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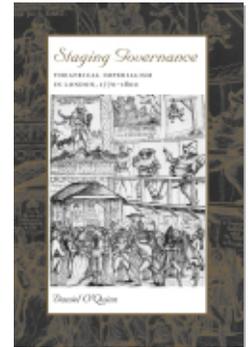
Staging Governance

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CHAPTER

War and Precinema

SEVEN

Tipu Sultan and the Allure
of Mechanical Display

IN THE 1790S new forms of popular entertainment began to compete with and eventually infiltrated the domain of the legitimate theatre. As nonpatent houses sprung up around London, technological innovations and transformations in scale altered the way narratives and scenes were presented to audiences.¹ The problem of technologically visualizing colonial space already explored in relation to Louthembourg's museological strategies in *Omai* and in my discussion of the figural deployment of the magic lantern show, the raree show, the camera obscura, and other visual machines in the discourse surrounding the Hastings trial takes a new turn at this historical juncture. The spectacles staged at Astley's Royal Amphitheatre, Sadler's Wells, and the Royal Circus fused dramaturgical elements derived from pantomime and opera, with forms of action and display whose origins were largely nontheatrical.² Military spectacles involving trained animals and soldier-actors, musical entertainment, acrobatics, and mechanical entertainments that had formerly been staged in outdoor spaces or in exhibition halls were mobilized in new dramaturgical tactics. These hybrid performances were in dialogue not only with conventional comedy, comic opera, and pantomime, but also with forms of entertainment that relied heavily either on bodily regimen, or mechanical ingenuity. In addition, new technologies of display, including the panorama, the phantasmagoria, and other visual machines that have usefully been described as precinematic, expanded the means through which an audience could be addressed and subjectified.³

In the interplay between bodies, animals, and machines in these performances, one can discern a complex negotiation between disciplinary and regulatory power. The new dramaturgical strategies first tested in the illegitimate theatre directly incorporated the body such that regulatory

and disciplinary power permeated one another. Foucault argues that discipline and regulation operate as two series that are both distinct and constantly infiltrating one another.⁴ This notion of two series operating on the same set of signs offers a way of understanding what is otherwise a chaotic transformation. In the permeation of disciplinary by regulatory technology, we have a model for the resignification of the body itself that downplays the visibility of individual traits in favor of the mobilization of mass qualities.

This chapter charts shifts not only in theatrical presentation but also in imperial subjectification by attending to the relationship between these two regulatory modes. This double genealogy follows a recognizable trajectory whose broad contours are directly related to increasing British militarization in India. Unlike the 1770s and 1780s, the 1790s were a period of consolidation in the empire. Military victories over Tipu and the establishment of the Permanent Settlement not only confirmed actual British domination in the Asian subcontinent but also provided an occasion for phantasmatic constructions of supremacy.⁵ It is not surprising that as the decade unfolds we begin to see signs of triumphalism in metropolitan accounts of Anglo-Indian affairs, but this confidence was fueled by prior anxieties. Earlier losses both in Mysore and in America had a lingering effect on future actions in India because the British could not afford further defeat and also because the primary British actor in the Mysore Wars and the Permanent Settlement, Lord Cornwallis, carried his experience of defeat at Yorktown and other American campaigns to India when he was appointed governor-general of Bengal in 1786. As an icon of both imperial humiliation and domination, Cornwallis plays an oddly double role in the plays celebrating victory in Mysore. Because commemoration of Cornwallis's actions in India always carries with it the threat of reactivating traumatic memories of the American war, the plays I discuss in this chapter explicitly engage in what Joseph Roach has described as surrogation: the process whereby a community attempts to fill a hole rent in the social fabric by death or loss with a substitute fantasy.⁶ The theatrical effects mobilized in these performances are always already tied to defensive tactics of obfuscation and displacement and thus need to be understood as compensatory tropes. One of the most disturbing elements of the readings that follow is the degree to which these defensive tactics congeal or solidify into regulatory fantasies whose locus was very real indeed—the bodies of imperial and colonial subjects.

In addition, this chapter supplements the previous chapter's discussion of the reforms generated in response to both the corruption of Hastings's

governance and the East India Company's poor showing in the First and Second Mysore Wars with a genealogy of fantasies of British imperial supremacy that swept through the metropole in the 1790s. This genealogy tracks the staging of the Third and Fourth Mysore Wars in both the non-patent and the patent houses. Spectacular productions such as *Tippoo Saib; or, British Valour in India* (1791), *Tippoo Sultan; or, The Siege of Bangalore* (1792), *Tippoo Saib; or, East India Campaigning* (1792), and *Tippoo Saib's Two Sons* (1792) literally dramatized the incoming news from each of Cornwallis's campaigns against Tipu Sultan in the Third Mysore War. All of these productions attempted to obviate lingering accounts of atrocity, both British and Mysorean, by building fantasies of British valor and paternalism following Cornwallis's victory over Tipu in 1792. The degree to which this modeling of metropolitan opinion was successful can be gauged from a reading of James Cobb's *Ramah Droog* (1798). *Ramah Droog* is the only theatrical production in the patent houses to directly address the Mysore Wars, and it crystallizes much of my argument about the deployment of sexuality in this book. But what I wish to demonstrate is that the comic opera deploys images associated with Cornwallis's victory over Tipu Sultan in order to play out and endorse Cornwallis's suppression of the Irish rebellion. In so doing, we can discern a moment where distinct strategies of imperial consolidation are brought together to generate a fantasy of global supremacy. That fantasy is brought into focus late in this chapter through a consideration of Astley's *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam* (1800). Astley's play theatricalized an important panorama of the fall of Tipu's stronghold at Seringapatam that closed the Fourth Mysore War, and thus provides an example of how precinematic display and embodied performance merge to generate new forms of audience subjectification.

Many of the performances in the series of Tipu plays are related to prior nontheatrical visualizations of the Mysorean conflict, and I explore the subtle alterations in imperial self-fashioning that emerge when a visual representation, whether it be pictorial or precinematic, is reconfigured for public performance. Ancillary moments of sexualization and racialization play a key part in these representations, but these spectacles not only support but also partake in the military techniques employed in breaking down colonial resistance.⁷ The ultimate objective of this chapter is to track the emergence of mass effects in the theatre and to demonstrate the way they reconfigure the question of racialization as British imperial domination in India became manifest.

This cascade of performances pertaining to the Mysore Wars not only

put former imperial anxieties to rest but also advanced a new form of theatrical imperialism. It is possible to discern two tactical strands in the theatricalization of the Third Mysore War. The first is a technology of sex, whose basic structure we have been tracking in the preceding chapter, but which now takes the project of racially consolidating the middle ranks one step further by turning its attention to questions of ethnic difference in metropolitan British society. The second is a technology of the self whose primary aim is to draw the body of the viewing subject into increasingly regulated dispositions, and whose target is less the individual audience member than the collectivity of the audience itself. These two tactics can be distinguished by their relation to the body of the viewer, for the largely sexual deployments focus attention on the fantasies that surround and undergird bodily identity, whereas the dramaturgy of war targets the sensorium of the viewer in a fashion that reconfigures the subject as a non-specific element in a larger political mass. These tactics have their roots in the very disciplinary regimes that Foucault analyzed so conclusively in *Discipline and Punish*: military drill and the generation of disciplinary effects through the spatial deployment of bodies. Astley's specialized in staged military spectacles, but rather than subjecting the audience to drill and regimen, these productions presented drill for consideration. This distancing from the spectacle of disciplinary power rendered the audience members not docile viewers but rather active agents in the process of racial consolidation.

What I wish to demonstrate here is the way the performance of sexual deviance endures as an avenue of critique even as it is superseded by representational tactics more closely akin to the exhibition hall than to the conventional theatre. Because visibility plays such a key role in the masculinization of the audience, forms of precinematic display, such as the panorama, provide a useful heuristic for understanding the emergence of these regulatory fantasies. As we will see, the fluid boundaries between painting, projection, set design, and spectacle play a key role in the presentation of British victory in Mysore throughout this period.

*Anxious Symptoms and Tactical Bifurcations:
The Third Mysore War*

The period prior to Cornwallis's tenure as governor-general was marked by serious reservations about the East India Company's military strategy and the effectiveness of British forces in the Asian subcontinent. These

reservations ranged from outright declarations of wrongdoing to less visible, but nevertheless persistent, signs of a lack of confidence in the company's military capacities. These reservations are most evident in the widely published accounts of British prisoners published in the late 1780s and 1790s. In the early 1780s British forces suffered as many reverses as successes in the campaigns against the sultans of Mysore. Significant battles were lost and numerous prisoners were taken. Kate Teltscher's exhaustive account of the British representations of the wars in Mysore underlines two key issues in the early accounts of the conflicts that are largely erased after Seringapatam falls and Tipu is killed in 1799. In the early phases of the conflict, both Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan were predictably demonized in the various military accounts. But in the mid-1780s there is a significant strain of dissent from representations of the sultans as the embodiment of despotic cruelty. None other than Edmund Burke, in articles in the *Annual Register* and in his speeches during the Hastings trial, argued that much of the cruelty attributed to the sultans of Mysore was a reaction to the tyrannical policies of the East India Company.⁸ At roughly the same time that Burke was representing Haider Ali as a reasonable statesman pushed into barbarism by the unwarranted depredations of the East India Company, other less politically motivated observers were alarmed at the degree to which Haider Ali had successfully incorporated European tactics into his resistance to the Company. Teltscher's crucial observation here is that Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan were threatening not only because they had proved to be able despotic adversaries, but also because they blurred the line separating Christian British and Muslim Indian subjects.

