imagery, on the basis that it represents the instability of any hybridisation of 'high' and 'low' social status. The representation of the see-saw constructs a metaphor for the dangers of 'an illegitimate coupling of high and low... the see-saw [raising] the undesirable (yet tantalising) prospect of one state sliding into the other.'<sup>23</sup> Solkin might have added that the action of the see-saw acts as a metaphor for the attempt to raise social status from low to high. In any case, the grotesquerie of *The See Saw*, in its implied condemnation of subverted hierarchy and its literal interpretation of 'high' and 'low', rendered it a visible and fruitful image for satirical manipulation.

As with *The Death of Wolfe*, *The See Saw* proved to be an inspiration for satirical artists working on Foxite topics and motifs, producing images such as *The Poll* (2:14, 1784). As an aside, this goes some way to bearing out Diana Donald's assertion that satirical copying of academic art did not become prevalent until the early 1780s – that is to say, towards the end of the period examined here – when figurative images began to supersede emblematic prints. While the most direct and obvious compositional emulations obviously benefitted from the trend towards a more 'realistic' style of etching and a move away from the use of coded emblems, multiple spatial perspectives and text- and speech-heavy scenes, it is clear that emblematic prints shared certain tropes with academic painting. Mutual reinforcement of emblematic iconography occurred frequently, and the trope of the see-saw or balance was a prime example of this reinforcement.

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<sup>23</sup> Solkin, David, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT & London, 1993), p.147



It is worth discussing, here, the broader relationship between genre scenes such as *The See Saw* and contemporary connoisseurial attitudes to Dutch ‘Golden Age’ art, much of which incorporated domestic moral allegory and emblematic representational strategies at the expense of aesthetically-idealised depictions of classical and Biblical history. As Harry Mount observes, this apparent preference led to accusations against connoisseurs and advocates of the genre hierarchy, that they could not and would not appreciate the ‘truthful’ nature of Dutch (and English) painting.<sup>24</sup> Connoisseurial opinion, on the other hand, castigated the Dutch school as vulgar, privileging the mercantile and the grotesque over the liberal and noble:

[T]hey describe the inside or outside of their houses, we have their own people engaged in their own peculiar occupations, working or drinking, playing or fighting. The circumstances that enter into a picture of this kind are so far from giving a general view of human life [...] Yet, let them have their share of more humble praise.<sup>25</sup>

This critique relates back to the public double-function of satirical prints, as tools used to both mirror and mock behavioural transgressions by public persons both specific and general. Even as it drifts away from emblematic representation and towards the figurative, English satirical print culture of the eighteenth century resembles Dutch genre painting of the seventeenth, in its representational strategies and functions. Hayman’s image – which lends itself well to satirical intervention precisely because of its genre status and Dutchness – drew upon the iconographic tradition of a balance representing moral status, and implicitly compared its precariously-positioned see-saw with the physically and morally stable balances of older genre paintings such as Johannes Vermeer’s *Woman Holding a Balance* (c.1662). It drew upon a trope that was already used by satirical artists as a playful sign of moral instability and of behaviour not matching expectations – for example, in *The Light Guinea, or the Blade in the Dumps* (2:15, c.1774) which takes the trope of the virtuous woman holding a balance and subverts it by transposing the virtuous woman with a prostitute weighing the coin offered to her by a client. The balance tips, indicating that the coin is false and therefore that the ‘blade’ (the client, whose sexual intentions are communicated by his phallic nickname) will not enjoy the woman’s sexual services. This print offers an ironic view of the commodification of virtue, which can be purchased at the right price, and which links back to the broader commodification of bourgeois public activity and leisure. Indeed, this subverted use of the balance, as a tool for weighing, counting and assessing

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<sup>24</sup> Mount, Harry, ‘The Monkey with the Magnifying Glass: Constructions of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Britain’ in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 29 no. 2 (2006), pp.167-84

<sup>25</sup> Reynolds, Joshua, *Discourse on Art IV* (1771)

commercial and spiritual value reiterates the connoisseurial perception of the ‘Dutch style’ as embracing an overt mercantilism.

*The See-Saw* reinscribed the balance, or see-saw, as an important theme in English painting, thanks to its visibility as a ‘public’ and ‘legitimate’ piece of art. Prints such as *The Poll*, *The Political See-Saw*, and *The difference of Weight Between Court and City Aldermen* all reference the balance trope in ways more or less related to Hayman’s painting. Of these prints, it is *The Poll* which bears the strongest compositional resemblance to *The See Saw*. It is interesting to note that both images are irrevocably engaged with London’s public sphere, and that both engage with that sphere in its broadest and most inclusive incarnation. *The See-Saw* was created as part of a backdrop for the supper boxes in London’s Vauxhall Gardens, which, while expensive and exclusive, were prominent enough to attract the observation of the less privileged revelers at Vauxhall. These latter, despite being charged a 6d entrance fee, were of sufficiently dubious reputation to warrant referring to them as an ‘impolite public’. Similarly, *The Poll* refers to the Westminster election of 1784, which, thanks to the interactions between socially prominent Whig supporters and the tradesmen and artisans enfranchised by the borough’s scot-and-lot system, also involved the mixing of social elites and non-elites and thus another kind of ‘impolite public’. The image replaces the girl and boy on Hayman’s contraption with caricatures of the pro-Whig Duchess of Devonshire on the right, and the pro-Tory Duchess of Gordon on the left. Both women campaigned publicly, speaking directly with voters; for which the Duchess of Devonshire received particular censure. Parodying the embrace between the girl and the well-dressed youth in *The See-Saw*, the Duchess of Gordon falls into the arms of the Pittite candidates contesting the seat, Admiral Hood and Sir Christopher Wray. Fox, the Whig candidate, stands under the elevated figure of the Duchess of Devonshire, again alluding to Hayman’s image in place of the girl who sits under the see-saw with arm outstretched. The use of Hayman’s image as an inspiration for this print serves three purposes. Firstly, it introduces the iconographic connotations of the see-saw or balance for the purposes of commenting upon the closeness of the polling in Westminster, and the ‘unbalancing’ effect that the candidates’ campaign supporters had upon the votes cast. Secondly, the see-saw associates its female occupants with the moral disequilibrium implied by an uneven balance, and the potential threat of a slide from their ‘high’ social status to a low one. Finally, *The Poll* plays upon the public and visible nature of *The See-Saw*, and its placement in Vauxhall Gardens, to allude to the comparably public nature of the election, and the impropriety of a ‘respectable’ female presence in that environment.

With reference to these three points, it becomes apparent that *The Poll* is a critical commentary on the situation of women in the public sphere, and the influence of politeness on

that situation. Its satirical effect derives in part from a comparison of the two duchesses with the female figures present in *The See-Saw*, locating the former in a context of masculine publicness to emphasise their objectification under a form of ‘male gaze’. Rauser has argued that the various prints produced in response to the Duchess of Devonshire’s involvement in the Westminster campaign sought to cast her as a ‘symbol of a corrupt and perhaps feminised aristocracy’ encroaching upon an electoral process that was specified as masculine and – in Westminster at least – ‘democratic’.<sup>26</sup> As the female figures in *The See-Saw* are contained within the space of a canvas, which itself was contained within a ‘super-box’ intended for use by paying patrons, they function primarily as ornamental, but with a secondary didactic role. In Hayman’s image, women – in this case, ‘poor’ women – decorate the spaces of a public sphere that is subject to the economic patronage and social sanction of elite and bourgeois men. This function was particularly apposite to the painting’s location, as it segued with the objectifying and transactional nature of gender relations within the context of Vauxhall (and, by extension, of polite urban sociability in general).

By comparing the duchesses to these female figures, *The Poll* seeks to undermine the ‘masculine’ autonomy that the former have assumed by taking on public, political roles. It plays upon these roles to metaphorically and figuratively ‘expose’ the duchesses: socially, as impostors in the public sphere, and physically, by representing both women with bared breasts. This latter trope emphasises the duchesses’ femininity, and thus their unsuitability for serious public engagement. The focus on femininity draws attention to the perceived immorality of the duchesses and, in conjunction with the ribbons and feathers that adorn their figures, suggests that ‘politeness’ in the artificial and feminised sense is incompatible with certain aspects of the public sphere. In placing them sitting astride a see-saw with a phallic pivot, the notion of immorality is being reinforced, as the women are positioned in a manner that ‘immodestly’ sets their legs wide apart and their skirts in disarray. The see-saw also serves to infantilise the women in its capacity as a plaything, undermining the efficacy and legitimacy of their campaigning. Ironically, *The Poll* heaps humiliation upon the figures of the duchesses by subjecting them to the same public male gaze as the women in *The See-Saw*, both within and ‘outside’ the print itself. Within the image, the duchesses ‘play’ in front of an electoral hustings packed with gesticulating men, implicitly shouting abuse or ribald encouragement. On a metaphorical level, the production of the print itself means that that the women’s campaign was open to an even broader public; thus, by extension, these women were able to be ‘purchased’ (another sly dig at their moral

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<sup>26</sup> Rauser, Amelia, ‘The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire: Between Caricature and Allegory in 1784,’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 36 (2002), pp.23-46

reputation). The treatment of the two duchesses in *The Poll* emphasised that, despite their wealth and high social standing, they were subject to the same economic dependence and social cynosure as the hypothetical ‘poor women’ of Hayman’s painting.

### **Satirising Genres: portraiture and the conversation piece**

Satirical engagement with portraiture, including individual portraiture and group portraits or ‘conversation pieces’, operated in a manner different to that of historical or genre scenes. While the aesthetic and narrative functions of the latter elucidated moral truisms, portraits were concerned with the construction of an individual ‘self’ or the social dynamic between a group of individuals. The specificity of the medium, however, made it ideal for targeted satirical attacks upon individuals; and the development of figurative satire and recognisable ‘caricature’ played an important role in the relationship between portraiture and satire. The contemporary understanding of caricature as a provocative, mocking method of representing the individual (from the Italian *caricare*: loaded, charged) relates back to the privileging of nature in the academic hierarchy.<sup>27</sup> The process of caricature, in its exaggeration of physical features and connection of physicality with character, was considered as true to nature inasmuch as it purported to expose and emphasise the unpolished – impolite – aspects of the individual. The academic understanding of nature as an aesthetic ideal, to be represented as harmonious, placed satirical caricature in ostensible contention with the fashionable and historic portraiture practiced by professional flatterers such as Reynolds.<sup>28</sup> The academic and satirical portrayals of public persons competed with one another in the construction of personae, as will be demonstrated. A caveat must be inserted at this point; namely that, while the personal nature of portraiture attracted satirical criticism of individuals, the related genre of the ‘conversation pieces’ did provide the creators of humorous social satire with general material for parody, especially with regard to the representation of bourgeois and elite domestic life, dress and social interactions. This will be addressed later in this section.

To return to satirical prints derived from individual portraits, it is clear that one characteristic remains constant between these and prints inspired by history paintings. In both cases, the satirical critique only gained its complete effect if the ‘original’ image on which the print was based was itself sufficiently visible, or at least well-known, by educated contemporaries. This qualification of ‘visibility’ did not demand that a specific painting be recognisable in a satirical image, but rather that a type of image was apparent in the print. This enabled the satirist

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<sup>27</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, p.9

<sup>28</sup> Postle, Martin, ‘The Modern Apelles’ in *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, ed. Martin Postle (London, 2005)

to draw upon the acknowledged meanings of traditional iconography, for the purposes of constructing a new, critical meaning. As an example, the print *Ecce Homo* (2:5), discussed above in relation to satirical intervention in academic organisations, uses contemporary interpretations of ‘Turkish’ costume to impute despotic and barbaric characteristics to the figure of the King. By depicting George III in profile, *Ecce Homo* clearly resembles Bellini’s celebrated portrait *Sultan Mehmet II* (1480), which portrays the Ottoman ruler in turban and robes. It also bears comparison with the *tronie*, or caricature portrait in the Dutch style, which insults the majesty and the dignity of the King by placing him in the category of the comic and vulgar. The stereotype of the ‘brutal Turk’ derived from a variety of contexts and sources, including travel writings (such as those of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu), reports of ‘Barbary pirates’ in the Mediterranean, and a construction of the Orient as an exotic and dangerous ‘other’ to Christian Europe.<sup>29</sup> By associating the King with this stereotype, *Ecce Homo* not only makes a direct critique of his ability to rule a nation vaunted for its ‘liberty’; it actually alienates him from the religious and racial/cultural conditions of his sovereignty. By casting George III as a ‘Turk’, the image distances him from the Protestantism and the (European) ancestry upon which his authority is founded. The Oriental characterisation also establishes a more subtle critique of the King’s authority and competence, by associating him with the predominantly feminine, French paradigm of ‘Turquerie’ portraiture popular in the middle of the eighteenth century. The depiction of elite women in artistic interpretations of Turkish dress, including pantaloons, robes and turbans, was a style of portraiture popular for its exotic associations and its ability to denote a degree of informality on the sitter’s part.<sup>30</sup> It was practiced extensively (but not exclusively) in France, with both the King’s daughter and mistress alike being portrayed in Turquerie. This, alongside the popularity of Turquerie as a masquerade costume in the same period, conferred associations of ‘female’ and ‘foreign’ behaviours such as decadence and artifice upon the wearer. The titling of *Ecce Homo* – ‘behold the man’ – is thus doubly ironic, as is the alternative title of this image, *The Patriot*.<sup>31</sup>

The effectiveness of *Ecce Homo* derives from its construction of the King as a ‘tyrant’, representing him as a character whose resonance derives from a collection of cultural and visual referents. In the sense that it was not compositionally derived from a pre-existing portrait of the King, *Ecce Homo* – or the character presented in the image – is an ‘original fiction’ rather than a parody. By contrast, specific portrait images held a particular kind of satirical potential; the

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<sup>29</sup> Colley, Linda, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850*, (London, 2003)

<sup>30</sup> Breskin, Isabel, ‘On the Periphery of a Greater World: John Singleton Copley’s ‘Turquerie’ Portraits,’ in *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 36 no. 2, pp.97-123

<sup>31</sup> BM Sat 5544

potential to critique the ‘public face’ of a portrait’s subject, and to undermine the self-image constructed by the process of sitting for a portrait. Satirical references to portraits did not always constitute direct parodies of the latter – rather, they might pick up on the visual clues to a sitter’s character as constructed through professional, traditional portraiture, and amplify and subvert those clues through the process of caricature. For example, consider the relationship between Reynolds’ portrait of Lady Worsley (2:16, 1776) and the mezzotint *An Officer in the Light Infantry, Driven by His Lady to Cox-Heath* (2:17, 1778). The latter, published approximately two years after the portrait, appears to integrate the visual character of the portrait with public knowledge of Lady Worsley’s reputation as an unchaste woman. Though it was produced before the spectacular ‘criminal conversation’ suit brought by her husband Sir Richard Worsley in 1782, Lady Worsley’s reputation was already sufficiently ‘damaged’ in the context of contemporary economies of sexual desire and status to warrant association with a print such as *An Officer in the Light Infantry*.<sup>32</sup> Reynolds’ portrait, displaying Lady Worsley in a red riding habit modelled upon her husband’s militia uniform, itself references the controversial fashion for female adoption of masculine, militaristic dress.<sup>33</sup> Alongside its companion portrait of Sir Richard in his matching uniform, the contentious nature of this garb is mitigated by the implication that it acts as a sign of Lady Worsley’s devotion to her husband and his public affairs. In *An Officer and his Lady*, however, the association between masculine dress and masculine behaviour is emphasised by representing a woman in similar scarlet habit driving a carriage at high speed while her husband – overweight, middle-aged and asleep – sits at her side. A mode of dress which, in a Reynolds portrait, is presented as a fashionable enhancement of the sitter’s physical charms and marital devotion, is re-presented and revealed as a sign of improper female behaviour. This satirical intervention, in turn, inscribes another semic value onto the original portrait; reinforcing the contentious implications of masculine dress for heteronormative female behaviour.

Nowhere was the process of satirical intervention more resonant than when it referenced an artist’s self-portrait; and thus attacked a subject that was ‘pure’ in its public construction, free of the possible perceptual disjunction between a portrait’s subject and its artist. It is for this reason that the satirical attacks on Hogarth towards the end of his career (partly for his support of Bute’s government and his animosity towards Wilkes, and partly for his controversial artistic practices) parodied not only his popular moral scenes, but his self-portraits. *Pug the Painter* (1:6) derives its composition from Hogarth’s *Self-Portrait Painting the Comic Muse* (1:7), while its title

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<sup>32</sup> Rubenhold, Hallie, *Lady Worsley’s Whim* (London, 2009), pp.35-37

<sup>33</sup> This will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

alludes to the earlier self-portrait *The Painter and his Pug*.<sup>34</sup> The print attacks Hogarth's opposition to the style of painting that would later be championed by Reynolds and the RA; that which privileged the representation of nature in a generic manner, and eschewed singular or 'low' subject matter. The text situated around the composition includes quotations from Horace: 'O imitatores, servum pecus' ('Imitators, a servile herd'), and the opening words of the aphorism 'Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque revenit' ('Though you may drive out nature with a pitchfork, she will nonetheless return').

*Pug the Painter* attempts to construct an artistic identity for Hogarth based upon notions of incompetence, hypocrisy and artifice. It takes the painter's objections to academic painting, and inverts this to cast Hogarth as a bad painter, incapable of achieving the visual perfection of nature. Hogarth's attacks on amateur gentleman connoisseurs, and his frustration at the privileging of Old Masters, are alluded to by placing the central figure of 'Pug' on a plinth engraved with the motto 'The Idea Box of a Connoisseur'. This animosity towards amateurs is mocked by representing Hogarth as an amateur himself, referring to his rejection of the 'Raphaelite' style and implying that this results from Hogarth's own lack of taste. Thus, not only is Hogarth a bad painter, he is a hypocrite for damning others while failing to recognise his own lack of taste. Finally, he is charged with artifice – the harshest accusation, for an artist who based a successful career upon representing the 'truth' of human nature. Hogarth's emphasis on truth is rewritten as a propensity for indulging in ludicrous images of the kind rejected by academic painters, by representing Pug working at a canvas that melodramatically depicts Moses striking water from a rock. As a final insult, Pug, the representamen of Hogarth himself, is a grotesque simian creature; conflating Hogarth's rejection of generic nature with the artist himself by depicting him as a singular and imperfect figure. Pug *qua* Hogarth not only practices an artificial and derivative style of art, but projects an artificial and derivative self.

The satirical preoccupation with artifice as an inevitable concomitant of politeness was also manifested in the production of a wide variety of prints concerned with mocking the materiality and physical or tangible attributes of polite taste; normally in the mezzotint medium. The conversation piece, or group portrait, formed an essential iconographic basis for this sub-genre of social satire, given that its success as an artistic format relied upon the depiction of materiality, and the association of a painting's sitters with the appropriate visual attributes of politeness. Mario Praz, dubbing conversation pieces the 'art of the bourgeoisie', cites the ability of the genre to represent the private spaces and property of the bourgeois public sphere

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<sup>34</sup> The BM catalogue dates *Pug the Painter* to c. 1754, however, the marked similarities between this print and *Self-Portrait Painting the Comic Muse* (c. 1757) implies a date of 1757 or later for Sandby's image.

(reminiscent of Habermas' 'private people come together as a public') as fundamental to its commercial success.<sup>35</sup> Crucially, as has been discussed, Praz also notes that the bourgeois incarnation of the conversation piece derives from a convention of aristocratic art in seventeenth-century Europe; that of depicting a family or social group in a private setting as a means of displaying personal, rather than political, tastes and attributes. The later conversation piece developed as a means of making private lives public, in the sense of commemorating family connections and the ownership of property to a painting's viewers. Family, and familial relations, were as important to the construction of politeness as the ownership of objects and property – the former implying sociability and propriety and the latter implying polite taste, while both attributes were enmeshed in an index of wealth, social control and 'connectedness' to the broader polite public sphere.

The production of conversation pieces peaked, in commercial terms, during the first half of the eighteenth century, though it continued as a viable genre of painting well into the nineteenth century. Its conventions and connotations were sufficiently well established for it to become a source of inspiration for satirists, though individual conversation pieces rarely functioned as specific sources for specific satirical images. Rather, the genre's conventions provided a visual framework suitable for the representation of inappropriate or comic social behaviours. There is considerable irony in the idea that the conversation piece, commissioned to commemorate true Augustan politeness (founded on taste, benevolence and a virtuous socio-familial structure), should be used as the source for a body of images seeking to undermine the concept of politeness as artificial and immoral.

There are numerous examples of early-century conversation pieces, variable not only in the 'quality' of their execution, but also in the relative social standing of their sitters. As a very general example, *The James Family* (2:18, 1751) fulfils the conventional criteria of the conversation piece genre, and is a useful image for the purposes of comparison with satirical prints. *The James Family* takes as its central image a representation of the polite family structure, with a benevolent paternal figure assuming a relaxed pose as he overlooks his wife and two daughters, the latter holding hands as an indicator of sisterly affection. The placement of the family figures reflect the accepted hierarchy of a respectable family group, with the husband and father represented in a standing pose close to the centre of the canvas, his wife by his side but seated, and their daughters separated from the parental couple and subordinated by their lower height and plainer dress. This spatial placement reinforces the masculine authority of the father, Robert James, and locates him within the context of polite virtue by representing him as the head of an ideal family,

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<sup>35</sup> Praz, Mario, *The Conversation Piece*, p.23



at ease in polite female company, and as benevolent, leisured, and wealthy. This last attribute is emphasised by representing the family group dressed in expensive and fashionable clothing; and situated in the environs of their private estate, which appears also to have been modelled in a fashionable style, complete with artificial lake and classically inspired 'folly'. It is valid to read this image not only as a tribute to familial affection, but also to the worldly success of Robert James, who held the post of Secretary to the East India Company. The James family occupy a liminal social space between the mercantile bourgeoisie and the aristocratic elite, which permitted the acquisition and display of polite behaviours and objects, but required a visual commemoration to consolidate the family's polite identity. Their ownership of an estate simultaneously emphasises their wealth and social status, and their privacy.

Access to privacy and the enjoyment of unlimited leisure was the preserve of a limited section of society, and satirical artists took the opportunity to highlight the contrast between those who enjoyed it, and those who attempted to imitate the leisured classes. *Mr Deputy Dumpling and Family Enjoying a Summer Afternoon* (2:19, 1781) depicts a "Cit", or London merchant, standing with his wife and children in front of the entrance to Bagnigge Wells, a popular garden and 'watering place' with a reputation for attracting prostitutes looking for clients. The boisterous and salacious environs of Bagnigge Wells, which would have been known to many urban viewers of this image, offers a total contrast to the dignity and exclusivity of the private estate depicted in *The James Family*. This contrast highlights the vulgarity and pretensions of the Dumpling family, as does their conspicuously gaudy clothing and overweight physiques. The composition (which also shares similarities with Hogarth's *Evening*) simultaneously mocks politeness, on the basis that its 'artificial' practices are easily assumed and bastardised, and those who seek to assume those practices, on the grounds that they lack the refinement of taste and education. In common with most other mezzotints published by Carington Bowles, however, this image is cheerfully satirical rather than malicious. Deputy Dumpling and his wife are represented as vulgar, but they are also shown as prosperous, affectionate and successful parents. Furthermore, as with many prints attacking polite behaviour, this image serves to reinforce the desirability of politeness even as it mocks it. It uses the vulgarity of the Dumplings to implicitly establish politeness as a superior mode of sociability, beyond their social and intellectual capabilities.

*Mr Deputy Dumpling* engages with the attempt to achieve polite status. It does not question the respectability of the family represented in the print, which does at least mirror that of *The James Family* in terms of propriety and virtue. Other satires, however, engaged with the

connection between the assumption of external politeness, and immoral behaviour. *Master Lavender Qualifying Himself for the Army* (1:5) resembles a conversation piece in terms of composition, depicting a male and a female figure in a well-appointed domestic interior and apparently in the process of socialising. In fact, the image subverts the gender hierarchy and boundaries expressed in typical conversation pieces, by inferring improprieties in the relationship between the soldier and his companion. The clearest of these inferences is that the two figures are not man and wife and, as there is no other figure apparent in the scene to police their interaction, there is a distinct possibility that their relationship is currently, or potentially, one of lover and mistress. This in turn raises questions about the young woman's status, and especially her attire. As discussed in relation to *Miss Macaroni and her Gallant at a Print Shop* (2:3), the satirical depiction of an apparently unattached young woman in expensive or fashionable clothing carried connotations of prostitution, with the clothing symbolising both her economic 'reward' for selling sex, her need to continue attracting male clients, and most importantly, her ability to disguise her corrupt moral self with the external trappings of wealth and fashion. Finally, the masculine cut and style of the woman's clothing further subverts 'proper' gender relations by placing her in a position of power over Master Lavender, whose own effeminacy is denoted by his floral name. The reality of a mistress' economic dependence upon her male protector is here reconfigured as a feminine ability to keep her lover dependent upon her, through dress, conversation and sex; and thus to benefit from him financially. The artificial nature of politeness has emasculated Master Lavender, in a neat reversal of the normative exchange relationship between bourgeois husbands and wives, in which the latter gain security and status from the former.

The satirical images considered here, and their relationship to academic artistic practice, represent an intervention on behalf of the bourgeois public in urban, commercial image-production strategy. Unlike the academy, which adhered to a rarefied, restrictive visual paradigm despite ostensibly answering the demands of an image-hungry public; satirical print culture actively engaged with the wider critical concerns of that public. In simultaneously representing and critiquing the public sphere, satirical prints fulfilled a discursive function that academic painting, with its lofty emphasis on generic perfection and heroic narrative, could not. Satire gave voice to publics excluded in theory from the Academy's idealised polite audience, layering the concerns and practices of these broader publics on top of existing discourse on politeness. Nonetheless, the academy and its iconography remained essential to the satirical lexicon, locating didactic and polemical prints in a broader referential matrix than the solely grotesque or 'low'. By alluding directly to the 'polite', the 'heroic', the 'patriotic' and so on, satirical imagery removed

these concepts and their representations from the straightforwardly idealised; complicating them and testing them by placing them under the scrutiny of a critical viewing public. Satirical practice was indexically linked to the sign-systems and structures of the academy; and yet, its mode of intervention in public discourse remained visually distinct.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ENTERTAINING THE PUBLIC: SATIRICAL INTERVENTIONS BY THE LONDON PRINT MARKET, 1745–1784

In late eighteenth-century London, satirical prints and entertainments formed part of a wider commercial public culture, sharing a visual language rooted in social discourses such as ‘politeness’ and ‘patriotism’. Visual satire was itself a genre of public entertainment, along with masquerades, processions and concerts. However, satirical images also functioned didactically, using the visual tropes associated with entertainments in order to shape critical perspectives towards those entertainments. The duality of satirical prints’ cultural location – both within entertainment as a genre, and yet above it as a critical tool – created a conceptual tension between the competing functions of such prints, and their relationship to public discourse. By considering the mimetic and symbolic affinities between satirical representation and the visual nature of entertainment, I aim to make the case for regarding prints as publicly owned objects. However, the functional duality of satirical images problematised this status, as the public ownership of prints had to contend with the realities of entertainment practice, not all of which were compatible with the interests of the bourgeois public sphere. The tension between the entertainment and the policing functions of prints created a paradoxically symbiotic, even sympathetic, relationship between satire and entertainment, with the former reflecting the broad social and cultural concerns of consumers of the latter. In this chapter, I will argue that this relationship can be regarded as a dialectic of opposition and legitimation, in which satirical representations of entertainments functioned – simultaneously, in some cases – as public statements of support and of rejection in relation to broader public discourse and performance.

The process of consuming prints affected the representation and staging of entertainments; and was a signifier of involvement in the public sphere. This process was itself a performative aspect of inhabiting the public sphere, constituting specific practices of viewing and consumption which themselves were categorised as forms of entertainment. Print consumption, particularly as it relates to the kind of tropes that recurred in the images examined here, refers back to Roland Barthes’ discussion of image lexicons, or ‘portion[s] of the symbolic plane (of language) which corresponds to a body of practices and techniques.’<sup>1</sup> While factors such as education shaped the individual perceptions of each person viewing a print, the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes, ‘Rhetoric of the Image’ in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London, 1977), p.46

satirical lexicons, and the common lexicons of the everyday environment, made it possible for social discourses to be denoted, juxtaposed and critiqued in print. As Barthes writes with reference to language-interpretation:

There is a plurality and a co-existence of lexicons in one and the same person [...] forming in some sort a person's idiolect. The image, in its connotation, is thus constituted by an architecture of signs drawn from a variable depth of lexicons.<sup>2</sup>

The 'meaning' of any satirical image was in many cases further fixed by the process of textual anchoring done by captions and verses appended to, or incorporated into, the image.<sup>3</sup> Thinking again about Wagner's concept of the 'iconotext', it is possible to see the eighteenth-century satirical lexicon as composed not only of those tropes, figures and mimetic allusions which comprised 'the image' as a compositional entity; but as a language-corpus incorporating written speech, labels, titles, captions and so on. In many cases, as I will demonstrate, the essential satirical meaning of a print could be conveyed only by joining a textual caption to the image. It is useful to consider the idea of 'paratext' in relation to this anchoring process, which Gérard Genette conceptualises as those utterances which are external to a text but which at the same time present it to the reader.<sup>4</sup> This is an interesting notion when considering the functionality of captions and other text in satirical prints, as it raises the possibility of the text being external to the image; acting, as Genette argues, as a 'threshold'.<sup>5</sup> This notion does not map adequately onto the interaction between image and text in the satirical print, which is performed internally. Though of relevance when looking at specific images which have been in some way annotated or added to at a later date, the majority of satirical prints were presented 'as is', with their textual components working as integral parts of the image, not as demarcations of an interpretive threshold.

While individual print viewers retained ownership of their unique interpretive capabilities, and performed practices of consumption according to these capabilities, the process of sign-architecture and sign-anchoring that took place within each image ensured that prints could be located within social discourse as markers of didactic or polemical positions. This enabled viewers to interpret satirical prints within a broader, non-satirical referential framework

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40

<sup>4</sup> Genette, Gérard and Maclean, Marie, 'Introduction to the Paratext,' in *New Literary History*, vol.22 no.2 (1991), pp.261-72

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.261

of cultural criticism: a framework in which public entertainments, pamphlets and ballads were included, and which derived from the emblematic and allegorical sign-systems of classical antiquity, Christianity and nature. This point is illustrated by the print *Iphigenia* (3:1, 1749), which represents the appearance of the courtier Elizabeth Chudleigh (later the Duchess of Kingston), in character as the Greek princess of that name, at a masquerade held to celebrate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Iphigenia/Chudleigh is escorted by two men in dominoes, while figures from the *commedia dell'arte* stand in the background.<sup>6</sup> The mythological allusion locates this image in a narrative pertinent to the context of the entertainment: one of securing peace through sacrifice and ritual commemoration. This narrative is juxtaposed with the *commedia dell'arte* references, which shifts Iphigenia's role from that of virtuous, passive symbol to knowing participant in an ironic parody of the peace celebrations. Iphigenia is still being sacrificed in this iteration, but on the metaphorical altar of public opinion; propitiating a commercial and cultural desire for scandal and humour rather than the whim of a classical deity.

For the print to succeed commercially, it was necessary that these masquerade tropes were recognisable to most viewers; and it was necessary that the title and composition be understood as alluding to a specific event. In this respect, *Iphigenia* is as much a part of the entertainment nexus as the original masquerade that inspired the image. Furthermore, in disseminating that event beyond its original audience, the contemporary viewer was enabled to participate in discourses that framed elite entertainment in terms of social and sexual impropriety, of luxury, foreignness and artifice, given the female nudity, sexual transgression, misuse of polite classical allusion, mask-wearing, and Italian pantomime characters. *Iphigenia* simultaneously entertains and polices certain aspects of public entertainment, including, in this case, female sexual propriety and the influence of politeness. Extrapolating the relationship between the dual functions of satirical entertainment prints, I will argue in this chapter that the oppositional meanings of these prints depended upon – or created a dependence upon – visual tropes that were associated with political and cultural opposition in the broadest sense. Therefore, the creators of such prints relied heavily on the use of tropes connoting patriotism and politeness, as synecdoches for the process of opposition and for the category of 'opposed things', respectively. It is necessary, however, to begin by establishing the conceptual parameters of public entertainment, and providing a historical context for such entertainments in London between 1745 and 1784.

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<sup>6</sup> Ribiero, Aileen, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730 to 1790*, (New York, 1984)

## The London scene: entertainment and leisure

It is one of the defining features of contemporary accounts of London, both fictional and factual, that frequent allusions are made to the variety, frequency and novelty of entertainments available to the public. It is also notable that these reflections and observations emanate primarily from writers whose origins were not local, such as the Scotsmen James Boswell and Tobias Smollett, the French lawyer Jean-Pierre Grosley, and the Swedish naturalist Pehr Kalm – testament to the diversity and intensity of London’s entertainment ‘scene’.<sup>7</sup> Boswell mentions numerous theatre visits, noble assemblies, cockfights, card parties and brothel visits in his *London Journal* of 1762-3.<sup>8</sup> Any Londoner or visitor of some wealth and leisure might add any of the following to their list of activities: concerts at the Foundling Hospital, masquerades at the Pantheon or the Haymarket Theatre, gambling at Almacks’ and Brooks’ clubs, wild-beast viewing at the Tower of London, the annual Fairs of Southwark and St Bartholomew, touring the Bedlam lunatic asylum, viewing the Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy, walking in public parks such as St James’s and visiting Vauxhall or Ranelagh pleasure gardens. These activities might be categorised as ‘formal’ entertainments, as they occurred on a regular basis and normally incurred some kind of cost for participating; in the form of a ticket, a meal, or perhaps an appropriate costume. As J. H. Plumb has stated, ‘[commercialised] leisure usually requires the expenditure of money as well as time.’<sup>9</sup>

A caveat might be added to the latter statement, in the form of ‘but not always.’ In addition to formal, commercial entertainments were numerous events and practices whose primary function was not necessarily the entertainment of an urban public, but which traditionally functioned as such in a secondary fashion. These included royal or civic processions, executions at Tyburn gallows, and Parliamentary elections. It is important not to overstate the ‘informal’ or ‘spontaneous’ nature of these entertainments, given the rituals and traditions that were frequently attached to events of this type. Terry Castle has described these rituals as ‘contemporary manifestations of the urban carnivalesque [such as] the celebratory behaviour and

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<sup>7</sup> It must be remembered that any written account of London by an “outsider” would to some extent follow the accepted conventions of contemporary travel literature, including a focus on the author’s own social experiences. Yet, the fact that these experiences occurred at all indicates the variety and intensity of London entertainments at the time. See: Batten, Charles, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Writing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978)

<sup>8</sup> Boswell, James, *London Journal*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (New Haven, CT & London, 1950)

<sup>9</sup> Plumb, J.H., ‘The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century England’ in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. John Brewer, Neil Kendrick and J.H. Plumb (Bloomington, IN, 1982), p.265

atavistic magical beliefs surrounding public hangings in eighteenth-century London.<sup>10</sup> While participants in executions and processions may have been less subject to the codified behaviours demanded at an aristocratic assembly, such events still manifested patterns of behaviour that were expected and accepted. There were also commercial elements present at non-fee-paying events, such as refreshment sellers and souvenir hawkers, although these presented the indigent reveller with an optional expense that did not preclude participation. Nonetheless, it is certain that these kinds of entertainments, removed from the directly commercial sphere by their traditional and relatively informal practices, widened both the interpretation of the ‘public entertainment’ as a concept. This in turn opens up the possibility of broadening the number of persons understood to be occupying the space of the bourgeois public sphere, and reiterates the fact that, though overlapping, the public was not always coterminous with the polite.