The Mysore army, actively supported by France from 1780 to 1784, derived its strength from contemporary European military principles: both Haider and his son were quick to adopt the strategies and technology of their British enemies. The construct of oriental tyranny, with all its traditional overtones, to some extent obscured the westernized efficiency of the Mysore army. . . . By erecting a wall of difference between East and West, the rhetoric of oriental despotism helped to conceal the similarities between the two powers' policies: the British were freed from the recognition of disturbing correspondences with their enemy.⁹

The extraordinary controversy regarding John Charles Sheen's account of the atrocities perpetrated by British forces at Anantpaur published in

Henry Oakes's *Authentic Narrative of the Treatment of the English, Who Were Taken Prisoner on the Reduction of Bednore by Tippoo Saib* (1785) is indicative of precisely how disturbing these correspondences were to the British public. Sheen accused East India Company soldiers of raping and massacring the women of the zenana and, in so doing, argued that Tipu's ferocious response was in effect a retaliation for British inhumanity. Despite recantations from Sheen himself and a host of rebuttals, the scene continued to exist as a kernel of doubt that implicitly troubled subsequent accounts of Tipu's barbarity. Like similar moments in Burke's speeches in the Hastings impeachment, these scenes of British depravity were historically resilient not only because they are attached to fantasies of the violence of the lower orders of the military, but also because subsequent representations of British triumph so thoroughly repressed the very real violence of colonial warfare.

Unlike the arguments that raged about whether his father Hyder Ali's actions were justified by the depredations of the East India Company or whether they were simply a symptom of Eastern despotism, Tipu Sultan, now mythologized as the "Tiger of Mysore," became an icon of native resistance to British imperial interests. In spite of the fact that Cornwallis won decisive battles against Tipu at Bangalore in 1791 and Seringapatam in 1792, earlier losses inflicted significant psychic damage to the imperial imaginary. Like earlier campaigns against Hyder and Tipu, the Third Mysore War did not start well for the British forces. The initial campaigns were conducted under the leadership of General William Medows, the governor of Madras. Medows served under Cornwallis in the American war and, despite his prior experience, made a number of tactical errors that reminded Cornwallis of his own miscalculations in Pennsylvania and South Carolina.¹⁰ Tipu took almost immediate strategic advantage in the early phases of the conflict and forced Cornwallis to take over Medows's command in mid-December of 1791. Cornwallis undertook one of the most massive deployments of men, animals, and artillery in British military history and eventually conquered the strategic fortress of Bangalore. Insufficient supply lines and uncooperative weather, however, prevented him from successfully taking Tipu's capital Seringapatam. The monsoon and other logistical problems forced Cornwallis to retreat. In November and December, he moved again with a larger force, overwhelmed the supposedly impregnable hill forts of Nundydroog and Severndroog, and moved on to besiege Seringapatam in early February of 1792.

Some sense of the resilience of metropolitan anxiety regarding military actions in India can be gleaned from James Gillray's *The Coming on of*

the Monsoons, which shows Tipu peeing on the British forces (fig. 7.1).¹¹ Gillray's print comes in response to the temporary reversal in the British pursuit of Tipu following successful siege of Bangalore in March 1791. Gillray's caricature of Cornwallis as Falstaff satirizes hyperbolic accounts of the war, but it is also haunted by a decade of far more tangible losses to the sultan. That even a temporary setback in the campaign to entrap Tipu is understood as a form of physical and arguably sexual degradation is significant because many of the British captives' narratives from the 1780s revolve around scenes of bodily degradation and mutilation whose connotations are similarly sexual. Many of Tipu's prisoners were enslaved and forced to fight against the British forces. These cheyla battalions were the site of intense anxiety because most of the cheylas, or slaves, were forced to convert to Islam and were circumcised.¹² As Teltscher states, "The British cheylas, marked with the stigma of Muslim difference but otherwise unconverted to Islam, were stranded in a doctrinal no man's land, and the texts reveal their sense of marginalization."¹³ However, she is also quick to point out, following Pratt, that the very fact of the existence of the survival narratives performs a kind of inoculation of their dangerous contents.¹⁴ Presented within the frame of a survivor's tale, the mutilation of the penis—and, by extension, of the religious and national subject—can be presented and contained. However, the line separating circumcision and castration is at times hard to discern in these texts because the mutilation, whether partial or complete, seems to instantiate a form of subjectivity that for all attempts at containment continues to inhere in the narratives and haunts even the most triumphant accounts.

Teltscher's reading of the case of James Scurry is instructive, for she demonstrates how his narrative, in spite of itself, denies the possibility of patriotism. *The Captivity, Sufferings, and Escape of James Scurry* was not published until 1824, but its account of forced Indianization and the subsequent meltdown in national and racial identity required careful mediation. Highly sensitive to the defensiveness of Scurry's text, Teltscher emphasizes how the account is framed by an editor's description of the returned prisoner's life in England:

After ten years captivity, Scurry has almost forgotten English customs and "the delicate refinements of his native land." When he first returns, he dislikes wearing European clothes, finds it hard to sit in a chair or handle a knife or a fork; his English is "broken and confused, having lost nearly all its vernacular idiom" and his skin colour "nearly resembled the swarthy complexion of the negroes." . . . Po-



FIG. 7.1. James Gillray, *The Coming on of the Monsoons; or, The Retreat from Seringapatam*, 6 December 1791 (courtesy of the Department of Prints and Drawings, The British Museum, London; BM 7929)

tentially a disturbing symbol of alienation, Scurry is rehabilitated through humour: he becomes an object of ridicule.¹⁵

The description of Scurry and the subsequent jokes made about his table manners are extremely reminiscent of the accounts of Mai's circulation in London society in the 1770s. However, here the racialization of Scurry and the feminization implied by the insinuation that he wears Indian clothes constitute a falling away from soldierly masculinity that requires further discursive regulation. We have seen this economy of ridicule in Starke's satirical attack on the passive Indianization of British women in *The Sword of Peace*, but here it is deployed to allay the threat of forced degeneration, which ostensibly characterizes captivity and conversion. The rendering of Scurry as a joke needs to be read symptomatically, and as we will see in our discussion of *Ramah Droog*, which also features a feminized British prisoner in Indian clothes, the joke can be easily turned around to perform an extremely disturbing critique of colonial rebellion in Ireland.

With some sense of the threat—both to actual territorial domination and to imagined forms of imperial identification—posed by Tipu Sultan, it should come as no surprise that the imperial theatre produced in the patent houses in the 1780s and early 1790s assiduously avoids anything like a historical account of military campaigns in the colonies. In *Omai*, *The Sword of Peace*, *The Widow of Malabar*, and *Inkle and Yarico*, soldierly characters not only accede to states of relative representational lack but also perform amatory rather than martial roles. As subjects and objects of desire, officers such as Captain Campley, Captain Cook, and Lieutenant Dormer become icons of sexual, racial, national, and class normativity, rather than heroic soldiers. This is due in part to the disturbing legacy of the American war and in part to the complex treatment of war on the stage following the declaration of war on France. Direct patriotic expression was primarily reserved for afterpieces and for venues that were not under the direct supervision of the examiner of plays. As Russell and Moody have argued, the tight regulation of political content on the patent stages ceded direct enactment of patriotism to the illegitimate theatre. These unregulated venues were free to pursue a dramaturgy of war whose technical innovations and ideological functions would exceed the immediate context of war with France.¹⁶

Between 1791 and 1793, Astley's Royal Amphitheatre and Sadler's Wells offered spectacular versions of Cornwallis's campaigns against Tipu Sultan as quickly as news came back from India. The resulting productions galvanized a new kind of imperial spectatorship that explicitly addressed both the anxious scenes of humiliation associated with previous defeat in America and Mysore and the recurrent scenes of blockage that seemed to characterize Burke's attempts to render events in India during the Hastings trial. The British assault on Bangalore in February and March of 1791 was in many ways the watershed of the Third Mysore War, and it signaled the maturation of Cornwallis's forces despite the fact that Tipu escaped capture.¹⁷ *Tippoo Sultan; or, The Siege of Bangalore* was staged on 9 April 1792 at Astley's Amphitheatre roughly one year after the events it represented and, like all such productions, was an amalgamation of action, animal husbandry, and complex scenic effects. Advertisements refer to it as "A Compiled, Whimsical, Oriental, Tragic, Comic, Pantomimical Sketch, in Three Parts."¹⁸ Cornwallis's military operation involved a double siege, first of the pettah and then of the citadel, and there is no doubt that all the vaunted energies of Astley's production team were employed to restage the battles. Tellingly, one reviewer describes the theatrical enterprise at Astley's as a military operation: "Mr. Astley, jun. commenced

the present Campaign last Monday evening, in presence of a crowded and brilliant Audience, who seemed as highly delighted with the improvements of the Theatre, as with the excellence of the Performances.”¹⁹ At the close of the run another reviewer makes a similar metaphorical gesture and, in so doing, aligns the production with the trajectory of the Mysore campaign: “On Saturday the Siege of Bangalore takes its leave of the Royal Saloon and the public, Tippoo Saib being compelled to fly. It is reported that he has bled freely, as young Astley can testify.”²⁰

In general the papers are far more interested in the sheer size and variety of the audience attending the play than in its particulars, but there are interesting reports regarding the representation’s authenticity.²¹ The *Oracle* reports that “Mr. Astley, junior, obtained Patterns of the Uniforms worn by Tippoo Saib’s Army at the siege of Bangalore, from the Prince’s Ambassadors at Paris. The incidents, dances, and other matters, are certainly very ingeniously displayed, and does the young Manager the highest credit.”²² We have seen these claims to ethnographic specificity before, but this remark should give us pause and not simply because it so unlikely. Why does Astley’s information regarding the uniforms need to come from Tipu’s ambassador via France when there is no shortage of British reports? Throughout the Mysorean campaigns, Britain was extremely concerned by the tactical, political, and economic alliances between Tipu and the French. For Astley to be ostensibly communicating with Tipu’s representative in Paris puts the manager in a rather nebulous zone between the British and the Mysorean-French forces. The notion that Astley is himself involved in some sort of negotiation with Tipu’s representatives implies that by staging—or restaging—war with Tipu, Astley is in some sense waging war on Tipu. As Moody has argued, “Astley’s, the Royal Circus and Sadler’s Wells Theatre began to pioneer their own physical dramaturgy of war. In these shows military knowledge, technical innovation and topographical illusion went hand in hand: managers like the gruff, blunt Philip Astley . . . shrewdly exploited his first-hand knowledge of military strategy and organization.”²³ It is this latter term that we need to pay attention to because the singular advancement both in the practice of warfare in the colonies and in the illegitimate theatre of war is logistical.

Manuel De Landa’s analysis of the relationship between bodies and machines in warfare marks a fundamental distinction between the clockwork army of the eighteenth century and the motorized armies first developed by Napoleon. Motorized here is understood as a conceptual quality. To paraphrase De Landa, the idea of the motorization of the European armies

should call to mind a form of “internal” motorization, not simply the motorization of their means of transportation. Napoleon, for instance, rejected the use of the physical motor, but assembled his armies in the form of an “abstract motor.” While a clockwork mechanism simply transmits an initial motion along a predetermined path, a motor produces new motion.²⁴ These types of fighting units were defined by their internal organization. In the face of limited communication technologies, the clockwork army maximized the sheer volume of projectile force by drilling soldiers until they operated as a single organism. Because the unit was held together by intense discipline and the range of communicative strategies up and down the ranks was limited to the bugle and simple visual signs, these type of armies were slow moving and thus unable to give pursuit when a situation changed suddenly. Armies operating for the East India Company were among the last solely clockwork armies in operation prior to the change in tactical command structure required when the French army suddenly adopted unit organization based on citizen loyalty rather than forced drill and discipline.²⁵ In fact, the British forces, despite repeated assertions to the contrary, possessed neither superior military technology nor larger numbers than their Mysorean enemies; what military superiority the British had was largely administrative. Discipline and logistical skill enabled them to deploy their forces more effectively than Tipu.

In the case of the siege of Bangalore, we see both the strengths and weaknesses of a clockwork army: it was highly effective in a siege format, but Tipu escaped before Cornwallis could give chase. Two points about the clockwork army are significant for us here. First, Kate Teltscher has ably shown that one of the primary fears of British commanders in the Mysorean Wars was that Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan would learn European clockwork tactics. There are frequent references to both sultans’ acquisition of military texts. James Bristow, a captured British officer, reports being forced “to instruct these *Chaylahs* in the manual exercise,” but he indicates that he passed on faulty commands.²⁶ Aside from the disturbing questions of the loyalty of cheyla battalions, Bristow’s anxiety is rooted in the widely disseminated, but partly inaccurate, distinction between the highly organized and disciplined European troops and the antiquated chaotic forces of the sultans. The following passage from Wilks is typical:

It is probable that no national or private collection of ancient armour in Europe contains any weapon or article of personal equipment which might not be traced in this motley crowd. . . . The osten-

tatious display of these antique novelties was equally curious in their kind. The free and equal use of two sword arms, the precise and perfect command of a balanced spear 18 feet long, of the club which was to shiver an iron helmet, of the arrow discharged in flight, but above all the total absence of order, or obedience, or command, excepting groups collected around their respective flags; every individual was an independent warrior, self-impelled, affecting to be the champion whose single arm was to achieve victory; scampering among each other in wild confusion.²⁷

Here the distinction between European and Indian forces is precisely that between modernity and antiquity, between clockwork drill and chaotic disorder, between an overwhelming integration of ranks arising from the rational mechanization of bodies and a force perpetually disintegrating into individualized animalized subjects. In short, clockwork here signifies not only military but also national and racial superiority.

And this is the second key recognition: the clockwork qualities of drill take on national and racial significance in and of themselves, because they are attached to a fantasy of European modernity. As De Landa states, fascination with the clockwork paradigm had cultural manifestations beyond the army:

These rigid squares of men and weapons, incapable of exercising any individual initiative on the battlefield, resembled a well-oiled clockwork mechanism. The time when the phalanx reached its peak, during the late eighteenth century, was also a time when technology had extended the clockwork paradigm to its ultimate consequences, as can be seen in the elaborate mechanical gardens and toy automata of the period.²⁸

Like the automata offered for public viewing at Cox's Museum that are described by Frances Burney in *Evelina*, the extraordinary synchronization of faux armies and animals for which Astley was famous are part of a celebration of the very processes that, in distinguishing British troops from their colonial adversaries, also claimed their manifest superiority.²⁹ In this light, the procession of Indian arms that always makes up a part of Astley's Tipu plays exhibits precisely the combination of antiquity and disorder that establishes the superiority of British order, which is itself enacted for the audience in Astley's practice.

As the following description of the performance indicates, however, a significant portion of the action in *The Siege of Bangalore* was explicitly nonmilitaristic:

Had Astley resided all his life in Mysore and its neighbouring countries . . . he could not be better informed than he is respecting the manners, customs, etc. of Tippoo Saib, his court and subjects.

Tippoo in the first act, is discovered seated at a table, surrounded by his nobility dressed in the Turkish manner, but instead of turbans they all appear in *Armenian caps* enriched with plumes and feathers. His guards, who are seen at a distance, are clothed in Tyger's skins and armed with halberds, resembling very much the Beef Eaters in the Tower.

In the second Act the manners and customs of the people are introduced. The High Priest of the Sun, who comes forward attended by numbers of priests of various orders, having made his invocation, he retires to commence the sacrifices of the day, the victims for which are seen bound, with wreathes of flowers round their necks, and consist of Hares, Rams and Hogs.

In the back part of the stage there are a number of people *wrestling* and others running races, a party of *beautiful virgins* urging them to victory and to the prize. Others are dancing, leaping, *skating* etc. etc.³⁰

The parade of animal sacrifices, priests, and scantily clothed virgins in the second act seems staged to obviate the explicit comparison between Tipu's guards and the Beefeaters that ends the description of the first act. In other words, a sexualized spectacle of cultural difference immediately supersedes a moment where such differences appear to dissolve. That the play opens in ambivalence is important, because it is this visual equation between iconic guards of the British state and Tipu's soldiers, as much as Tipu himself, that must be overcome. Astley's production both elicits and quells anxieties regarding not only past military failures but also ongoing concerns about the "dangerous" potential for British subjects to be assimilated into Indian society that we saw both in Cornwallis's correspondence and in Starke's *The Sword of Peace*.

Tippoo Sultan; or, The Siege of Bangalore stages the primary anxiety elicited by the First and Second Mysore Wars—that difference dissolves into similitude—in its opening scene and then stages two intertwined forms of tactical resistance. The exhibition of military drill as a figure for

European modernity supplements ethnographic fantasies of racial superiority that are grounded in sexual normativity. The balance between the sexual and the martial is tipped toward the latter in this play, and it is the obvious precursor to much more violent theatrical experiences staged to commemorate the final victory over Tipu in 1799. In 1791, however, the mechanical exhibition of supremacy remains not an end in itself but rather an explicit compensation for previous humiliation. And the specter of humiliation ensures the resilience of sexual normativity as a tactical weapon in the cascade of Tipu plays that followed *The Siege of Bangalore*.