Bearing this in mind, it is worth returning to Boswell’s list, which, while reflective of what was available as entertainment, was not representative of how entertainment was experienced or practiced by this broader potential public. As a male with leisure and a private allowance, Boswell had both the means to participate in fee-paying entertainments, and the tacit consent of his social milieu to do so. The possibility of a female of Boswell’s class visiting a cockfight or brothel, or of a male apprentice visiting a noble assembly, was one that was negated in a practical sense by social censure and/or a lack of money. The very unlikelihood of such a disruption of class or gender boundaries was itself a source of material for many satirical images of entertainments: a point which will be developed later in this chapter. Indeed, it was only through satirical images that many forms of entertainment could be experienced by a broader range of people – of which *Iphigenia* is an excellent example.

Boswell’s list, and indeed the entire range of potential sites and genres of entertainment, is also notable for several related dichotomies that existed within the broader range of public entertainments. There were juxtapositions of polite and impolite activities (the assembly *versus* the brothel), of formal and informal (the art exhibition *versus* the May Day celebration), and of benevolent and malevolent (the charitable concert *versus* the cockfight). It is reasonable to posit that many individual members of the London public experienced a broad range of entertainments, encompassing both sides of these dualities, if they enjoyed sufficient wealth and social sanction. Of course, this is not to deny that many individuals’ experiences of public entertainments were limited by financial or social circumstances, or by personal inclination. Yet, the relationship between entertainment practices and satirical representations of these practices

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<sup>10</sup> Castle, Terry, *Masquerade and Civilisation: Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, CA, 1986), p.18



suggests that the range of entertainment genres, and the variations in their social acceptability, were understood and practiced by a particular public which also comprised the main audience for satirical prints – unsurprisingly, given the status of prints as a type of public entertainment, as well as check upon their excesses and foibles. Vic Gatrell has argued that the commercial audience for satirical prints – that is to say, print purchasers, rather than the wider consuming audience who looked at prints in shop windows, taverns and clubs – was largely, though not exclusively, male and moneyed.<sup>11</sup>

In defining an entertainment, as understood by the inhabitants of eighteenth-century London, it is possible to draw very broad parameters. From chimney sweeps dancing in the open streets on May Day, to the extravagant masked dances held regularly at the Pantheon, any event that existed solely to amuse, or that had developed an attendant culture of amusement that was impossible to extricate from the main event, was an entertainment. For an entertainment to be understood as public, the criteria for participation were normally impersonal and commercial. However, it must be remembered that, because the possible range of entertainments was broad, it did not follow that an individual's experience of entertainments would match this breadth, depending upon their access to leisure time and disposable income.

One important exception to this definition of a public entertainment, in terms of accessibility, was the elite entertainment attracting the attention of the public press, including journalists and satirical artists. While not commercial, and restricted to a list of invited individuals, the attention focused upon, for example, the Duchess of Devonshire's notorious private card parties made those events public by proxy. They entertained the uninvited public through written and visual accounts, and these accounts formed part of the cultural nexus to which public entertainments belonged. This relationship – between entertainment, press and reader – demonstrates the value of the print-consuming audience as a sample public that is, as Habermas would describe it, bourgeois in nature; by contrasting it with the vestiges of an elite representative publicness originating in the feudal European court culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to which the British oligarchy still adhered in many ways.<sup>12</sup>

The second necessary component of the 'public entertainment' was the public itself. The introductory chapter has explored the theoretical framework of the public sphere in eighteenth-century Britain, and established that it constituted a social and cultural space between structured state authority and the authority of the private family. It was articulated by the emerging 'popular' press, and functioned as a tool for legitimising political and cultural decisions with the

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<sup>11</sup> Gatrell, Vic, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (London 2006), pp.155, 235-36

<sup>12</sup> The relationship between the bourgeois public and George III's court is investigated in chapter 5.

sanction of ‘public opinion’.<sup>13</sup> Corresponding to its legitimating role, the public sphere also functioned as a potential destabiliser of those same political and cultural processes; operating dialectically. This theoretical construct acknowledges the role of entertainment within the process of debate, rather than denoting it as a strictly commercial enterprise or as a means of transient pleasure. Habermas discusses the importance of London coffee houses and other entertainment locations as spaces in which emergent ‘modern’ forms of political debate, such as party affiliation, first flourished. He later discusses the emergence of public culture as a necessary evolution of political debate, based upon the weakening of the courtly monopoly of ‘high’ culture as a tool for the representation and legitimisation of power, and the public commercialisation of ‘high’ cultural consumption; for example by establishing the annual exhibition at the RA.<sup>14</sup> The practice and representation of entertainment was therefore a means of fostering consciousness of the public space among its inhabitants, and a valid location for discourse. Satirical representations of entertainments play on the relationship between figures located both inside and outside the bourgeois public sphere, which reintroduces the question of Fraser’s ‘counterpublics’ and the alternative commercial and cultural structures that formed these spaces and overlapped with the bourgeois public. Prints make use of counterpublic figures’ othered and/or marginalised status in order to achieve their effects. For example, Sophie Carter has explored the satirical representation of prostitutes within the context of London masquerades, arguing that this reflected the concerns of the bourgeois consuming public regarding the ability of the ‘immoral woman’ – an inhabitant of the commercial sex-trade public – to inhabit the same spaces and consume the same commoditised culture as the dominant bourgeois equivalent.<sup>15</sup> By extension, it can be argued that the male figures with whom these hypothetical prostitutes interact are being represented as active consumers in both the bourgeois public sphere and the commercial sex trade public. Entertainment, as both a social practice and satirical subject, opened up questions of public boundaries and belonging into the discursive sphere of the consuming public.

### **Visual Affinities: mimesis, distortion, and the carnivalesque**

The symbiotic relationship between satirical prints and public entertainments was not based solely upon shared commercial interests or social proximity. The commercial relationship would not have existed without visual affinity. Didactic humour, whether in the form of a satirical print

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<sup>13</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.27

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.56-57

<sup>15</sup> Carter, Sophie, ‘This Female Proteus’: Representing Prostitution and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century English Popular Print Culture’, in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 22 no. 1, (1999), pp.57-79

or a genre of entertainment, derived its interpretative structure from the use of inversion. It drew viewers' attention to the differences between idealised modes of behaviour and thought, and the failures to which those idealised modes were subject, marking the boundary between 'how things should be' and 'how things are'.<sup>16</sup> This notion of humour dialogue, both between satirical image and referential framework, and image and consumer, can be located within Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the 'carnavalesque'. This comprised: ritual spectacle; textual parody; and the use of 'Billingsgate humour', such as profane language.<sup>17</sup> With particular regard to ritual spectacle, it is possible to see close links between the practices of entertainment and representation, and the atavistic processes of carnivalesque 'folk humour'.

At this point, it is worth looking again at the relationship of public entertainments to the concepts of legitimation and opposition; examining how entertainments both created and subverted social norms. It is too simplistic to consider legitimacy and opposition as a dichotomy in this scenario; rather, the public sphere functioned as both a strengthener and a weakener of cultural authority, which was produced by the consumption and discursive networks that constituted the public. Opposition, which ties in with the notion of 'loyal opposition' developing in party politics of the period, still occurred within the public space, and according to its discursive mechanisms. This relates to the carnivalesque inasmuch as the latter concept provides a framework for reconciling the public's dual role – creative and critical – in producing and performing normative social behaviour. Regarding carnivalesque satire as a subversive 'safety valve' rather than as a direct challenge to authority takes us back to the point made in the introductory chapter of this thesis, that satirical representation reifies authority structures. *Iphigenia* is a case in point. This image is located between parody and representation. It represents the parodic masquerade process – here, the performance of Elizabeth Chudleigh assuming the guise of a virtuous virgin from antiquity in a manner calculated to evoke non-virtuous responses of lust and public curiosity. In doing so, however, it reiterates Chudleigh's superior location in the public sphere; her position as maid-of-honour to the Princess of Wales and her status as a wealthy woman of fashion not only enabling her attendance at a masquerade ball, but also providing the very impetus for her printed representation in the first place.

The defining characteristics of the early modern carnivalesque did not map directly onto the experiences and practices of commercial public entertainment in eighteenth-century London. Early carnivalesque functioned in relation to religious ritual, particularly Catholic ritual, and is

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<sup>16</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, pp.176-77

<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN, 1984), p.5

described by Bakhtin as ‘Paschal laughter’ for its significance as a pre-Lenten celebration.<sup>18</sup> London was a nominally Protestant, commercial city; it did not replicate the religious and caste-based imperatives that prompted the medieval carnival, such as sumptuary laws. However, a broader understanding of the carnivalesque as a reaction to political and social authority – in this case, the authority of the bourgeois public sphere – allows for an interpretation of eighteenth-century public entertainments as agents of inversion and subversion. Satirical prints, fulfilling their ‘double function’, form part of the carnivalesque challenge, while simultaneously reinforcing the strictures of the bourgeois public sphere by representing them.

Bakhtin argues that one of the defining features of carnival was that it knew no boundaries except for those imposed by participants’ knowledge of the transient carnival state.<sup>19</sup> While public entertainments did operate within defined commercial, social and physical boundaries, it can be argued that their satirical representation rendered these boundaries more porous than otherwise, by transmitting the critical and pleasurable effect of the original entertainment among a wider audience. The satirical print genre itself amplified the unboundedness inherent in carnival: for example, prints’ representative capacity was limited only by the imagination and intention of their creators; they subverted demarcations between high and low cultural forms; and they encompassed various forms of anonymity and untraceability which freed them from all parameters of expression except the commercial. This extrapolation of laughter and mockery was only possible if prints shared a visual language with the entertainments they purported to represent. The clearest and simplest visual connection between entertainments and prints was mimetic: the physical elements of any entertainment had to be reproduced in print if potential comedy or criticism was to be derived from the image. Without a recognisable cultural location, the joke was lost. As discussed with regard to *Iphigenia* (1), the fact that the female figure has attended a public masquerade in a semi-nude state, and therefore has transgressed boundaries of propriety, is made clear by the presence of masked figures and characters from the *commedia dell’arte*.

It is useful to compare this image with other representations of the same event, such as *Miss [Chudleigh] in the actual dress as she appear’d in ye character of Iphigenia* (3:2, 1749). Though the representation of nudity is considerably different from – and indeed, less nude than – that seen in *Iphigenia*, the consistent presence of masquerade figures locates this print in the same social context as the former, and carries similar connotations of sexual immorality, foreignness and inauthenticity. Later representations of the event, such as Gainsborough’s *The Duchess of Kingston*

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.5, 14

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

as she Appeared at the Venetian Ambassador's Ball (3:3, 1788) published after her bigamy trial of 1779, remove the masquerade tropes and reconfigure her costume as one which references theatrical display as well as academic representations of Hellenic mythology. These different registers of meaning indicate the influence of commercial imperatives on modes of representation: print-consuming audiences brought a demand for images that cohered with their other, popular, experiences of entertainment consumption.

At a fundamental level, both prints and entertainments depended upon being visible as an essential attribute of commercial and cultural success. Unlike many emblematic political prints of the period, which tended to represent fantastical scenes,<sup>20</sup> satirical artists offered geographically plausible, recognisable scenes and figures when representing entertainments. Both phenomena made ideas and opinions visible, through representation and reproduction of familiar tropes. Entertainment prints were mimetic, being copies of entertainments. Many entertainments were themselves closely bound up in processes of mimesis: masquerades, for example, were predicated upon the 'copying' of characters from history, classical literature, folk culture and the contemporary theatre; while theatrical entertainments were based upon the processes of copying and representing. This mimesis, however, should not be taken at face value. While satirical prints 'copied' aspects of polite entertainment, they did not have the quality of perfect representation. Yet, it would be misleading to try and make a case for prints being not-passive, as it implies the existence of agency on the part of inanimate images. Somehow, a case for prints' intervention in the entertainment sphere must be negotiated between passive copying and mimetic agency. As Michael Taussig puts it, 'sliding between photographic fidelity and fantasy, between iconicity and arbitrariness, wholeness and fragmentation, we thus begin to sense how weird and complex the notion of the copy becomes.'<sup>21</sup> Perhaps it is necessary to see the satirical print as operating liminally between the boundaries of representation and practice, negotiating a place on 'the plane where the object world and the visual copy merge.'<sup>22</sup>

Affinities – not only mimetic, but market-based and distributive affinities – between public entertainments and satirical prints were more ambiguous. In keeping with their double function, prints did not necessarily offer a direct 'mirroring' of the entertainments that they represented. For didactic or critical purposes, the carnivalesque nature of entertainments could be emphasised in satirical representation. *The Pantheon, in Oxford Street* (3:4, 1772) offers a view of a fashionable commercial entertainment venue that distorts the contemporary perception of it as

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<sup>20</sup> Donald, Diana, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT & London, 1996), p.46

<sup>21</sup> Taussig, Michael, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York and London, 1993), p.17

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35

one of polite sociability and refinement. Instead, the print represents three well-dressed prostitutes, drinking tea from an expensive-looking service and flirting with clients of equal refinement in their dress and presentation. A sinister note is added by the presence of a small girl sitting astride a sword and holding it in a sexually suggestive manner; as well as holding a whip aloft. This image of transgressive sexuality, juxtaposing the 'weakness' and femininity of the girl with the trappings of normative masculine power, challenges the status of the Pantheon as a location of the politeness and propriety implied by the material consumption represented in the image. In doing so, it entertains the viewer with a carnivalesque, titillating image, advertising the sexual possibilities of visiting the Pantheon, and implicitly mocking the pretensions of those who visit for polite conversation, music and dancing. At the same time, it warns the virtuous viewer against stumbling into an inappropriate situation. In addressing the bourgeois male consumer, the trope of prostitutes with clients acts both as an enticement to sexual pleasure, and as a warning against venereal disease, adultery or bringing one's respectable family into contact with prostitutes.

Satirical images such as this allowed entertainments to be reframed as polemical and/or didactic. In order to do so, it was necessary for satirical artists to anchor their critical messages in a recognisable symbolic language, and thus to adopt a strategy of linking visual symbols with specific critical themes. For example, the use of fashionable clothing to denote vanity, luxury and artifice is common in satirical prints. However, it is far too simplistic an analysis to state that any representation of fashion or luxury equated to the rejection of politeness as a valid social discourse. The entire phenomenon of urban, commercial entertainment was so intertwined with ideas of politeness, status and display, that the latter were necessary visual components of any representation of an entertainment. It is more accurate to state that, even in the case of images criticising material politeness, there was a debt owed by the image-maker to non-critical conceptions of fashion and taste; reinforcing politeness' paradigmatic status even as it criticised that status.

What is also clear, from exploring the connotations of the images discussed above, is that satirical images increased the potential for entertainments to be imagined and reconstructed as polemical and/or didactic in character, rather than as ephemeral events occurring solely for commercial and pleasurable ends. Independently of satirical prints, many genres of public entertainment functioned polemically and didactically in their own right – for example, royal celebrations such as the 1749 fireworks display held, like the Chudleigh masquerade, to commemorate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. This offered a celebratory public legitimisation of a decision of state, and another manifestation of the elite 'representative public' – albeit one which

overlapped substantially with the bourgeois public and the broader demotic London populace. However, it is wrong to regard any individual entertainment as a Gestalt phenomenon, experienced in its entirety, and with the same responses, by every participant or audience member. Regardless of the polemical intentions of an entertainment's organisers, satirical prints retained the power to distort these intentions and represent a particular aspect of an entertainment experience at the expense of others; as discussion of *The Pantheon, in Oxford Street* also illustrates.

To return to the example of the Royal Fireworks, the print *The British Jubilee* (3:5, 1749) offered a perspective on these celebrations which undermined their status as a manifestation of elite politeness and representative power. The wooden edifice constructed as the centrepiece of the firework display, described in *The Gentleman's Magazine* as appearing 'in great elegance, like a temple of fine stone', is here relegated to a backdrop.<sup>23</sup> In the foreground is represented a varied crowd of figures, including butchers holding their traditional marrowbones and cleavers for the purposes of making music.<sup>24</sup> Two men sit astride a keg, presumably containing beer, while other men and women crowd around the keg tap trying to fill cups with the liquid. This scene, with the presence of beer and butchers, could be read as an affirmation of Britishness, in keeping with the print's title, and therefore as a positive, demotic response to the signing of the Treaty.<sup>25</sup> While this reading of *The British Jubilee* challenges the connotations of the Royal Fireworks as an elite entertainment, it nevertheless offers a view of the event as one that is overtly patriotic in character, and by extrapolation, pro-Crown and pro-government. However, this idea of an entertainment sponsored by the 'representative public' of State and Court is complicated by the representation of the public crowd in the foreground of the scene. Figures in the crowd appear to be socially and economically diverse: on the right, for example, is a male figure who wears elaborate, fashionable apparel and carries a sword; who contrasts with the butchers and sailors on the left-hand-side. What is interesting about this intersection of social 'types' is that it represents the public space as a broad one, illustrating a crowd of mixed social status and gender whose affirmatory celebrations provide a mandate of legitimacy for the actions of the political class. Another point of note is that it represents a 'patriotic' public comprised of actors who manifest their patriotism in a variety of ways. While the butchers reflected a longstanding patriotic tendency to treat their occupation as a synecdoche for the archetypal strong and

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<sup>23</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 19, April 1749, p.186

<sup>24</sup> Barlow, Jeremy, *The Enraged Musician: Hogarth's Musical Imagery* (London, 2005) p.69

<sup>25</sup> On the plebeian, patriotic connotations of the 'English Butcher', see: Rauser, Amelia, 'The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire: Between Caricature and Allegory in 1784' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 36 no.1 (2002), pp.23-46

forthright Briton, the fashionably-dressed celebrants on the right resemble caricatures of 'Frenchness' from the period. That is not to say that the figures are meant to represent French persons. Rather, their inclusion highlights both the porousness of the public sphere and the flexibility of patriotism, by demonstrating the possibility of a British public influenced by French cultural modes but remaining structured according to a framework of national political identity.

It is interesting to note that, regardless of whether the affirmatory or the critical reading of this image is the 'correct' one, the print does not record one of the most discussed aspects of the Royal Fireworks; namely the fact that there was a serious fire which effectively ruined the entertainment. As *The Gentleman's Magazine* stated:

'About half an hour after nine, in discharging some of the works from the pavilion at the left wing of the building, it set fire to the flame, and burned it with a great fury to the ground [...] By one of the large rockets darting strait forward into the scaffold next the library, it set fire to the cloaths of a young lady, which would have soon destroy'd her, but some persons present having the presence of mind to strip her cloaths off immediately to her stays and petticoat, she escaped with only having her face, neck and breast a little scorched.'<sup>26</sup>

As this report demonstrates, the representation of an entertainment in satirical prints could distort and disguise not only the polemical emphasis, but even the 'real' facts; filtering the progress of events through a nexus of public priorities and bourgeois social agendas.

### **Polite Entertainments: legitimization, hierarchy and benevolence**

To return to mimesis – the instability of the mimetic process resulted in a significant consequence for satirical prints. The copying and representation of objects and behaviours for humorous and/or didactic purposes was intertwined with the copying and representation of said object's appealing qualities. The entire phenomenon of urban, commercial entertainment was so inextricably linked with ideas of politeness, status and display, that the latter were necessary visual components of any representation of an entertainment, satirical or otherwise. Even in the case of images that apparently focused upon a mocking critique of fashion and material politeness, there was a debt owed by the image-maker to prevailing, non-critical conceptions of fashion and taste. This went beyond the necessity of 'resemblance' between entertainments and prints. Rather, it was an acknowledgement of the status ascribed to particular material objects and modes by consumers. By deeming the material objects on display in the entertainment

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<sup>26</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 19, April 1749, pp.186-87



sphere as being worth satirising, the creators of prints reinforced the hierarchy of taste in the public sphere.

This can be seen in *Miss Rattle Dressing for the Pantheon* (3:6, 1772), which shows a woman adorning herself in preparation for an entertainment, with high hairstyle and elaborate gown according to the fashion of the day.<sup>27</sup> This image is a satire on female vanity and extravagance, and upon the pernicious effects of public entertainments and public display. However, in order to make the point, it was necessary to emphasise the desirability of Miss Rattle's costume. Jewels, ribbons and ruffles are represented in detail, which gives the image resonance with contemporary fashion prints, and emphasises the desirability of material display at the heart of public entertainment. The connotations of the costume are supported by the material attributes of the interior space within which the wearer is located, including expensive furnishings. Given that Miss Rattle is not married, it is implied that she is either a virtuous woman placing her virtue in danger by displaying herself publicly, or a prostitute who has donned her finery with the intention of luring clients. In either interpretation, she obeys the commercial imperatives of the public sphere despite the possibility of transgressing social boundaries, perpetuating the consumption of fashionable goods, and creating an appearance that is desirable to a masculine public.

The notion of transgression is also apparent in *A City Taylor's Wife dressing for the Pantheon* (3:7, 1772). The tailor's wife wears jewellery and a hairstyle similar to that of Miss Rattle and sits alongside her plainly dressed husband, who raises his fist in a gesture of anger. The contrast between the two figures implies that the wife is attempting to remove herself from her appropriate social and economic sphere, and emulate her betters. Her dress is beyond the means of the tailor's income, and has perhaps been purchased on credit. A stag's head is situated on the wall above the tailor, the horns symbolising cuckoldry, while a pair of scissors is shown cutting an end of ribbon shaped like a phallus, emphasising the wife's emasculation of the husband and alluding to the contemporary joke that tailors suffered from a lack of phallic endowment. Again, the Pantheon is not construed as a site of polite entertainment, but as a site of danger and deviance, with sufficient claim to politeness to be desirable.

*A City Taylor's Wife* uses irony in order to illustrate the lure of material politeness, given that the wife is not from a 'polite' background, and yet seeks to assume its appearance. In depicting her vulgar apparel, the image supports the superiority of true politeness. For example,

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<sup>27</sup> Prints depicting women with extremely tall hairstyles proliferated from 1771-78, reflecting current fashions. See: Powell, Margaret and Roach, Joseph, 'Big Hair', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 38 no. 1 (2004), pp.79-99

she is depicted wearing facial patches which, by the date of this print's publication, had lost their fashionable status and become associated with prostitution and the concealment of venereal disease.<sup>28</sup> Read as a display of impropriety, the patches reinforce the distinction between the emulative dress of the wife and the standard of politeness being emulated. There is a carnivalesque element to this distinction, in the sense that it provides a contrast between the invisible polite ideal and the visualised grotesque; the latter reminds the print audience of how an ideal female participant in any public entertainment should look.

Prints such as *Miss Rattle* and *A City Taylor's Wife* were not solely concerned with preserving the status and desirability of fashion as a social concept. The cultural relationship between dress, sexuality and artifice affected interpretations of female and male bodies in a clothed state, related to notions of masking, transgression, deceit and otherness. This relationship, and its effect upon representations of material culture in the context of entertainment, will be discussed in detail in chapter four. In discussing the potential of entertainment prints to legitimate prevailing norms of the public sphere, however, the representation of fashion-hierarchies is illustrative of how satirical prints functioned within the sphere of public entertainment, as well as above it. Carnivalesque polemical and/or didactic critiques of public entertainments did not work unless there was an acknowledged ideal or desirable mode to be challenged.

Politeness as a discourse of consumption was not the only possible locus of legitimation. Politeness as an aspect of the *habitus* – a series of distinguishing behaviours concerned with conversation, deportment and social milieu – received visual legitimation from public entertainments, and satirical representations of those entertainments. 'Augustan' politeness, with its emphasis on internal integrity and benevolence, was expressed in the public, urban charitable culture of the eighteenth century, which depended upon a network of commercial guilds and companies, elite and bourgeois donors, and private initiatives such as the Foundling Hospital and the Marine Society. The rituals of City guilds and the social activities of polite elites were configured with the requirements of fundraising and giving, so that in many instances the concept of the public entertainment was synonymous with that of the charitable benefit. Sarah Lloyd has described in detail the social nexus of concerts, dinners, processions, sermons and plays that were hosted specifically with the aim of raising funds for particular charitable causes.<sup>29</sup> By hosting and participating in these entertainments, elite and bourgeois men in particular could

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<sup>28</sup> Hogarth depicts patches on the bawd, in plate I of *The Harlot's Progress* (1731), and on the diseased Lord Squanderfield and his son throughout *Marriage à la Mode* (1743-5).

<sup>29</sup> Lloyd, Sarah, 'Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners: Conviviality, Benevolence and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London,' in *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 41 no.1 (2002), pp.23-57

enact an Augustan ideal of authentic polite benevolence. Furthermore, in using the commercial entertainment nexus of the bourgeois public sphere as the site of this benevolent behaviour, the status of polite benevolence as an ideal behavioural mode for elite/bourgeois men was reinforced. As Lloyd writes, 'Formalised patterns of display produced the categories and boundaries through which men and women, rich and poor, were to know themselves in relation to peers and others.'<sup>30</sup>

This form of entertainment – the benevolent benefit – constitutes a curious omission among the various tropes of satirical print culture. Representations of benevolence were not missing from print culture in general: for example, the Foundling Hospital was a frequent subject of architectural and topographical images. Similarly, Jonas Hanway commissioned an engraving from Giovanni Battista Cipriani as a frontispiece to his pamphlet *Three Letters on the Marine Society* (3:8, 1758); which depicted the Society's committee welcoming ragged urchin boys and outfitting them as sailors.<sup>31</sup> The charity organisation was a well-known feature of public life, and entertainments associated with benevolent aims were notable and frequent, as Lloyd has shown.<sup>32</sup> Charitable entertainment, therefore, was highly visible among the London public. As such, its lack of representation in satirical culture is somewhat surprising. It is possible to speculate that the laudable moral aims of such enterprises made satirical attacks difficult to construct – when a polite entertainment was connected with the Augustan notions of benevolence and integrity, it became harder to critique it as a display of inauthenticity. Yet, charitable institutions were themselves satirised on occasion – the Foundling Hospital, for example, was criticised as an incentive to risk 'immoral' extramarital sex, with an untitled print of 1745 (3:9, c.1740s) construing it as a means of disguising adultery. A satirical coat of arms comprises an escutcheon formed by an entwined snake enclosing a stag, with a crest of cuckold's horns and the figures of Adam and Eve as supporters. Playing on the contemporary perception of women as deceitful, corrupting and inherently lustful, the image construes the Foundling Hospital (which is shown in the background) as an institution enabling women to subvert the 'natural' order of the patriarchal bourgeois family. This print raises the question of why entertainments organised to support the Foundling Hospital, such as performances of Handel's *Messiah*, appear never to have formed the subject of a (surviving) satirical print. The omission is unsatisfactory; it 'fails to mean.'

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/search\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectid=1674303&partid=1&searchText=marine+society&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&orig=%2fsearch%2fsearch\\_the\\_collection\\_database.aspx&currentPage=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1674303&partid=1&searchText=marine+society&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&orig=%2fsearch%2fsearch_the_collection_database.aspx&currentPage=1) Accessed 14 July 2012

<sup>32</sup> Lloyd, p.25

What does exist, however, are a corpus of images satirising entertainments that were organised by, or connected with, civic organisations. I suggest that these prints acted as acceptable alternatives to critiquing such morally worthy events as the *Messiah*; given that a great many charitable entertainments were in fact organised by bourgeois civic bodies such as the Freemasons. An example of such an image is *The Court of Equity, or Convivial City Meeting* (3:10, 1779) depicts a group of men gathered in the club-room of the Globe Tavern in Fleet Street; engaged in drinking, smoking tobacco and conversing.<sup>33</sup> The figures are represented in apparel that demonstrates the accepted male mode of the day, with wigs, canes and frock coats; but there is no hint of the ostentatious, fashionable excess that characterises caricatures of male macaronis. Instead, in keeping with the title, the group appears to be one of prosperous City merchants, meeting in accordance with the dictates of an organised club. The coats of arms represented on the rear wall, and the situating of a presidential figure in an imposing chair and under a larger coat of arms, imply that the meeting is under the aegis, or on the premises of, a City guild or livery company. The charitable function of such guilds, which encompassed poor relief, schooling and medical care, is alluded to in the title, and by the larger coat of arms (incorporating a balance and a wine bottle) and the attached motto: 'Mirth and Justice'. It is apparent, then, that the individuals represented in this image are connected with eighteenth-century London's network of charitable social activities, which, by extension, links them with the behavioural mode of polite benevolence that gave an imperative to these charitable works. While the 'court of equity' alluded to by the title is likely to refer to the 'equity' of the assembled members – the 'bracketing out of inequalities' references in the previous chapter – it can also be read as an allusion to the benevolent 'equity' with which the figures treat their fellow public persons and social inferiors.

The scene depicted in *The Court of Equity* reinforces the connection between organised charity and the concept of internal politeness; it also makes a case for the masculine nature of internal politeness in its ideal state. The gathered group engages in activities such as drinking wine and smoking pipes of tobacco, which serve to provide the 'conviviality' alluded to in the title. Consumption of wine, rather than spirits or beer, marks the prosperous bourgeois status of the figures in this image, and also acts as a marker of manliness. This coheres with the French visitor Grosley's description of an evening spent at an all-male club: '*On y est rangé autour d'une grande table ronde, chargée de vins de différentes espèces, de thé, de café et de tout le service nécessaire pour ces*

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<sup>33</sup> For a detailed description of this print, see George, M. Dorothy, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, vol. V

*différentes boissons*.<sup>34</sup> The concept of the club, as a model of urban male sociability, was seen as a means of polishing one's behaviour through contact with, and observation of, one's peers; and had its cultural roots in the masculine coffeehouse milieu approved by Addison and Steele. As 'Mr Spectator' put it:

'Sometimes I am seen thrusting my Head into a Round of Politicians at *Will's* and listening with great Attention to the Narratives that are made in those little Circular Audiences. Sometimes I smook a Pipe at *Child's*; and, while I seem attentive to nothing but the *Post-Man*, over-hear the Conversation of every Table in the Room. I appear on *Sunday* nights at *St. James's* Coffee House, and sometimes join the little Committee of Politicks in the Inner-Room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My Face is likewise very well known at the *Grecian* [and] the *Cocoa-Tree*.'<sup>35</sup>

As the Augustans argued that external displays of politeness reflected the internal integrity of the truly polite man, so scenes of male sociability such as the one depicted here underline the connection between organised entertainments and benevolence. As Roy Porter has pointed out, engagement in formal charitable activities, such as benefit dinners and anniversary celebrations, institutionalised benevolence as a tool for securing polite status and social connections.<sup>36</sup> By emphasising the benevolent aspect of politeness, and the masculinity of benevolence, this image can therefore be read as one that attempts to neutralise the critique of effeminate luxury so frequently levelled at politeness. As Lloyd has pointed out, public charitable organisations were anxious to advertise their patriotic aims, and the representation of entertainments associated with charity can be seen as a means of reconciling what otherwise appear to be dialectically opposed social discourses.

Returning to the broader concept of legitimation, *The Court of Equity*, among other images, can also be read as supporting the process of social stratification and class differentiation that created a boundary between the polite and the impolite. As has been noted, this print focuses on a group of prosperous male figures, probably merchants of some description. It is highly likely that copies of this image were aimed commercially at the class of individuals upon whom the figures in the print were based, given that the publisher's address is listed as being in the commercial district of Cheapside, and the price of the print is marked at one guinea – a substantial sum in a period when a male labourer could expect to earn an average of two shillings

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<sup>34</sup> 'It is arranged around a large round table, laden with wines of different types, tea, coffee, and all that is necessary for these drinks.' Grosley, Pierre-Jean, *A Tour to London*, trans. Thomas Nugent (London, 1772), p.259

<sup>35</sup> *The Spectator*, no. 1, 1 March 1711

<sup>36</sup> Porter, Roy, 'The Gift Relation: Philanthropy and Provincial Hospitals in Eighteenth-Century England,' in *The Hospital in History*, ed. Lindsay Granshaw and Roy Porter (London, 1989), pp.149-78.

per day.<sup>37</sup> In this context, *The Court of Equity* can be read as upholding the social hierarchy of the paternalistic public sphere, as embodied by the merchants it depicts. In the simplest sense, the image privileges the depiction of those who can engage in charitable giving, over those in receipt of charity, and visually associates benevolence with privilege. Importantly, however, this privilege is configured as material, rather than one based upon birth, which again aligns benevolence with the Augustan principle that a polite man need not be of aristocratic birth, but should have sufficient wealth and leisure to polish his manners and education. Politeness, in this analysis, is an essential behavioural mode of the bourgeois public sphere, as it acts as a framework for the transfer of cultural authority from the 'feudal' representative public sphere.