Sadler's Wells was quick to pick up on Astley's success and staged *Tippoo Saib; or, East-India Campaigning* less than a month later, but the production's focus was less on the thrill of militarized discipline than on the spectacle of captivity.³¹ Rather than enact the logistical superiority of British warfare, the play opens with "The manner in which several English families concealed themselves from the ravage and Plunder of the enemy."³² As the play unfolds each spectacle of Tippoo's strength, magnificence, and cruelty is superseded by a scene of native loyalty to British rule. This reaches its culmination with a performance of "The signal bravery of a detachment of Sepoys, who released the English Prisoners, defeated a part of Tippoo's army, and brought off an Elephant."³³ Narratives of "sepoys' faithfulness act as a kind of emblem for the continuance of British authority," and the Sadler's Wells production extends this fantasy of voluntary subordination to the Brahminic caste.³⁴ Reviews of the performance indicate that "The interesting situation of several English Officers when confined in the Prisons of Seringapatam, with the extraordinary fidelity of a Black Servant, in forming and executing a plan of escape"³⁵ was the play's highlight largely because it depicted British mastery as the ardent desire of an Indian subject: "The most flattering applause attended every scene of Tippoo Saib last night at Sadler's Wells, but most particularly in that of the prison, where the faithful black discovers himself to his master."³⁶ If Astley's spectacle could be described as a phantasmatic enactment of the tactical superiority of modernity, then the production at Sadler's Wells could best be described as a fantasy of native capitulation that exorcizes the horrors of imprisonment but does not fully allay Tipu's threat. After all, the loyal sepoys only destroy part of Tipu's army and make off with an elephant. Scenes of voluntary subordination now emerge as temporary compensations for an unresolved will to domination. Taken together, the two productions capture the ambivalent combination of hyperbolic triumphalism and residual fear of Tipu that characterizes British response to the reports of Cornwallis's actions in the winter and spring of 1792.

Significantly, the release of the prisoners in the final scene of *Tippoo Saib; or, East-India Campaigning* was itself an anticipatory fantasy, for while it was widely believed that Cornwallis would overrun Seringapatam, news of the victory did not reach London until 23 June 1792.³⁷ When that news came, Astley immediately sought to capitalize on the extraordinary terms of Cornwallis's victory, for the defeat of Tipu at Seringapatam involved not a decisive military annihilation, but rather an extraordinary diplomatic transferal of money, lands, and two of Tipu's sons as hostages to British rule. That transferal had already generated important moments of performance in Mysore and Calcutta. Cornwallis himself engineered the first of these some months earlier. On 23 February 1792, Cornwallis carefully staged a spectacle involving elephants, artillery, and soldiers in full ceremonial costume, in which he publicly received Tipu's two sons, "dressed for the melancholy occasion in muslin adorned with pearls and assorted jewellery," with a gesture of paternal care.³⁸

This spectacle of military paternalism outside of Seringapatam was followed by elaborate celebratory performances in Calcutta on 23 April 1792. A gala concert was performed using amateur musicians and singers from the ranks of the company, and an extraordinary number of illuminations or projected transparencies were displayed throughout the town.³⁹ As the *Calcutta Gazette* reported,

Company servants . . . brightened the Calcutta night with illuminations, each vying with the other for splendor and ingenuity in design. Government house strung up lights of different colors. A large transparent painting depicted Fame with her trumpet over a bust of Cornwallis. Beneath it Britannia received the treaty from Tippoo's sons. Hercules stood behind Britannia, and a large panoramic view of Seringapatam filled the background. The accountant general's office displayed a large transparency showing the captured forts. Lights flooded the Post Office.⁴⁰

Precinematic transparencies had been used to powerful effect in other colonial locales, but in this case it is the screens themselves that are most important.⁴¹ By illuminating the key offices of the East India Company, the celebrations in Calcutta took icons of the governmental care and bureaucratic regulation of subject peoples and made them contiguous with Cornwallis's paternal care of Tipu's sons. As P. J. Marshall argues, "the effusions provoked by the Third Mysore War suggest that the British were coming to see themselves not only as a great military power in India but

as people of justice and moderation. Victory was a triumph for British humanity as well as for British arms.”⁴²

But there was more at stake than the expression of this particular form of patriotic paternalism. The colonial newspaper accounts devote extensive coverage to the technical achievements of the illuminations that I would argue amounts to a subtle declaration of the cultural superiority of technological modernity. The following example is typical of the descriptions of the “external illuminations”:

The Accountant General’s house formed a grand and characteristic display of lights, transparent paintings and apposite device [*sic*] and inscriptions, in the center of the main front, on the top of a large frame of transparent silk, was painted his Lordship’s arms proper, with the British colours superior over those of the Suldaun Tippoo, and on the sides the names of the hostages “Prince *Abdul Kalifh*” “Prince *Murrad Dien*” and in the center lower down in large character—“*Definitive treaty of peace* signed under the walls of Sieringapatam on the 17th of March, between Earl *Cornwallis*, the Mahrattas, Nizam, and Tippoo Suldaun.” And covering a considerable share of the rest of the painting in small circular spaces were exactly enumerated the *names* and *dates* of the capture of all the fortresses . . . during the war. At the bottom the following lines:

True fortitude is seen in great exploits
That justice warrants, and that wisdom guides

On the east end of the house was an elegant transparency of Justice and Fame supporting a medallion of his Lordship, and bearing the emblems of plenty and glory—with the following inscription:

In this triumphant, this long wish’d for hour,
Say what could our festive joys encrease?
That HERO’S presence who the Tyrants power
O’er-threw, and gave to our fond wishes Peace.⁴³

Throughout the newspaper coverage there is a fascination with how the illuminations transform the quotidian spaces of Calcutta into “one continuous blaze” of allegorical splendor in which the very loci of formerly precarious rule emerge as classical emblems of virtue.⁴⁴ As the *Madras Courier* declared, “suffice it to say, that where so general a display of beauty,

splendor, and magnificence were combined to render Calcutta, and its vicinity, one of the most superb Coup d'oeil's it has ever exhibited."⁴⁵

This collocation of might, moderation, and precinematic visual wonder was similarly enacted in the gala concert held in the Calcutta theatre:

Entering at the west door, the first object that rivetted the attention was a beautiful semicircular temple, of the Ionic order, dedicated to Victory, placed at the east end, whose dome reached within a foot of the ceiling. In this was placed a transparency, representing a bust of Lord Cornwallis on a pedestal, with the Goddess of Victory flying over it, with a wreath of Laurel in her hand, which she was in the act of placing on his Lordship's brows:— on the plinth of the pedestal was his Lordship's motto,

Virtus Vincit Invidiam.

And over the bust

Regna Assignata.

And on each side of this was a nich, —in one of which a figure of Fortitude, and in the other, of Clemency, was placed. Over these, and extending the whole breadth of the temple, was a transparent painting of the action of the 6th of Feb. 1792, and beneath, the following four lines:

*Still pressing forward to the fight, they broke
Through flames of sulphur, and a night of smoke,
Till slaughter's legions fill'd the trench below,
And bore their fierce avengers to the foe.*⁴⁶

The contiguity of the emblem of Clemency and the images of slaughter encapsulate a specific patriotic style that unites the illuminations and the musical entertainment. The accounts of the concert indicate that transparencies were illuminated and extinguished in order to direct audience attention to various patriotic emblems before the actual performance of excerpts from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*. Handel's famous patriotic oratorio was originally, and continued to be, understood as an allegory for George II's victory over the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Staging the oratorio in Calcutta at this moment carried double significance, for it not only celebrated the temporary termination of Tipu's rebellion but also promoted a fantasy of British unity, which would not have been lost on the

large number of Scottish employees of the East India Company attending the spectacle.

When the news of Cornwallis's victory reached Britain, London was flooded by quickly published books and a profusion of celebratory verse.⁴⁷ In addition, the English public was inundated with visual images of both the "hill forts" (*drugs*) that were the focus of British military pressure and the transfer of Tipu's two sons to Cornwallis as hostages. This latter event was the subject of everything from paintings and prints to illustrated tea trays and large-scale illuminated transparencies.⁴⁸ The *Gentleman's Magazine's* account of the event is symptomatic:

Lord Cornwallis received [Tipu's sons] in his tent; which was guarded by a battalion of Sepoys, and they were then formally delivered to his Lordship Gullam Ally Beg, the Sultan's Vackeel, as hostages for the due performance of the treaty. . . . At length Gullam Ally, approaching Lord Cornwallis, much agitated, thus emphatically addressed his Lordship: "These children," pointing to the young princes, whom he then presented, "were this morning the sons of the Sultan, my master: their situation is changed, and they must now look up to your Lordship as their father." The tender and affectionate manner in which his Lordship received them, seemed to confirm the truth of the expression. The attendants of the young princes appeared astonished, and their countenances were highly expressive of the satisfaction they felt in the benevolence of his Lordship.⁴⁹

Teltscher argues that the representation of Cornwallis's acceptance of Tipu's sons as a scene of paternal benevolence contrasts with the popular accounts of Tipu's alleged mistreatment of British captives. War between the East India Company and Mysore was now refigured as a tropological struggle between normative and errant models of paternal care. The wide circulation of this image achieved the twofold effect of downplaying the atrocities revealed during the Warren Hastings trial and of reinforcing Whig fantasies of colonial rule as a form of affectionate paternalism.