Satirical representations of public entertainments necessarily engaged with the visual distinctions between social classes, not only in terms of 'markers' of social status, such as individual dress, but also as a means of contextualising and critiquing the cultural ramifications of particular entertainments. As with the visualisation of politeness as a consumable, material model, politeness as a tool for limning the boundaries between tiers of urban social hierarchy was also acknowledged and reinforced by satirical print artists. Again, this opens up the public/polite entertainment to accusations of artifice, irresponsible luxury and social insularity. However, it also restates the position of politeness as a high-status mode of behaviour, and therefore as desirable, both for individuals participating in entertainments, and for the entertainment itself – the politeness of the latter being determined largely by the politeness of the former. Indeed, the representation of public entertainments is especially pertinent to any attempt to reconstruct eighteenth-century politeness, both as a practiced and an observed mode. The emphasis on polishing one's behaviour (or 'becoming' polite) through interaction with one's peers privileged the commercial public entertainment as an arena in which the polite individual would, in theory, be guaranteed to come into contact with other polite individuals, and in which a social premium was placed on the public display of correct conversation, deportment and dress. Furthermore, the Augustan notion that the polite man benefited from spending time in the company of polite women rendered most genres of public entertainment, which involved both male and female participants, as legitimate sites for the acquisition of politeness.

As an example of how satirical prints acknowledged the desirable status of polite behaviour, and its function as a hierarchical marker, the print *The Beau Monde in St James's Park* (3:11, c.1740) is epitomatic. This image depicts a large group of men and women, assumed to be elite individuals on the basis of their fashionable apparel and the print title's designation of *beau*

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<sup>37</sup> Langford, Paul, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford, 1998), fig. 8b, p.456

*monde*. The figures are represented as promenading in a public space associated with the Royal court in its proximity to St James's Palace and to Buckingham House; the latter being delineated in the background. This *beau monde* exists within the literal parameters of the print, but alludes to a 'real' milieu of London's polite and fashionable persons, here reimagined and represented to the print's consumers as a self-contained elite, accessible only via the satirical image. Again, the process of reification strengthens the status of fashionable dress as a manifestation of polite consumption and social discourse. The satirical focus of this print purports to be the folly and irrationality of fashionable dress, incorporating a quote from Alexander Pope in the *pareregon*: 'The ruling Passion, be it what it will. The ruling Passion conquers reason still.'<sup>38</sup> This focus, however, does not detract from the connotations of exclusivity and desirability surrounding the concept of 'polite society' as viewed publicly in an entertainment context. The potential criticisms of artifice and luxury are, in this sense, irrelevant to the point that the appearance of politeness is construed as desirable – indeed, it can be argued that it was precisely this desirability which gave didactic force to criticisms of artifice as morally dangerous.

The representation of fashion hierarchies is illustrative of how satirical prints functioned within the sphere of public entertainment, as well as above it. Carnavalesque critiques of public entertainments did not work unless there was an acknowledged ideal or desirable mode to be challenged. The desirability of politeness was frequently criticised as being unpatriotic, as the associations between politeness and Francophilia were longstanding, including the influence of French cooking, the popularity of travel to France, and the pervasiveness of the French language in polite correspondence.<sup>39</sup> Ironically, many satirical prints attempted to legitimate politeness by reconciling it with patriotic sentiment. This is apparent in *The Double Attack, or French Politeness not a match for English Assurance* (3:12, 1772), in which two aristocratic men compete for the attentions of a fashionable woman at a public assembly. Although 'politeness' is specifically ascribed to the French figure, whose facial features and exiguous physique cohere with other satirical representations of effeminate Frenchmen, both men inhabit the same polite space and dress. This print can be read as an attempt to construct an English mode of politeness, disassociating the excessive formality of French manners from the easy assurance of the Englishman, the latter of which has much in common with earlier polite codes established by the Earl of Shaftesbury, Addison and Steele. This frames the ideal behaviours of polite conduct within the context of English masculine superiority, reconciling the demands of the public sphere with patriotism.

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<sup>38</sup> Wagner, Peter, *Reading Iconotexts: from Swift to the French Revolution*, (London 1995), p.97

<sup>39</sup> Eagles, Robin, *Francophilia in English Society, 1748-1815* (London, 2000)

The reconciliation of politeness with patriotism can also be detected in *The Wapping Concert* (3:13, 1786), albeit representing an entertainment at the other end of the social spectrum to that shown in *The Double Attack*. This image takes the notion of the polite entertainment and mockingly subverts it by removing the elite connotations of the West End music venue – such as the Pantheon or Vauxhall – and reconstructing the entertainment in the context of an East End Freemasons’ hall. At first glance, it appears to be mocking the plebeian and petty bourgeois audience for their attempt to emulate the polite world; though it must be said, that this audience fits into the public space through their commoditised leisure consumption just as the attendees of a polite assembly would do. A sign on the rear wall of the tavern lists the rules which constrain the potentially unruly and impolite behaviour of the patrons, such as ‘No Lady come into this Room with Pattens [...] No Lady or Gentleman crack nuts, whistle or talk during the songs.’ Upon closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that the print is more a satire on the musician than upon the listeners; being a lampoon of the German-born singer Gertrude Mara. Mara had achieved prominence singing in the royal Handel Commemoration of 1784 – which was itself the subject of several prints, albeit non-satirical ones – and is represented here catering to a ‘low’ audience by singing the patriotic song *O The Roast Beef of Old England*, in contrast to her previous performances for the royal family. The lyrics of this song add another layer of patriotic reference to the print, given that they formed a critique of the effects of contemporary politeness and foreign cultural influence. What is apparent, therefore, is that even when performing polite practices such as attending concerts, the public could be configured as essentially patriotic in its tastes, especially when the bourgeois aspect of publicness was emphasised and uncoupled from its associations with the representative courtly and aristocratic public.

### ***The Reception: transition from legitimation to opposition satire***

It must be reiterated that the public sphere paradigm is relevant to the history of politeness, in that the aims and ideal practices of the latter are in many ways synonymous with those of the public sphere. The notion of discourse is central to both: manifested as ‘rational-critical debate’ in the public sphere, and, less precisely, as ‘conversation’ in the polite world. To a certain extent, Habermas’ private persons were also polite persons, and thus the act of ‘coming together as a public’ was politeness collectivised. By extrapolation, contemporary patriotism, as a concept and as a practice opposed to cosmopolitan politeness, placed patriotic discourse in opposition to the public sphere. However, patriotism and politeness were polyvalent concepts,



and were therefore open to manipulation. A variety of symbolic and emblematic markers were clustered around polite and patriotic discourse, forming their respective tropes. These tropes retained their specific associations, but could be placed in a variety of visual contexts to support or undermine public discourse.

In order to demonstrate how satirical prints could mediate between the legitimating and oppositional aspects of a public entertainment, and bearing in mind the relatively unstable nature of politeness and patriotism as concepts, it is instructive to consider a case study of two companion prints. *The Reception in 1760* and *The Reception in 1770* (3:14 and 3:15, both 1770) represent two progresses by George III through London in his private coach – one shortly after his accession in 1760, and the other after a further decade has elapsed. In the image representing the earlier progress, male and female figures surround the royal coach in a public thoroughfare, and lean from the windows of a building, alongside speech bubbles denoting the approbation and enthusiasm of this crowd towards the King; such as ‘Honor and glory to our British King,’ and ‘He’s a sweet pretty man.’ In the image associated with the later date, the cheering crowds are absent. The King, his coachmen and his guards are the only figures present in both the earlier scene, and this one. The only additional figures are those of two Scotsmen, in Highland bonnets, bowing at the door of the coach, and a male figure of bourgeois appearance and belligerent stance, commenting ‘Not a creature at any of the windows.’

These images form a political comparison; one which highlights the decrease in popularity suffered by George III in the first decade of his reign, as a result of the perception that his ability to rule was affected by the influence of the Earl of Bute and the latter’s Scottish acolytes. Looking at these images through the framework of the public sphere, however, highlights how the satirical visualisation of political issues was rooted in social discourse – in this case, in a dialogue between politeness and patriotism. *The Reception in 1760* looks back to the King’s initial popularity, by placing him firmly within the authoritative framework of the public sphere. On first examination, this representation of a royal journey appears more like a manifestation of the ‘feudal’ representative public in all its monarchical, court-centred splendour. However, it is possible to locate the public perception of George III as an essentially proto-bourgeois monarch in both the early years of his reign and those following his ‘madness’ of the 1780s. Construing George III as a representative of the bourgeois public sphere, and thus a proponent of patriarchal, commercial authority as Linda Colley has argued, coheres with his representation in *The Reception in 1760* as being literally in the middle of ‘his’ public.<sup>40</sup> The figures

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<sup>40</sup> Colley, Linda, ‘The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation 1760-1820’ in *Past and Present*, no. 102 (1984), pp.94-129

surrounding his carriage are inhabitants of the urban landscape in which the King's coach is situated; their street-based location and apparel place them in the realm of the respectable, bourgeois persons who comprised the public sphere, while their apparent loyalty, and comments relating to Britishness, highlight the patriotic sentiment of this sphere. The approving comments relating to the King's physical appearance also allude to the idea of polite internal benevolence being manifested externally. This image connotes a physical and an ideological proximity between King and subjects, which can be read as a retrospective approval of his early reign, by a visual tool of the public sphere: the satirical print.

By contrast, *The Reception in 1770* emphasises the loss of public approval suffered by the King, by not depicting the public that supposedly attended his carriage a decade previously. The absence of a public presence, and the absence of any entertainment, critiques the idea of George III as a bourgeois, publicly accountable monarch, and indirectly supports the notion that the occurrence of a public celebration had a valedictory function as well as a critical one.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, this image posits the idea that George's kingship is more closely aligned with the 'feudal' representative public of a centralised, powerful royal court and, therefore, with the tyrannical governance associated with ostensibly absolutist Continental monarchies, such as France. Firstly, by giving greater pictorial space to the King's luxurious equipage (obscured by the crowds in *The Reception in 1760*), the material appurtenances of a representative public are made the focus of the print's composition. In the context of contemporary criticisms levelled at polite luxury consumption, particularly those accusations relating to artifice, wastefulness and effeminacy, this visual emphasis on the material aspect of royalty aligns the King with the satirical stereotype of 'the Frenchman'. Also of greater prominence are the King's personal bodyguards, their placement in the foreground of the coach occupying the space occupied by the public in the earlier image. The guards act as a barrier between the King and the viewer, reinforcing the isolation of the monarch from the consuming public and reminding the viewer of the authority and status that require such protection. Finally, by depicting a pair of cringing Scotsmen bowing towards the King, the creator of this latter image has drawn the viewer's attention to George III's relationship with his unpopular minister, Lord Bute, and the common perception that Bute and the King conspired together to subvert the rights of Parliament, and create a network of Scottish patronage and placemen to reinforce Bute's position. Not only does this association imply the King's lack of patriotism with respect to English internal and constitutional affairs, but also, in alluding to Scotland and Scottishness, suggests the broader

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<sup>41</sup> This representation of the King would still enjoy a public audience in the form of print consumers, who would have been entertained and discursively engaged by the act of looking at and decoding the print.

patriotic fear of Jacobitism, Catholicism and pro-French attitudes. In short, by compiling a series of tropes that construe the King as an unpatriotic ‘tyrant’, *The Reception in 1770* distances him from the bourgeois public sphere; and, given that the print acts as the representative agent of that same sphere, it criticises him for this breach of values.

This reading of the two *Reception* prints points to the complexity and occasional ambiguity of using the public sphere as an interpretive framework for understanding entertainment satire, and satirical print culture in general. The ideal bourgeois public, represented in this pair of images both as a physical crowd and an imagined audience ‘outside’ the image, engages with the discourses of politeness and patriotism in different ways, depending upon social, political and economic contexts. Politeness could be construed approvingly when it reinforced the patriarchal authority structures, commercial consumption and social benevolence key to the operation of the bourgeois public sphere. In this interpretation of politeness, the discourse was not seen as incompatible with patriotism, as both could be manipulated to the benefit of national/public concerns, such as commercial strength and a unified, civil society. Within the context of the public sphere, however, polite and patriotic interests could diverge. The double function of satirical prints, being both ‘of’ and ‘above’ the sphere of public entertainment, ensured that polite entertainments could be imagined as both the target of satire – given the position of politeness as an authoritative model of public behaviour – and the tool of satire, in mocking ideas and phenomena deemed inimical to the public sphere. Patriotic discourse was also identified with the ideal public sphere, and therefore could be configured as antithetical to politeness as and when the latter discourse was under attack. It is therefore necessary to examine the capacity of public entertainments, and entertainment prints, to articulate and convey opposition, both to the prevailing modes of the public sphere, and to social concepts situated outside that sphere.

### **Patriotic Entertainments: unity, mockery and opposition**

The sphere of public entertainment might not seem a likely cultural location for the promulgation of explicitly socio-political agendas, given the openly commercial imperatives behind such entertainments, and their association with transient pleasure. The visual and public nature of entertainments, however, ensured their usefulness to graphic satire, as it was the very dependence of entertainments upon visible objects and actions (such as the dressing and comportment of the body, and the markers of physical location) which created a series of recognisable, manipulable tropes and allegories. The rooting of these tropes in specific cultural traditions and mutable social contexts enabled their use as critical markers of those traditions and

contexts, particularly as these latter pertained to the public sphere within which graphic satire functioned.

For example, the pictorial representation of a well-dressed prostitute attending a public entertainment, which derived its moral valence from contemporary legal, religious and thus social notions of female virtue, potentially acted as a critique of ‘entertainment’ as a site of sexual transgression, polite artifice and physical/spiritual uncleanness.<sup>42</sup> The situating of such a figure in the representation of an entertainment was a common means of construing such entertainments as detrimental to the interests of bourgeois patriarchy, as has been discussed in relation to *The Pantheon, in Oxford Street* (3:4). This ubiquity, as well as the relative ambiguity of the well-dressed female figure, undermined the boundaries – in pictorial terms – between the transgressive prostitute and the ostensibly virtuous female. The analysis of prints produced in response to Miss Chudleigh’s near-nude masquerade appearance as Iphigenia illustrates how satirical imagery could conflate the satirical subject (the specific female body) with a recognisable, negative trope (the prostitute). This conflation aligned the satirical subject with the original notion of a threat to the patriarchal public sphere, as posed initially by the archetypal prostitute.

The various entertainment-related tropes used in graphic satire often became associated with specific critical or oppositional discourses, appropriate to the social connotations of the trope. For example, the representation of a traditional fair, complete with enticing booths, performers and peddlers, was frequently employed as a satirical device connoting party-political or governmental unpopularity. The traditions associated with the phenomenon of the fair, including pseudo-magic, ritual, spectacle, crowd violence and commerce, cohered with both the material manifestations of the political system, such as election hustings, and the abstract conception of politics as being innately deceitful, based upon popular spectacle rather than integrity. This imagining of politics-as-fairground is depicted in *The Humours of a Fair* (3:16, 1770), which in the political context of its publication emphasised the supposed corruption of the English constitution and political system under the mismanagement of Lord Bute, the Duke of Grafton, and Lord Holland; all of whom are depicted. As with the many other satirical images attacking Bute and his relationship to the monarchy, symbols denoting him, his Scottishness and his supposed sympathy for French despotism are incorporated into the structures of the fair booths – a boot, thistles and *fleurs-de-lys*. The booths themselves bear banners reading ‘The Bill of Wrongs’, ‘The Death of Britannia with ye Farce of Liberty’, and ‘The Royal Art of Cuckold-

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<sup>42</sup> The authoritative moral attitude towards the danger of the attractive women, and her power to deceive, is epitomised by Proverbs 6:25-26: ‘Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread.’

Making' – the latter a reference to Bute's supposed adulterous relationship with the King's mother.<sup>43</sup> This imagining of unconstitutional actions as public spectacles emphasises the carnivalesque nature of politics-as-fairground, creating a space in which the normative ideal of politicians accountable to the bourgeois public (the electorate) is absent, and the political antithesis of the public sphere – 'tyrannical despotism' – is simultaneously rendered deceitful and ridiculous by its representation as a form of entertainment. This is reinforced by the representation of the King and Queen standing in a raised booth decorated with *fleurs-de-lys*, in a composition reminiscent of actors upon a theatrical stage. While the *fleurs-de-lys* allude to the perception of the King as sympathetic to despotism and Catholicism, fulfilling a similar function to the guards and Scotsmen in *The Reception in 1770*, his situation on the stage of a public fair lowers him to the status of a travelling actor or Merry Andrew, effectively ridiculing his pretensions to despotism by casting him as the ruler of a petty fair.

The location of *The Humours of a Fair* within the public discursive space is ambiguous, despite the unequivocally critical attitude the image displays towards Bute and George III. It appears to be the case that this particular print functions as representative of a broad segment of public opinion, criticising the King's perceived attempts to undermine constitutional convention in the hope of ruling in the style of the feudal representative public. The manifestation of this criticism in satire acts a powerful reminder of the cultural and commercial power of the public sphere to successfully articulate its political concerns. It must be noted, however, that aspects of the fair trope do not sit well with the public sphere as a bourgeois construct. In this image, for example, a large cask of beer or ale bearing the inscription '45' – a reference to John Wilkes' anti-Bute publication, *The North Briton*, and to the year of the Jacobite Rebellion – is situated in the background. Nearby, a vomiting Scotsman, whose vomit contains the words 'Oh No. 45, No. 45', is shown sitting on the right of the scene. The obvious inference is that the beer, construed as a synecdoche for Wilkesite patriotism, is unpalatable to the Scots who would otherwise seek to gain control over English politics and patronage. 'Oh No. 45' refers to issue number 45 of *The North Briton*, an attack on the Treaty of Paris negotiated by Bute, for which Wilkes was famously prosecuted on the grounds of seditious libel. It can also be read as 'NO 45'; an inscription in the puddle of vomit which configures the latter as a putrid rejection of Wilkes' 'unpalatable' viewpoint by the Scottish fairground reveller.

The connotations of beer as a commodity were not only patriotic, however, but also inescapably plebeian, as discussed in relation to the cask depicted in *The British Jubilee* (3:5), and in

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<sup>43</sup> Details of the satirical controversy surrounding Bute and his relationships with the royal family will be the subject of Chapter 5.

this respect, beer (unlike wine) was not an approved consumable **good** of the bourgeois public sphere. Furthermore, the fair as a historical phenomenon was inextricably linked with the feudal and the carnivalesque, harking back to a period where time, commerce and authority were understood and manifested very differently. Bakhtin emphasises the importance of the fair as a collective marketplace, and as a location of the grotesque imagery and cynicism inherent in the works of Rabelais.<sup>44</sup> The polite tastes and manners of the public sphere had little in common with the carnivalesque, as manifested in *The Humours of a Fair* by, for example, the grotesquerie of the vomiting drunk and the anthropomorphised figures of Lord Holland, as a fox, and the Duke of Grafton sporting large cuckold's horns.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the cynicism apparent in this print's assertion that particular politicians were charlatans and their supporters fools would seem to be at odds with the benevolent and charitable disposition advocated by the Augustans. It is also worth noting Jonathan Haynes' description of the divergence between the function of an urban fair as a 'festive marketplace', and the re-situating of public commerce into polite, formal shops or commodity 'warehouses' that developed during the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>46</sup>

The grotesque potential of the fair trope, and thus the cultural distance between this trope and the public sphere, is manifested in greater detail in the earlier *The Chevaliers Market, or Highland Fair* (3:17, 1745). Published during the Jacobite Rebellion, this print imagines a Jacobite victory as a metaphorical fair and complete inversion of Englishness, focusing upon the Catholic superstition, material poverty and tyrannical governance associated with France (and Scotland). English Protestantism, prosperity and Parliament are represented by a *sabot*-clad figure sweeping away papers labelled 'The Book of Common Prayer', 'India Bonds' and 'Magna Charta'. These symbols of Englishness can be understood as vested public interests, and thus *The Chevaliers Market* can be read as upholding the public sphere by satirising that which is detrimental to it. It is impossible, however, to ignore the manner in which this image constructs its opposition, emphasising the grotesque through death and dirt. This is not the life-affirming grotesque of Bakhtin's 'lower bodily stratum', which emphasises the regenerative power of bodily degradation, but a bleak and cruel vision.<sup>47</sup> The fair is located in a typical English marketplace, the market cross hung with a proclamation by 'King' James, the Jacobite 'Old Pretender'. The fair's commercial function, and thus its connection with prosperity and regeneration, is mocked by the

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<sup>44</sup> Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN, 1984), pp.146, 188

<sup>45</sup> Lord Holland was Sir Henry Fox prior to his elevation to the peerage; the Duke of Grafton divorced his first wife for adultery in 1769.

<sup>46</sup> Haynes, Jonathan, 'Festivity and the Dramatic Economy of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*', in *English Literary History*, vol. 51 no. 4 (1988), pp.645-668

<sup>47</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p.21

presence of booths selling items associated with French poverty, such as ‘Fine Plump Frogs for a Fricassee’. The sale of frogs contrasts stereotypical French eating habits with the status of beef and butchers in the mythological narrative of Englishness. This contrast is strengthened by another sign, bearing the legend ‘Flesh for such as have Licenses’, implying that Franco-Scottish despotism and the presumed introduction of Catholic restrictions on meat-eating would impinge upon English butchers, not only in the practice of their trade, but also as symbolic figures of the unique strength and liberty of plebeian Englishmen.

Representations of dangerous Catholicism are pertinent to identifiably carnivalesque imagery, given that its historical roots are located in medieval ‘Paschal laughter’. In addition to its panoply of monks and priests, *The Chevaliers Market* includes a sinister booth purporting to sell ‘Holy Relics’ and piled high with skulls. This image can be read not only as an attack on Catholic credulity and superstition, but also as a reminder of the perceived barbarity of Catholic practice, if one considers the improbability of so many skulls being ‘genuine’ saints’ relics. These overtones of murder and/or grave-robbing should be understood in the context of the assertion that French government, despotism and Catholicism were synonymous. This tripartite association was represented in *The Grand Fair at Versailles or France in a Consternation* (3:18, 1759). This image represents the reaction of France in the wake of the British victory at Quebec as literally chaotic, using emblems and distorted fields of perspective to achieve a haphazard and nightmarish effect, completely unlike a figuratively realistic fair. Among the different emblems on display are those labelled ‘General to be broken on the Wheel’ – a particularly gruesome means of enforcing the death penalty, used as a punishment for blasphemy, among other crimes – and ‘The Minister to be Hang’d’, suspended from a rope affixed to the cross-beam of a crucifix. Here, the figures of Minister and General, embodiments of the authority of the French state and yet individually failing to uphold that authority, are subject to bodily punishments normally handed to heretics, regicides and other malefactors.

The inference from this juxtaposition is twofold – primarily, it serves to argue that, in France and other Catholic nations, the authority of the state is synonymous with the authority of the Church, and thus a failure to uphold one is grounds for punishment by the other. Taking into account the chaotic composition and strange, nightmarish figures represented in *The Grand Fair at Versailles*, it is also possible to argue that the creator of this print has attempted to represent French society as being in a state of perpetual carnival, in the sense that normative, ‘English’ structures of political and cultural authority are permanently inverted, made arbitrary and unstable. This invocation of the carnivalesque as an all-encompassing, permanent state removes it from its accepted literary and social location as a sporadic, temporary manifestation of

mockery and opposition. From being the authority structures against which carnival asserted itself, church and state have, in this print, become inherently carnivalesque. From the point of view of an English print audience, this created a potential scenario in which the public sphere could not exist; given the notion that the fair (though employable as a trope in the service of the public sphere) essentially could not be manifested in a manner coherent with the ideal social behaviours of the bourgeois public, the possibility of the fair and the carnival being made permanent was inimical to the functioning of the public sphere. In this respect, the English public sphere is indirectly configured as a patriotic concept, associated with liberty, tolerance and order, by implicitly comparing it with the imagined carnival of Franco-Scottish despotism. It is possible to see these prints as actually conferring a kind of codified, symbolic narrative on contemporary patriotic discourse; which, in contrast to politeness, was not shaped by a plethora of conduct literature.

The narrative of plebeian patriotism constructed by images of the fair was also developed via images of other non-elite entertainments, such as popular processions and May Day celebrations. As with the anti-Bute sentiments displayed in *The Humours of a Fair*, this patriotism was not solely configured as a response to external, foreign threats; rather, it operated primarily as a public response to perceptions of internal corruption. In the case of Bute, his supposed foreignness was generally employed as a means of discrediting his political machinations in England, rather than being the primary target of criticism. An interesting example of this mode of patriotic thought is *The British Patriot's Procession Through London and Westminster* (3:19, 1751). This print represents the exit from Newgate prison of Alexander Murray, who had been committed there by Parliament for supposedly inciting violence against the Government's electoral candidate for Westminster, and for displaying 'contempt' at his sentencing by refusing to kneel. The event has been represented as a triumphal procession, with crowds in the street waving their hats in celebration, and Murray's supporters following his coach, clutching supportive petitions. In this respect, the print strongly resembles *The Reception in 1760*, which, along with its companion print, also employed the representation of a public crowd as a means of legitimating authority. In *The British Patriot's Procession*, the crowd bear a Union flag and a banner reading 'Murray and Liberty' as symbols of their opposition to the illiberal actions of the House of Commons, and their identification of Murray with the cause of British patriotism. It is, however, the print's contemporary context which actually reinforces the interpretation of patriotic 'liberty' as an inward-looking phenomenon: Murray was not only, like Lord Bute, a



Scottish noble, but also a committed and acknowledged Jacobite.<sup>48</sup> The fact that this image, produced and sold in London alongside so many virulently anti-Jacobite prints, has treated Murray as a 'British' patriot in order to construct a political critique indicates how introspective the notion of patriotism could be; particularly in London, where the inter-relation of Parliamentary authority and elite society created a space in which plebeian and less prosperous bourgeois individuals used patriotism as a narrative of opposition.

The equating of patriotism with street culture, and with plebeian manifestations of the carnivalesque, is also an important theme in satirical representations of May Day. The celebration of May Day, the traditions of which derived from pre-Christian agricultural rites, centred upon renewal, fertility and the coming of spring. Though ostensibly a rural rite, London had developed its own May Day rituals, such as the procession of dancing chimney-sweeps and milkmaids wearing foliage in their traditional headdresses of pewter-ware.<sup>49</sup> These traditions are visualised in *May-Day in London* (3:20, 1784), which represents a scene of dancing and music-making in a London street, filled with a diverse crowd composed not only of milkmaids and young sweeps, but of labourers, tradespeople and passers-by. The scene is undoubtedly a cheerful one, rather than explicitly critical, but it does firmly locate the atavistic and carnivalesque celebrations of May Day in a framework of patriotism that, although tacitly supportive of the public sphere, is not part of it. The central figure, a one-legged man playing a violin, is potentially a military or naval veteran; these latter were frequently represented in satire as amputees, symbolising their service in action. On a background wall, immediately behind the one-legged musician's head, are posters advertising commercial May Day entertainments; one of these is a performance of *Loyal Crew* at the Theatre Royal. This not only emphasises the connection between the veteran and the patriotic sentiment of the crowd surrounding him, but also reinforces the liminal location of the May Day celebrations on the border of the public sphere, permeating the boundary between the organised, commercial entertainments of that sphere, and the traditional, informal and carnivalesque entertainments of the plebeian 'counter-public'. The geographical location of the May Day scene also offers a juxtaposition between the public sphere and its plebeian counterpart, representing traditionally costumed milkmaids and sweeps dancing in an urban street lined with shops. It is important to note that manifestations of patriotic, plebeian culture operated as a counter-public space, relating to, overlapping and sometimes opposing the mores and structures of the bourgeois public sphere, rather than conceptually negating the existence of the public sphere.

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<sup>48</sup> Hugh Douglas, 'Murray, Alexander, of Elibank, Jacobite earl of Westminster (1712–1778)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19586>, accessed 9 April 2010]

<sup>49</sup> Joshua, Essaka, *The Romantics and the May Day Tradition*, (London, 2007), p.98

## Masquerade: identity, suspension and publicness

As a site of carnival, images of the fair acted as a powerful reminder of the double function of satirical prints. By employing visualisations of the grotesque and the plebeian in support of the bourgeois, ordered public sphere, the fair trope operated as a means by which patriotism and politeness could be culturally reconciled. It is inaccurate, however, to claim that only plebeian entertainments operated as sites of carnivalesque behaviour. As important as the fair, in terms of understanding the relationship between carnival and the public sphere, was the masquerade. The meanings of masquerade were derived from the same carnivalesque traditions as the fair, encompassing metamorphosis and behavioural license, and yet masquerade operated within specific boundaries.<sup>50</sup> As Terry Castle has noted, the ‘otherness’ inherent in the act of masquerading, in which was encoded the superimposition of anarchic and fantastic bodies over essential bodies, operated according to a ‘logic of symbolic inversion [...] if the masked ball was a kind of anarchy, it was paradoxically a systematic anarchy.’<sup>51</sup>

While the typical masquerade operated within the social and commercial confines of the public sphere, it also attracted criticism from within that sphere, focused upon perceptions of masquerade as a site of sexual license, artifice and foreignness, in defiance of the patriarchal and patriotic interests of the public sphere. However, the visual nature of satirical prints permitted some degree of ambiguity in the criticisms they aimed at masquerades. The representation of masquerade opened up the possibility of its being used to critique the public sphere itself.

A quintessential masquerade print in which the ambiguities of the genre can be understood is *The Jubilee Ball* (1:8), which was discussed briefly in the introductory chapter. The primary focus of the composition is a crowd of figures in costumes denoting recognisable, with a view of Ranelagh Gardens in the background rendered in the style of a *vue d’optique*, designed to be looked at through a perspective glass. The crowd resembles a group of actors on a stage, with a formal boundary established between them and the frame of the print; emphasising the theatrical and artificial nature of the masquerade, and the suspension of normative identities. The processes of costuming and masking, though related, operated within different frameworks – while masking denotes a negation of individual identity, costuming implies the deliberate associating of the self with a new identity. Within both processes, however, is encoded the potential to subvert and invert norms. It is clear that the guises assumed in *The Jubilee Ball*

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<sup>50</sup> Castle, Terry, *Masquerade and Civilisation: Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, CA, 1986), pp.23-28

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4-5

distance the masquerading individual from the public sphere by conferring a temporary otherness. It should be noted that, although the assumption of otherness through costume distanced the wearer from the behavioural expectations of the public sphere, the act of participating in a commercial masquerade ensured that the individual's membership of that sphere could never be totally suspended. Nonetheless, the costumes depicted in this print indicate a breaking down of accepted boundaries between genders, social classes, religions and nationalities. For example, a nun and monk, a male and female Quaker and a stereotypical Jew, are divergent from the Anglican hegemony of the public sphere. The representation of figures in national costumes, such as the hussar and the oriental noble in a turban, also proclaim their exotic 'otherness' in contrast to the idealised, non-represented Englishman.<sup>52</sup>

The verses appended below this image target the potential dangers of sexual license at the masquerade, and the freedom to indulge in transient liaisons offered by the process of masking. The perception that masquerade undermined patriarchal authority and sexual virtue was based on a twofold assumption: firstly, that female participants would seize the opportunity to escape scrutiny, and secondly, that male participants would abandon their rationality in the process of masking. Therefore, it is not surprising to find in this scene a female figure dressed in the coat and peaked cap of a jockey, brandishing a horsewhip as a symbol of temporary masculine authority. Similarly, it is feasible that among the masked figures in female dress is concealed one or more men, abrogating their masculinity, and thus authority, by adopting temporary transvestism. As Castle writes, 'this revelatory disorder in the realm of costume paralleled a similar disorder in the realm of actual behaviour. The masquerade diffused a novel spirit of sensual liberty; disguise and anonymity granted a license for erotic experimentation.'<sup>53</sup>

The perception that the temporary assumption of otherness was inimical to the accepted behaviours of the public sphere can be inferred from the verses printed beneath *The Jubilee Ball* referring to the figure of the Oriental noble as 'The Turk [who] stands glotting on a Christian Dame.' This equates the assumption of costume, and of otherness, with a desire to adopt the aims and values of the 'other' state of being. In this instance, the figure of the Turk is interpreted as embodying the predatory Oriental male, connoting ideas of heathen cruelty and sexual license.<sup>54</sup> In the context of 1749, amid recent memories of the Jacobite Rebellion, the prominent

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<sup>52</sup> *The Jubilee Ball* (1749) predates the adoption of 'John Bull' as a recognisably English satirical stereotype from the 1760s onwards.

<sup>53</sup> Castle, Terry, 'Eros and Liberty at the English Masquerade, 1710-90', in *Eighteenth-Studies*, vol. 17 no. 2 (Baltimore MD, 1983), pp.156-176, p.159

<sup>54</sup> Inge Boer, 'Despotism from under the Veil: Masculine and Feminine Readings of the Despot and the Harem' in *Cultural Critique*, vol.32 (Minneapolis, MN, 1995), pp.43-73

figures of a tartan-clad Scot and Mary, Queen of Scots, can be understood as dangerous symbols of Scottish cultural and political incursion. The verses below the print refer to 'Mary Scot [to whom] the humble Plaid extends, His hand, and in Obeisance lowly bends': the cultural memory of Mary as a figurehead of Catholic plots, and the visual similarity between the tartan-clad figure and those in other anti-Scottish satires of the period, ensures that this pair of costumes can be interpreted as subversive. Not only has the process of masking caused these figures to temporarily disown their identities as normative members of the English public sphere, but their new, costumed selves embrace an identity that is in direct opposition to the interests of that sphere and its members.

In this respect, it is possible to view the masquerade as a tool for critiquing the public sphere, rather than as an aberrant anomaly from the latter. The construction of masquerade as a polite pastime places politeness under criticism, and into direct conflict with patriotism; implying that polite persons use the opportunity for deviance afforded by masquerade to adopt identities of foreign 'others'. Masquerade practice was identified with foreignness, thanks to the organisation of commercial masquerades in London by foreign entrepreneurs such as Count Heidegger and Teresa Cornelys. The similarities between masquerade and medieval carnival also contributed to the perception of masquerade as a foreign innovation, influenced by Catholic festivals of misrule and the Venetian *carnivale*. The association between politeness and artifice, as expressed in dress and manners, finds its most archetypal expression in the masquerade, which was defined by deliberate pretence, and the assumption of character. Masquerade can be seen as a hyper-real microcosm of polite practice, whereby an individual assumed a dress and behaviour that allowed them to appear publicly as a polite person. Furthermore, the obvious connection between character-identities selected for the masquerade, and identities considered taboo within the parameters of the public sphere, associates the masquerade with a deliberate assumption of unpatriotic values, and a desire to subvert behavioural expectations such as chastity and rationality.