The relationship between arms and paternal care was brought into palpable tension when Astley's *Tippoo Saib's Two Sons* opened on 20 August 1792. The play is divided into three parts: the first, aside from offering a spectacular view of Seringapatam, introduces "the affecting, pleasing, and interesting Departure of TIPPOO'S TWO SONS from their FATHER, at the Gates of Seringapatam, previous to their being delivered up as hostages to His

Majesties Forces”; the second offers a view of the Hill Fort and stages “the noble reception experienced by the INDIAN PRINCES on their Delivery to the Commander in Chief”; and the third offers “an ORIENTAL MILITARY FESTIVAL, which took place on the occasion.”⁵⁰ Again the play was extremely successful and generated an imitation at Sadler’s Wells.⁵¹ Reviews of the Astley’s show stress the way the two first parts play off of one another: “The departure of the Royal Hostages from the Capital of their Father, is as affecting as their delivery to the British Troops is glorious.”⁵² In this scenario, Cornwallis becomes both the triumphant commander in chief and the father that Tipu’s sons never had. The generation of affective sympathy for the hostage sons is managed such that it emphasizes Tipu’s defective paternal care and downplays systematic British aggression in the region. Within the structure of Astley’s entertainments, the emblematic construction of British benevolence is enacted in two registers in front of similarly contrasting views. The affecting departure of the sons is staged in front of a painting of the civil space of Tipu’s capital, whereas the triumphant transference of the hostages takes place in front of the defeated hill fortress. The very transition in scene ties British paternalism to a scene of Mysorean military defeat.

Rather than conclude with this emblematic scene, however, *Tippoo Saib’s Two Sons* revs up into an “Oriental Military Festival,” which, despite its title, refers to a British victory celebration. After all, large-scale display was Astley’s forte, and while the transfer of the hostages could be managed with infinite pomp and circumstance, it does not leave much room for the musical interludes that characterize these types of productions. It would be a mistake to downplay the generic hybridity of these plays because they often shift from scenes of sympathetic affect to tightly executed military drills to moments of quasi-ethnographic observation to patriotic or racist musical acts. Judging from the emphasis placed on this variety, this was a fundamental component of this form of display, and we are fortunate in that the *Oracle* preserved one of the featured songs in the closing festival. The opening verses of “Patrick O’Conner’s Description of the India Campaign, with his Friend TIPPOO” tells us a great deal about the ideological imperatives of Astley’s entertainments because it is performed in “the exact brogue of a Paddy” by Mr. Johanot to the tune of “Corporal Casey”:

I.

From sweet Tipperary, to pick up some honour;
I’m here, to be sure, little Patrick O’Connor;

With Dennis O'Neal, Teddy Blane, and O'Carty,
By my soul we have routed the Black-a-moor Party.
Och! rub a dub, row de dow, faith, Mr. Tippoo,
We have bothered your head, and we've made you skip O!
Devil burn me, you're quiet, so good-bye, Mr. Tippoo.

II.

Now, d'ye see, the queer Chief would have fain made us bellow,
But for gallant CORNWALLIS, that fine British fellow,
While Tippoo made sure now, to kill us and eat us,
With half of his Kingdom we made him to treat us.
Och! rub a dob, row de dow, so, Mr. Tippoo,
You fain wou'd have give us, my jewel, the slip O!
Arrah, honey, be easy, now do, Mr. Tippoo.⁵³

After alluding to the financial settlement exacted by Cornwallis, the song goes on to describe the other terms of the peace including the hostage sons. The image of the cannibal Tipu is not surprising, but what is notable is the complex effect of mobilizing an Irish character in this celebration of Cornwallis.⁵⁴ If the opening verse is any indication, the British army is composed of loyal Irish subjects fighting on behalf of the crown, and thus this victory also testifies to the voluntary subordination of another colonized population to British rule. Like the loyal sepoys, Patrick O'Connor and his associates consolidate an imperial fantasy that is not only not yet operative but also in a state of permanent contestation. London audiences are incited both to laugh at the Irishman and to identify with his literal investment in a unified Britain. As the song unfolds, metaphors of monetary gain and expense suddenly take over; Tipu's loss is both military and economic, and the Irish fighters stand to gain both power and "Lacks of Rupees" by joining in the English cause:

O England and Ireland, my jewel, for ever,
Their hearts are so great, and their Soldiers so clever;
Now Tippoo wou'd fain send us back with pretences,
But d'ye mind, it won't do till he's paid all expences.⁵⁵

This deployment of the loyal Irish soldier in a scene of Tipu's subjugation plays out the desires of many an imperial viewer at this moment in the history of British colonial rule. But it is important to remember that, despite the claims to victory in Mysore and unity in the British Isles in this

play, both Tipu Sultan and the United Irishmen will seek French assistance in almost simultaneous rebellions before the decade is out.

Strategic Substitutions: Ramah Droog's Indianization of Ireland

As the 1790s unfolded, the spectacular qualities of illegitimate dramaturgy infiltrated productions in the patent houses to such an extent that legitimate theatre was hollowed out from within.⁵⁶ Productions such as Colman's *Blue-Beard* thrilled audiences at Covent Garden, but theatrical commentators mourned the loss of legitimate comedy as a sign of cultural devolution. James Cobb's *Ramah Droog; or, Wine Does Wonders* plays a significant role in this history because it exhibits many of the qualities of illegitimate production and also engages with the sequence of Tipu plays, which were so important to the development of Astley's craft.⁵⁷ As I have argued thus far, the performative, textual, and visual archive surrounding the Third Mysore War built a fantasy of benevolent paternalism that displaced the representation of military violence. This refiguring of colonial conquest as familial care was tied to emergent sexual norms that have important ramifications for *Ramah Droog*. However, the more violent desires that ground these fantasies of benevolent British governance are encoded into the comic opera's sets and its spectacular procession. One could argue that here the line between a patent production and Astley's entertainments can be drawn, for what has to be coded in the patent houses can be enacted in the illegitimate venues. The *Morning Herald's* opening-night review declared that "the first objects that attract our attention in the representation of this piece, are the Scenery and the Dresses. The ingenuity, beauty, and magnificence of these surpass every thing of a similar description that we have for many years witnessed."⁵⁸ Aside from their aesthetic qualities, the scenery is the occasion for a monetary thrill not unrelated to that of the Orient itself. The sets materialize the potential for surplus value in the colonial enterprise: "[T]he Expence attending their construction and decoration must have been immense . . . the Piece bids fair to become so attractive, that we have no doubt of the liberality of the Manager meeting proper return from the attention of the Public."⁵⁹ The excitement generated here deserves careful consideration for the sets themselves resolve a series of political anxieties that impinge upon the economic stability of colonial activity in India.

As if to underline the importance of the stage effects, the *Morning Herald* provided a complete catalog of every set in order of appearance. The

play opens in the fortress of Ramah Droog with “British captives on one side, the walls of the palace garden on the other,” and quickly shifts to “a distant view of the hill of the fort of Ramah Droog.”⁶⁰ By opening in a prison, the play gestures toward the widely reported cruelties suffered by British prisoners of Tipu Sultan. Like the cascade of Tipu plays in the early 1790s, Cobb activates all of the anxieties of captivity right at the play’s outset, thereby establishing specific forms of vulnerability—sexual and military—that are to be overcome during the course of the entertainment. In this sense, much of the opera’s ideological effect relies on the assumption that victory over Tipu five years earlier has generated enough security for the audience to revisit and play at colonial anxiety. This playing at anxiety allows Cobb to explore sites of real and current instability. Put simply, an earlier scene of anxiety is being reactivated to gain access to an altogether different instance of imperial concern: India is deployed as a safe field in which to explore Irish problematics.

Close attention to the list of sets reveals that the opera shuttles the audience in and out of the phantasmatic space of the prison in spite of the fact that almost all of the onstage action and dialogue happen within the walls of the fortress. The moments when the opera provides either distance from the fortress or a respite from the narrative problematic of imprisonment are therefore extremely important. Of these I focus on two: the extraordinary procession with its mechanical elephant, and the long-range view of the fortress that accompanies the second scene. Midway through the play a “splendid procession” interrupts the action:

The Rajah . . . on an Elephant, returning from hunting the Tiger hunt, preceded by his Harcarrahs, or Military Messengers, and his State Palanquin. The Vizier on another Elephant—the Princess in a gaurie, drawn by Buffaloes. The Rajah is attended by his Fakeer or Soothsayer—his Officers of State, and by an Ambassador from Tipoo Sultun in a Palanquin; also by Nairs or Soldiers, from the South of India—Poligars, or Inhabitants of the hilly districts, with their hunting dogs—other Indians carrying a dead tiger, and young tigers in a cage, a number of sepoy—musicians on camels on foot—Dancing Girls, &c.⁶¹

Unlike similar processions in earlier plays, a great deal of attention is placed on the mechanical elephant as a figure not only for military might but also for technological rationality. A great deal of ink was spilled on how Cornwallis’s assault on Bangalore was the first British campaign in

India to use elephants on a large scale. But in keeping with the display of military technology pioneered at Astley's, the handbills and advertisements emphasized the ingenuity of the elephant's mechanism, and some reviewers suggested that witnessing its movements was sufficient incentive to go to the theatre. Plans for the elephant were reportedly published during the first run of the opera. What is important for us to recognize is that the technological display afforded by the elephant and the ethnographic accounting of various attendants are not divergent practices. The former implicitly declares the superiority of British technological innovation and the latter gestures toward the supposed combination of Hindu servility and Moslem bellicosity that undercuts Indian attempts to become a similarly modern and legitimate society capable of such technological sophistication.