The subversion of social categories, such as gender and class, forms a constant theme in the process of masking. What has not been given the same degree of scholarly attention, especially as it relates to social discourses, is masquerade's potential to subvert human status altogether. The power of the masking process to transgress and blur the boundaries of personhood, which encompass physicality and consciousness, and to assume identities outside normative human-ness is a recurring theme in satirical representations of masquerade. In *Remarkable Characters at Mrs Cornely's Masquerade* (3:21, 1771), this theme is particularly apparent. The 'remarkable characters' include many of those depicted in *The Jubilee Ball*, including the Turk,

a nun, and the cast of the *commedia dell'arte*. However, the print also represents a number of characters or costumes whose identities are situated outside the parameters of the strictly human, such as a coffin-costume embellished with death-head symbols, a 'bear' led by an organ-grinder, and the ghoulish figure of 'Mad Tom o'Bedlam'.<sup>55</sup> The presence of Death, here in the form of a coffin, was ubiquitous in the medieval carnival as a regenerative agent; in this image, however, the coffin-costume also functions as a kind of *vanitas* symbol, reminding masquerade participants of the transience of human life. Paradoxically, the presence of such a symbol endorses the masquerade as an environment in which transience is acknowledged and embraced; indeed, the anthropomorphism of the coffin-costume could be construed as regenerative, given its liminal location on the boundary between the living and the dead. Furthermore, the comical aspect of a dancing coffin, subject to a gesture from a smiling Harlequin, actually highlights masquerade's potential to mock that which was considered serious beyond the confines of the masquerade itself.

This mockery of the human condition is also apparent in the representation of the bear, and Mad Tom, both of whom connote identities bound up in irrationality, brutishness and indignity. The costumed bear should be understood in the context of London's bear-baiting subculture, which, although considered cruel and plebeian, attracted a substantial audience of bourgeois and elite men.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Mad Tom, a longstanding cultural reference to madness in English literature, symbolises human degeneration and the undermining of rationality, and should be viewed in light of the popularity of visiting insane asylums as a form of polite entertainment.<sup>57</sup> The figures of the bear and the madman, like that of the coffin, destabilise the relationship between the practice of masquerading and its social context by creating a scenario in which the process of masking does not merely mean the assumption of another human identity. In this scenario, rather, the process of masking can also mean the rejection of normative humanity altogether, privileging states of being usually located outside not only the public sphere, but entirely outside any category of social discourse. Masquerading could enable the public actor to temporarily inhabit the identity of a being that, in the normative public sphere, had no discursive agency.

The implications of this, in terms of understanding masquerade as a genre of public entertainment, are that the masquerade offered its participants an opportunity to assume

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<sup>55</sup> 'Mad Tom O'Bedlam' was a guise assumed by the character of Edgar in *King Lear* (c.1603); it was also the title of a ballad first published in Thomas D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth* (1720). See Bloom, Harold, *How to Read and Why*, (New York, 2000), pp.104-07

<sup>56</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p.201

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62

identities that not only inverted the behavioural expectations of the public sphere, but actually called that sphere's validity and existence into question. Social discourses rooted in the public sphere, including politeness and patriotism, were rendered null and void during the process of masquerade, as their dependence upon the behaviour of individuals was undermined by a process of masking that potentially obviated the human individual. Ironically, the public nature of masquerade ensured that this suspension of social discourse – or rather, the suspension of behavioural expectations concomitant with discourse – actually served to critically re-establish masquerade's position as a phenomenon of the commercial public sphere. The supposed behavioural licence associated with masquerades, especially that relating to sexual and social transgression, attracted the attention of critics with an interest in upholding the structures and expectations of the public sphere, such as Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London.<sup>58</sup> Critical engagement with masquerade meant that the costumes, behaviours and interactions temporarily adopted during the process of masking were inalterably associated with the strictures of the public sphere that they sought to suspend; for their cultural meaning as 'inverted' or 'subversive' depended upon their being recognised as in opposition to a particular discourse. The depiction of masquerades in satirical prints, especially, subjected the genre to the double-function of such prints, simultaneously representing masquerade and criticising it. Paradoxically, this meant that masquerade was at once opened up to a broader public – those whose geographical, social or financial restrictions precluded their attendance – and at the same time reduced to a static, critical representation of an 'exotic' social anomaly, sensually bland in comparison with the actual event.

The representation of entertainments in satirical print culture was paradoxically dependent upon the idealisation of entertainment as a public and commercial enterprise, and the acknowledgement of entertainment's location as a site for publicly aberrant modes of thought and behaviour. Only satirical prints, with their encoded logic of inversion and mockery, had sufficient referential range and public exposure to adequately convey a sense of the dichotomies inherent in entertainment practice: dichotomies of communal behaviour and self-presentation, of commercial and moral imperatives and political realities and symbolic fancy. It is still necessary to ask, however : did prints matter? Did they constitute significant interventions in the sphere of public, commercial entertainment during the eighteenth century? The idea that satirical entertainment prints 'mattered' socially, in the sense that they conveyed meanings to their audience that affected the behaviours and thought processes of that audience, can be illustrated in a tangible sense by examining the commercial viability of satirical prints as saleable objects,

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<sup>58</sup> Gibson's anti-masquerade sermon, first published in 1724, was reprinted in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1771, implying a continuity of interest in masquerade criticism.

and their frequent display in open fora such as shop windows.<sup>59</sup> This indicates at least that they were common, recognisable and desirable items among the strata of London's population with the opportunity to engage with them. Specifically, prints were primarily purchased and viewed by those bourgeois and elite persons who could afford them and 'correctly' interpret their symbolic and allegorical images; the same persons who notionally comprised the public sphere. Gatrell has argued convincingly that satirical prints, individually and collectively, were lodged in the cultural consciousness of elite and bourgeois urban male consumers, as significant reference points marking particular events, and as transmitters of continuity for atavistic or traditional visual symbols.<sup>60</sup> He makes the point that the frequency of direct written references to particular prints, by those same elite/bourgeois men, indicates the important place of satirical images in the matrix of social and cultural reference shared by the public sphere, alongside the other genres of entertainment that prints represented. Individuals fitting the archetype of the prosperous, cultivated male print-purchaser, such as Sir Horace Walpole and John Wilkes, demonstrated in their private writings the importance of viewing, buying, exchanging and discussing satirical prints among their immediate social contemporaries.

That prints mattered, and that they held a place in the cultural consciousness of the public sphere, is not necessarily an indicator that they influenced or changed the organisation of, or behaviour at, the public entertainments they represented. It is entirely reasonable to posit that some viewers of prints would have paid heed to the didactic messages connoted by many prints, developing and reinforcing social expectations already in existence (for example, that assemblies were 'fashionable', or that the Pantheon was a site of potential immorality). However, if satirical prints had any social influence, this influence must primarily have emanated from the mimetic and symbolic functions of prints – that is to say, from their visibility. Prints had the power to represent what was culturally desirable, in terms of dress, leisure, manners and so on, to an audience whose means of accessing images was often limited.<sup>61</sup> As such, they reinforced the social hierarchies, and markers of hierarchical place, of contemporary entertainments. They also had the power to process inchoate currents of cultural thought into self-sustaining symbolic narratives – such as the interconnected series of satirical tropes attacking Scotland, France, despotism and Catholicism – which in turn gave structure to broader discourses, such as patriotism. This enabled the use of carnivalesque entertainment tropes as allegorical exegeses of discourse, and of conflicts between discourses.

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<sup>59</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, pp.19-20

<sup>60</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, pp.213-14

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.210-12

It is not possible to construct some kind of statistical ‘measurement’ or psychological analysis of the influence of satirical entertainment prints, on entertainments themselves, and on the behaviour of entertainment participants. From the commercial and cultural presence of prints in the urban public sphere, however, and from the unique function of prints to construct, participate and critique social discourse, it can be inferred that satirical images of entertainments in eighteenth-century London played an important role in understanding those entertainments. Though there is no direct evidence that the physical processes of entertainment were significantly altered by the production and viewing of satirical prints on the topic, the mental processes relating to the metaphysical location of ‘entertainment’ in urban bourgeois and elite culture must have been, thanks to the ubiquity and pervasiveness of satirical imagery.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PRIVATE BODY MADE PUBLIC: PRINTS AS COMMODITY, PRINTS OF COMMODITY

Present-day representations of eighteenth-century English culture – whether dramatic, literary or otherwise – depend upon a historical visual language through which stereotypes of the period can be communicated. The powdered wigs and vast hooped skirts of aristocratic women, or the cocked hat and cape of the highwayman, for example, play a role in constructing a modern overview of the period as one of hierarchy subverted by artifice, excess and moral turpitude. They work together to establish what Barthes dubs *l'effet de réel* – the sense of verisimilitude which derives from the representation of objects and events not directly concerned with narrative.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, these visual articulations of eighteenth-century material experience are simplified by creators of current visual culture to the point of parody; for example in Sofia Coppola's biopic *Marie Antoinette* (2006), or in the portrayal of the Prince Regent in the television comedy *Blackadder The Third* (1987). This present-day simplification finds a curious echo in satirical imagery produced and consumed within the eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere. Satirical prints used dress and fashion as a means of situating individual actors in social and public locations; to such an extent that dressing, as a social practice, formed a significant sub-genre of such prints. At the same time, however, the range and types of clothing represented in prints offers the historian a subtler and probably more 'realistic' view of eighteenth-century dressing practices, not confined to representations of high fashion or portrait costumes. Again, *l'effet de réel* comes into play, as the representation of clothing and dressing practices reinforces the efficacy of satirical commentary on, say, class distinctions or gender roles.

This chapter will investigate satirical manifestations of the relationship between dress, the body, and identities in the public sphere. Satirical print culture took the intimate and subjective praxis of dressing and used it publicly as a means of denoting 'objective' social and political messages; rendering the body generic and impersonal in doing so. It is bodies in their clothed and public manifestations which concern this chapter. Within the category of 'dress' are included fashion, uniform and costume as varieties of dressing practice – all of which were incorporated into satirical representations of publicness. I will argue that dress was an essential component of 'public identity', and as such its presence in the matrix of satirical print imagery ought to be

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<sup>1</sup> Barthes, Roland, 'The Reality Effect' in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1986), pp.141-148

regarded as a cultural referent denoting aspects of public discourse concerned with: artifice and authenticity; physicality and health; social rank; and gender identity. This chapter will consider the role of clothing in the construction of satirical interventions in fashion discourse; in contemporary gender roles; in social stratification and hierarchy; and in national identities. In doing so, it will also address broader issues relating to the role of consumption in constituting the bourgeois public sphere: satirical prints were commodities just as much as the clothing they depicted. The materiality of prints, like the materiality of fashion, constructed hierarchies of consumption and display in which, for example, a hand-coloured mezzotint 'droll' retailing at two shillings was politer and more suitable for display than a crudely-etched, cheap, uncoloured political broadside on sale for sixpence; and the Piccadilly print-shops were superior sites of consumption in comparison to those around Cheapside and St Paul's Churchyard.

### **Clothing: modes of use, parameters of display c.1750 – c.1780**

Before this, however, I wish to offer an overview of what clothing was worn in the latter half of the eighteenth century, how it was worn, and by whom. Without this, it is not possible to understand the significance of clothing as represented in contemporary print culture. The technical and aesthetic history of dress in this period has been comprehensively covered by Aileen Ribeiro, and it is through her work that 'dressing', as a practice, can be best understood in relation to the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Dressing, understood broadly, encompassed a variety of manufacturing and consumption modes, including but not limited to: home sewing; ordering new garments from tailors or seamstresses; receiving uniforms, liveries and cast-off clothing from employers; and the purchase of second-hand garments.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of recycling and remaking garments, for example, was a common one in a period of expensive fabric and cheap sewing labour.<sup>4</sup> The Kyoto Costume Institute holds in its collection a pink *robe à la anglaise* cut in the style of c. 1785, but made up from a painted Chinese silk produced in the 1760s; as well as a yellow *robe à la anglaise* in the style of c. 1770 but made up

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<sup>2</sup> Ribeiro, Aileen, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France, 1750-1820* (New Haven, CT & London, 1995) and *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715-89*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (New Haven, CT & London, 2002)

<sup>3</sup> See also Roche, Daniel, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the 'Ancien Regime'*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1994)

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy George, for example, cites a 1767 list of outfitting costs in which the contrast between the cost of fabric and the cost of labour for making it up is apparent. The cost of linen for 'four day-shirts' is £1 17s 6d, while the cost of their sewing is 10s, or less than less than one-third the cost of the fabric. George, M. Dorothy, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Chicago, IL, 2000), p.362

from a 1740s Spitalfields silk.<sup>5</sup> Though not ‘new’ in the strictest sense, these particular garments can nevertheless be located in a discourse of fashionable display and luxury. They represent only the highest end of the spectrum of clothing recycling, their survival in a museum perhaps better enabled by their expensive and precious nature. More typical of the clothing worn by most people in this period would be that passed on from family members and altered to fit, or bought and sold through the second-hand trade. As Beverly Lemire has argued, the recurrence of clothing among inventories of stolen and fenced goods in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England points to its value as a transferable and desirable commodity.<sup>6</sup> The sale and exchange of clothing was an area of business dominated by women, and as such it recurs as a motif in novels of the eighteenth century with female protagonists: *Clarissa*, *Moll Flanders* and *Fanny Hill*. The presence of remade and reused clothing is not explicitly represented in satirical print culture, but its ubiquity in the urban public space gave it a kind of invisible presence, inasmuch as it could function as an implicit marker of artifice and imposition. The custom of giving cast-off clothing to servants, and the entrapment of prostitutes by indebting them to brothels for hired clothing, had particular ramifications for the satirical representation of women; and will be touched upon in this chapter as satirical tropes relating to the power of dress to conceal and deceive.

That mode of female dress which represented the standard fashionable form throughout most of the century – that is to say, clothing produced by expert manufacturers for intended first use – consisted of either a mantua/sacque/*robe à la française*, or a closed gown/*robe à l’anglaise*.<sup>7</sup> Both of these were relatively simple in shape and appearance, if not in actual construction, but tended to be decorated with a bewildering variety of colours, prints, ribbons, ruffles and other adornments. The essential shape consisted of a gown, or mantua, which had elbow-length sleeves, covered most of the torso, and came down into a skirt. The back of the gown was sewn into pleats so as to accommodate the expanse of fabric required in the skirt: these pleats might be left to hang loose on the *robe à la française*; or sewn flat as far down as the waist on the *robe à l’anglaise*. The *robe à la française* was open at the front, and laced or pinned over a V-shaped stomacher as far as the waist; while the *robe à l’anglaise* was sewn or (later) buttoned closed at the front. Below the waist, the gown might be closed, but was normally left open to display an

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<sup>5</sup> For images and curatorial comments see [http://www.kci.or.jp/archives/digital\\_archives/detail\\_24\\_e.html](http://www.kci.or.jp/archives/digital_archives/detail_24_e.html) and [http://www.kci.or.jp/archives/digital\\_archives/detail\\_18\\_e.html](http://www.kci.or.jp/archives/digital_archives/detail_18_e.html) respectively, accessed on 18 August 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Lemire, Beverly, ‘The Theft of Clothing and Popular Consumerism in Early Modern England’ in *Journal of Social History*, vol. 24 no. 2 (1990), pp.255-76

<sup>7</sup> As will become apparent, the vocabulary of fashion in this period is dominated by French terminology; a contributory factor to the contemporary perception of fashion as unpatriotic.

underskirt known as a ‘petticoat’.<sup>8</sup> The relative homogeneity of female fashion (which was worn over a linen shift, a set of stays and one or more under-petticoats) can be seen in *The Contrast, Or a Lady in ye Dress of 1745 and another in ye Dress of 1772* (4:1, 1772). As the title implies, this image purports to offer a distinct contrast between fashionable dress at the time of publication, and that of three decades previously. Despite the apparent differences in trimmings and accessories, however, the structure of the two garments depicted remains fundamentally the same. The figure of 1745 is dressed *à l’anglaise*, with the petticoat extended over a broad hoop; while the figure of 1772 is dressed *à la française* with the skirt looped up in a style known as *à la Polonoise*.

From this print and its connotations, it is possible to draw out several salient points regarding female dress that relate to the polemical and satirical potential of clothing as a visual trope. One is the notion that normative gender identity is enforced by the form of garments, and vice versa. The accepted shape of the gown and its underpinnings, for example, minimises the waist and emphasises the bosom and hips in a manner that alludes to visualisations of female fertility and desirability. Long and voluminous skirts impede and disguise legs, and this denial of the reality of bifurcation protects female chastity by negating the possibility of sexual access; as well as limiting women’s mobility and physical autonomy. Furthermore, it is clear that the relative sameness of women’s clothing in this period means that criticism was levelled not at the structure or cut of particular fashions, but at modes of embellishment and the demeanour with which they were displayed.<sup>9</sup> In *The Contrast*, for example, the thrust of the print’s satirical message is aimed specifically towards ‘contemporary’ (1772) fashion; achieved by mocking the excessive embellishment and lace trimming on the gown, and the outlandishly tall hairstyle.<sup>10</sup> From this, it is also possible to infer that one of the primary satirical objections towards ‘fashion’ as a concept was its potential association with the interrelated concepts of excess, artifice and foreignness – which will be considered in detail later in this chapter.

Having dealt only with dress as iterated through ‘fashion’ thus far, it makes sense to pause and consider the representations of female clothing which did not always sit within the

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<sup>8</sup> Despite the great variation in fashion nomenclature in this period, I have attempted to use terms in a consistent and general manner.

<sup>9</sup> Again, there was some variation. The redingote, caraco and Brunswick, for example, were all styles of female garment which differed somewhat from the basic *à la anglaise/française* dichotomy. While some, such as the redingote, were sufficiently different (i.e. masculine) to warrant discussion in their own right, most were essentially variations on the same theme.

<sup>10</sup> Hair and wigs were an integral component of ‘full dress’, and their exaggerated representation in many fashion satires points to the centrality of dressed hair to the presentation of the fashionable self. Dressed hair, or the covering of natural hair with a dressed wig, offered the most obvious example of the human body being visibly distorted and manipulated in the interest of maintaining a fashionable appearance. See Rosenthal, Angela, ‘Raising Hair’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 38 no.1 (2004), pp.1-16

parameters of fashion as a discourse of exclusivity, luxury and newness. While the *robe à l'anglaise/à la française* constituted the accepted form of fashionable female dress, the garments worn by poorer women marked their place in the social hierarchy without deviating from what was considered gender-normative. Poverty – or rather, lack of disposable income – was represented through clothing. Women without pretensions to fashion might be seen in a variety of garments which signalled varying degrees of respectability and status. At the upper end of this social and economic scale were ensembles such as that worn by the maid in Edward Penny's comic painting *A City Shower* (4:2, 1764). Her gown and petticoat conform to the fashionable shape and may be good-quality cast-offs, as the petticoat is quilted; an expensive procedure.<sup>11</sup> They are covered by a large apron and a patterned shawl over the shoulders. Her apron, and the fact that her shoes are protected by pattens, marks her as a working woman in the context of the period.<sup>12</sup> She is not, therefore a woman 'of fashion', which in contemporary usage implied high social status as well as modish dress.<sup>13</sup> At the bottom of the social and economic scale, poverty and degradation were signalled by the representation of ragged, patched and dirty clothing – such as the stockings worn by the prostitute in *The Whore's Last Shift* (4:3, 1779), which contrast with her fashionable high coiffure; or the torn skirts of the drunken women and children in *The Funeral Procession of Madam Geneva* (4:4, 1751). In both cases, the unkempt clothing of these figures marks their inability or unwillingness to engage in the relevant transactions that would allow them to present themselves according to the standards of the bourgeois public. They are alienated and made 'other' through their clothing.

These ideas of status, artifice and public presentation can also be mapped onto a typical satirical representation of men's fashion in this period, such as *Out of Fashion, In Fashion* (4:5, 1772). Like *The Contrast*, this print depicts two figures – this time, male – in the costumes of the 'present' and of twenty to thirty years previously. Once again, the relative sameness of the cut and structure of male costume (subject to changing fashions in embellishment) is apparent. The basic form of male costume comprised a buttoned coat, falling approximately to the knees, over a buttoned waistcoat and knee-length breeches. This costume was completed with stockings, a linen shirt under the waistcoat, a three-cornered or 'cocked' hat over a wig, and buckled shoes. The figures in *Out of Fashion/In Fashion* are dressed in the most formal *habit habillé*, accepted as

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<sup>11</sup> Millar, Maria, *The Needle's Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution*, (Amherst, MA, 2006), p.102

<sup>12</sup> The universal wearing of pattens by both sexes and at all social levels in the medieval period, as manifested in Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434), had since declined. Pattens became unnecessary for those not obliged to work, as fashions and manufacturing processes entailed the production of thicker and more durable shoes.

<sup>13</sup> 'Fashion, n.', OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. Accessed 4 September 2012  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68389?rskey=7U87gL&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

the only appropriate mode of dress at court, Parliament and assemblies until the late 1770s.<sup>14</sup> The less formal *frac*, or frock coat, was simpler in its cut and embellishment, which explains its conspicuous absence from fashion satires except as a marker of ‘normality’ and, often, rural identity; as I will demonstrate in the next section. The clothing of men located outside the sphere of fashion was essentially the same in shape as its fashionable counterpart, but made of rougher and more durable fabrics such as frieze.<sup>15</sup> As with the clothing of poor women, it tended to be represented as ragged or worn as a means of denoting poverty and otherness.

This print demonstrates the potential for fashionable variations in the *habit habillé*, such as the size of the hat, the length of the waistcoat or the style of wig; in essentials, however, both the *habit habillé* and the *frac* remained as constant in basic shape as female costume. Just as women’s dress manipulated female biology for the purposes of reinforcing social norms, so too did the accepted standards of fashion for men reinforce normative masculinity. The expectation of masculine independence and authority is raised by the wearing of breeches and a coat – garments which permit movement and complement, rather than manipulate, natural physicality. The inclusion of hats in this overview of male fashion (and their exclusion from *The Contrast*, despite the fact that women did wear hats outdoors) also emphasises the ‘publicness’ of normative masculinity in this period; the hat connoting a readiness for social interaction and codified behaviour.

It is also possible to understand some of the satirical uses to which fashion and costume were put by analysing this particular image. While *The Contrast* seems to criticise only the costume current at the time of publication, by setting the excessive and artificial fashions of 1772 against the relative plainness of 1740s dress, *Out of Fashion/In Fashion* applies its criticism more broadly. Both the figure representing male dress of the 1740s and that representing the 1770s are depicted in costume that is extravagant in its embellishment. The 1740s figure is located in the foreground of a church constructed in the Gothic style, thus associating him with the notion of anachronism and former modes; while his contemporary counterpart stands before a fashionable neo-Classical church. So, satirical representations of costume can be used as markers of status in relation to time – as a positive or negative reflection on issues of history and modernity.

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<sup>14</sup> Mansel, Philip, ‘Monarchy, Uniform and the Rise of the *Frac*, 1760-1830’ in *Past and Present*, no. 96 (1982), pp.103-32

<sup>15</sup> "frieze, n.1". OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/74665?rskey=Gu7g4F&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed November 09, 2012).

Also of interest is the inclusion of a monkey or ape dressed in a costume similar to that of the 1740s figure. The use of anthropomorphic primates as a symbol of human artifice was a common satirical trope throughout this period known as *singerie*. *Singerie*, which connoted not only artifice and ‘aping’ but also the Frenchness of its rococo origins, will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. It is interesting to note that this symbol of artifice is applied here to the spectacle of an earlier fashion, despite the fact that the ‘current’ styles of the 1770s came under significant scrutiny and criticism. Though the 1770s figure is here equated with neo-Classical modernity, his mode of dress and comportment coheres exactly with that illustrated by the numerous ‘Macaroni’ images produced in the same period. From this, it is possible to infer that the status of costume – or, more specifically, ‘fashion’ – within the context of satirical print culture depended upon the humorous and/or polemical message connoted by an individual image. Representations of dressing *per se* did not, broadly speaking, constitute a satirical trope that was constant in its meaning. Nonetheless, there were discourses around the dressing that were manifested in satire by means of specific modes of dressing representation; frequently if not exclusively anchored in verbal captions or ‘speech’. Macaroni prints constituted one such mode of representation, in which a recognisably flamboyant, ‘effeminate’ style of male dressing became a kind of satirical synecdoche for the negative traits mentioned previously – artifice, extravagance, foreignness, etc.<sup>16</sup>

This analysis, of two ‘fashion contrast’ images, offers a way in to examining the broader corpus of satirical prints related in some manner with dress as praxis. Of course, it can be argued that virtually any image in which the human body was depicted constituted an intervention in dressing-related discourse. For the purposes of this chapter, however, the images studied will be confined primarily to those whose particular satirical target seems from the evidence to have been related to fashion and/or aspects of dressing practice. Within these, a number of particular tropes and satirical sub-genres become apparent. First of all were the straightforward fashion satires, which depicted current male and female fashionable costumes with mocking captions or titles. These were also related to other bodies of images, such as Macaroni satires, which anchored their broader social critique in representations of dress.

After looking at these representations of ‘normative’ dress (in that they depicted modes and styles sanctioned by the dictates and structures of the ‘fashionable world’), it is necessary to consider satirical representations of ‘costuming’. By this, I mean not only costume in its quotidian sense (for example, masquerade costume), but also in the more general sense of any

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<sup>16</sup> See p.127

clothing donned to reposition the cultural or social identity of the wearer. So, in this category will be included representations of transvestism; of ‘cross-class’ dressing, such as servants dressing in the clothes of their employers; of the classical and historical guises employed in portraiture; and of uniforms.<sup>17</sup> Finally, consideration will be given to depictions of the undressed and undressing body in satire, including ‘boudoir’ imagery.

### **Folly, Femininity, Furbelows and Flounces: the fashion satire**

The ‘fashion satire’ constituted a significant part of satirical iconography, in that the representation of clothing was ubiquitous in any representation of contemporary figures, and functioned in that context as a marker of status and identity. It closely resembled non-satirical fashion imagery, in that it depicted figures posed against an idealised ‘genteel’ background, dressed in a manner that displayed current modes. Satires tended to incorporate a humorous caption, and usually incorporated an extra ‘non-fashionable’ figure in normative but unadorned clothing; against whom the contrast of high fashion was produced. The similarities between the two types of image can be seen by comparing a fashion print such as *The Park – or the most Fashionable Dress for the year, 1777* (4:6, 1777) with an overt satire such as *Female Fashionable Follies – or, Bob Blunt in Amaze* (4:7, 1776). Both *The Park* and *Female Fashionable Follies* represent a pair of female figures dressed in the most current fashion, the former situated in a landscaped urban park and the latter in the grounds of a country house. At first glance, there is little difference between these two images – both coloured mezzotints – in their depiction of contemporary fashion. Both pairs of women appear to be dressed in the less formal *robe à l’anglaise*, suitable for walking in public; both are accompanied by small dogs. There are, however, significant differences in the relationship of each of these images to their viewing public; in the staging of the scene and in the anchoring text. Most apparent of all these differences is the fact that *Female Fashionable Follies’* title locates it firmly in the realm of critical humour, as opposed to the implicit moral neutrality of *The Park*. The denotation of fashionable dress as a ‘folly’ reduces the entire pursuit of fashionable status to an irrelevance and a distraction. As analysis of other images will demonstrate, this coheres with the longstanding contemporary critique of fashion as corrupt, artificial and excessively French. *The Park* locates the wearing of fashionable dress as appropriate in a polite public environment, without comment. By contrast, *Female Fashionable Follies* engages

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<sup>17</sup> Of course this distinction is not meant to imply that ‘normative’ fashion played no role in manipulating individual identities. For the purposes of clarity, however, it makes sense to deal with representations of fashion separately from costume, given that the kind of clothing worn ‘everyday’ carried different social connotations to that consciously donned with a view to disguising or changing an inhabited identity.



with the notion that fashion is both an inextricable component of publicness, and a regrettably detrimental public discourse and practice. By locating two elaborately-dressed women in a park, this print emphasises the similarities between the unnaturalness of their appearance and the imposition of fashionable order on nature itself; connecting this to the artificiality of fashion-performance in the context of urban sociability.

In situating fashion within the public arena – both figuratively, in the prints’ representation of open space, and literally, within the space of the print itself – both of these images necessarily engage with the relationship of femininity to publicness. In both cases, fashion is configured as a predominantly, though not exclusively, feminine pursuit. While the central figures in *The Park* include a man in fashionable dress, he is only depicted in half-length as the skirts of his female companions spatially dominate the image. The title of *Female Fashionable Follies* does imply the existence of male fashionable follies as a corollary; however, the image focuses upon the apparent tendency of women to pursue fashionable status. Like *The Park*, this print incorporates a male figure; in this instance, however, he is an observer of the women, rather than their companion. Furthermore, this figure – the ‘Bob Blunt’ of the title – is dressed in a normative but very plain, unadorned manner that connotes his role as the representative of rural plainness; in contrast to the elaborate coat buttons and gold-trimmed hat worn by the figure in *The Park*. Bob Blunt functions as a point of contrast against which the dress and comportment of the women can be measured. The fact that he is described as being ‘in amaze’ denotes his role as a kind of average man, a predecessor of John Bull, who symbolises specific public values of plainness and honesty. These are opposed to the values of artifice and luxury that were identified with both fashion as a concept and with French national identity, thus emphasising Bob Blunt’s cultural separation from the women at which he looks, and reinforcing the reason behind his being ‘in amaze’.

Bob Blunt acts not only as a foil for the women in this image, but also as a proxy figure for the imagined viewer, who would have a similar reaction upon viewing extreme or outlandish fashions. This places the fashionable women in a potentially precarious situation – unlike their counterparts in *The Park*, they are not safely accompanied by a man of their own status, but instead are walking alone and subject to the scrutiny of other men. They are accompanied by a black servant boy – but this is no guarantee of their moral safety. Hogarth’s Moll Hackabout also had a black servant employed for her while the mistress of a wealthy Jew.<sup>18</sup> By extension, they are also subject to the scrutiny of the print’s viewers. This reinforces the view that fashion

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<sup>18</sup> Hogarth, William, *A Harlot’s Progress*, Plate II

constituted a danger to female morality, placing fashionably-dressed women in a position of objectification by men from which they had no protection, and thus posing a threat to their chastity and respectability.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the pursuit and practice of fashion also called into question the morality of women – especially single or unaccompanied women – who had sufficient resources to access an expensive and frequently-changing wardrobe. The practice of hiring expensive clothing to women who worked as prostitutes was common in brothels of the period, and functioned as a means of keeping the women in ongoing debt to their employer, preventing them from leaving without a male protector.<sup>20</sup> It is possible, then, to speculate that the women in *Female Fashionable Follies* were engaged in commercial sexual transactions, either as prostitutes or kept mistresses; and their clothing is both the result of their ‘immoral earnings’ and an effective means of attracting more attention and future clients.

Whether moral or immoral, the women in this image embody the contentious nature of the relationship between publicness and politeness. At the most obvious level, their potential status as loose women renders their claim to polite status (claimed via their fashionable appearance) false and misleading. As such, the public display of fashionable clothing and possessions problematises the concept and practice of politeness, which was implicitly bound up with fashion. Compared with the figures illustrated in *The Park*, the women in *Female Fashionable Follies* could be described as ostentatious and vulgar. The dress depicted in the former image is certainly fashionable and expensive; however, its colours are muted, its trimming is moderate and the hair and hats on display are modest in size by the standards of the period. In the latter image, both women are dressed in bright, garish colours, with the left-hand figure particularly extravagant in trimmings, accessories and *coiffure*. While the hand-colouring of prints left much to the discretion of the colourist, I infer that the commercial imperatives of the print trade made it likely that colouring would have been undertaken with the efficacy of satirical messages in mind. So, the contrast between the muted blue and puce shades of *The Park*, and the virulent red in *Female Fashionable Follies*, effectively reinforces the messages of those respective images. In the latter, fashion does not seem to be equated with notions of ‘elegance’ or ‘taste’, which were certainly prevalent in the commentary and correspondence of acknowledged fashion leaders of the time. This particular representation of fashion simultaneously emphasises its position as a public practice, while aligning it with negative conceptions of politeness which privileged external appearance over internal integrity.

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<sup>19</sup> Conversely, the objectifying effect of fashionable dress upon male bodies called into question normative conceptions of masculinity, as I will demonstrate on p.117.

<sup>20</sup> Carter, Sophie, *Purchasing Power: Representing Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century English Popular Print Culture*, (Ashgate, 2005), p.145

It is apparent, then, that fashion was construed by satirical (and non-satirical) criticism as a potential agent of social and moral corruption. This point is made most clearly in a sub-genre of fashion satires which focused upon the reuniting of a parent with their child, the latter fashionably dressed and scarcely recognisable. Typical of this type is *Is This My Daughter Ann?* (4:8, 1774) and the related *Be Not Amaz'd Dear Mother – It Is Indeed Your Daughter Ann* (4:9, 1774), both of which depict a plainly-dressed and elderly woman confronting a younger, fashionably-dressed woman. The implication of these scenes is clear: the polite urban environment lures innocent young people with the promise of fashion and luxury, corrupting them to a point at which they are barely recognised by their own mothers. The theme of corruption is especially clear in *Is This My Daughter Ann?*, which constructs a narrative around the daughter's exit – with a man – from a doorway marked 'LOVE JOY' over the entrance. The implication, of course, is that the daughter now works as a prostitute or courtesan; the sign over the doorway connoting the presence of a brothel or other house of assignation. Similarly, her appearance in *It Is Indeed Your Daughter Ann* echoes the figures in *Female Fashionable Follies*, in that her apparel raises questions about the manner in which it was paid for.

What is interesting about the narratives constructed by these two images is that fashion, as a practice, is to an extent construed as a passive rather than an active corrupting influence. That is to say, it acts as a lure but does not have agency. Instead, agency is in the hands of those individuals who choose to pursue fashion to destructive ends. This perspective is reinforced by the verses printed underneath the first image (4:8), from which can be inferred that the moral censure incurred by the daughter stems at least as much from the mother's jealousy of the former's youth and attractiveness, as from the inherent immorality of her actions:

The Matron thus surprised exclaims,  
 And the deluded Fair One Blames.  
 But had the Mother been as Charming,  
 She had Thought the Mutual sport no harm.  
 This Moral's an undoubted Truth,  
 Age envies Still the joys of Youth.

In doing so, this pair of images takes a humorous and pragmatic approach to the issue of fashion; acknowledging the importance of fashion practice as a means of attracting and then distinguishing members of 'the public' (in the broad sense of participants in urban discursive social networks), while simultaneously placing the responsibility for the negative consequences of luxury and dissipation on the heads of those who participate. At the same time, these images – like *Female Fashionable Follies* – take advantage of this didactic message to interest viewers with

representations of an attractive young woman in the most up-to-date and luxurious clothing. Ironically, by resembling fashion prints in this way, the *Daughter Ann* images attract their audience with exactly the seductive fashions they critique.

In contrast to the *Daughter Ann* images, *The Farmer's Daughter's Return from London* (4:10, 1777) uses the parent-child relationship to construct a sense of fashion as being unequivocally pernicious and dangerous. Rather than acknowledging the agency of the individual in determining whether or not fashion influenced their moral values and social behaviour, *The Farmer's Daughter* can be read as a narrative which emphasises the victimhood of the extravagantly-dressed daughter, representing her to be both literally and figuratively ensnared by her mode of dress. Encoded into this appearance of passivity, however, is the implication that the 'victim' of fashion in fact makes the choice to self-fashion; reassigning a degree of agency and moral culpability to the daughter as well as to the discourses which enable her appearance. In this image, the 'farmer's daughter' is depicted in the act of entering the farmhouse kitchen inhabited by her family; the appearance of both room and occupants being prosperous but not polite.<sup>21</sup> Each individual family member manifests an expression and a physical stance of horror and surprise at the daughter's appearance, which has been augmented by a lace-ruffled dress worn *à la Polonoise* and – most noticeable of all – an enormous powdered and padded coiffure. As an added touch of critical humour, even the family cat and dog rear backwards in horror; from which the viewer can infer that this symbolises the 'natural' and 'instinctive' reaction towards the artifice of fashionable dress. The physical pose in which the figure of the daughter is depicted, and the spatial relationship of this figure to the other figures and objects inhabiting the image, both work towards the construction of fashion, not as a passive practice, but as a discourse with a dangerous degree of autonomy and influence over the morally vulnerable.

As an example, consider the ambivalent pose in which the farmer's daughter enters the doorway of the kitchen. From an initial observation of this pose, it is possible to read the idea of a social greeting – arms outstretched in affectionate welcome, and the legs running towards the family gathered by the fire. Taking into account the daughter's fashionable apparel, and the suggestion raised by this of her exposure to vice and debauchery (as in *Is This My Daughter Ann?*), it is also valid to read her pose as one of despair and as a request for comfort or assistance. In this scenario, the family recoils not only at the visual extravagance of the daughter's clothing, but at the implied moral turpitude to which she has descended. In short, this print suggests that the

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<sup>21</sup> As a point of interest, the same image was printed and sold in Ireland as *The Farmer's Daughter's Return From Dublin*, which can be seen as an example of universal (Anglophone) concern at the influence of fashion in urban areas.

daughter has ‘descended’ to sell her body in return for the ability to dress that body in fine clothing – and so dresses and displays her body in this way in order to attract further transactions. It foreshadows George Morland’s 1786 series of paintings, *Laetitia, or, A Harlot’s Progress* (itself influenced by Hogarth’s series of the same name) which was engraved in 1789, and which punctuated its narrative of the seduced innocent with representations of Laetitia approaching, and eventually returning to, her virtuous and humble family. This conclusion is supported by the arrangement of looped sausages hanging from the kitchen ceiling, resembling female genitalia, and the hanging pieces of meat reflecting the daughter’s hairstyle accidentally hooked to the ceiling rack. The latter is a direct physical result of her self-fashioning, and indicative of the broader moral dangers of that process inasmuch as it threatens to pull down the rack as well as ‘pulling down’ the moral equilibrium of her respectable home. She becomes ‘meat’ in the sexual and physical sense, hanging up as if for sale in a butcher’s shop, at once turned into a consumable commodity and a decaying piece of depersonalised flesh. The daughter’s debasement renders her, not inherently dangerous (her position is too passive and vulnerable), but as a harbinger of danger, introducing the notion of urban corruption and vice into a virtuous rural household. This is exemplified by the sheer volume of her hairstyle, which allows her to physically dwarf the father-figure – a considerable feat given his representation as a typical stalwart English yeoman – and thus to undermine the normative moral order in which a male authority figure oversaw the chastity and respectability of their female familial subordinates.

The images examined so far all constitute representations of a particular visual ‘type’ of fashionable femininity; that of the attractive, young woman who embodied the passive object onto which fantasies of aestheticised sexual deviance and ownership could be projected. In contrast to this genre of fashion imagery was the representation of the ‘hag’. Representations of aging, unattractive and/or ‘fat’ women in fashionable clothing played upon the tropes of desirability and status inherent in the fashion print; making a statement concerning the propriety (or otherwise) of the relationship between age, female visibility and fashion. This propriety was also bound up in issues of social status and class, in a manner somewhat different to that of fashion on the bodies of younger, attractive women. An excellent example of such an instance can be seen in *The Butcher’s Wife Dressing for the Pantheon* (4:11, 1772). This print represents an aging, portly female figure adorning herself in front of a mirror, in preparation, as the caption states for a visit to the fashionable Pantheon concert hall. Unlike the younger ‘beauties’ depicted in *Female Fashionable Follies* and *The Farmer’s Daughter’s Return from London*, the butcher’s wife is explicitly situated in a position of respectability, if not of wealth and high social status. As a wife, she is free to some extent of the imputations of impropriety levelled at the single and unescorted

women in figures (4:7) and (4:10); her status allowing her to enjoy a degree of socially-sanctioned display and the right to 'perform' the visual and material practices of the married woman. In this specific case, however, her position as the wife of a butcher problematises her rights to participate in fashion. In being aligned with a trade, particularly one as physically foul and symbolically plebeian as butchering, the figure in this print is made to look ridiculous by seeking a fashionable status beyond her means.<sup>22</sup> This ridiculousness is emphasised by the figure of her butcher husband, or one of his apprentices, grinning in the doorway and identifiable by the sharpening-tool hanging at his belt. The satirical nature of the juxtaposition between the wife's place in the urban social hierarchy and the expensive and elevated appearance she tries to adopt stems from a complex economy of desire, appearance and status. The butcher's wife is evidently not wealthy enough or sufficiently socially elevated to have secured a husband whose own status would render her fashionable by default (which in itself raises the question of how her finery in this print has been paid for, emphasising the ruinous nature of luxury). At the same time, she does not possess the youth or physical attractiveness to raise her social status by becoming the kept mistress or courtesan of a wealthy, high-status man – unlike the women in the previous four images.<sup>23</sup> As a result, it is implied that the butcher's wife is unlikely to 'fall', morally speaking, as a result of being lured by fashion – and it is also unlikely that her finery is the result of a dubious sexual transaction conducted outside of the boundaries of marriage.

The point of *The Butcher's Wife Dressing for the Pantheon*, taking into account the economy of desire against which the figure of the wife is measured, is that 'fashion' in its satirical incarnation has no place in the lives of women located outside the elite, leisured group of public tastemakers. Nonetheless, as the print implies, many women situated outside this elite group were in a position to assume a fashionable appearance that belied their actual status as working women. As a secondary consideration, the print also reinforces the impropriety of fashion on the bodies of older, unattractive women. Nonetheless, the visual dichotomy of 'beautiful' clothing on 'ugly' bodies reinforced the contemporary stereotype of the unregulated woman as being immodest, wilful and lustful, whether or not those characteristics actually reached their fulfilment in the person of the butcher's wife.

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<sup>22</sup> On the importance of butchers as symbolic 'everyman', see Rauser, Amelia, 'The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire: Between Caricature and Allegory in 1784,' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 36 no. 1 (2002), pp.23-46

<sup>23</sup> It is tempting to read the butcher's wife and her association with meat as a representation of the phrase 'mutton dressed as lamb,' though the OED records the earliest written occurrence of this as 1811. It may, however, reference the phrase 'laced mutton' (particularly when considering the lacing on the wife's bodice), which connoted the idea of female immorality. "mutton, n.". OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124371> and "laced, adj.1". OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/104788> (accessed January 06, 2013).

This is further apparent in *A Speedy and Effectual Preparation for the Next World* (4:12, 1777), which represents the historian Catherine Macaulay adorning herself at a dressing table, much in the manner of the butcher's wife. This image has been analysed in some detail by Cindy McCreery, who draws out the relationship between Macaulay's self-adornment and her inevitable spiritual failing.<sup>24</sup> Macaulay does not merely adorn herself with rouge and other cosmetics, in the manner of actresses, courtesans and women at the French royal court. She ignores the significance of the decorations in her elaborate hairstyle, which are shaped like a miniature hearse and six horses – each of which are adorned with funeral plumes resembling the ostrich feathers popular in hair fashion at this point, and symbolically associated with female vanity and excess. These adornments, and the skeletal figure of Death holding an hourglass, act as harbingers of her demise as a direct result of fashion and vanity. As McCreery points out, the use of lead-based cosmetics implies the 'shortening of Macaulay's own life, [which] is hastening her entry to the "next world" but she is spiritually unprepared for it.'<sup>25</sup> The interest shown by Macaulay in her appearance and in fashion bears little relation to the problematic interest shown by young and beautiful women lured into possible prostitution, or that shown by the fat and vulgar butcher's wife: Macaulay was a wealthy and respectable doctor's widow with a reputation for political and intellectual writing. *A Speedy and Effectual Preparation* is not a direct commentary on the sexual virtue of its subject; although it references aspects of Macaulay's personal and romantic life to undermine her success. What it is, in fact, is another intervention in the discourse on fashion and its role in female publicness. In the background of the image is a profile portrait of a man in clerical garb, which McCreery suggests is a representation of the Rev. Thomas Wilson, a patron and supporter of Macaulay's work who was supposed (by contemporary gossip) to be in love with her.<sup>26</sup> His presence, and the fact that the figure of Death holds a Cupid's arrow in the manner of a gentleman's sword, connects the fashionable Macaulay to the imputations of vanity and emotional irrationality that characterise satirical approaches to feminine dressing practices. As such, Macaulay's credibility as a writer and polemicist in traditionally masculine fields – history and politics – is negated by both her engagement with feminine fashion and the associated imputation that her private romances are fair game for public critics.

In the images examined thus far, it is apparent that the representation of fashionable dressing in the eighteenth century was bound up with the construction of a particular 'type' of

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<sup>24</sup> McCreery, Cindy, *The Satirical Gaze: Prints of Women in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2004), pp.231-33

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232

<sup>26</sup> Hill, Bridget, 'Catherine Macaulay', *Oxford DNB* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17344?docPos=2> accessed 26 August 2012

femininity – the stereotype of the deviant, unregulated, lustful woman. In satirical terms, a set of dressing practices and modes became shorthand for female public impropriety, and the notion that women were ruled by their bodily impulses (if not policed and confined to the private sphere) was manifested in the wearing of clothing that advertised those bodies and their transactional potential. What, then, are we to make of fashion satires that depict male figures? More importantly, how did eighteenth-century publics process such images? The alignment of fashion and femininity inevitably problematised the visual interaction between fashion practice and normative ideas of masculinity. This is most apparent in images that used fashionable dressing as a means of criticising and marginalising men whose tastes and self-presentation identified them as ‘Macaronis’. The Macaroni phenomenon, which reached its zenith in the late 1760s and 1770s, was originally associated with a small and informal group of elite men whose experiences of European travel, and preference for Italian and French ‘high’ culture, set them apart from the stereotypical British patriotic male. Named after the pasta dish which was popularised in Britain by these returning travellers, the concept of the Macaroni was eventually spread among a wider audience, diluting its elite connotations and emphasising extravagant dress at the expense of specific foreign cultural references. Satirical prints were as much the cause of this shift, as they were observers of it. For example, Matthew and Mary Darly’s series of Macaroni satires mapped the Macaroni stereotype onto a broad social range of male characters, including lawyers and merchants. As Amelia Rauser has pointed out, the imagined figure of the Macaroni became a contested site of British material culture and identity, forming a trope with which debates over the dangers of cosmopolitanism and the authenticity of luxury could be furthered.<sup>27</sup>

In terms of dressing practice, then, the Macaroni embodied a paradoxical status which simultaneously lowered him as a figure of mockery and elevated him as a kind of elite (or quasi-elite) aesthetic pioneer. Very few men actually dressed in the exaggerated Macaroni style, even among those who could theoretically afford to do so. Even those who were noted for doing so, such as the then-youthful politician Charles James Fox, are not recorded as wearing any garment or wig that quite lived up to the fantastic excesses illustrated in Macaroni satires. It would seem that, while female fashion satires referenced a very real contemporary concern with women’s virtue, their public role(s) and the possibility of prostitution, the male equivalent was concerned more with a theoretical construct. That is to say, fashion and its excesses were regarded as a normative aspect of femininity; whereas the notion of the fashionable man was construed as

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<sup>27</sup> Rauser, Amelia, ‘Hair, Authenticity and the Self-Made Macaroni’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 38 no. 1 (2004), pp.101-17



problematic by satirical print culture. It was possible for a man of the period to maintain an appearance that was both normative and fashionable – for example, in wearing an appropriate wig, or in donning a military uniform. However, the theoretical extremes to which fashion could be taken, and the association between excess adornment and femininity, meant that the idea of a man pursuing a fashionable appearance and reputation could be represented as unmanly. The character of the Macaroni allowed this tension to be resolved in satire, by creating a figure so extreme in his appearance that real-life iterations of male fashion appeared normative by comparison. At the same time, the Macaroni acted as a warning to the male print consumer; his presence connoting

This brings us back to the distinction between *habit habillé* and the *frac*: the Macaroni is not only a wearer of the ostentatious *habit habillé*, but he wears it in the street, the park and other informal settings. Furthermore, he wears it at a time when the *frac* was becoming the new normative mode of masculine dress for most occasions.<sup>28</sup> The aberrant and anomalous nature of the Macaroni can be inferred from a print such as *Docking the Macaroni* (4:13, 1773). In this image, a stereotypical Macaroni figure is attacked in the street by an equally stereotypical butcher; the latter harking back to the social tension between butchering and fashion inherent in *The Butcher's Wife Dressing for the Pantheon*, and holding a knife to the enormous, scrotal 'club' of hair worn by the Macaroni as a threat of symbolic castration.<sup>29</sup> At its simplest, the image offers a concise narrative in which a weak man, his weakness manifested in an effeminate and foreign appearance, is physically overcome by a strong man who displays the outward characteristics of British masculinity. There are, however, a series of interrelated allusions in the both the text and iconotext of this image, which connect fashion practice directly to a complex network of ideas on ideal manliness and the visual expression of that ideal.

It is worth considering, for example, the ambivalent nature of the action central to the narrative of this print: the cutting or 'docking' of the Macaroni's hair by the butcher. The iconotextual reference to docking in the caption alludes to the practice of cutting-short dogs' and horses' tails for cosmetic or working purposes; and from this it is possible to infer a connection between the hair as a 'tail' and as a sexual symbol. The gendering of this symbolism is, however, obscure – hence the ambivalence. On the one hand, the scrotal shape of the hair-arrangement, and the possibility of associating the idea of 'tail' with male genitalia, offers the possibility of

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<sup>28</sup> Mansel, p.106

<sup>29</sup> The figure of the butcher effectively operated as a counter to that of the Macaroni in this period. His stereotypical physique and personal roughness, combined with his symbolic role as a provider of British beef, made the butcher a forerunner of John Bull in terms of British patriotic satire. See fn. 11

interpreting the act of docking as being on a par with castration and emasculation. In this reading, the Macaroni is essentially masculine (albeit embodying a niche and subversive form of masculinity). The butcher's knife assault on the Macaroni's hair could represent an attempt to critique and undermine this particular expression of masculine identity by the representative of a more traditional mode. In opposition to this interpretation, however, is the association of 'tail' specifically with female genitalia. Notwithstanding the phallic shape of the hair, it is possible to see the docking as an act of protest against the Macaroni's perceived effeminacy, as expressed through his consumption and display of fashion. Rather than a castration, the docking functions as an attempt to physically force the Macaroni to return to a traditional expression of masculinity. The butcher literally imposes his own masculine strength on the Macaroni, cutting off the feminine excess of hair at the latter's back; and figuratively cuts off the 'tail' that stands proxy for the latter's effeminate identity.

Of course, this hermeneutic dichotomy is complicated further by consideration of the fact that much of the discourse surrounding Macaronis emphasised their asexuality and/or gender-neutrality. For example, an article in *The Oxford Magazine* refers to the archetypal Macaroni as 'a kind of animal, neither male nor female, a thing of the neuter gender, lately started up amongst us. It is called a Macaroni. It talks without meaning, it smiles without pleasantry, it eats without appetite, it rides without exercise, it wenches without passion.'<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Diana Donald points out that the relationship between Macaroni men and fashionable women, as represented in satirical prints, was 'not sexual attraction but *affinity*.'<sup>31</sup> That is to say, the Macaroni engaged with (elite) women as equals, on the basis of their shared interest in fashion and display. This emphasised their distance from normative heterosexual models of masculinity, which placed women in the position of sexual objects and/or familial subordinates, not as equal participant in cultural discourse. The Macaroni's preference for female company, and his apparent lack of sexual interest in them, can be seen as the corruption of the Augustan recommendation that men improve their manners by socialising with women and being refined accordingly.

It is clear, then, that the typical Macaroni print functioned as a site of negotiation over different modes of masculine expression; offering up a stereotypical character that embodied both desirable and undesirable facets of manliness. The wealth, personal cultivation and social status of the Macaroni counteracted his status as a figure of derision and a target for attack;

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<sup>30</sup> *The Oxford Magazine*, June 228/2 (1770)

<sup>31</sup> Donald, Diana, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT & London, 1996), p.80

implying that the reason for his mockery lies as much in the envy of the plebeian butcher as in the inherent aberrance of his appearance and his nature. To illustrate this, consider *The Old Beau in an Extasy* (4:14, 1773). This mezzotint can be regarded as a kind of counterpoint to *Docking the Macaroni*; inasmuch as it shows a Macaroni's hairstyle being created, rather than destroyed. The narrative potential in this image is derived from the representation of an aged Macaroni – the 'old beau' – attended by a valet or hairdresser who styles, and adores, the former's elaborate coiffure. If the butcher's 'docking' of the Macaroni in the previous image establishes an ambiguous and fluid sense of sexual identity, it is reasonable to infer that the creation of a similar hairstyle also constitutes an intervention in the satirical construction of masculinity. Here, the spatial and iconotextual situation of the 'old beau' suggests a strong connection between Macaroni dress and effeminacy; unlike the ambiguous message of the previous image. Like the butcher's wife (4:11), the beau sits in front of an elaborate dressing table and mirror, linking his appearance and actions with the stereotypically vain, self-aggrandising and display-loving female; while the elaborate and dramatic drapery on the left allows his portrayal to function as a parody of a grand portrait, with its connotations of vanity and display. The attentions paid to him by his male valet mirror those represented in satires implying illicit relationships between hairdressers, staymakers etc. and their female clients (which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter). Furthermore, the admiration of the beau for his own reflection recalls the pose of the sexually deviant Squanderfield in plate I of Hogarth's *Marriage à-la-Mode*. In short, there is a homoerotic subtext to this image, centred around fashion practice and the association of this practice with a particular view of femininity (or, in the case of Macaronis, effeminacy). Nonetheless, this is complicated by the fact that the act of hairdressing, around which the narrative of the image is focused, constructs an edifice of hair that can be considered aggressively sexualised. This can be read as homoerotic. It can also, however, be read as a symbol of the beau's essential heterosexual masculinity; on top of which the effeminate character of the Macaroni is superimposed. This would cohere with the role of the similarly phallic hairstyle in *Docking the Macaroni*, the cutting of which can be seen as an act of castration and emasculation.

The critical case for the effeminacy of the fashionable male rested not only upon the perception of private sexual deviance bound up in the suggestion of homosexuality (or, indeed, asexuality). More importantly, the suggestion of subversive private behaviour had inevitable public connotations, as evinced by the very fact that these instances of subversiveness were represented in so public a medium as the satirical print. The relationship between iterations of fashionable dress and a broader discourse on the moral, economic and social cohesion of 'the public' was a well-trodden theme in both satirical prints and written commentaries of the period.

John Brown's *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, for example, stated with bluntness that 'the Character of the Manners of our Times [will] on a fair Examination, will probably appear to be that of a "vain, luxurious and selfish Effeminacy."<sup>32</sup> Addressing a presumed male reader, Brown explicitly equates the manners he criticises with a lack of masculinity. The book, published in 1757 as a response to Britain's military losses in the Mediterranean, was not without its contemporary critics; however, its strictures on male fashion were in keeping with the critique offered by satirical imagery:

The first and capital Article of Town-Effeminacy is that of *Dress*: which, in all its Variety of modern Excess and Ridicule, is too low for serious Animadversion. Yet in this, must every Man of Rank and Age employ his Mornings, who pretends to keep good *Company*. The wisest, the most virtuous, the most polite, if defective in these exterior and unmanly Delicacies, are avoided as *low people*, whom *Nobody knows*, and with whom one is *ashamed to be seen*.<sup>33</sup>

In short, the comical excesses of the Macaroni, if taken as an expression of effeminate behaviour in general, had an insidious impact that went beyond social ridicule. The satirical mockery directed at women in fashion satires was rooted in a belief that most women, given the opportunity, would be lured into extravagance and possible immorality by the seductiveness of fashionable clothing, and the opportunities for male seduction offered by this clothing. By contrast, the intersection of fashion and masculinity presented print consumers with a problematic situation in which the pursuit of fashion encouraged men to relinquish their masculine, public authority. Male fashion, as it was represented in satirical print culture, undermined the sober, virtuous ideal of manly behaviour upon which publicness was predicated.

### **Whores in Disguise: deceit, dress and representing hierarchy**

Despite its engagement with ideas of subversion and public deceit in relation to luxury, the fashion satire as a print genre was essentially rooted in normative ideas of gender identity, and social and economic hierarchy. Fashionable dressing could be used as a comparative device to mock, for example, sexual immorality or the pretensions of a parvenu. In doing so, however, satirical prints of this type were anchored in a discursive context that reinforced the status of fashionable dressing as desirable, polite and even tasteful, when manifested with propriety. Though extreme in its embellishment and decorative function, clothing with 'fashionable' status fundamentally resembled 'normal' clothing in its cut, its method of displaying or concealing the gendered body, and its function. In contrast to this, there existed a significant corpus of satirical

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<sup>32</sup> Tacitus, *Annales*, quoted in Brown, John, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, 1757), p.29

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36

images dealing with dressing practices aimed toward deliberate and drastic disguise of physical and social identities – for example, transvestism, and/or masquerade costume. For the purposes of comparison and analysis, I will refer to these images as ‘costume satires’ to distinguish them from the aforementioned ‘fashion satires’.

Of course, this distinction is to an extent arbitrary. The humorous and didactic function of fashion satires pivoted upon the expectation that fashionable dressing allowed individuals (for example, courtesans) to circumvent their humble or obscure origins to become celebrated as ‘fashionable’ in a broader social sense. It is not disputed that these prints represented instances in which private identity was publicly manipulated by clothing. However, these prints tended also to represent individuals who, whatever their background, had actually managed to achieve some level of public acknowledgement as a result of their dressing practices. By contrast, costume satires worked on the assumption that the figures they represented were dressed in a manner that totally disassociated their private or authentic identity from their public presentation. Such images can be regarded as distant from non-satirical fashion prints – the humour and the didactic/polemical impact of costume satires depended upon their ability to expose the falseness of their subjects’ assumed identities. Compare, for example, *A Morning Visit – or the Fashionable Dresses for the Year 1777* (4:15, 1778) with *High Life Below Stairs* (4:16, 1772). The former image, which is presented as a fashion-plate rather than as a satire, depicts fashionable dress in its ‘proper’ environment; on the bodies of wealthy, sociable men and women, and in an elegant and luxurious interior setting. Even in this image, however, the representation of fashion registers several conflicting satirical meanings – for example, the hat and calash-hood worn by the women in the foreground imply that this visit takes place in the context of fashionable urban society and its accepted ritual of social calling. On the other hand, the informal *frac* and musket of the gentleman in the background points to a rural setting, suitable for sport. The disposition and stance of this gentleman also add nuance to the meaning of the print: the fact that he remains seated as a female visitor enters the room implies either extreme familiarity or a lack of respect, which in turn undermines the legitimacy of the women as figures of high social status, although their surroundings are indubitably expensive. The gentleman also turns his gaze directly to the maid – herself well-dressed and with fashionably high hair - who enters the room bearing a tray, rather than to his female companions. The narrative in *A Morning Visit* is ambiguous – and could represent a failure of social awareness on the printmaker’s part, rather than deliberate nuance – but one clear trope that emerges is that of the pretty female servant attracting the notice of a high-status man. His hunting apparel adds to this impression by hinting at the idea that the servant is his ‘prey’. In opposition to *The Morning Visit*, *High Life Below Stairs* imagines a scene in

the kitchen or servants' hall of a similarly luxurious establishment. At the centre of this scene is a young female servant whose hair is being dressed in a manner very like that of the women in *A Morning Visit*. However convincingly the servant tries to present herself as fashionable, this print emphasises the fact that she is a low-paid, low status woman whose 'true' identity is located in the servants' hall where her transformation takes place.

The ease with which servants could assume the external appearance of their masters and mistresses was a common trope of public discourse on the subject of personal liberty and the effects of luxury. The standard practice of including cast-off clothing among servants' perquisites was blamed by a number of commentators for this situation, which overlapped with the relative cheapness of participating in ostensibly 'polite' entertainments such as those at Vauxhall Gardens; the second-hand clothing market – itself fuelled by the sale of cast-offs – also contributed to this situation.<sup>34</sup> The potential negative social impacts of this 'hierarchy-hopping' were manifold. Looking at the intersection of gender and class in this print, for example, it is reasonable to infer that the servant-woman's taste for luxurious dress reinforces both the high status of fashion (as desirable) and its incipient danger. The servant is in all likelihood a ladies' maid, tire-woman or other high-ranking personal servant whose duties allow her to prioritise style over practicality. As such, her continual contact with her mistress exposes her to the latest fashions, and allows her to receive cast-off clothing of a quality not normally affordable on a servant's salary. She is therefore in a position to assume a fashionable appearance. However, the public function of female fashion – to display one's physical charms and social status in order to secure a good husband – is denied to the servant. No matter how creditable her appearance, her low economic status means that it will be virtually impossible for her to attract the kind of legitimate male attention that would result in a respectable and secure marriage. While she seeks to emulate the position of the women in *A Morning Visit*, it is far more likely that she will end up like those in *Female Fashionable Follies* – that is, as a fallen woman – if the lure of fashion and extravagance proves stronger than the relative security of her current employment. The concomitant danger of her downfall is that she may take others with her. As a higher-ranking servant, she presumably has some influence over her inferiors, and may in turn 'infect' them with an improper love of fashion. This possible outcome can be inferred from the presence of a small girl standing behind the servant, copying the actions of the hairdresser upon a doll.

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<sup>34</sup> 'The servant-maids of citizen's wives, the waiting women of ladies of the first quality, and of the middling gentry, attend their ladies in the streets and in the public walks, in such a dress, that, if the mistress be not known, it is no easy matter to distinguish her from her maid.' Grosley, Pierre-Jean, *A Tour to London*, trans. Thomas Nugent (London, 1772), p.75

The immediate narrative made explicit in *High Life Below Stairs* leads to an implied negative outcome for the central figure of the servant-woman. Beyond this, however, must be considered the framework of public values and priorities which influenced perceptions of this narrative and its outcome. From the perspective of the assumed print viewer – the leisured urban male – the implications of the servant’s pursuit of fashion simultaneously imperils the cohesion of the public sphere and enables its subversion. On an explicitly public level – that is to say, on the level of shared public discourse as well as individual behaviour in public – the servant’s aspirations, as manifested in her dress, centre on a desire to leave the social place allotted to her by her educational background, birth, character and economic status. Her love of fashion – inextricable from the desire to achieve a higher social position – fits into the broader discursive theme of femininity and vanity that has been examined previously. The fact that this narrative theme is represented in a satirical print implies that it, and she, fit into a widely-held public assumption that most underprivileged actors within the urban social hierarchy wished to improve their economic and social status. This cannot be characterised as a desire to actually overturn established hierarchies; but it can be seen as a structural flaw in the hierarchy as it exists. The inevitable outcome of a prevailing cultural discourse that prizes ‘politeness’ as the primary indicator of status is a scenario in which the material appurtenances of polite culture become aspirational objects. Of these objects, fashionable dress is the most easily assumed by persons whose lack of wealth, education and independence prevent them from being truly polite. From the point of view of the privileged public actor, this simmering cauldron of aspiration reinforces the dominance of politeness; by locating the concept at the apex of material and social desirability. At the same time, aspiration also threatens to undermine politeness, by illustrating how easily the appearance of it can be assumed, and thus how fundamentally externalised and inauthentic it is.

Another danger to which the privileged male print viewer was exposed was that of personal deception by the well-dressed servant, as hinted at in the representation of male desire in *A Morning Visit*. By extension, the viewer was also – perhaps simultaneously – at risk from the hypothetical well-dressed prostitute. The ability of servants and prostitutes to successfully take on the appearance of a respectable polite woman put men at risk. Deceived by expensive and stylish clothing, the polite urban male risked accidentally socialising with his inferiors at public gatherings and entertainments. When worn by women of such low status, ‘fashion’ became ‘costume’ as it fulfilled a function of disguise as well as enhancement. This notion of costume, with its attendant implications of deceit and license, is explored in images such as *The Vauxhall Demi-Rep* (4:17, 1772) and *Wantonness Mask’d* (4:18, 1771). Both images play with the contrast

between expectations and reality inherent in the dressed female body. The *Vauxhall Demi-Rep* offers the viewer a relatively straightforward contrast between external, material presentation and internal virtue. A well-dressed young woman with her skirts fashionably arranged *à la Polonoise* glances at the print's viewer from beneath the trim of her elaborate hat.<sup>35</sup> This image, which contains no other detail or symbol save a sketch of the ground on which the woman stands, is categorised by its title as a representation of a whore; a 'demi-rep' being contemporary parlance for a woman of high social status and lax sexual virtue.<sup>36</sup> As Sophie Carter points out, the deliberate choice of Vauxhall as a site in which to locate the demi-rep points to the natural affinity between sexual license and masquerading, both entangled in notions of physical deceit and lust.<sup>37</sup>

*Wantonness Masked*, on the other hand, plays with the practice of masking and physicality in a more complex manner; subverting and confusing the viewer's expectations regarding the internal narrative of the scene. Masking, and its attendant context of the masquerade, has been discussed in detail in an earlier chapter of this thesis. Considering it specifically as a site of costume, however, can offer an insight into the fundamental relationship between satire, clothing and the public sphere. In *Wantonness Mask'd*, an interaction between a fashionably-dressed man and woman – the latter of whom retains a mask over her face – typifies the danger and titillation inherent in the practice and observation of deceptively costuming the body. The possibility of an illicit sexual encounter is encoded into the print's visual narrative and into the iconotext (caption and attached verses). It is certain that both the male and female figures display desire for each other: their blushes attest to their feelings. What is unclear, however, is the social and moral status of the masked woman, upon which the probable outcome of the interaction depends. Her masked face complicates the normal process of identification. Her red cheeks are configured as the symbol of her desire, alluded to in the verses as a 'raging fire' which no mask can hide. Angela Rosenthal has demonstrated that the representation of blushing in eighteenth-century art was coded as a sign of the 'inner self', the surface of the (white, European) skin acting as a visible intermediary between consciousness and the sensate body.<sup>38</sup> In this case, however, it is unclear whether this reddening is the sign of sensibility in a virtuous woman, or the artificial rouge of a

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<sup>35</sup> It resembles the series of Macaroni prints by the same publisher, Matthew Darly, many of which used the macaroni trope to mock real people such as Charles James Fox. This print may also function as a satire *à clef*, in that it represents a specific woman of loose morals, but if so this meaning is now lost to us.

<sup>36</sup> "Demi-rep, n." OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. Accessed 8 September 2012

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/49706?redirectedFrom=demirep>

<sup>37</sup> Carter, 'This Female Proteus', p.69

<sup>38</sup> Rosenthal, Angela, 'Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture,' in *Art History*, vol. 27 no.4 (2004), pp.563-92



prostitute faking the appearance of innocent reluctance. In the latter case, the verses under the print function ironically, juxtaposing the naturalness of sexual desire with the woman's reluctance to remove her mask. As with *The Vauxhall Demi-Rep*, the woman's fashionable dress and unchaperoned status support the inference of prostitution, as does the vulvar appearance of the pink ribbons on her hat. However, it is also possible to read this image as a narrative of innocence resisting – or on the verge of – sexual corruption. It is credible to see it as a representation of a heretofore respectable woman abrogating her chastity within the carefully coded anarchy of the masquerade.<sup>39</sup>

From the point of view of the unmasked man – or 'buck' of the verse – this potential confusion endangers both himself and, in a wider sense, the social hierarchy that maintains his position. Bearing in mind, also, the possibility that he stands proxy for the 'typical' male viewer; it is worth analysing the encounter between him and the masked woman from the perspective of a bourgeois public actor. On the one hand, the woman's clothing and hair bespeak a fashionable appearance, which in turn implies a high social status. It may be that this, in conjunction with the mask she wears, has encouraged the man to approach her under the assumption that she is his social equal or superior, perhaps undertaken with a view to finding a suitable wife. In which case, the possibility that the woman is, in fact, a prostitute renders the man's efforts null, and distracts him from paying attention to 'legitimate' objects for his marital intentions. It endangers him, and by extension endangers the institution of monogamous marriage on which the security of the bourgeois public rests, if the woman's apparently natural appearance covers up an infectious disease such as syphilis. Furthermore, if this woman is indeed chaste, she has undermined her candidacy for respectable marriage by placing herself in a location and a costume that feasibly causes her to be seen as artificial, and/or mistaken for a whore. Whatever the state of affairs with regard to her desire, his blushing can be construed as natural – rouge being worn only by the most effeminate and Macaroni of men. This is emphasised by the condition of his costume in comparison to hers. He has removed his mask to openly acknowledge his desires, while hers remains on her face; and the hand he rests upon her is ungloved, allowing him closer physical contact, while her hands remain covered.