But one detail in the procession above all others raises fundamental political and dramaturgical questions. Cobb's procession features a dead tiger and young tigers in a cage. Widely known to the English public as the "Tiger of Mysore," Tipu is here figured a year before his death as a dead tiger and his already-hostage sons as captive tiger cubs. *Ramah Droog's* procession acts as an allegory for acts of domination already achieved and yet to come. In this light, the procession draws the audience into a very particular historical juncture, one that not only analeptically stages Tipu's political and military defeat but also proleptically instantiates the desire for his actual death. The opera's less-than-subtle revisions of the history of British intervention in India opens the way for the self-congratulatory combination of humanitarianism and military strength that dominates the third act of *Ramah Droog*.

What is so remarkable about this opera is that this instantiation of the desire for the death of colonial resistance is geographically transferable. The temporal problematic established in the theatricalized space of India is transferred to a more proximate space in order to deal with a similar historical juncture in Britain's imperial subjugation of Ireland. This commutability turns on the widespread public acceptance of Cornwallis's exemplary moderation, for he is a lurking presence in this play as much for his Indian career as for his role in putting down the Irish rebellion of 1798. Perhaps the most complex aspect of Cobb's opera is the way in which it invokes Britain's ostensibly parental relation to India as a model for hegemonic accounts of the Irish rebellion. *Ramah Droog* opened one day after the death of Wolfe Tone, and its audience members would have been suffused with accounts of violent uprising in Wexford. In short, the national fantasy of just moderation that allowed the English to justify colo-

nial policy in spite of the revelation of abuses of power by the East India Company is deployed by Cobb to consolidate ideological support for government policy in Ireland.

Within the political plot of the opera, English, Irish, and Indian prisoners enable other British troops to overthrow the usurper Mahah Rajah Surooj Seing and restore the rightful princess Zelma and her lover Zemaun to the throne. The finale, which is sung by Zemaun and a chorus of British soldiers, should give ample sense of the opera's nationalist gestures:

Joy shall swell the choral strain,
Loyalty and truth to prove;
Gratitude in Freedom's fane
Shall hail the monarch of a people's love.
Sacred to Freedom's glorious cause,
Britain the sword of justice draws;
A lesson to the admiring world:
Oppression from his seat is hurl'd.
(191)

This song's involution of loyalty and gratitude is the culmination of a series of speeches extolling not only the virtues of British law and governance but also the benevolence of British military intervention in Indian politics. Chief among these comes when Barney Liffey—the opera's principal Irish character⁶²—is threatened with death by the Princess Alminah:

What the devil! Condemned without a trial? . . . in my country the monarch and the meanest subject are bound and protected by the same laws. . . . It seems very odd that we should find the value of the blessings of home, by looking for them abroad, where they are not to be found. But it is very true; and well may they say in our little kingdoms, that a man should travel to know the worth of his country and its constitution. (179)

Liffey's expression of the worth of his country and its constitution rehearses an earlier speech in which he teaches the Rajah that "An Irishman is an Englishman with another name . . . and we are like two arms, when one needs defence, the other naturally comes to his assistance" (172). The naturalness of this coembodiment is perhaps the play's most violent rewriting of contemporary colonial conflict. However, to gain a full sense

of *Ramah Droog's* manipulation of Anglo-Irish affairs requires further spatial analysis.

The assault on the Rajah's fort that brings the opera to its conclusion is reminiscent of a series of sieges conducted by Cornwallis against Tipu's *drug* fortresses in the region of *Barramah'l*—hence the title “*Ramah Droog*.” After conquering Bangalore in 1791, Cornwallis methodically secured his supply lines by laying siege to a number of strategic fortresses, including the supposedly impregnable forts at Nundydroog and Sevendroog. When they fell, most of the other hill forts in the region surrendered. Cobb fuses these historical moments when Zelma's servant Agra describes a military action that is reminiscent of Clive's use of a diversionary attack at Arcot to conceal the surreptitious ascent of the *drug* (190). This ties the resolution of the opera's conflict to similar moments of violent conflict resolution in the history of British colonization. These two campaigns, more than any other military actions in the subcontinent, aroused intense interest among the British reading and viewing public. As Mildred Archer argues “The South Indian word ‘droog’ for a great fortified hill early became absorbed into the English language.”⁶³

It was precisely this public interest that incited illustrators like Thomas and William Daniell to follow British forces into the region. The two artists painted a series of *drug* fortresses and a number of famous views of the fort at the rock of Trichinopoly that were subsequently engraved and in circulation less than three months before the opening of *Ramah Droog*.⁶⁴ The *Morning Chronicle's* opening-night review emphasizes the role of Daniell in the design of the opera's scenography:

We are prevented by want of room from going . . . into a more regular animadventure on work upon which infinite expence of decoration has been bestowed, and that with perfect taste; for the scenes and dresses we understand have been prepared under the skilful direction of Mr. Daniels, who, as an artist that enriched the world with exquisite specimens of the picturesque scenery of India. In point of spectacle, therefore, it is superb, and the procession will please upon repetition.⁶⁵

The reviewer, perhaps inadvertently, recognizes that the elephant-laden procession at the end of the second act seems to exist separate from the primary field of action. If the pageant is excised, then a rather different spectacle captures the audience's attention—that of the *drug* itself. John Inigo Richards's sketch for the staging of the opera's second scene, in



FIG. 7.2. John Inigo Richards, Set design drawing for James Cobb's *Ramah Droog* (courtesy of the Department of Prints and Drawings, Enthoven Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

which the audience is given a spectacular view of the *drug* fortress, is explicitly derived from Daniell's engravings (fig. 7.2). The set change, therefore, shifts the audience from the phantasmatic space of colonial catastrophe to a famous scene of British victory in India. However, this visual resolution of one form of colonial anxiety is complicated by the appearance of a second phantasmatic assemblage, whose operation is primarily sexual and which speaks directly to scenes of colonial violence much closer—both spatially and temporally—to the opera's audience.

The Daniells' frequently painted groups of Indian subjects or each other in the foreground to give the viewing public a sense of scale of the buildings or fortresses they portrayed. But the figures in the foreground do more than help to clarify the physical size of the object viewed; they also insert an English subject within the visual field, thereby mediating between that which is recognizable and that which is entirely other. Richards's sketch replicates this gesture, but the two figures in the foreground destabilize this mediation because they are anything but normative English subjects. The first is Barney Liffey, whose "Irish pleasantries" according to the *Morning Herald* "frequently enliven the scene, and con-

vulse the audience with laughter.”⁶⁶ The second is Eliza, Captain Sidney’s wife, who enters “in male attire.” These examples of ethnic difference and gender transgression standing between the audience and the distant fort are telling, for normative English men rarely appear on stage. With the exception of Captain Sidney, the British are represented by an Irishman and two women in breeches. Sidney’s and Liffey’s wives, Elizabeth and Margaret, have joined their husbands as soldiers in the colonial project.⁶⁷ That the “female knight” gratuitously reemerges first in front of the *drug* and later inside the fortress walls indicates precisely where emergent forms of sexual and colonial governance intersect on the London stage.

Ramah Droog presents two kinds of women—the heavily eroticized Princess Alminah, who is in love with Captain Sidney, and the British female knights. In terms of the erotics of stage presentation, Cobb is mobilizing two forms of exoticism, one based on interracial heterosexual desire and another that plays on tropes of sapphic desire. As the play unfolds, the threat of miscegenation on the one hand and gender insubordination on the other are obviated when Elizabeth interrupts Alminah’s pursuit of Sidney by revealing her femininity. At one level it is not surprising to see both forms of nonnormative sexuality simultaneously ejected, but Elizabeth harmonizes her sex and her gender at precisely the moment in the final act when the British soldiers take over Ramah Droog. As the British regain colonial dominance, English cross-dressing is cast off in favor of normative gender relations. What this suggests is that the play recifies related “perversions” in the sexual and the political world.