The mode of dressing practiced by the female figure in *Wantonness Mask'd* negotiates a place between normative fashion and overt disguise. The role of costuming as a practice of complete identity abrogation needs to be investigated more thoroughly, and in particular it needs to be investigated outside the framework of the masquerade. Masquerading – which has been

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<sup>39</sup> On masquerade and anarchy, see p.105

discussed in detail in a previous chapter – encompassed the notion of using costume to suspend identity, and to superimpose a kind of carnivalesque anarchy upon normative social, national, physical and sexual characteristics. Masquerade was, however, a specific site of costumed carnival; the practice of dressing in which the suspension of identity was encoded functioning within a defined and temporary framework. From an ideal scholarly perspective, it would be useful to examine a group of satirical prints which represent persons clothed in a manner intended to conceal one or more facets of their ‘authentic’ identity; outside the specific confines of the masquerade scene and other acknowledged sites of carnival, such as May Day. In reality, however, the trope-dependent nature of satirical prints meant that the representation of most figures within them anchored the identity of those stereotypical figures in their clothing. That is to say, with the exception of images which deliberately addressed themes of deception (such as masquerade, or prostitution), it was almost impossible for a print to convey a sense of disguise, given the necessity of using that which was visible and apparent to make its comic or moral point. Upon occasion, recognisable figures were shown clad in costumes that bore no resemblance to their actual appearance, as a means of reinforcing whatever criticism the print was intended to convey. An example of this can be seen in the representing of Edmund Burke in Jesuit robes in *General Blackbeard* (2:11). This device allows the viewer to connect the Irish Burke with Catholicism and superstition, and thus to connect Charles James Fox – the focus of the image and a close associate of Burke at the time – with those qualities also. Nonetheless, the success of this costuming trope depended upon the viewer of the print recognising Burke in the costume, else its semiotic value was wasted through a lack of specificity.

It is fortunate, then, that there is in existence one particular ‘case’ of satirical images commenting upon the process of disguise outside the boundaries of carnival. In rare but well-publicised cases of acknowledged transvestism, satirical prints negotiated a public response that took into account both a fascination with socially and sexually subversive behaviour (and the resulting celebrity status), and the theoretical revulsion at the moral turpitude of ‘denying’ gender identity and associated social expectations. In a celebrated case such as that of the Chevalier D’Éon, satirical images anchored their polemical and their comical messages in the representation of clothing-based disguise. D’Éon, a French diplomat resident in London 1764-77, was noted for appearing at the French court dressed in women’s clothing, though while in London he dressed, behaved, and was treated as a man for official and political purposes.<sup>40</sup> The fluid sexual persona of D’Éon did not prevent his social success in London society (nor, for that

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<sup>40</sup> D’Éon is referred to as ‘he’ for the sake of consistency, on the basis that he was known to be biologically male.

matter, does his nationality appear to have been a disadvantage).<sup>41</sup> However, his representation in prints is more in keeping with the social and moral concerns of a bourgeois, masculine urban public; not with the more relaxed expectations of the smaller cosmopolitan ‘elite’ who dominated London’s most fashionable social sphere as well as its most prominent political and intellectual activity. The latter, which had tolerated the sexual ambiguities of prominent and aristocratic individuals such as the politician Stephen Hervey, was more familiar with the culture of masquerade and thus with the abrogation of authenticity as the foundation of identity. By contrast, those ‘middling’ persons who as a group were simultaneously interested and repelled by masquerade practices (if the representations of masquerade in satire can be taken as evidence) had less exposure to the concept and the practice of transvestism. Furthermore, as part of a public which depended upon each individual inhabiting the normative role assigned to their sex, age, social and national status, this practice embodied a threat to the privileged position of normative (heterosexual, authoritative) masculinity, and thus to the structure of the bourgeois public itself.

Taking representations of the Chevalier D’Éon as an example, it is possible to see how problematically the practice of cross-dressing was perceived. In *The Discovery, or Female Freemason* (4:19, 1771), D’Éon’s masculine role as a Freemason is conflated with his known predilection for dressing as a woman; the iconography of both identities – masculine ‘mason’ and ‘woman of fashion’ – combined on and about his person. The identification of D’Éon as a freemason emphasises the paradox inherent in his identity, by contrasting his ‘femaleness’ with a role that officially could be held and performed only by a man.<sup>42</sup> Here, he is represented in fashionable female clothing, his hair dressed high and embellished in the most up-to-date style of that time. The physical shape and sexual identity of the body that is covered by this clothing is ambiguous – a curved line above the Order of St Louis worn on the Chevalier’s chest might be construed as the outline of a female breast; but it has no symmetrical counterpart. His figure is slender at the waist, which may be a mark of femininity but may also be indicative of his French origins, rather than a sign of sexual identity. The masonic apron he wears is a piece of masculine regalia, but it resembles the type of apron worn by women as a fashionable accessory. The masonic compass embellishing the apron resembled the shape of the female pudenda, and is located on top of the genital area – where the female sex organs would be, if the Chevalier’s clothing matched his

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<sup>41</sup> Rogister, J.M.J., ‘D’Éon de Beaumont, Charles Geneviève Louis Auguste André Timothée’, *Oxford DNB* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7523> accessed 23 February 2012

<sup>42</sup> In a similar vein, several well-publicised cases of female-to-male cross dressing discovered in the latter half of the century were referred to in a similar manner. E.g. ‘the Female Soldier’ (Hannah Snell) and ‘the Female Husband’ (Mary Hamilton and, later, Mary East). In both cases, their ‘female’ identity is contrasted with a social role which can only be performed officially/legally by a man.

biological sex. Furthermore, his face is epicene in its features; sufficiently feminine to look ‘natural’ surrounded by a woman’s hairstyle and mode of dress, but with the potential to appear masculine in the context of men’s clothing and performed masculinity. This androgyny offers the possibility of extreme moral danger from the perspective of the ‘public person’. For one thing, it is theoretically possible that a man (exemplified by the ‘buck’ in *Wantonness Mask’d*) may be deceived by transvestite practice into directing his romantic and/or sexual attentions towards this ‘fashionable woman’. Reasoning further, it may be the case that the transvestite in question may attempt to decoy or seduce the heterosexual male into homosexual contact. This potential outcome undermines both the marital and familial structure on which male public autonomy is based, and also transgresses the legal codes of the nation, within which the public operates.<sup>43</sup>

The deceptive and transgressive nature of D’Éon’s public identity is also represented by various symbolic accoutrements on and about his person. On the wall above his head hangs a three-cornered hat and a sword; placed in such a way that the hat again resembles the female pudenda, and the sword a penetrating phallus. Indeed, ‘old hat’ was contemporary slang for the female genitals, while the metaphor of a sword, lance or other martial weapon for the penis had long been in use.<sup>44</sup> This visual juxtaposition indicates his possible hermaphroditism, which would provide a biological basis for the ambiguous state of his socially-constructed gender. It also establishes the idea that he may use his fluid sexuality to fool a heterosexual male into ‘deviant’ contact; the hat acting not only as pudenda but also as another tool of costume-based concealment (keeping his ‘authentic’ sexuality ‘under his hat’). Another indicator of his deceptiveness is a framed picture on the rear wall, representing a recumbent figure with rabbits between its legs. It is clear that this picture is intended to recall the celebrated case of Mary Toft, who in 1726 claimed to have given birth to a series of live rabbits. Though initially of interest to several respected doctors, including the royal physician Nathaniel St André, Toft was eventually exposed as a fraud. By referencing her case in this print, it simultaneously draws attention to the fraudulent nature of D’Éon’s female persona, and also to the ‘unnaturalness’ of his sexual fluidity. Speaking of fluidity, the picture opposite that of Toft – of a portly man squeezing or sliding into a bottle funnel – hints at ideas of sexual hermaphroditism and innuendo. The funnel recalls a vagina, and in that sense is being ‘penetrated’ by the male; but it leads into a phallic bottle stem, which references the idea of an identity that appears female, but turns out to be

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<sup>43</sup> Sodomy was punishable by death until 1861, while the lesser crime of ‘assault with sodomitical intent’ was normally punished by a spell in the pillory.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Hat; old hat: a woman’s privities, because frequently felt.’ Grose, Francis, *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (London, 1811)

male. The shape of the funnel also recalls that of stays, in which case it offers a comical take on the idea of a man forcing his physique into tight-laced female garments.

In the context of other representations of the Chevalier, *The Discovery* negotiates a relationship between his two 'separate' gender identifications which attempts to break down the contemporary perception of gender as a binary opposition, even as it critiques the moral implications of this breaking-down. Other images had less tolerance of ambiguity encoded into their composition. An untitled mezzotint (4:20, 1788) after an earlier portrait by Maurice de la Tour shows D'Éon in female dress, cut low to reveal a definite décolletage. This print, produced after D'Éon's recall to France, must be considered in light of Louis XVI's order that he live as a woman; as a means of confining and neutralising his political influence. By contrast, in *The Chevalier D'Éon Pronouncing Evidence Against Certain Persons* (4:21, 1769), D'Éon is represented in straightforwardly masculine dress as he vomits on Lord Bute, symbolic of his accusation against Bute of wishing to restore the Jacobite pretender to the British throne. At the same time, however, his physical features are those of an ape. This is inconsistent with contemporary Butian iconography, which more frequently uses a monkey or an ape to represent Bute himself. Its use here, however, is that it permits D'Éon to be represented in masculine costume while simultaneously acknowledging that he is, in a sense, 'less' than a complete man. As an animal, even one capable of 'aping' a man, the representation of D'Éon in this image implicitly acknowledges his predilection for dressing as a woman, though this mode of dressing is not visible within the print itself. Additionally, the figure of a doctor standing behind D'Éon and holding a large clyster syringe brings into play the notion that the Chevalier is homosexual, or at least his effeminacy invites a visual bugging from both the other figures in the print, and from print's audience.

This representation plays with the older visual tradition of *singerie*, which originated in early eighteenth-century France as a decorative motif, and which itself harked back to earlier uses of the monkey in French, Dutch and Italian emblem books.<sup>45</sup> It is probable that the configuration of the Chevalier as a monkey alludes to his French nationality, and the associations of French masculine identity with effeminate behaviour and appearance – like apes, they are not regarded as 'complete' men. The ape (or monkey) trope appeared frequently in fashion satire – as in *Out of Fashion, In Fashion* (4:5) and *How Fantastick is that Nation, Where Every Coxcomb Aims at Fashion* (4:22, 1747) – and is often seen in conjunction with criticisms of 'French' fashion and

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<sup>45</sup> Randall, Richard, 'Templates for Boulle Singerie', in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 111 no.798 (1969), pp.549-53. On emblem books see, for example, the figure of 'Imitation' in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1593), who is accompanied by a monkey.

artificiality. As such, it should be regarded as a later-eighteenth-century reappropriation of an earlier visual trope – with *How Fantastick* being one of the earliest, transitional iterations of this – being adopted for specific social and political critiques even as the broader genre of visual emblem began to decline in polite culture. The adoption of *singerie* indicates the entrenchment in public discourse and visual culture of the relationship between fashion practice and inauthenticity; and also points to the popularity of pet monkeys among wealthy and fashionable individuals, especially women. The juxtaposition of ‘wild’ beasts with refined and carefully codified modes of dress was relevant to the notion of ‘costume’, and the adoption of false and non-legitimate outward identities. In *How Fantastick*, for example, two apes – or human bodies with apelike heads – appear to stand in conversation with each other, one dressed in fashionable male clothing, the other in fashionable female dress. The ‘gentleman’ ape offers a snuffbox towards the ‘lady’, who holds up her hand in a possible gesture of refusal. These apes can be linked to others occurring in print culture of the period, and they intersect with several important public cultural practices. For example, Hogarth’s ‘tailpiece’ design for the *Catalogue of the Society of Artists at Spring Gardens* (4:23, 1761) represents a costumed monkey as an emblem of the contemporary connoisseur, his bestial nature and grotesqueness pointing to a view of the average connoisseur as one who blindly and ignorantly imitates true authorities on artistic excellence.<sup>46</sup> In so doing, this ape connoisseur collects and admires bad paintings which are themselves imitations of a superior style.

Similarly, the ape or monkey is a recurring trope in representations of dancing instruction, for example in *Boarding School Education, or the Frenchified Young Lady* (4:24, 177). In this image, two fashionably-dressed women practice dancing to the music of a Macaroni playing a violin; while a monkey and a dog copy and, again, ‘ape’ their movements. In this case, the animals are not dressed fully in fashionable costume, but the monkey holds a sword in the manner of a gentleman, and the dog holds a handkerchief in its mouth. Their mimicry indicates that the manner of dancing practiced by the women is simultaneously artificial and ridiculous, and at the same time not worthy of a civilised person. This enables the print viewer to see the apparatuses of civilisation represented – fashionable dress, dancing, formal education and music – paradoxically. On the one hand, the imitation of monkeys confirms that ‘fashion’ holds a status worth mimicking – on the other, the animal presence indicates that ‘fashion’ is a foolish and ignorant game on a moral level with the frolics of animals.

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<sup>46</sup> Mount, Harry, ‘The Monkey with the Magnifying Glass: Constructions of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Britain’ in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 29 no. 2 (2006), pp.167-84

To return to *How Fantastick*, it is clear that this image also functions paradoxically. The focus of the print is the notion of ‘distortion’, both as a distortion of perception (the use of fashion to alter the wearer’s apparent identity and status) and distortion of the physical form. The verses below the image refer to fashionable people as those who ‘Study to distort there shapes. Tho th’are Humane, look like Apes.’ This interaction between image and text presents the viewer with an apparent dichotomy, in which the practice of bodily distortion through fashion (such as wigs and hooped skirts) renders the wearer inauthentic and unnatural, but at the same time compares them to beasts of nature. These processes of distortion, and their relationship to the acts of dressing and undressing, form the final portion of this chapter, shifting the discussion from the displayed effects of dressing and costuming, to the practices that shaped these effects.

### **Dressing Up and Dressing Down: concealment, distortion and publicness**

As a general point, fashion satires and costume satires looked at clothing as an agent of public display. Though the act of selecting and donning clothes might in itself be considered a private and intimate one, the social ramifications of dressing practice could only be represented by showing ‘fashion’ in public, or potentially public, contexts. Even images which purported to show men and women adorning themselves in front of mirrors, in what was assumed to be the domestic privacy of the home, carried titles which emphasised that these processes of adornment were intended to be viewed publicly, and as such the appearances of these individuals had consequences for public discourse. There is, however, a significant sub-genre of fashion satires representing the processes of dressing as intimate acts, which nonetheless have theoretical consequences for the construction of bourgeois public values. The processes illustrated by this sub-genre, which tend to focus upon female hairdressing and shape-distorting undergarments, intersect with contemporary discussions on authenticity and the pernicious effects of vanity, luxury and foreignness. As such, the private act rendered in satire becomes a matter of public concern. This juxtaposition is evident in *Tight Lacing or The Cobler’s Wife in the Fashion* (4:25, 1777), in which an artisan’s wife attempts to adorn herself in the requisite undergarments and hairstyle of the prevailing mode. This image illustrates the intersection between fashion’s role as an agent of social duplicity, and of physical distortion – both of which have an identifiable impact upon contemporary gender roles in the bourgeois public sphere. Distortion as a result of dressing practices was not a new concern in the later eighteenth century – Swift made it the central theme

of *The Lady's Dressing Room* (1732) – but graphic satire made the instruments of deception visible to a broader audience.

The ‘joke’ in this image, if it can be called such, revolves around the wordplay inherent in the phrase ‘tight lacing’; which refers simultaneously to the wife’s tightly-laced stays, and the ‘tight lacing’ or beating about to be administered by the cobbler husband.<sup>47</sup> The verses below the images make this apparent:

The Hoighty head and Toighty waist  
As now they’re all the ton  
Ma’am Nell, the cobbler’s wife, in taste  
By none will be outdone  
But ah! When set aloft her cap  
Her Boddice while she’s bracing  
Jobson comes in, & with his strap  
Gives her, a good tight lacing

The cobbler’s wife has made a choice to dress in a manner that emulates the fashion of the day: both this mode of dressing and the mere fact of her having made a choice allude to a series of interconnected public issues surrounding the presentation and autonomy of the body in the public sphere – particularly the female body. Like the female servant in *High Life Below Stairs* (4:16), the wife is attempting to present herself in a manner that is ‘above’ her social status, in terms of being economically unattainable and unsuited to the commercial and domestic environment in which she lives. Being dubbed ‘hoity toity’ by the verses emphasises the subversive and carnivalesque nature of her attempt at fashionable dress, as the phrase registered as meaning ‘riotous or giddy’ as well as implying the assumption of superior airs.<sup>48</sup> In this image, however, the female parvenu is explicitly presented as a married woman, rather than as single; with the emphasis of the print’s didactic message upon her domestic transgression rather than the potential issue of her public visibility and immorality. The conflict between her fashionable ambitions and her role as the wife of an artisan is illustrated by the use of a hammer to weight the strings of her stays, pulling them into the required degree of tightness. This indicates that the wife has no servant to assist with her dressing, as a truly fashionable elite woman or courtesan would have enjoyed. It can also be read as a misuse of the cobbler-husband’s tools, facilitating the wife’s fashionable appearance instead of being used legitimately in the repair of shoes. There

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<sup>47</sup> It is unlikely that the wife’s transgression lies in the wearing of stays *per se*, as these were the standard undergarment for women and girls of all classes. It is to be presumed that the print refers specifically to the tightness of the stays and the attempt to produce an ‘unnatural’ figure; rather than the garment itself.

<sup>48</sup> "hoity-toity, n., adj., adv., and int." OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/87662?rskey=4A5qjC&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed November 10 2012).



is a cruel irony in this scenario: the cobbler's anger is directed towards his wife's attempt to render her appearance 'unnatural', as well as her waste of valuable business time and his earnings. However, the earnings and the time spent upon the cobbling business are themselves inextricable from the commercial side of fashion. The cobbler presumably repairs and remodels shoes that contribute to an individual woman's style, falsely elevate the height, follow luxurious and foreign fashion, and enable a woman to walk in public and subject her appearance and character to scrutiny. In short, he is castigating his wife for attempting to participate in the very social practice upon which his own economic survival depends.

The wife's domestic transgression is the comic focus of this image; and the punishment administered as a result is treated without serious moral or social criticism. It can in this sense be said to represent the prevailing contemporary view of marriage as one in which the wife was subject to her husband, and he responsible for her errors in the eyes of both the law and the public. Though the ideal conception of marriage in this period was companionate – if not necessarily romantic – the economic reality of urban life encouraged women to marry for the sake of security, and men to marry for the sake of their business or trade. This was particularly applicable to individuals of the non-aristocratic, non-elite sphere. Thus, the wife's desire to be fashionable, and to be admired in public for her appearance, is represented explicitly as being at odds with the mode of femininity expected of an artisan's wife: thrifty, modest, concerned with the domestic/private sphere, and supportive of her husband's interests as far as was compatible with her private role. On the wall behind the wife, an image of meat and vegetables is pinned up; reminding print consumers of her rightful role as a domestic factotum – food and other essential items being the only type of consumption in which she should engage. The caged bird, illustrated in the upper right-hand corner of the print, may indicate the wife's thwarted desire to fly free and display her 'plumage'; but it also symbolises the essential folly and superficiality of those desires, based on the idea of the bird as a pet suitable for women and children.<sup>49</sup> Like the monkey, the songbird implied frivolity and display; and the placement of its cage above the cobbler's workbench points to the restriction of the display-loving wife by her husband. In this context, the songbird is a critical rather than a sympathetic trope. Through her frivolity, the cobbler's wife 'invites' punishment at the hands of her husband.

It is important, however, to emphasise that this image is not a manifestation of an educated bourgeoisie laughing at the brutality and uncivilised nature of their social inferiors. While domestic violence did attract more censure in the highest echelons of the social hierarchy,

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example, the caged songbird in Hogarth's *The Graham Children* (1742, National Gallery)

particularly in cases where the female victim had access to financial resources and/or influential sympathisers, the right of a man to physically chastise his wife was enshrined in law.<sup>50</sup> According to Sir Francis Buller's notorious judicial ruling of 1782, a man might beat his wife with a stick 'no thicker than his thumb'. As such, it is possible to see *Tight Lacing* as a valid representation of a common viewpoint among members of the public sphere. Though an artisan, and rejecting his wife's attempts at fashion, the cobbler can nonetheless be identified as a 'public' man and a member of the bourgeoisie; in possession of his own business and invested in the social process of consumption and transaction. This visual inclusivity highlights both the potentially broad definition of 'publicness', and the relevance of the satirical image to individuals in a lower stratum of the urban social hierarchy than that of the independently wealthy, leisured and educated. While the gentleman was by default a member of the public sphere, the public sphere did not consist solely of gentlemen, as defined by their contemporaries. To return to the theme of the dressed/undressed body, it is through the wife's private appearance in her undergarments that the cobbler's status as a member of the public is cemented. His role as the head of a business and a household, and the narrative of beating his wife in a domestic setting, confirms his investment in the normative model of patriarchal authority over the commodity-consuming family unit; upon which publicness depended.

Another iteration of the 'undressed wife' trope, *A Hint to Husbands, or the Dresser, properly Dressed* (4:26, 1776), investigates the relationship between a husband and wife of a higher social and economic status; and as such emphasises the impact of leisure and public sociability upon that relationship. In this print, the wife is attended by a professional hairdresser or *friseur*, who is dressed in a style which in some respects approaches Macaroni-dom. Though he does not display the slender physique or oversized cravat of the typical Macaroni, his substantial wig is reminiscent of that mode. This is reminiscent of the ambiguity encoded into the hairstyle depicted in *Docking the Macaroni* (4:13); in which the phallic shape and size of the hair connote a masculine identity at odds with the perceived effeminacy of male adornment. Rather, the *friseur* in this image sports his wig as a professional necessity, advertising his trade and skill as well as hinting at his sexual potency. She is 'undressed' in the sense of being clothed in an informal *peignoir*, which reveals a substantial amount of flesh. The narrative of the scene revolves around the husband, who appears to be older and less physically attractive than both the wife and the *friseur*, entering the dressing room and brandishing a whip. It is apparent from this, from the title of the image, and from the actions of a maidservant who holds two fingers above the husband's

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, the case of the Countess of Strathmore, who divorced her second husband through the ecclesiastical courts on grounds of cruelty and forced abduction.

head (the ‘horns’ of a cuckold) that the wife and her attendant are involved in an adulterous affair. The Elizabethan-style portraits on the rear wall of the room simultaneously point to the dynastic succession of the husband’s family, which the wife and her lover are undermining; and at the same time hint at the lustfulness of the wife by posing the female portrait in a manner that suggests masturbation.

The didactic focus of this image is twofold: it examines the implications of fashion as a visual, display-based practice in the public sphere; and it looks at the impact of fashion as a material and commercial phenomenon upon the cohesion of the private family unit. In this sense, *A Hint to Husbands* resembles a kind of ‘middle path’ negotiated between *Tight Lacing* and *The Butcher’s Wife Dressing for the Pantheon* (4:11). It represents a wife being dressed in such a manner as might be expected for an evening’s entertainment, with high hairstyle and elaborately-trimmed gown. Unlike the cheerful mockery levelled at *The Butcher’s Wife*, however, the narrative of this image pivots around the violent action of the husband, who moves to whip the *friseur* for his alleged encroachment. It is the presence of the latter upon which the moral and public danger of fashion is predicated. Presumably, his employment in the private household depends upon the permission of the husband, whose financial resources pay for the *friseur*’s services. By indulging the wife’s desire to inhabit ‘fashion’ as an indicator of her social status – and by extension, the paying husband’s own status – the husband has unintentionally invited the agent of her seduction into their home. As with any service that involved dressing and adorning the body, the role of hairdresser was an intimate one, which involved access to the most private spaces of the domestic sphere – the bedroom and/or the dressing room. A related scenario, with a similar outcome, can be seen in *The Stay Maker taking a Pleasing Circumference* (4:27, 1784). The staymaker of the title kneels before his female client in a manner reminiscent of romantic adoration or marriage proposal. His bent knee pointed between her legs connotes an erect penis, while his discarded hat – shown with the interior of the crown visible – once again recalls the idea of ‘old hat’ and the female pudenda. The rich and fashionable interior in which these figures are situated implicates the pair as potentially adulterous – the staymaker a visiting tradesman, and the client likely to be the wife or perhaps unmarried daughter of the owner of the house. The danger is enhanced by the fact that, although fashionable and well-dressed himself, the staymaker’s appearance does not ascend the heights of Macaroni excess. As such, his normative masculinity is open to less doubt by the print’s consumers, and he is implicitly more likely to maintain a heterosexual interest in his client – implied again by the presence of blushing cheeks on both the staymaker and his client.

In both *The Stay Maker* and *A Hint to Husbands*, however, the physical and economic presence of the husband highlights the danger posed by such intimate servants to the very structural foundations of the public sphere. By committing adultery with the wife, the *friseur* does not merely destroy a legitimate marriage of the kind upon which the commodity-exchanging public was based. He also attacks the very notion of private property, bearing in mind the status of a wife as the subordinate possession of her husband. This notion is borne out by the contemporary possibility of suing an adulterous lover for ‘criminal conversation’ with a wife, based upon the idea that she (and her virtue) were the property of the husband, and that adultery ‘damaged’ this property.

The representation of clothing and the clothed body in satirical prints revolved around the notions of transaction and ownership. Clothing acted as a marker of status because its ownership and wearing implied prior acquisition. The control of the transactional process, however, was not always in the hands of the wearer; thus once again calling into question the authenticity of the ‘self’ presented to the public space. Satirical print culture located dressing praxis as an essential component of publicness and, as such, the implicit deceitfulness of the dressing process cast the public sphere as a space in which individual identities were fluid and potentially inauthentic. The fashion satire, therefore, operated as both record and warning, presenting modes of dressing for public visual consumption in a context that reinforced their potential negative social consequences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **CASE STUDY: THE EARL OF BUTE AND THE 'PRESS WAR' OF 1762-3**

The treatment of John Stuart, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bute, at the hands of satirical artists during the 1760s forms a specific and unique 'case' of satirical print culture's constitution of a matter of public concern through representation. Bute's unpopularity, as a politician perceived to have undue influence over the young George III, and his subsequent demonisation as a figurehead for national political corruption, were represented extensively in prints of the period; indeed, the tropes and signs associated with Bute in these prints made a substantial contribution to his public persona. Despite the semiotic importance of the Bute images as a representation of his place in public culture and the articulation of English identity, historical scholarship on them has tended to treat them as a specifically political phenomenon, while art-historical scholarship has barely accorded them any notice except as examples of the broader genre of political satire. Karl Schweizer has identified the satirical attacks on Bute as part of a wider 'Press War' between the earl and his supporters, and those ranged against him, including John Wilkes and William Pitt the Elder.<sup>1</sup> This notion of a war, with its connotations of organised conflict, is applicable not only to Schweizer's political analysis of Bute, but can be seen as a framework within which the discursive tensions inherent in public identity can be understood.

The conceptualisation of anti-Bute images as part of an ongoing war has a further relevance in that it emphasises the idea that such images could essentially 'win' or 'lose' in terms of affecting public opinion and discursive agendas. War is an appropriate metaphor for the commercialised eighteenth-century press, in that it was necessary for journalism to be polemical and, therefore, combative and contrarian, in order to promote sales. This approach shapes the interpretation of anti-Bute images as manifestations of public opinion structured by the production and consumption of visual culture. In doing so, it contributed to the investigation of satirical print culture's role in shaping discourse, in addition to representing and reflecting that discourse. The idea that satirical prints functioned in two distinct but related ways – being both 'of' and 'above' public discourse, simultaneously representing it and critiquing and shaping it – has been explored throughout this thesis. Presenting the case of Lord Bute, and the images produced as part of public opposition to him and to his career, is intended to consolidate the

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<sup>1</sup> Schweizer, Karl, 'Lord Bute and the press: the origins of the Press War of 1762 reconsidered,' in *Lord Bute: Essays in Re-interpretation*, ed. K. Schweizer (Leicester, 1988)

argument that satirical prints formed an essential part of eighteenth-century public discourse by providing a site for the exploration of ambiguities and dichotomies existing between various strands of that discourse. There is a paradox inherent in the satirical treatment of Bute, which resembles the broader paradox inherent in public print culture. His public discursive agency, determined by his social, political and courtly positions, was enhanced by the construction of his satirical persona; but, at the same time, this persona was constructed with the aim of undermining and negating any influence that he might have.

Satirical prints published as part of the sustained attack on Bute during the 1760s contributed to the construction of a number of significant dichotomies and conceptual tensions that characterised public discourse of the period. Like fashion, entertainment and academic art, Bute's career and his place in public life were simultaneously constructed around desirable concepts and behaviours – in this instance, Bute's political power, elevated social connections and polite comportment – and mocked as being inimical to the public interest. It is possible to identify three primary themes of conflict running through the body of anti-Bute prints: Bute's Scottish persona *versus* English patriotism and national identity; his perceived political corruption and the implications of that for the public interest; and the relationship between his embodied agency and contemporary notions of masculinity and polite self-control. Before exploring these conflicts, however, it is useful to examine the political events which constitute the historical context within which Bute, as a private and public person, was subject to satirical attacks.

There is a notable divergence between the actual political issues that prompted attacks upon Bute, and the issues and actions for which he was criticised in those attacks. Politically speaking, Bute's unpopularity derived from his perceived ousting of William Pitt from the Cabinet – who in fact resigned in October 1761 rather than face Cabinet opposition to his preferred policy of war with Spain – and Bute's role in negotiating the Treaty of Paris which ended British involvement in the Seven Years' War. These events were the ostensible catalyst for Bute's drubbing by commercial print culture. The prints themselves, however, tended to represent and reference aspects of Bute's persona that cohered with broader public concerns, such as his Scottishness and supposed corruption. Nonetheless, the specific political context within which Bute's visual assault took place deserves attention, not only for the purposes of recognising political representation in prints, but also as a means of understanding why Bute was cast as an figurehead of all that was antithetical to a politically-engaged English public. It is important to reiterate at this point the distinct framework of Englishness, as opposed to Britishness, within which opposition to Bute was constructed. Despite the regular recurrence of

British tropes and motifs, such as the figure of Britannia, anti-Bute prints were constructed around an English-Scottish binary, in which Scottishness was othered and Englishness construed as the essential core of British identity. The production of these prints, in London, was geographically consistent with the centre of oppositional discourse focused around Wilkes – MP for Middlesex – and the Society of Supporters of the Bill of Rights, comprised predominantly of London merchants and artisans.

On which note, it is also important to clarify that the political basis of bourgeois opposition to Bute was not located around a simple binary of tyranny *versus* democracy. While anti-Bute satire did indeed criticise the minister for his perceived usurpation of Parliamentary authority and influence, the political ideal which it advocated was not ‘democratic’ in the sense of being universally participatory. As Karen Whedbee has written, ‘for many who lived in Britain and America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Athenian democracy was more likely to connote a street riot than a legitimate form of government.’<sup>2</sup> While plebeian political actions such as the St George’s Fields riot (1768) were perceived to have been provoked by Wilkesite rhetoric on liberty, those bourgeois persons who produced and consumed commentary on the riots did not advocate participatory democracy as a desirable opposite to Bute’s ascension. In *The Scotch Victory* (5:1, 1768), for example, the theatrical representation of the events at St George’s Fields is ironically dedicated to Bute – represented by a boot – as the ‘Protector of our Liberties’; while the shooting of James Allen by uniformed soldiers is presented as an instance of the apparatus of state turning upon its own people. I will demonstrate, however, that the defence of ‘liberty’ with which anti-Bute polemicists were concerned did not extend to the advocacy of democracy or plebeian enfranchisement. Rather, satirical prints on the subject of Bute’s power and position focused upon the threat to the bourgeois public – a public that was constituted by its patterns of consumption and reproduction of commercialised political and other urban-social commentaries.

Bute’s ascent to political power was based upon his position at Leicester House – the alternative court of Frederick, Prince of Wales – as official tutor to his son, who in 1760 would become George III, and unofficial confidante of George’s mother, Princess Augusta, after the Prince’s death in 1751. At George III’s accession in 1760, Bute consolidated his influence over the young King by being sworn into the Privy Council and granted the Cabinet position of Secretary of State for the Northern Department. In this role, Bute led the Anglo-French peace

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<sup>2</sup> Whedbee, Karen E., ‘The Tyranny of Athens: Representations of Rhetorical Democracy in Eighteenth-Century Britain,’ in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 3 no. 44 (2003), pp.65-85

negotiations of 1761, which prompted the resignation of Pitt from his secretaryship of the Southern Department (the more senior position to that of Bute, and also responsible for foreign relations) after Bute and other members of the Cabinet refused to sanction Pitt's policy of pre-emptive war against Spain. Though Pitt's resignation resulted from his refusal to compromise over a matter of policy, it was construed by his supporters as being directly instigated by Bute and the King; becoming a recurring theme in numerous anti-Bute images. Pitt's reputation as the 'Great Commoner', though dented by his acceptance of a £3000 pension and a peerage from the King, sustained his position as the political and personal antithesis of Bute – English, protective of Parliamentary rights, and aggressive towards Britain's Continental enemies.<sup>3</sup> His policy of war with Spain had also consolidated his popularity among the English mercantile interest; given the potential for the seizure of Spanish treasure shipments from South America and for the expansion of trading primacy in the Americas. By contrast, Bute was frequently castigated as a corrupt Scot anxious to maintain the dominance of the Crown, and to negotiate peace at any price with France and other antagonists.