This conjunction of sexual and colonial regulation gains some depth when we look closely at the representation of the Irish in *Ramah Droog*. The relationship between Liffey and his English “master,” Captain Sidney, allegorizes an act of union that would have warmed the hearts of English audience members. However, Liffey is also placed in a subordinate relation to the Indian Rajah. In a complex plan to help liberate the British prisoners, Liffey impersonates a European doctor and cures the ailing Rajah with a potato. The potato becomes a crucial prop in the play, not only because it figures for Liffey’s Irishness but also because it occasions an intriguing cultural exchange between the Irish character and the Indian Rajah. To compensate Liffey for curing his hangover, the Rajah makes Liffey a vizier and grants him a zenana of his own.⁶⁸ The gesture draws Liffey into broadly held cultural assumptions that the sexual excess implied by access to the seraglio devolves into compromised masculinity. For the remainder of the play Liffey wears a ceremonial “*khelaut*,” and he is included in the tiger hunting party described earlier. Nestled, therefore, in

the elaborate spectacle of Oriental splendor, we find an Irish vizier dressed in what London audience members would have considered effeminate clothing. Cobb reorients the containment strategy discussed earlier with regard to James Scurry in which the emasculated and Orientalized cheyla is ridiculed for his incivility in order to effect a critique of Irish disaffection. Like the stereotypical cheyla, Barney collaborates with the Rajah but all anxiety is contained under the rubric of ridicule. This is significant because the primary anxiety associated with Irish rebellion was that the rebels, like the sultans of Mysore, were allied with the French. In short, the stakes are high and Cobb figuratively circumcises/castrates Barney in an entirely symptomatic fashion. The feminization of Liffey is a significant departure from the hypermasculinization of male Irish characters earlier in the century, but it is consistent not only with the ideological disarmament of the Irish and Indian rebels in the English press, but also with the representation of Barney's wife Margaret as a pistol-toting duelist who terrifies her Indian captors.

Liffey's inclusion in the procession has the potential to unsettle the play's overt endorsement of union between Ireland and England. But the threat posed by this collocation of two fractious colonial spaces is contained in advance by the opera's pastiche of British military victory in the subcontinent, both at the level of set design and narrative. It is not only Elizabeth who reassumes her normative gender identity as the threat posed by the Rajah is erased. When the British storm Ramah Droog, Liffey casts off his Indian garb, reassumes his soldierly masculinity, and resumes his subservient relation to his English "master." The consolidation of gender roles in the emergent heterosexuality of the late eighteenth century is matched by a parallel consolidation of ethnic difference within the emergent political entity of Great Britain. And that difference is regulated by the subtle deployment of nonnormative sexualities that ultimately connects Ireland and India as "unhealthy" sites in the colonial imaginary.

Margaret's masculinization, unlike Eliza's, remains intact at the close of *Ramah Droog*. What this means is that the relation between Barney and Margaret diverges from the normative heterosexuality exemplified by Eliza and Captain Sidney. Margaret and Barney's closing duet allows us to recognize the political importance of this sexual distinction. As the British troops scale the *drug*, the opera's principal Irish characters narrate in song the extraordinary restraint of British victory in a fashion that is reminiscent of what the *Gentleman's Magazine* called "the humane yet spirited conduct of the Marquis Cornwallis" not only in Mysore but also in Ireland.⁶⁹ For two Irish characters to be cheering "our Country and our King"

and identifying with *British* “sons of freedom” (189) on the London stage in early November 1798—less than six months after the bloody extermination of the United Irishmen—is not only wishful thinking but also an indication of the importance and the longevity of the image of “moderate Cornwallis” to English fantasies of “humanitarian” imperial domination. These fantasies rely on figures of benevolent paternal governance in the family that are consolidated by the attribution of nonnormative masculinities to colonized others. In this light, the opera’s subtle destabilization of Irish masculinity through the continuing presence of the Irish female knight helps pave the way for subsequent imperial policy. Significantly, the Indian characters who benefit from the British displacement of the “despotic” rajah embody a similarly nonnormative heterosexuality. Zemaun, the heroic Indian figure in the opera, is always understood to be subordinate to Princess Zelma. This similarity between Indian and Irish heterosexuality is, I believe, crucial to the opera’s image of coloniality, for the continuing presence of masculinized colonial women and subordinate colonial men is the defining distinction between colonized ethnicities and imperial British identity following the ejection of more threatening colonial others, such as Tipu Sultan and Wolfe Tone. In this light, the buoyant celebration of normative middle-class sexuality in this comic opera is intimately tied to the careful concealment—from metropolitan subjects—of violent dominance without hegemony in the colonial realm.⁷⁰

Exhibiting Supremacy: The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam

The relationship between *Ramah Droog*’s sets and the prior circulation of images of *drug* fortresses by the Daniell brothers raises a series of questions regarding the place of visual spectacle in the reception and interpretation of war in the cultural memory. The previous section has argued that, in spite of the fleeting moments when actual conflict is staged in *Ramah Droog*, the real engagement with the question of colonial war takes place somewhat surreptitiously at the level of visual memory, and that it is the recent uprising in Ireland that is being indirectly presented through analogies with the earlier victories at Tritchnopoly, Nundydroog, Severndroog, and Seringapatam. This containment of colonial anxiety and its re-deployment to a separate colonial space implies an extraordinary level of commutability that ultimately rests on the metropolitan audience’s ability to strip colonial subjects of their specificity and deal with them as sim-

ilarly subjugated beings. This ability rests on a particular form of sanctioned ignorance that misrecognizes triumphant rule in one colonial locale for enduring political instability in another.

The sentimental paintings and prints of the hostage sons of Tipu lurk behind Cobb's opera, and their conjunction of triumphalism and paternal care lives on in *Ramah Droog's* careful suturing of British ascendancy and sexual normativity. The hostage scene in all its manifestations becomes a kind of screen memory for the reconstitution of British military control after the earlier humiliations rendered by Gillray and others.⁷¹ But despite the displacement of military domination in the paintings and prints, a kind of counter-memory of violence was enacted all through this period in the military performances at Astley's Royal Amphitheatre. As the decade came to a close, British forces would once again capture Seringapatam, but this time victory was sealed by the death of Tipu Sultan. Like the profusion of images of Cornwallis's reception of the hostages that closed the Third Mysore War, the Fourth Mysore War was visually commemorated by a series of paintings and prints, but artists focused on two very different scenes, both of which were based on Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Beatson's firsthand account of the fall of the fortress.⁷² Beatson's text offers detailed accounts of the siege of the fortress and of the discovery of Tipu's body. These two sections of Beatson's text occasion two sets of paintings that are as distinct in their representational tactics as they are in their subject matter.⁷³

With its references to *Hamlet* and its transcriptions of Tipu's dream premonitions, Beatson's text provides more than enough material for the composition of a tragedy.⁷⁴ But the emotional response in the viewer that lies at the heart of tragedy may exceed the ideological work necessary at this historical moment immediately following the news of Tipu's defeat. What was necessary in 1800 was the combined effect of forgetting past defeats and of promoting heroic British martyrs. And what better to occlude the threatening bodies not only of Tipu but also of the cheylas than the distinct, but related, mechanical entertainments offered at the Lyceum and at Astley's Amphitheatre. In Gillian Russell's words, what appears to have been necessary was a paradoxical "de-theatricalization of the representation of war" in forms of theatre that emerged beyond the purview of the patent houses.⁷⁵ This process of detheatricalization shifted the emphasis from identification with particular actants to the visual experience of mechanized war, and thus what emerges is "war without the mediation of actors."⁷⁶ Despite the opportunities presented by Tipu's defeat for the sentimental performance of triumphant national identity or the staging

of tragic reversal, the most important performative commemoration of British victory over Tipu opted instead to stage a “Grand Military Spectacle,” titled *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam*, which was itself based on a panoramic view of the battle.⁷⁷

In the spring of 1800, two representations of the fall of Seringapatam were competing for public attention. On 17 April 1800, Robert Ker Porter’s immense panoramic view of the event, *The Storming of Seringapatam*, was opened for public viewing at the Lyceum. The panorama was longer than two hundred feet, covered more than “2,550 square feet of canvas, and contain[ed] several hundred figures as large as life, with near twenty Portraits of British Officers.”⁷⁸ As one can imagine, the semicircular panorama overwhelmed its viewers (fig. 7.3). Thomas Dibdin recalled the panorama’s effect:

The learned were amazed, and the unlearned were enraptured. I can never forget its first impression upon my own mind. It was as a thing dropped down from the clouds—all fire, energy, intelligence, and animation. You looked a second time, the figures moved, and were commingled in hot and bloody fight. You saw the flash of the cannon, the glitter of the bayonet, the gleam of the falchion. You longed to be leaping from crag to crag with Sir David Baird, who is hallooing his men on to victory! Then, again, you seemed to be listening to the groans of the wounded and the dying—and more than one female was carried out swooning.⁷⁹

The illusion of motion and immediacy is typical of panoramic display, but it is important to recognize that the painting is both an optical and a narrative machine. The fact that Dibdin’s account pulls the viewer first into the place of General Baird is not incidental because he occupies the very center of the central panel. In other words, the panorama’s convex shape, much like a convex mirror, forces the viewer into the center of the semicircle. Once there, Baird’s line of sight and other compositional factors, such as the placement of the ramparts of the fort, move the viewer’s attention back along the curved wings to incorporate other elements of the battle. This places the viewer in the place of the commander of the forces, but then enables the viewer to see more than Baird could ever see. In short, the viewer accedes to a position that both incorporates and exceeds that of command. As Gillian Russell argues, “part of the politics of making war possible has involved the privileging of the vision of the civilian audience: the viewer . . . must ‘see’ more than even the ordinary soldier in the field,

tlement, a little further to the left.”⁸¹ This relegation of Tipu to the left side of the panorama and to the last phase of the proposed order of observation literally decenters the sultan and thus accords him far less narrative significance than the various British soldiers shown dying for their country. Hence, the troubling corpse of Tipu is not only not presented but the structure of the optical mechanism focuses viewer attention on the dead bodies of both named and unnamed soldiers.

Dibdin makes precisely this point when he sums up the aftereffects of viewing the panorama: “[T]he accompaniments about the sally-port, half choked up with the bodies of the dead, made you look on with a shuddering awe, and retreat as you shuddered. The public poured in by hundreds and thousands for even a transient gaze—for such a sight was altogether as marvellous as it was novel. You carried it home, and did nothing but think of it, talk of it, and dream of it.”⁸² As a mechanism for inculcating the sublime, the panorama was perhaps unmatched, but the key observation here is that, unlike the transient effects of the sublime, Porter’s painting was able to instill a sense of dread and wonder in its viewer well past the viewing moment. As such, the painting needs to be understood primarily as a historical machine: a machine that narrativizes events and generates phantasmatic identifications with historical personages. In this sense, the panorama is similar to the staging of topical historical events in the illegitimate theatre, and it is perhaps this common objective that prompted Astley to not only stage his own production of these events a few weeks later, but also to incorporate a scaled-down version of Porter’s panorama into a pantomimical pastiche of London life called *The Pirate; or, Harlequin Victor* in the fall.⁸³

Astley was Porter’s chief competitor for the attention of the viewing public and was involved in a similarly complex narrative game. However, the relationship between machinelike performance and phantasmatic investment was quite distinct and hailed its viewers in an altogether different fashion. On 5 May 1800, ostensibly to fulfill the “particular desire of several Military Officers,” Astley opened *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam* to universal acclaim. The following excerpt from the advertisement gives a sense of the overall trajectory of the performance:

In the course of this interesting Spectacle the following most striking Scenery will be displayed, viz. 1st, A view of an Indian Sea Port; 2d, A view near the River Cavery; 3d, The Banqueting Garden of Tippoo Sultaan; 4th, The Commander in Chief General Harris’s Marquee; 5th, A correct view of the City of Seringapatam, the whole of Tip-

poo's Army, elephants, camels, &c. in motion, together with the Mysore Army, consisting of Peadars, Bungaries, Sirdars, &c. forming the Camp near Fort Periapatam; 6th, A British Battery opening brisk fire on Tippoo's Advanced Guard, particularly the blowing up of a Powder Mill; 7th, The Fortifications and City of Seringapatam, with the Springing of a Mine; 8th, External view of Tippoo's Palace, and his two Sons firing from the windows; and 9th, The Zenana and City on Fire. With a variety of circumstances which attended this important conquest.⁸⁴

Because Astley's military action unfolds in time, its narrative effects are more conventionally recognizable. The first four scenes visually transport the viewer to the scene of the conflict, but they do so by constructing a series of spaces each geographically more proximate to the campaign. The buffering effect here is important because it establishes the distance of the events from the metropole, but the increasing enlargement of scale—each successive scene corresponds to a smaller geographical space—has a telescopic effect. Although the size of the performing space remains constant, the spatial parameters of the spectacle become increasingly magnified. As in Porter's panorama, the viewer is given the illusion of proximity, but here the succession of scenes effectively generates the fantasy of hurtling into the space. This phantasmatic motion stops momentarily in General Harris's camp in order to secure audience identification before the onset of clockwork motion and mechanical spectacle turns the space into one of simulated war.

As soon as *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam* puts the armies in motion in the fifth scene, the visual experience of the audience undergoes a crucial transformation. The scene opens with a view of the city, but the static pictorial spectacle is immediately subordinated to the choreographed motion of Orientalized soldiers and animals—some of which may have been mechanical. If the effect of the first four scenes was figuratively to move viewers through space toward the scene of conflict, then the effect of the fifth scene is simultaneously to render the viewer static and to put the performing space into motion. From his or her newly secured position, the viewer can now marvel at the moving array of Tipu's forces. The display of Tipu's armies was likely one of choreographed chaos. As the preceding description indicates, there would be no standard uniform but rather an amalgamation of types of warriors, and it is important to consider the effect this would have had in the enclosed space of Astley's Royal Amphitheatre.⁸⁵ The excitement generated by the sheer number of

moving bodies and machines would enact the threat of Tipu's forces and would also open the door for the demonstration of the superiority of the clockwork action that defined British military operations. It is entirely predictable that the scene of martial chaos would be superseded by the efficient performance of "A British Battery opening a brisk fire on Tippoo's Advanced Guard . . . [and] the blowing up of a Powder Mill." As Mark Seltzer has discussed in *Bodies and Machines*, the artillery battery involves a mechanization of the soldier's body. Each artillery soldier performs a single task, and the order and duration of tasks are defined by the firing mechanism. Seltzer uses the phrase "body-machine complex" to indicate how these interactions create an expanded notion of the subject that can best be understood as prosthetic, and it is in this light that we have to consider the fifth and sixth scenes.⁸⁶ If the fifth scene constitutes the clockwork regulation of human motion, then the sixth scene stages the superiority of integrated human-machine interaction. This development is significant because, as we saw earlier, the very staging of clockwork motion in Astley's was a sign of British martial superiority. Here Astley deploys many of the same techniques to establish the threat of Tipu's forces and then renders them subordinate to another technological innovation—the "blow up."

The spectacular explosion that destroys the tyrant's castle was a prominent feature of illegitimate dramaturgy and "the blow-up actually marks a radical departure in the dramatization of nation and empire. It makes representable in an entirely new way that irreducible confrontation between freedom and despotism, good and evil. In so doing, the dramaturgy of illegitimate theatre implicitly reveals the failure of rationality, the inadequacy of rhetoric and the impossibility of benevolence."⁸⁷ *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam* seems to conform to the first part of Moody's argument, but I would argue that what is demonstrated for the viewers in Astley's is not a failure of rationality but rather its resilience. By using these same logistical techniques to move Tipu's forces around the Royal Amphitheatre, Astley is engaging with precisely this historical problematic: namely, that the Sultan effectively mimicked European tactics of row and column warfare. Astley's answer to this is to counter the clockwork movement of bodies with an even more radical incorporation of the soldier/actor into the body-machine complex of the battery. Not only has the performance shifted attention away from actors, it has also drawn attention to the articulation of particular bodily motions and machine processes. The explosion that rocks the powder mill at the end of scene 6 and the mine that explodes in scene 7 are themselves the product of a

technological rationality engineered both on the battlefield and in the amphitheatre, and, as such, they literally punctuate the viewing experience with evidence of supremacy.

This redeployment of the performer as part of well-oiled action activates specific fantasies of national consolidation both in the scene of performance and in the audience. After the dissolution of the individual performers as discrete entities and the ensuing blowups of scenes 6 and 7, the viewer is suddenly confronted with two specific individuals. Tippoo's two sons fire from the windows, and then the audience is treated to a spectacle of mass death with the zenana and the city on fire. After the fearsome display of the power of group cohesion in the body-machine complex of the British battery, the two sons would appear as soldiers pathetically working with insufficient arms and caught in an antiquated tactical mode. It is the same distinction between modernity and antiquity deployed in earlier accounts of the Mysore Wars, but here there is an ancillary implication: namely, that the British force is powerful because the soldier/actor gives up his subjective specificity in order to play a role in the larger national/theatrical machine. The zenana and the city burn not only because the British are technically superior, but also because Tippoo's sons are fighting as mere individuals. Much could be made of this correlation between the shedding of specific subjectivity in favor of fantasies of national consolidation, especially at a moment when the pressures of the war with France accelerated the emergence of an abstract British subjectivity from the host of distinct ethnic and political groups that inhabited the British Isles.⁸⁸

Preliminary advertisements for the Astley's performance state that it will present "the Death of Tippoo Saib."⁸⁹ However, accounts of *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam* after opening night indicate that the show does not conclude with Tipu's death but rather with the burning of the zenana. In terms of arguments put forward elsewhere in this book, this substitution is crucial because the sexual deviance implied by the zenana is the primary figure for Tipu's despotic governance, and thus the theatre-goers watch the entire figurative assemblage of despotism ablaze before them. As a metaphorical transaction, this has the distinct ideological advantage of staging the death of Tipu without actually rendering his corpse. This has the double effect not only of canceling any sympathetic or tragic identification with Tipu's body but also of configuring the audience as a realm of sexual and political normativity. If we imagine Astley's show as a careful management of incendiary devices and tropes, then we can suggest that the same heat that consumes Tipu, his wives, and his city melts

the audience into a patriotic amalgam. As Astley's dramaturgical strategies deindividuate the audience members, the audience can no longer be considered a disparate collective, for it now aspires to a kind of mass identity assimilable to the species being of the nation. And hence we gain some sense of the importance of the performance's initial distancing effects. Just as the audience must be sufficiently distant from the stage to allow for the blowups and fires to occur, so too must the metropolitan subject be brought close enough, but not too close, to the colonial fire to ensure the proper cohesion of disparate elements. Astley's success at maintaining effective proximity needs to be understood not only as one of the singular innovations in the representation of colonial space—one that Burke and the managers in the Hastings case were unable to achieve—but also as a metropolitan enactment of the segregationist policies that characterized British governance in India following Cornwallis's interventions.⁹⁰