The resignation of the Duke of Newcastle as Prime Minister in May 1762, over his opposition to Bute's policy of ending financial subsidies to Frederick II that enabled Prussia to continue its three-cornered military struggles against Russia, Austria & France, resulted in Bute's elevation to Newcastle's former office. It was at the point of Bute's elevation that the so-called Press War gathered pace, as the signing of peace terms with France was attacked by Pitt and his supporters, and by those generally hostile to Bute on the basis of his closeness to the King, as inadequate and unnecessarily concessionary. Schweizer has pointed out that the terms of the Treaty of Paris were in fact advantageous to British interests, and received as such by most politicians and commentators.<sup>4</sup> However, this advantageous position was built upon British attacks on Spanish Cuba, the return of which was traded for Spain's ceding of Florida – thus justifying, in part, Pitt's earlier determination to wage war on Spain against the wishes of Bute and other Cabinet colleagues. The fact that Bute became the focus of textual and pictorial satirical attacks, as well as attempted physical assaults and proxy attacks in effigy, nonetheless suggests that he (or rather, his public persona) was located at the centre of several interconnected strands of oppositional political discourses. Essentially, he fulfilled the role of scapegoat for a number of unpopular policies, the resignation or demotion of several well-supported politicians,

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<sup>3</sup> Brewer, John, 'The Political Misfortunes of Lord Bute: A Case Study in Eighteenth-Century Political Argument and Public Opinion', in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 16 no. 1 (1973), pp.3-43

<sup>4</sup> Schweizer, Karl, 'John Stuart, third earl of Bute', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26716?docPos=7> accessed 9 August 2011



and the perceived high-handedness of George III; as well as the effects of residual chauvinism.<sup>5</sup> Less than a year after taking office, he resigned as Prime Minister, ostensibly over public opposition to the introduction of a cider tax, but in fact exhausted by the sustained vitriol and opprobrium levelled against him.<sup>6</sup>

Though leaving London, and political life, at the end of 1763, Bute remained a frequent figure in satirical and polemical media during the 1760s, with a notable re-emergence during the Wilkesite crisis of 1768-9. As Frank O’Gorman has noted, the concept of Bute’s supposed secret influence over George III lingered far longer in the public imagination than the actual possibility of Bute controlling the Crown’s relationship with Parliament and the people.<sup>7</sup> Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the printed pamphlets, handbills and periodicals published in opposition to Bute during his premiership, and again during the rise of Wilkesite agitation; particularly the works of Wilkes himself, and of his ally Charles Churchill. It was through the medium of satirical prints, however, that the image of Bute as the corrupt power behind the throne was most consistently sustained in the public eye. Contemporary ‘Whig’ historical narratives, particularly the writings of Edmund Burke, constructed a historical role for Bute as symbolic of the malign influence of the Crown *versus* the wishes of Parliament and those of the public enfranchised to select and critique that body.<sup>8</sup> While this interpretation was a clear influence on the substance of the polemical anti-Bute messages disseminated via prints, it was the visual nature of prints themselves that contributed to the construction of Bute’s place in the public imagination as a focus of general antipathy. To expand upon Schweizer’s martial metaphor, this demonisation of Bute can be regarded an important moment in the establishment of the contours of the English public sphere, drawing up specific parameters within which members of the bourgeois public defined themselves as a cohesive body against external enemies, both cultural and national.

It is useful at this point to examine a print that typifies the satirical attacks upon Bute; incorporating the three main lines of criticism levelled against him in the form of corruption, Scottishness and non-normative masculinity. *The Boot & the Blockhead* (5:2, 1762) represents a crude wooden barber’s head of the type used for dressing periwigs (the ‘blockhead’) topped with a beribboned Scotch bonnet; which acts as a simulacrum for Bute. The bonnet is of a style also depicted upon the heads of a plaid-clad crowd of Bute supporters. The blockhead is supported

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<sup>5</sup> Brewer, ‘The Political Misfortunes of Lord Bute’, p.7

<sup>6</sup> Schweizer, ‘John Stuart, third earl of Bute,’ *Oxford DNB*

<sup>7</sup> O’Gorman, Frank, ‘The Myth of Lord Bute’s Secret Influence’, in *Lord Bute: Essays in Re-interpretation*, ed. K. Schweizer (Leicester, 1988), p.57

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

upon a pole that in turn rests inside a spurred boot, emblazoned with a sun – possibly a reference to Louis XIV, the ‘Sun King’, and an attempt to connote Bute’s plans for George III with the French absolutist, ‘tyrannical’ model of kingship. The boot also bears a band with the word *Soit* inscribed upon it, referencing the phrase *Honi soit qui mal y pense* – the motto of the Order of the Garter, of which Bute was a Knight Companion, thus emphasising his royal associations. It is possible to read sexual innuendo in the reference to the Garter; in the position of the pole relative to the boot in which it rests; and in the phallic overtones of the boot’s spur. This forms one example of another common allegation against Bute, that he conducted an affair between Bute and George III’s mother, the Dowager Princess of Wales; and more generally indicates the contemporary construction of Scottishness as a masculine, brutish, hyper-virile trait, lacking politeness and self-control. The sexual overtones are most apparent, however, in the appendage hanging from the ‘blockhead’ and curling around the pole, labelled as ‘The Tail of Beauty’. Though at first glance it appears to be merely a reference to the artist William Hogarth’s support for Bute (by associating the ‘tail’ with Hogarth’s theoretical ‘Line of Beauty’), the juxtaposition of a speech bubble containing the words ‘Bless me, it verifies the old saying a blockhead and a fool has the most powerful tail’, and the phallic ending of the ‘tail’, underscores the association between Bute’s Scottishness and the implication that he is too brutal and uncivilised to govern.

The inclusion of the ‘Tail of Beauty’ is one of several allusions to Hogarth in this composition, all of which reference plate I of *The Times*; Hogarth’s artistic intervention praising Bute’s premiership, and the determination of the latter to conclude British involvement in the Seven Years’ War. Hogarth himself is grotesquely caricatured, clutching a copy of *The Times* and flanked by a palette and brush, addressing a figure representing the anti-Bute satirical writer Charles Churchill, who in turn clutches a copy of John Wilkes’ opposition paper *The North Briton*. Representations of Tobias Smollett’s *The Briton* (in opposition to which *The North Briton* was established) and of ‘A Scotch Peace’ (i.e. the Treaty of Paris) sit at the foot of the boot, while a further reference to Hogarth is made in the false attribution of the print to ‘Oh! Garth *fec’it* 1762.’ Dropping the ‘h’ sound from the beginning of his name may be an attempt to other him by referencing other prints’ parodies of French speakers. Given Hogarth’s general reputation as a patriotic English artist, this lampoon is clearly an attempt to negate the possibility that his support for Bute might lend that minister some credibility in Westminster politics.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Hallett, Mark, *Hogarth* (London 2000), pp. 238-39, 278

The conflict represented within this print, between Bute and the figures supporting him, and those opposing him (Churchill, George III's uncle the Duke of Cumberland, and Admiral Hawke), is rendered spatially. Cumberland and Hawke are positioned atop a flight of steps, on the right hand side. Cumberland addresses Hawke with 'Lend us a hand Ned to scourge the worshippers of a blockhead, I'll warn 'em presently as I did in 45' – a reference to the Cumberland's part in quashing the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, and possibly also a reference to the imputed connection between Scottishness and Catholicism, with the object of the 'blockhead' replacing the physical 'idols' of Catholic worship. To reinforce the moral and political authority which the image assigns to Bute's opponents, the composition moves diagonally downwards and to the left, from the military figures atop the steps, to the crowd of cringing and bowing Scots at the toe of the boot. Ironically, however, the object enjoying the highest position within the composition is in fact the 'blockhead', the placement of which may be an acknowledgement of the political reality of 1762; that despite his unpopularity, Bute remained politically influential.

On the printed page that comprises *The Boot & the Blockhead*, there is a disjunction between the image and the written verses situated underneath. Although the verses do not directly name Bute (perhaps for fear of a libel action), they refer to him indirectly as a 'self-deem'd Machiavel', emphasising his supposed manipulative intentions. By contrast, the image above the verses renders Bute as a passive object, rather than as a figure with potential autonomy. In this way, Bute is not only made ridiculous, but, more importantly, he is turned into a symbol of corruption, and of the values that were most inimical to the stereotypical English patriot – alien nationality, Catholicism, duplicity and physical weakness. As a 'blockhead' that merely resembles a human head, Bute is paradoxically deemed to be deceitful, and yet impersonal. Diana Donald argues that this impersonal, detached manner of representing Bute is a manifestation of 'the reduction of a powerful person to a satirical cipher, [which] can be experienced as an act of destructive power: and the cipher becomes an independent reality, which can be manipulated.'<sup>10</sup> This notion of the destructive act is certainly valid when considering not only *The Boot & the Blockhead*, but numerous other satirical images of Bute, which will be examined in due course. However, it is possible to take exception to Donald's further theory that this reductionist approach to representation is the authentic voice of popular, plebeian, culture. Her argument that the emblematic nature of most anti-Bute prints – in a period that saw a development in the technical and referential sophistication of satirical representation – constituted a deliberate counterpoint to polite, bourgeois notions of artistic propriety overlooks

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<sup>10</sup> Donald, Diana, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, (New Haven, CT & London, 1996), p.51

the cultural and discursive overlap within the broader public sphere. Given that the public, as an entity, embraced both politeness discourse (and, by extension, critical consumption of polite art) and a political outlook that encompassed patriotic sentiment and mercantile 'City' attitudes, it is perhaps too deterministic an approach to regard the corpus of anti-Bute/pro-Wilkesite satirical prints as belonging symbolically to a distinct stratum of 'plebeian' visual culture. Though it is tempting to adapt this to the aforementioned notion of a press war, neatly locating emblematic print culture in direct opposition to a synecdochic Bute, the demographic and discursive realities of the public sphere within which these prints existed undermines the attractive simplicity of this approach.

Another image which reduces Bute to a cipher is *The Quere? Which will give the best heat to a British Constitution, Pitt Newcastle or Scotch Coal* (5:3, c.1760). In this print, however, there is a sophisticated engagement with political realities, rather than a straightforward reiteration of sullen prejudices; and the symbolism owes much to the kind of classicising motifs found in polite, academic art. This image is compositionally simple, but text-heavy, centering upon three rectangular altars with flames emitting from each. Several figures approach these, and 'speak' in such a way as to reveal the symbolic purpose of the altars, each of which represents a politician. The various types of coal that fire the altars of Pitt, the Duke of Newcastle and Bute, respectively, create a series of jokes based not only on homonyms (such as 'Pitt' and 'pit-coal'), but also on social allusions, as the families of each of these figures derived their wealth in some part from taxes on coal. Though the altars are symbolic, the print acknowledges the place of pragmatism in contemporary politics, and is considerably more critical of Newcastle than of Bute, who again is invisible and marginalised. While the altar representing Pitt is guarded by Britannia, and described in the adjoining caption as fired by coal 'dug out the bowels of Liberty by a West Country miner', the men who attempt to approach it are rebuffed by a figure representing Pitt himself. This figure states that 'merit shall always be rewarded', which could be read as an attempt to justify Pitt's acceptance of a peerage and pension from King upon his retirement in 1761, which was heavily criticised by Bute's supporters as being unworthy of 'the Great Commoner'.<sup>11</sup> One of the rebuffed men states that he will 'try the new alter, see if I can receive benefit by its heat, the old fire grows useless.' In this instance, the 'new' altar is that representing Bute, flanked by the ubiquitous tartan-clad Scots, one of whom asks for 'a trifle, only to be an Admiral or so.' The 'old fire' refers to Newcastle, and the flames emitted by it are labelled as *ignis fatuus*, emphasising his political decline. The main caption describes the

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<sup>11</sup> Peters, Marie. 'Pitt as a Foil to Bute: the public debate over ministerial responsibility and the powers of the Crown' in *Lord Bute: Essays in Re-Interpretation*, ed. Schweizer, Karl W. (Leicester 1988), p.100

Newcastle altar thus: 'it never was universally esteem'd, except by French Cooks & so not fit to be used.' By doing so, the patriotism of the print, which finds a positive focus in the figure and descriptions of Pitt, conversely finds its negative focus in Newcastle and his supposed Francophilia.<sup>12</sup> Surprisingly, for an image that references Bute and Scottish encroachment, the emphasis is on an explanation of why Bute has attracted sycophancy and accusations of corruption, not a direct criticism of him as a politician or as a figurehead.

Locating anti-Bute prints in a broader cultural context than that of the strictly plebeian is not intended to imply that that plebeian sphere was devoid of political engagement or awareness. Rather, it is intended to make the point that the presence of 'low' cultural modes, particularly the use of emblematic sign systems and scatological humour, is not necessarily an indicator of an audience that was exclusively or even primarily 'low' in its tastes and frames of visual reference. As Vic Gatrell has touched upon, it suggests the co-opting of 'low' modes by a broadly bourgeois public sphere in conjunction with other strands of visual culture, including the overtly 'polite'.<sup>13</sup> While the amalgamation of 'high' and 'low' was common to eighteenth-century satirical print culture in general, it was a particularly effective tactic in formulating critiques of Bute and his actions, as it denoted the supposed social universality of the opposition against him, and of the far-reaching consequences to national (English) interest of his constitutional meddling.

### **Bute and the Constitution**

This interplay is apparent in two prints, *The Jack-Boot, Exalted* (5:4, 1762), and *The Jack Boot Kick'd Down: or, English Will Triumphant* (5:5, 1762). Like *The Boot & the Blockhead*, these images use the paronymic emblem of the boot to represent and ridicule Bute as an oppressive and corrupt symbol; while the introduction of the 'jack boot' plays on the aural similarity to 'Jacobite'. Produced in 1762, they refer specifically to the constitutional crisis engendered by Bute's premiership of the same date, although the themes that they represent and address can be related to the broader corpus of anti-Bute material. Despite the apparent overlap in their frame of symbolic reference, they do not appear to be companion prints in the sense of being composed by the same artist, or published and sold as a pair. Rather, their shared use of the 'jack boot' implies that their intended audience interpreted images within a referential matrix that incorporated both traditional emblematic patterns and sophisticated political arguments. In this

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<sup>12</sup> Despite his anti-French foreign policy, Newcastle was mocked for his Francophile tastes, particularly his preference for French food. See, for example, the 1745 etching *The Duke of N-le and his Cook* (BM Sat 2684).

<sup>13</sup> Gatrell, Vic, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London 2006), p.19

sense, these images and others like them embraced the ‘double function’ of satirical prints within the public sphere; simultaneously forming part of public discourse, and at the same time critiquing that discourse and the practices associated with it.

In *The Jack-Boot, Exalted*, it is possible to see this double function at work in the print’s commentary on Bute’s supposed usurpation of influence over George III. The figure of Bute partially emerges from a large boot, which is itself adorned with a spur and the Order of the Garter. This echoes the symbolism in *The Boot & the Blockhead*, again reducing Bute to a cipher and emphasising the consequences of his political office, rather than his personal actions and attributes. From within the boot, which rests upon a curtained plinth in the manner of a royal throne, Bute dispenses largesse to a group of plaid-clad Scottish supporters; while one Scot brandishes a sword at a group of Whig politicians appearing to exit the space. The relative simplicity of this visual narrative, which is supported in the verses printed beneath the image, restates the key objections to Bute: namely, his Scottishness and his unconstitutional position. Questions of national identity and patriotism will be discussed subsequently in this chapter; for now, however, the focus upon Bute’s unconstitutionalism reveals much about public attitudes to political authority and the effect of satirical engagement with the latter.

The details of Bute’s official political career, and of the machinations of Pitt, Grenville and others to oust him from office and from influence, have been covered in depth by Brewer, Schweizer *et al.* It is not the purpose of this chapter to repeat those details, but, rather, to assess the role of satire in shaping and representing public reactions to the synecdochic Bute persona. *The Jack-Boot, Exalted* neatly encapsulates the attitude towards Bute that, if prominence and ubiquity can be taken as accurate indicators, was held by the majority of politically-aware members of the English bourgeoisie. Bute’s distribution of largesse, for example, ties in with his unpopularity among Pitt-supporting urban merchants. While the origins of this dislike were rooted in Bute’s foreign policy of avoiding a lucrative war with Spain, this print configures that prejudice more broadly as an accusation of disproportionately dispersing British wealth among unworthy Scottish supporters, diverting important financial resources into a network of patronage designed to keep Bute in his position of malign influence. Bute’s position was therefore manifestly opposed to the ‘public interest’, not only because it appropriated public funds to consolidate the power of the royal favourite, but also because its reliance upon misappropriated patronage subverted the role of the public-as-electorate in determining the composition and role of government. The association of the public with Parliamentary government is emphasised by the adornment of Bute’s boot with a ribbon and garter. By visibly

aligning Bute with the most obvious external trappings of the Court and royal favour, he is separated from the broad mass of the bourgeois public (most of whom would have had no formal or social connection with the Court) and simultaneously raised above them. The association of Bute with court ceremony emphasises the popular perception that his power was based upon royal favour, and explicitly not upon the assent of the public via the accepted conduit of Parliamentary representation.

It is interesting to observe that *The Jack-Boot, Exalted* takes an ambiguous approach to representing the public and its politics. For example, while three English Whig Cabinet ministers are depicted being chased out of the space on the left hand side of the print, a fourth politician bows to the Jack Boot and utters the words, 'Be not Vain because I kneel; tis not to thee, but to a Superior Power'. Though unidentified by the print, it is likely that this figure represents George Grenville, who lobbied for the position of Northern Secretary within Bute's cabinet despite the opposition and resignation of his former Cabinet colleagues. Despite the caveat offered by Grenville's apparent 'lip service' to Bute, he nonetheless is depicted as complicit in propping up Bute's Cabinet through his own personal pragmatism. By extension, the public is, if not responsible, certainly itself complicit in permitting Bute to remain in his position of power. Both the ministers allowing themselves to be shuffled off the political stage, and those serving Bute in the interests of their own careers, are the representatives of the public as a political entity. In similar vein, the 'British lion' depicted behind Bute/the Boot stands erect, acting as another symbol of courtly favour. In the context of one print, this is unremarkable; however, it takes on a more important dimension when considering the use of the lion in satire as a representative of the British people. Often accompanying the figure of Britannia in prints, the lion (derived from the heraldic lion on the royal coat of arms) was frequently depicted as muzzled or sickly in order to symbolise the supposed oppression of the English public.<sup>14</sup> Thus, for the lion in *The Jack-Boot, Exalted* to be depicted in the passive manner that it is denotes an implied passivity on the part of the British public.

By contrast, the lion in *The Jack Boot Kick'd Down*, is muzzled rather than passive; returning to the notion of oppression rather than complicity on the part of the public. In the context of the 'press war' theory advanced by Schweizer, this symbolism complicates the notion of a straightforward political and ideological dichotomy between Bute, on the one hand, and the 'popular public' on the other. This print acts as a corollary to the previous image by depicting Bute, still inside his giant boot, kicked to the floor by William, duke of Cumberland – hence the

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, *The Parricide* (1:4) and *The Monkey's Downfall* (5:19)

pun in the image's subtitle, 'English Will Triumphant.' *The Jack Boot Kick'd Down*, which marked Bute's resignation from the Cabinet, places his political machinations firmly within the physical and social space of the urban bourgeois public sphere. While the 'throne room' setting resembles that of *The Jack-Boot, Exalted*, this version also includes a window onto an exterior space which incorporates a sign for 'The Bedford Head', and an entryway to an auction house selling a 'Young Tame Lion and 3 Kingdoms'. The Bedford Head references the Duke of Bedford's role in the preliminary peace negotiations with France (1761), and in the Grenville administration formed after Bute's resignation. So does the auction house itself; signposted 'I Rustle' in allusion to John Russell, the Duke's family name. The 'young tame lion' for sale alludes to George III, now liberated from Bute's malign and unconstitutional influence by the latter's resignation – the lion as heraldic symbol representing the Crown. These signs locate Bute's downfall within a recognisable nexus of public spaces and practices, such as the tavern and the auction, again emphasising the idea of public complicity in the progress of his career.

*The Jack Boot Kick'd Down* will be returned to in the course of this chapter, for the purposes of examining Bute's location in discourses around Scottishness and masculinity. Keeping with the theme of Bute as the synecdoche for unconstitutional government, for now, it is apparent that those prints criticising Bute as a figurehead of oppression were firmly integrated into bourgeois public culture at its broadest. If, indeed, these prints constituted salvos in a press war, they were produced in full view, and with total awareness, of the enemy's tactics. In so doing, they established intertextual relationships with one another, contributing to the constitution of the public discursive space through reference and symbolic allusion. For example, *Canada or the Tower* (5:6, 1763), published during the 1762-63 Bute ministry, takes Hogarth's well-known cross-eyed caricature of Wilkes and manipulates it into an image that critiques Bute's own supposed manipulation of the press and public. The Wilkes caricature (5:7) is reproduced, omitting none of Hogarth's original 'uglification' of Wilkes' face and figure. However, in this image, the reproduced figure of Wilkes is juxtaposed with a representation of Bute – unusually, in figurative rather than symbolic form. Behind both figures stands another man, unidentified but possibly meant to represent George III, who speaks 'O! Liberty, O! my Country.' In this composition, Bute is located directly behind Wilkes, physically close almost to the point of sexual innuendo, as if Wilkes is sitting on Bute's lap. The latter figure holds an elongated object in front of Wilkes' face which resembles both a spoon and an artist's spatula. The first calls to mind the idea of Bute attempting to 'spoon feed' his political opinions to the press, forcing unpalatable opinions down unwilling throats by means of financial persuasion and outright bribery – and the



aggressiveness of this implication also coheres with the notion of the press war. This is reflected in the opening stanza of the verses below the image:

*Bute humbly entreats you will now condescend  
To tell at what price he can make you his friend  
He only implores you will lay down your pen  
And say, on your Honour, you'll not write again*

It also subtly damns Bute by associating him with the proverb that 'he should have a long spoon who sups with the Devil,' in tandem with the representation of demonic wings and tail at his back; as well as two small, plaid-clad demons labelled as 'Fingal' and 'Temora', which allude to Bute's connection with Ossianic poetry.<sup>15</sup> However, it is the idea of the paint spatula that lends itself to interpretations of *Canada or the Tower* as a critique of the inauthenticity and danger of Bute's relationship with public culture. Reading this print as Bute holding an artist's tool in front of a representation of Wilkes that would have been recognisable *qua* representation to contemporary audiences, Bute is shown as the artist that 'creates' the negative image of Wilkes and brings it to life through his press connections and propensity to bribery. Bute is seen as the ultimate creator of Hogarth's work, and of all other public utterances in his support; this point is reinforced by quite literally placing the necessary tool in his hand.

### **Sawney, Stuarts and Sassenachs: Bute as 'treacherous Scot'**

Images such as those based around the Jack Boot tended to conflate the allegations of unconstitutional practice levelled against Bute with the fact of his Scottish title and ancestry. It was repeatedly implied, in print after print that the essential characteristics of 'Scottishness' enabled and motivated Bute to act in a fashion that undermined the pre-eminence of England, and the cohesion of the United Kingdom as a whole. Though Bute himself was cosmopolitan – educated at Eton and the University of Leiden, and married to an English wife – he was cast as Scottish and therefore othered in contemporary satire. Criticism of Lord Bute must, therefore, be examined within the context of anti-Scottish sentiment and broader patriotic discourse as a whole. It is interesting, if ultimately unproductive, to speculate on the extent to which Bute's Scottishness consolidated his unpopularity in the eyes of the English public. Plenty of politicians with impeccably English antecedents had earned the opprobrium of the public at all levels of expression, from the writers and readers of detailed political pamphlets, to the members of street crowds participating in effigy-burning and other 'plebeian' emblematic practices. Walpole,

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<sup>15</sup> See p.163

Newcastle and even ‘the Great Commoner’ Pitt had all at times endured the kind of satirical and political attacks levelled at Bute, but never to the same degree of vicious intensity or for the same length of time. It was Bute’s characterisation as a Scot that marked him out as especially deserving of hatred, thanks to a complicated nexus of patriotic English identity, Whig anti-Jacobitism, Protestant hegemony and a suspicion of any person or group in sympathy with the traditional enemy, France.

Just as representations of Bute the man manipulated his public persona into a synecdoche for corruption and foreignness, so conversely did the external trappings of Scottishness become shorthand for Bute and his supporters during the 1760s. Even when depicted in quasi-human form, such as in *The Boot & the Blockhead*, Bute is almost always identifiable by a Scottish costume. This costume, consisting primarily of Scotch bonnet and belted plaid, was in fact a garb associated specifically with poor, pro-Jacobite Highlanders, rather than with Scotsmen as homogenous group.<sup>16</sup> To depict Bute in this costume was to associate him with the most alien, ‘other’ conception of Scottishness, which by extension rendered him as ‘other’ in relation to the English print-consuming public. This mode of representing Bute created a number of paradoxes, not least of which was the idea of a Jacobite sympathiser in the role of ‘favourite’ to a staunchly Protestant, Hanoverian king. Furthermore, it problematised the critique of Bute as excessively invested in ‘Frenchified’ practices of politeness. Bute in the guise of ‘Sawney’, the stereotypical Highland brute of eighteenth-century satire, sat ill with his public reputation as a tasteful intellectual of patrician appearance and demeanour. The use of plaid as shorthand for Bute – automatically equating Scottishness with political corruption and casting Scots as inherently opposed to the English public – is recognisable upon re-examining *The Jack Boot Kick’d Down*. While the trope of the Jack Boot was not in itself specifically Scottish, but rather a reference to Bute’s personal vanity and a pun on his name, this image configures it as part of an anti-Scottish language. Even the titular reference to ‘English Will’ implies a state of direct opposition between that, and the boot as a Scottish symbol. This is emphasised not only by the plaid-clad Highlanders represented in the upper-left corner of the image, being ushered out of the space by an English soldier in the distinctive grenadier’s cap of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards;

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<sup>16</sup> Trevor-Roper, Hugh, ‘The Highland Tradition of Scotland’ in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm (Cambridge, 1983), pp.19-21

but also by the plaid stomacher on the dress of the Princess of Wales, who kneels by the recumbent Jack Boot.<sup>17</sup>

A clear example of this contrast can be seen in *Nemo Me Impune Lacessit, Dieu Et Mon Droit* (5:8, c.1763), which shows a plaid-swathed Bute seated at an elegant writing desk and surrounded by the material trappings of the polite intellectual. Despite its association with Highland brutality, the plaid costume also calls to mind the classicising draperies used in contemporary history paintings and political portraits, just as Bute's figure is posed in a manner reminiscent of portraiture. Furthermore, the title of the image also locates Bute's political transgressions within a polite classical/historical tradition. At the same time, however, it highlights his Scottishness to those viewers with the capacity both to translate the Latin phrase *nemo me impune lacessit* ('no-one attacks me with impunity' – another implicit reference to the ongoing Press War, as is the depiction of Bute in the act of writing), and to recognise it as the motto on the Scottish royal coat of arms. Discourse surrounding the unpatriotic nature of polite and fashionable practices enjoyed considerable currency during this period; thus, for the critical overtones of 'politeness' to be adulterated by introducing a discordant note of brute Scottishness implies that that latter stereotype carried the greater weight in terms of formulating public opposition to Bute.

Politeness overlapped with Scottishness in other, subtler ways. For example, *Scotch Paradise: A View of the BUTE-full Garden of EDEN Borough* (5:9, 1763) plays upon the idea of a Biblical paradise, inverting and thus profaning it by populating it with Bute, the Princess of Wales, and his Scottish acolytes. More insidious than this obvious comparison, however, is the resemblance between the composition of *Scotch Paradise* and that of two Zoffany portraits commissioned by Bute of his three sons and three daughters, respectively (5:10 and 5:11, both c.1763). Both the satirical print and the pair of portraits centre upon the motif of a tree, surrounded by the subjects of the images in question. Neither the print nor the portraits can be definitively and specifically dated; however both can be situated around 1763. It is plausible that the satire post-dated and referenced the 'polite' portraits it resembles. This is significant because, in addition to the usual criticisms of Bute as corrupt, venal and diabolical, it effectively uses a conception of Scottishness to undermine the polite aristocratic identity constructed in the children's portraits. The portraits depict the legitimate offspring of Bute and his wife Mary, daughter of the patrician traveller and writer Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and as such represent

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<sup>17</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards (later the Grenadier Guards) were under the colonelcy of the Duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Culloden in 1746; therefore, the choice of a soldier from the regiment to illustrate the ushering out of the hated Highlanders is particularly apposite in *The Jack Boot Kick'd Down*.

the kind of secure dynastic future prized by aristocratic families. This is undermined in *Scotch Paradise* by instead showing the Princess of Wales gesturing at the foot of the tree, towards Bute perched at its height, again suggesting an illegitimate union which makes a mockery of Bute's claims to personal morality and irreproachable family life. By associating his children with a satirical critique, it is also implied that they, too, share their father's moral and personal defects – an idea that is reinforced by the arboreal trope suggesting the proverbial notion that an apple (or acorn) 'never falls far from the tree' in terms of family characteristics. Even more importantly, *Scotch Paradise* takes the English setting of the Zoffany images, in the grounds of Bute's seat at Luton Hoo, Hampshire, and reconfigures it as a site of overt and negative Scottishness. Even in Bute's personal and private life, the English aspects of his identity – purchasing Luton Hoo, marrying and having children by an English wife – were constantly rebuffed by a satirical culture and a critical audience determined to view him and hate him as a particular 'type' of Scotsman.

Pastiches of politeness could not only be used to subvert Bute's claim to cultural legitimacy, but also to undermine the entire discourse of 'Scottish Enlightenment' and reinforce the stereotype of brutish, ignorant Sawney. *The Staff of Gisbal: An Hyperborean Song* (5:12, 1762), an illustrated balled mocking Bute as a figure of sexual perversion and lust, parodies the Ossianic poetry cycles published by James MacPherson (and funded by Bute himself) between 1760 and 1765. Ossian, a hero constructed by MacPherson – who nevertheless claimed to have 'discovered' the poems as authentic antique manuscripts – was a commercial and critical success upon its first publication, and was hailed as the Celtic equivalent of classical epics such as the *Iliad*.<sup>18</sup> To cast Bute as Gisbal, a mock-Ossianic hero, was to reinforce his Celtic otherness while at the same time discrediting the literary and historical achievements of polite Scottish culture. What is more, the suspicion that fell upon MacPherson, as the perpetrator of a literary falsehood that had deceived some of the most prominent European intellectuals, rebounded upon Bute; casting him as false and untrustworthy as his fictional alter-ego. *The Staff of Gisbal*, and the Gisbal-themed prints published in its wake, acted as a site in which conflicting ideas of politeness and patriotism could be articulated, revolving around the notion of appropriate masculine behaviour and its relationship to national identity. The representation of Bute as a masculine archetype, and the implications of this for English perceptions of Scottishness, will be discussed later in the chapter. At this point, it is worth considering the juxtaposition between the Gisbal prints' frame of cultural reference, and their mode of visual representation. Though working within a sophisticated framework of literary, Biblical and political reference, these images are executed in

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<sup>18</sup> Gaskill, Howard, 'Introduction: genuine poetry... like gold', in Gaskill (ed.) *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, (London, 2004), p.3

a crude emblematic style that recalls the woodcut satires produced in the first decades of the century. In *Gisbal's Preferment; or the Importation of the Hebronites* (5:13, 1762), Bute's alleged preference for his fellow-Scots in the distribution of patronage is textually framed as an episode of epic poetry, but rendered visually as a rough and emblematic sketch of Bute welcoming wagon-loads of Scots into England while the Princess of Wales and her ladies are represented making innuendo-laden comments on Bute's 'staff', which he holds in a phallic manner between his legs. For context, this image was produced at a date (1762) at which 'painterly' mezzotint satires were beginning to be produced and sold in London, which implies that *Gisbal's Preferment* appeared anachronistic to those educated and sophisticated consumers who would be able to engage with its literary references.

Even when draped in plaid and bonnet, then, representations of Bute highlighting his 'brutish' Scottishness could and did take on a sophisticated political dimension, as in *Sawney Below Stairs* (5:14, c.1763).<sup>19</sup> This print participates in a tradition of diabolical satire, which depicted unpopular political and social figures in the process of being introduced to the Devil, or by the Devil to the environs of Hell.<sup>20</sup> It also provides a neat Biblical counterpoint to *Scotch Paradise*, shifting from an ironic vision of Bute's corrupt paradise to a polemical imagining of his deserved Hell. Thus, in this image a figure representing Bute ('Sawney') is shown stepping from a Stygian boat to be greeted by the figures of other, deceased 'favourites' of historical monarchs. The boat, and the stretch of water depicted beyond it, recalls the escape of 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' from the Isle of Skye after the failure of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, again emphasising the interconnectedness of Bute, Scottishness, and unpatriotic or treacherous behaviour. Further evidence of Bute's identity comes from Order of the Garter seen again below his left knee, and particularly from the pastiche Scotch dialect used in the speech attributed to him. The construction of critique in this image offers an interesting insight into the centrality of anti-Scottish sentiment to Bute's downfall – the notion of 'Scottishness' is not essential to the basic narrative of the image, which centres around the idea of one corrupt favourite being united with others in Hell. The fact that aspects of Scottishness are nonetheless superimposed upon this narrative again implies the significance of the Scottish trope in public opposition to Bute. This supports Adam Rounce's argument that anti-Scottish sentiment coalesced around pro-Wilkesite dialogue in public discursive spaces such as the press, the coffee-house and the urban street,

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<sup>19</sup> The figure of 'Sawney', a derogatory visual shorthand for the brutal and impolite characteristics attributed to Scottishness by English polemicists and satirists, probably has its roots in the folk legend of the Galloway cannibal Sawney Bean. See Hobbs, Sandy and Cornwell, David, 'Sawney Bean: Scottish Cannibal' in *Folklore*, vol. 108 (1997), pp.49-54

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, *The Diaboliad* and its companion print, *The Diabo-Lady*, produced with reference to William Combe's poem of the same name (BM Sat 5424, 1777)

forming a specifically English strain of patriotism that cast the Scot Bute as one of its most hated 'bugaboos'.<sup>21</sup> Bute's association with George III did not serve as proof of his patriotic, anti-Jacobite credentials; rather, it raised suspicions regarding his influence over the King, and his desire to return to a Stuart-style 'absolute' monarchy on a courtly paradigm, freed from the shackles of ministerial influence. The latter point was construed as a desire to liberate the King from any need to heed the 'will of the people', hence the discursive dichotomy between supporters of Bute and the King's 'court party' and the English urban, mercantile public at large.

### **Bute and the King**

Despite the suspicions attached to George III as a puppet of Bute and a closet despot, there was a very real desire manifested in many prints to see the new king removed from the latter's influence. Rather than treating the King as being voluntarily of Bute's faction, as with his mother the Dowager Princess, most prints that represented him at all did so in a manner that excused his conduct on the grounds of youth and ignorance. *Patriotism Triumphant, or The Boot Put to Flight* (5:15, 1763), is a complex emblematic image in which the concept of patriotism is explicitly identified with the figure of the King, seated upon a throne in the upper part of the image. The various vignettes represented each comprise an interaction with, or reaction to, the idea that Bute has lost his power, thus liberating King from his tutor's tutelage. The enthroned King receives his loyal English ministers, including William Pitt, and utters 'Welcome ye good and faithfull Servants, enter into the Joy of your Master.' At the feet of the King sits Britannia, who repulses a many-headed hydra with the words 'See this and tremble all you that wish evil to Israel.' Together, these figures create a scene that reinforces the notion of England's unique liberty, based upon its Protestant heritage.

As Linda Colley has noted, the equation of British Protestantism with the Biblical perception of Israel as a 'promised land' was particularly potent in periods of military or constitutional crisis.<sup>22</sup> This image, however, conflates Protestantism specifically with Englishness. The relationship of the figures to their geographical context is configured in Biblical terms, offering a frame of reference in which to locate a commentary on religious difference. The Princess and Bute – the latter depicted as a miniscule figure riding in a giant boot carried by the Princess – are shown fleeing in the direction of a river and mountain range away from the

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<sup>21</sup> Rounce, Adam, "Stuarts Without End": Wilkes, Churchill and anti-Scottishness,' in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 29 no. 3 (2005), pp.20-43

<sup>22</sup> Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New Haven, CT & London 2005), pp. 30-32

defenders of English patriotism. These geographical features may stand for the River Tweed on the Scottish-English border, and the Highlands. However, they are labelled as the *Flu Jordanus* and *Alpes Hebronites*, respectively. ‘Hebron’ is a pun on ‘Hibernian’, which ties Bute back into his satirical alias ‘Gisbal’ – though published in Scotland, Ossian was supposed to have been an Irish folk figure, the son of the giant Finn MacCool. This reading of Hebron associates Bute-as-Gisbal with Irishness and thus Catholicism; as well as with a notorious and controversial literary fraud as a signal of his inauthenticity. I argue that Hebron may also be read as an allusion to the history of Judah Maccabeus, as contained in the Books of the Maccabees. Judah, a 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Jewish warrior, led a successful revolt against the Seleucid Empire, notably crossing the River Jordan and destroying the city of Hebron.<sup>23</sup> In the context of this print, Judah is clearly identified with King George III, chasing Bute the ‘Seleucid’ tyrant back across the Tweed. Indirectly, this also associates Scotland with Catholicism, as the Books of the Maccabees have never been recognised as Biblical canon within Protestantism, whereas it has been in both Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. It is interesting to note that this invocation of the King’s authority being liberated from the influence of Bute and of the Dowager Princess forms a relatively rare direct visual representation of the King in an anti-Bute print. John Brewer correctly points out that perceptions of Bute’s secret, unconstitutional influence over George III were manifested as a belief in a conflation of the power of the King, and the power of the King’s minister, so that an attack on the minister was *de facto* a treasonable attack on the King.<sup>24</sup> What Brewer describes explicitly as ‘Whig’ political ideology was as opposed to the actions of the King as to those of Bute (an attitude that would persist throughout the reign of George III), and thus the representation of a ‘free’ King in *Patriotism Triumphant* is perhaps as much an exercise in Protestant idealism as an expression of genuine political expectations.

Of course, no anti-Bute print could discuss patriotism without referring once again to the connection between Scotland and corruption. In the lower left of the image, three English sailors harangue and attack a plaid-clad Highlander whose bagpipe has split open to reveal a cache of hidden coins. One sailor refers to him as ‘Sawney’, while another threatens violence with ‘Lend me your Sneaker, Tom, I’ll Probe him who knows but the Rascal has got his Belly full.’<sup>25</sup> The anti-Scottish narrative is completed on the right-hand side of the image, where Bute and the

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<sup>23</sup> In *The Staff of Gisbal*, Bute is also referred to as ‘Lord of Hebron’. See Cardwell, M. John, *Arts and Arms: Literature, Politics and Patriotism During the Seven Years’ War*, (Manchester, 2004) p.268

<sup>24</sup> Brewer, ‘The Political Misfortunes of Lord Bute’, pp.26-7

<sup>25</sup> The OED lists one contemporary meaning of ‘sneaker’ as a small glass of spirits; however, this does not seem to be the appropriate explanation here. In the context of the sentence, it appears to mean a knife of some kind. Another example of a print ‘failing to mean’ once removed from its cultural context and approached by a different (i.e. current) audience.

Princess are shown fleeing. They travel in the same direction as an airborne broomstick (a possible allusion to the witches of *Macbeth*) bearing the figures of Satan, a witch and several politicians, including Henry Fox and Lord Mansfield. This physical and spiritual separation of Scotland reinforces its position as ‘other’ and thus implies that George III, the hero of this image, is first and foremost an English – rather than a British – king. Scotland is not only a geographically distant location from George III’s and Pitt’s England, but a cultural other. The rational sociability and Protestant straightforwardness of the English bourgeois public is contrasted sharply with Scotland’s implied fascination with all things diabolical. The association between Scotland and witchcraft was a longstanding one, derived from the North Berwick witch trials of 1590 and the publication of King James VI’s treatise on the subject, *Daemonologie*, in 1597.<sup>26</sup> This casts new light upon the frequent iterations of Satanic symbolism in the corpus of anti-Bute prints. They occur not merely as a means of criticising Bute’s general morality, but as a way of emphasising the superstitious irrationality of his political outlook and the nature of the dichotomy between him and London’s polite, Protestant public.

In some cases, the King was not merely excused, but in fact praised as the model of a monarch, thwarted by the nefarious scheming of Bute and the Princess. For example, *Claudius Pouring Poison into the King’s Ear* (5:16, 1769) re-imagines Bute’s effect on the King as a scene from *Hamlet*. Bute, as Claudius, is encouraged by the Princess, in the guise of Gertrude, to pour poison into the ear of George III, who simultaneously represents both the elder and the younger Hamlet. The character of the elder King Hamlet allows the image to reference the actual plot of the play, in which the King is poisoned just as the print depicts. The staged poisoning of the theatrical plot provides an opportunity for the satirical image to configure Bute’s political and personal advice as ‘poison’, maliciously administered rather than misguided in its aims. Effectively, Bute’s role in the apparatus of monarchy shifts from that of enabler (encouraging George III to insist upon his ‘independency’) to traitor and metaphorical regicide, seeking to kill off the King’s power and assume it for himself. The younger Prince Hamlet is also relevant to the interpretation of this image, given his status in the play as the son of the widowed Gertrude and nephew to Claudius, opposing their marriage after the death of his father. By extrapolation, George III is the idealised virtuous prince, forced to suffer the consequences of his mother’s alleged sexual misconduct and the encroachment of an ‘uncle’ who usurps the power to which the prince is entitled.

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<sup>26</sup> Larner, Christina, *Enemies of God: the Witch Hunt in Scotland*, (Oxford, 1981)



## The Boot and the Petticoat: Bute and ideals of masculinity

*Claudius Pouring Poison* is just one of dozens of images whose creators made a point of placing the alleged adulterous relationship between Bute and the Princess of Wales at the centre of its critique. Whether or not the relationship actually existed in any kind of emotional or physical sense is unknown, although current scholarship treats it as improbable.<sup>27</sup> What matters from the perspective of satirical analysis is that it was believed to exist by contemporary courtiers, writers and satirical artists. As John Bullion has pointed out, ‘the mere fact that some people were gossiped about in certain ways at specific moments could change the historical events of their time.’<sup>28</sup> The supposed relationship was not only treated symbolically in satire; with Bute and the Princess being rendered as a boot and a petticoat, respectively; but also became a symbol in itself. It connoted both a sense of Bute’s innate sinfulness, and an unnatural and destructive alliance between the figurehead of Scottishness and the maternal progenitor of English monarchy. In *The Scotch Tent* (5:17, 1762), for example, Bute is represented as figuratively invisible, enveloped within a large plaid tent that bears a strong resemblance to the ‘petticoat’. As with the depiction of Bute inside a tiny boot in *Patriotism Triumphant*, this underlines the notion that the Dowager Princess dominated Bute; and, by extension, Bute’s pupil and her own son, George III. The sexual symbolism in this image is complex, as it inverts the usual trope of the boot ‘penetrating’ the circular petticoat, as seen in *The Scotch Victory* (5:1). Instead, the envelopment of Bute within the orifice of the tent/petticoat implies his complete emasculation. Furthermore, the only direct reference to Bute himself is in the form of a small Jack Boot enclosed within a decorative cartouche on the front of the tent. Not only does the cartouche resemble the female genitals in shape, reinforcing the idea that Bute is captured by the Princess’ female influence – it also alludes to the display of women’s heraldic arms, by convention on a cartouche or lozenge. As such, Bute’s personal rank and noble status is subsumed beneath that of his alleged royal mistress. An interesting addendum to this nexus of references to his adultery can be found in the mock attribution of the *The Scotch Victory*, which lists one of the places in which the print can be purchased as ‘at the bust of Impudence alias the brazen head in Leicester Square.’ It would have been inescapable for the well-informed London purchaser to interpret

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<sup>27</sup> Bullion, John L., ‘The Origins and Significance of Gossip About Princess Augusta and Lord Bute,’ in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, vol. 21 (1992), pp.245-65

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.246

this claim as a reference to the Princess, who had lived in Leicester House before her son's accession to the throne.<sup>29</sup>

The visual diminution of Bute did not only contribute to the moulding of his impersonal persona in the public eye; but also reinforced his 'unpatriotic' status by connecting him with notions of foreign physicality and gender identity. The tent/petticoat that forms the focus of *The Scotch Tent* is flanked by two male figures. These are, to the left and to the right respectively, identifiable as the Duke of Cumberland (labelled as the 'Emblem of England') and as the Duc de Nivernais, a key negotiator in the Treaty of Paris (labelled the 'Emblem of the State of France'). Nivernais is represented in keeping with the typical satirical approach to Frenchmen; as slender and, by implication, weak and effeminate. This implicit connection between physical strength and national virtue places Bute in a compromising position, aligned as he is with the physical weakness of the stereotypical Frenchman. Therefore, the portly, virile figure of Cumberland functions as a site of opposition to Bute once again, as in (5:1), which highlights the notion of aggressive conflict and division between Englishness and Scottishness. By referencing the relationship between the Bute and the French actors in Bute's unpopular treaty, Scotland is further distanced from England by emphasising the historic allegiance, or "auld alliance" between Scotland and France.

These physically diminutive representations of Bute, however, do not tell the complete story in terms of masculinity and sexuality, and their impact upon public critiques of Bute himself. While the use of diminution and invisibility comprises a very distinctive and valid mode of representation, there are other, equally distinctive and valid ways of depicting Bute; each of which connotes different aspects of his gendered identity. Examining Bute's gendered identity in all its facets is vital to fully understanding how he was regarded by a public that functioned in ways structured by visible, and visibly contested, gender boundaries; and to understanding how Bute himself fitted within public discourse on the subject of gender and its associated concepts. For example, it was also possible to associate Bute with 'Frenchness' by depicting him, not as diminutive, but in the conventional guise of a polite and fashionable aristocrat. Alternatively, at the other end of the social spectrum, he was frequently shown in a brutish, sub- or non-human fashion, emphasising his connection to stereotypical Highland Scots. With regard to this latter mode of representation, issues of sexual behaviour and morality inevitably came into play. *The Scotch Colossus* (5:18, 1762), for example, illustrates clearly the perceived connection between

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<sup>29</sup> It would also have been recognised as an ironic reference to Bute's supporter William Hogarth, who had maintained a studio and residence in Leicester Square since 1732 – see Hallett, *Hogarth*, p.102

Scottishness, masculinity and morality that was current at the time. Bute is depicted as being supported on stilts, each of which rests inside a Jack Boot in a fashion that suggests sexual penetration. The stilts are situated at a distance from each other which places Bute in an open-legged stance, and he holds a bagpipe with the chanter (melody pipe) falling between his legs in an overtly phallic way. Beneath this entire ensemble, a female figure seen from behind is intended to represent the Princess, who looks and gestures upwards in the direction of Bute's crotch.

*The Scotch Colossus* emphasises Bute's Scottishness as a means of locating him within contemporary discourse surrounding civilised and uncivilised masculinity. The perception of Highland Scots as being brutish and unpolished (in comparison to the polite persons comprising the urban public) meant that Bute's supposed affair with the Princess could be cited as evidence of his sexual incontinence; and thus his general inability to control his instinctive emotional and physical responses in the public/political arena. This can be referenced back to his representation in the *Gisbal* prints, which pointedly depicted the 'staff of Gisbal' as a phallic symbol admired by the Princess and other ladies of the royal court. This, of course, brought into question the contentious relationship between anti-Bute satire and politeness. While the negative association between polite behaviour and French culture was exploited by satirists seeking to cast Bute as a pro-French tyrant, politeness in its most 'mainstream' and acceptable form could be used as a standard of public social behaviour against which to compare and contrast Bute. Instead of castigating polite taste and practices as effeminate, prints that employed the approach manifested in *The Scotch Colossus* sidelined these negative connotations in favour of a politeness constructed to embody the masculine English virtues lacking in Bute's persona. Contemporary ideals of masculinity could be used to 'other' Bute in relation to his critics. As such, it was necessary to depict Bute in a manner that did not just reduce him to the role of impersonal political hate figure, but also alienated him from print consumers to a degree that rendered his actions reprehensible beyond the normal framework of public moral critique.

*The Monkey's Downfall, or Cat's-Paw Rescu'd* (5:19, c.1767) achieves this end by representing Bute as a monkey, his political downfall illustrated as a bestial frenzy of violence and scatology. The monkey lies on its back, its midriff wrapped in a band of plaid and one leg shod with a Jack Boot while the other boot burns in a fireplace. He defecates on the floor, as a pack of dogs – each one representing one of Bute's political enemies – snarl and bite around him; while one dog cocks its leg and urinates in the monkey's face. The obvious inference to be taken from this scenario is that Bute is less than human; that his lust for power and personal immortality renders

him on a level with beasts. The choice of a monkey is interesting from a semiotic point of view, given the network of symbolic and allegorical connotations attached to that animal in satirical and folkloric lexicons. Again, it is possible to see these instances of intertextuality constituting a space for critical public discourse. The monkey incorporates the visual tradition of *singerie*, as discussed in chapter four, and as such is another example of older emblematic traditions being appropriated by and for a polite audience. One immediate interpretation hinges upon the notion of the monkey being the animal closest to humankind in its appearance and actions. Thus, Bute is represented as a pretender, in this instance quite literally ‘aping’ his apparent superiors – particularly the King, who is represented here in normative human form. This reference ties in with the idea of the monkey as a duplicitous, mischievous animal. It also coheres with the popularity of monkeys as pets among elite and fashionable women; which is further alluded to by the presence in the image of the Princess Dowager, who begs the King: ‘O Spare my Monkey’. By casting Bute as the pet or plaything of the Princess, his status as a usurper at court is emphasised. Furthermore, the cross-referencing between this suggestion and the pre-existing accusations of an affair between Bute and the Princess creates the implied scenario of bestial sexual relations between woman and monkey; reinforcing in the most grotesque terms the ‘othering’ of Bute as non-human and aberrant.

The monkey trope offers a different, more ambiguous engagement with politeness discourse to that constructed by *The Scotch Colossus*. The latter print emphasised the brutish and boorish implications of Bute’s Scottish identity, contrasting this with an imagined ideal of polite English masculinity. *The Monkey’s Downfall*, however, constructs an image that, while undoubtedly grotesque and brutish, plays on contemporary negative stereotypes of politeness. The monkey was frequently employed in satirical imagery to represent the popular stereotype of the Frenchman; as in *How Fantastick* (4:22) where he is dressed in the most formal and fashionable *habit habillé*. This afforded satirists the opportunity to contrast the outward artificiality of polite taste with the essential nature of man, shielded and distorted by his externalised politeness. Thus, by being represented as a monkey, Bute is simultaneously rendered as uncivilised and as ‘polite’ in the most negative way. The aesthetics of politeness come full circle in this image, as the artificiality of the concept and its associated behaviours are used to emphasise the true animal nature of that which it is supposed to disguise and polish.

Of course, if Bute’s representation in animal form was meant to offer a critique of his actions as brutal and aberrant, then attention must also be paid to the representation of his political enemies, who are shown in *The Monkey’s Downfall* as a pack of dogs. Specifically, the

verses printed beneath the image refer to the dogs as ‘an English pack, of true bred Mastiffs free and bold.’ Unlike the monkey, the dogs are associated with creditable, patriotic characteristics such as strength and bravery; and yet they still demonstrate impolite, scatological and violent behaviour. Just as the monkey-Bute is shown fouling himself, so the dog whose collar identifies him as [the Duke of] Portland’ cocks a leg and urinates in the face of the monkey. This obviously functions as a sign of both personal contempt for, and political enmity towards, the figure of Bute. At the same time, however, it serves to distance Portland and his canine peers from contemporary notions of polite social behaviour. While *The Monkey’s Downfall* constructs a distinct English masculinity against which Bute can be measured and found wanting, this masculinity does not engage with politeness in its publicly palatable form. Unlike the dialogue between politeness and brutishness in *The Scotch Colossus*, in which the former concept is configured as an ideal – even essential – attribute for those who oppose Bute, the narrative and symbolism of this print reject it completely. Read with reference to the general integration of ideal publicness and politeness, the representation of prominent, public politicians in this impolite fashion becomes contentious. It separates politicians off from the broader satirical audience, many members of which would have some belief in the concept of politeness as a standard of ideal behaviour. It may also be a commentary on the perceived nature of contemporary eighteenth-century politics, punning on the Aristotelian idea of man as a ‘political animal’ to present a view of English government as fierce and combative. As such, it calls into question the status of politicians as representative of the public as a body, given the engagement of this body with notions and modes of politeness. This query is reinforced by a depiction of the British lion within the image, lying behind the figure of the King in a sleeping position, although with one eye slightly opened. Referring back to the discussion of the English lions in *The Jack-Boot, Exalted* and *The Jack Boot Kick’d Down*, it appears that *The Monkey’s Downfall* seeks to implicate the body public as complicit in Bute’s initial rise to power. The lion, as synecdoche for the public, remains slothful and passive while the pack of political dogs worries and harasses the monkey-Bute.

It was also possible to depict Bute in a manner more in keeping with conventional representations of polite masculinity, though such images were less common than those showing him as uncivilised and/or sub-human. Prints such as *Nemo Me Impune Lacessit* worked with, rather than against, Bute’s reputation for handsomeness and personal elegance; while subtly referencing and criticising his Scottishness and his supposedly tyrannical ambitions. In such prints, the aesthetics of politeness were used conventionally, but inevitably contrasted with alternative aspects of polite/patriotic discourse in order to distance and critique Bute’s persona and

ambitions. For example, *The difference of Weight between Court & City Aldermen* (5:20, 1772) shows Bute in standard court dress, without bodily distortion or non-human parts. With Lord Mansfield, he stands behind the figure of the King, who is located on one half of a giant set of scales. The King manages to tip the balance in his, and the court's favour – despite the fact that the other half of the scale is populated by an extremely corpulent merchant and the additional figure of John Wilkes. The true 'difference in weight', it is implied, is caused by the large bags of coins sitting at the King's feet, each of which is labelled as containing '10,000 [pounds sterling].' While this satire obviously focuses upon the competition for political influence between court and public, it is interesting to note that both the courtly and mercantile figures in the print are dressed in a similar fashion – that is to say, in the accepted 'polite' mode of the period, without exaggeration or ostentation. The merchant upon the scale is represented as obese, in keeping with the notion of English prosperity being linked with powerful and substantial physical presence. Overall, however, there is little in the way of appearance to distinguish the two factions. From the perspective of anti-Bute satire, this is unusual – and may be explained by the later date of the print, indicating Bute's less current status – as he forms only part of this print's polemical target, rather than being the figurative focus of the image.

The multifaceted nature of Bute's representation in satirical print culture indicates both the visual flexibility of that culture, and the complexity of the public audience to which it was addressed. Seen as both person and persona, Bute was portrayed simultaneously as polite and boorish; Scottish and French. Between his first rise to prominence in 1760, and the Wilkesite revival of anti-Bute sentiment in 1768-69, he became a focal point for several interrelated concerns expressed in the English public sphere, including: the preservation of 'popular' liberty, the perceived encroachment of French and Scottish cultural influences, and the moral dangers of both excessive politeness and excessive barbarism. In attempting to reconcile the apparent dichotomies and paradoxes inherent in satirical treatment of Lord Bute, it is therefore necessary to anchor this treatment in the bourgeois public sphere in which it was produced and consumed. The discursive and iconographical incoherencies in the corpus of satirical prints attacking Bute, then, become a map of the public sphere's parameters and cultural contours.

## CONCLUSIONS

The case of Lord Bute and his representation in satirical print culture indicates the extent to which that culture functioned in the broader realm of discourse, as a locus for the articulation of bourgeois public interests. More precisely, it demonstrates how satirical print culture functioned as both a site of articulation and of reconciliation. For example, by representing Bute as both a fashionable, elegant aristocrat and as a symbol of Scottish boorishness, the corpus of anti-Bute prints demonstrates the contemporary tension between criticisms of politeness as a mode of public behaviour, and the acknowledged economic and social benefits of polite leisure and material culture. This leads back to my argument that the consumption of satirical prints had a double function: one, to form a strand in broader journalistic discourse as a site of entertainment and information; and two, to play the role of critical outsider in the public space. Of course, these two functions could not be separated from each other – critical utterances were invariably shaped by the discursive culture and performative practices they purported to criticise, and vice versa. Satirical prints, therefore, constituted meta-commodities, forming part of the nexus of material and leisure consumption while at the same time commenting on the various modes of consumption that produced ‘publicness’.

What this thesis has definitively established is that satirical print culture between about 1740 and 1780 was an important component of publicness; both symptomatic of and causative of the bourgeois public sphere. By publicness, I mean the social and cultural spaces inhabited by bourgeois persons whose patterns of consumption, discourse and representation gave them an interest in public affairs. Satirical prints functioned as a site of evaluation for matters of public interest, with the representation and interpretation of those matters determined by individual consumers. Furthermore, those matters defined as being ‘of interest’ by their inclusion in satirical prints (and other media) are synonymous with contemporary questions relating to the collective identities of ‘the public’ as a body: national, regional, religious, social, hierarchical and cultural. As I have demonstrated, satirical prints represented a diverse array of concerns, from the social impact of fashions in hairdressing to the constitutionality of George III’s relationship with Parliament. What all of these concerns have in common, however, is that they constitute a discursive network which maps the development of the bourgeois public sphere as a source of cultural authority, and the desire for individual actors occupying that sphere to define and legitimate it against emerging and competing counterpublics.

In placing such an emphasis on the importance of the bourgeois public sphere, this thesis has engaged not only with the classic, Habermasian model of publicness, but additionally with the competing and conflicting senses of publicness that were manifested in contemporary visual and literary culture. The ‘public sphere’, as a concept, has proven both useful and misleading. The former, because it has offered a framework within which satirical prints can be understood as instances of commodified culture; appropriating artistic, literary and other visual tropes in response to demand from politically-engaged and socially-invested bourgeois consumers. The latter idea – that Habermas’ work has hindered, rather than helped, research into the idea of an eighteenth-century public space – derives from the prescriptive, deterministic nature of his theory; as well as a focus on explicitly political public action, which belies the actual ambiguities and inconsistencies of publicness that are represented in satirical prints. The first of these objections is built upon two observations: one, that Habermas’ ‘private people come together as a public’ were, in fact, private *men* come together as a public. Specifically, he formulates the public as a space defined and inhabited by bourgeois, educated males with sufficient leisure and disposable income to participate in commoditised leisure practices. Individuals who do not fall into this category – women of any social class, for example, or dependent servants – are admitted to the public space only as consumers whose status and resources are derived from their membership of patriarchal family units, the existence of which reinforces the position of the aforementioned bourgeois men who head those units.<sup>1</sup> The second observation, which is connected to the first, is that Habermas makes the implicit assumption that inclusion in the public sphere meant that any individual actor prioritised the concerns prioritised in that sphere over those of any other social groups with which they identified. This is problematic in that it forces any interpretation of ‘public’ according to the Habermasian model to be either insufficiently focused, or insufficiently flexible. If we assume that the public sphere functioned as a broad church in terms of the opinions and practices that could be sustained within the space, there is a risk that the parameters of that space become so wide as to be useless from a socio-historical view. On the other hand, excluding opinions and practices which appear to contradict the so-called public interest, or which manifested as private and personal, prevents the public sphere from being understood as a space which encompassed a complex and layered collection of modes and performances.

As a means of trying to establish a sense of what constituted ‘the public’, I have investigated satirical prints’ role in offering a definition of this public, the parameters of which mapped onto contemporary ideas about national identity and English/British patriotism; as well

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<sup>1</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp.43-47



as onto strands of discourse around politeness, taste and fashion. The conflict between politeness and patriotism was manifested in the attempts to clarify and codify these ideas, but not necessarily in their performance. Satirical prints functioned as sites of representation, depicting the performance of politeness, patriotism and other modes of 'being public'. Simultaneously, they functioned as objects whose consumption was itself a performance, and which represented aspects of this performance in a process of *mise en abyme*. As such, they offered the public a means by which it could explore and critique the problematic overlap between its dual roles as a space for cosmopolitan culture, consumption and 'luxury', and as a space in which questions of national identity, strength, and fiscal and moral prudence were addressed.

The contentious role of politeness in determining inclusion in the public space is a case in point. The apparent discursive overlap in contemporary conceptions of politeness and publicness can be seen in, for example, representations of the audience for academic art. The implicit necessity of taste, leisure and disposable income to consume visual culture in this way casts the public consumer as polite by default. In an image such as Brandoin's *The Exhibition of 1771*, the crowd observing the paintings at the Royal Academy display their affluence and education through their dress, posture and, indeed, their very presence in a location accessed only by payment of an entrance fee and advertised specifically as a locus of taste and cultural edification. They perform the rites and behaviours of politeness and thus mark their right to be considered part of the audience for polite art. This performance, however, does not guarantee that these cultural consumers have sufficient taste or education to benefit from their consumption; or that they are indeed consuming art at all, rather than using the site for social interaction and display. The RA, which was established as a prestigious institution of national cultural and commercial significance, is here represented as mere space for fashion and flirtation. This, therefore, raises issues such as the authenticity of polite performance, and the moral perils of succumbing to the dominance of taste and materiality over personal integrity and national interest; that was seen by some as an inevitable outcome of polite manners. Indeed, the production and viewing of satirical prints can be regarded as an effective method for eighteenth-century consumers to mediate between the consumption-based nature of public membership and the anxieties attendant on that membership which related to the patriotic and moral propriety of 'luxury'. Satirical prints were both high-status commercial objects, and images representing critiques of commercialised leisure and demarcation of hierarchy. As such, they offered individuals a medium for consumption that fulfilled and educated consumers in the polite and commercial requirements of public participation; and at the same time displayed an

awareness and an implicit acceptance of the criticisms levelled at these polite and commercial practices.

Throughout this thesis, I have treated the public sphere as a constant phenomenon, working with the assumption that the practices and strands of discourse that signified publicness remained approximately the same in 1784 as in 1745. This assumption is based upon the fact that the apparatuses of publicness in place by 1745 – such as periodicals, commercial entertainments, clubs and coffee houses – functioned in much the same way for the next four decades, mapping onto the period in which satirical prints emerged and were established as a significant mode of intervention in public discourse. The ways in which the public sphere developed and manifested aspects of discourse were subject to change – as Paul Langford points out, the history of the eighteenth-century public was not the history of ‘a static society’.<sup>2</sup> Instead, he argues, ‘Lord Burlington’s generation [of the 1720s] would have been astonished by the Gothic Revival, middle-class tourism, macaroni extravagance and the sentimental excesses of the cult of feeling.’<sup>3</sup> These innovations in leisure, commerce and representation, however, were still performed within the context of a bourgeois public whose existence remained dependent upon the same fundamental attributes: an educated, affluent and leisured urban population. This population grew and diversified throughout the period, taking on new functions and modes of performance as forms of commercialised leisure and material consumption developed. Nonetheless, it maintained a vested interest in defining itself as a discrete social group – that is to say, as a public – hence the reiteration of certain values and ideals in satirical prints, and the attempts made in these prints to unify the bourgeois public and reconcile value-conflicts such as that between the moral dangers of inauthenticity and the economic importance of conspicuous consumption. At the same time, particular practices existing within this public sphere exhibited a willingness to emulate the discourses and practices of other, overlapping, social groups; as well as a degree of porousness in terms of participation. Masquerade, for example, was a commercial and public leisure practice which both drew inspiration from elite courtly and continental Catholic entertainments (the masque and the *carnivale*), and covertly admitted and even encouraged the presence of ‘low’ persons such as prostitutes. Similarly, the ‘bourgeois’ attitudes to family structure, morality and consumption are evident in prints depicting the artisanal and labouring classes, such as *Tight Lacing* (fig): indicating an adoption of those familial values further down the social hierarchy even as the wife’s participation in fashionable consumption is criticised.

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<sup>2</sup> Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p.6

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

Though the fundamental concept of ‘the public’ remained constant throughout the period studied, important changes in the materiality of satirical print culture – and, indeed, print culture in general – were developed; meaning that the relationship of bourgeois public persons to the print-objects with which they interacted was altered. The major change in satirical print production during this period can be characterised as a shift from emblematic to figurative representation, in which prints began to resemble more closely the styles of painting displayed at the Royal Academy and elsewhere, rather than relying as heavily on the semiotic shorthand of emblem that was derived from a variety of historical roots: nature, heraldry, the Bible and Christian hagiography, as well as ancient history and classical mythology.<sup>4</sup> That said, there are issues which need to be unpacked if the impact of this material change is to be understood in relation to publicness. It should be noted, for example, that the shifts in subject representation occurred concurrently with technical changes in print production. Mezzotint and etching, though first introduced in 1642 and c.1500 respectively, were not widely applied to the production of satire until the 1770s; with mezzotint in particular a popular medium for the production of decorative, generic social satires thanks to the tonal and painterly quality of its finish. What is difficult to establish is the direction in which these developments occurred: did the introduction of different printing techniques encourage new subjects to be represented, or did a demand for new subjects encourage the adoption of new techniques? To offer a tentative conclusion to this question, I suggest that changes in print media enabled the production of more technically sophisticated, decorative prints – particularly social and fashion satires – but that the commercial demand for these prints was prompted by developments in other modes of consumption and leisure, such as the instigation of exhibitions, and the growth of the decorative arts as a bourgeois commodity.

### **For Further Research**

Though broad in terms of both chronology and in its treatment of ‘the public’ as an entity based upon consumption, this thesis has raised a number of questions which deserve further scholarly investigation if the importance of print culture in eighteenth-century social discourse is to be more richly understood. In theory, it would be interesting to expand the focus of this work on satirical print culture to other centres of population, social interaction and commerce such as Bath, York or Liverpool – or further afield to Dublin and Edinburgh – to understand how the construction of public discourse worked outside the context of the capital. In practice, however, such a project would be both difficult and unproductive, thanks to the relative lack of prints

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<sup>4</sup> Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p.57

produced outside – and therefore distinct from – the London market; and the poverty of archival information on provincial print collectors. This project’s focus on London is a legitimate, if exclusionary, approach – given the dominance of the city both in print production and as a source of subject matter.

Rather than looking to expand the geographical parameters of this thesis’ analysis, it would be appropriate to take the work that has already been done as a basis for further thematic investigations. Having established the crucial role of satirical print culture in the bourgeois public sphere – as both constitutive and symptomatic of publicness – these findings can be used to further scholarly understanding of other, specific, aspects of eighteenth-century discourse. Some of these aspects have already been addressed – for example, McCreery’s *The Satirical Gaze* offers a detailed analysis of the representation of women in print culture, providing a much-needed counterpoint to the privileging of masculinity inherent in classic Habermasian publicness. This thesis, however, has concerned itself with representations of consumption, and of matters affecting consumption. One way to move forward from this work, therefore, is to continue focusing on representation in commodity forms, by examining the production of satirical, political and commemorative images on performative personal objects such as china, jewellery and fans.

This suggested project would be relatively small, both in scholarly scope and historical contribution. A more productive contribution to knowledge would be an examination of the abstract and immaterial strands of discourse constituting and symptomatic of the public sphere. These deserve to be analysed with respect to their representation in commoditised forms; in order to test the integrity of the public sphere as a socio-historical concept. The role of the Church of England, and of religion and belief systems generally, in shaping the identity of a social group constituted primarily through consumption, is one such phenomenon which deserves to be considered in light of the many satires produced on the subject. Similarly, print culture as an intervention in the development of ‘sensibility’, and of discourse on nature and the sublime, needs to be given more scholarly attention in order to gain a fuller understanding of prints’ public constitutive role. Only by addressing satirical treatment of public phenomena which were not (in theory) commoditised, is it possible to gauge whether prints can transcend their own status as commodities – or, to be more precise, whether prints’ commodity-status prevents viable scholarly analysis of their role in representing modes of public performance which did not prioritise or even involve consumption.

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#### 4. Databases and online resources

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Eighteenth-Century Collections Online:

[http://find.galegroup.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/ecco/dispBasicSearch.do?prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=ucl\\_ttda](http://find.galegroup.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/ecco/dispBasicSearch.do?prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=ucl_ttda)

Kyoto Costume Institute Digital Archives: [http://www.kci.or.jp/archives/index\\_e.html](http://www.kci.or.jp/archives/index_e.html)

Lewis Walpole Library Digital Collection: <http://images.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/>

Literary Encyclopaedia: <http://www.litencyc.com>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Database: <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections>

The MusEYEum: [http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/museyum/online\\_exhibitions/printroom/antiquepr.cfm](http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/museyum/online_exhibitions/printroom/antiquepr.cfm)

The National Maritime Museum Database: <http://www.collections.rmg.co.uk/>

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com>

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