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## Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium, 1770–1790

O'Quinn, Daniel

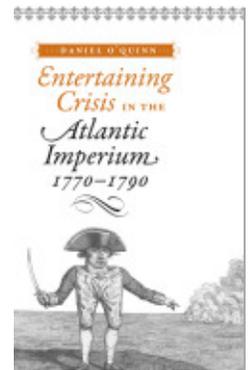
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## To Rise in Greater Splendor

*John André's Errant Knights*

Americans and feathers and masquerades will drive  
us into libraries . . .

Horace Walpole, 1775

Late in 1778, John Burgoyne, like many avid readers of the papers, would have been closely following not only the stern recriminations regarding his own failure at Saratoga but also the vicious debate surrounding William Howe's command of the British forces in New York and Pennsylvania. The level of acrimony over Howe's command in late 1777 and early 1778 had been intense, and, if anything, the ensuing attempts by the Howe brothers and Burgoyne to justify their conduct in America only deepened the sense of conflict over British colonial affairs.<sup>1</sup> Despite his prominence, Sir William Howe is a somewhat enigmatic figure in the history of the American war. Like Burgoyne, Howe had a distinguished military career before the 1770s, especially during the Seven Years' War. Recognized for his bravery on the Plains of Abraham, he played important roles in the British victory over the French at Quebec and Montreal, not to mention distinguished service in the Caribbean. Although a less prominent parliamentarian than Burgoyne, he was an independent member for Nottingham from 1758 to 1780. But unlike John Burgoyne, William Howe did not support the Coercive Acts:

He had a deep affection for American colonists, especially the people of Massachusetts who had been his comrades during the Seven Years' War and who had honoured his brother, George Augustus, with a memorial in

Westminster Abbey. He had also been publicly critical of British efforts to punish the people of Massachusetts for having resisted imperial taxes. Yet in January 1775 he let friends in the government know that he would accept appointment as second in command of the British army at Boston. He offered to go to America in hopes of succeeding General Thomas Gage as commander-in-chief and of promoting a reconciliation between mother country and colonies.<sup>2</sup>

Howe entered the war to conduct peace, and, in the summation of his biographer, his inability to decisively suppress colonial rebellion over the ensuing three years was a result of serial attempts to diplomatically resolve the crisis.<sup>3</sup>

Significantly, what Howe got up to when not actually engaging with the enemy became a topic of some concern to Britons and rebel colonists alike. While in New York in the winter of 1776 and 1777, officers under Howe's command established a successful season of theatrical entertainments in New York. With much of the organizational structure intact, the same officers commenced an ambitious roster of plays shortly after occupying Philadelphia. The season opened on 19 January 1778 with a production of Susannah Centlivre's *The Wonder, or A Woman Keeps a Secret* at the Southwark Street Theatre and "proceeded to present a play every Monday evening."<sup>4</sup> The season included five productions of *The Wonder*, Arthur Murphy's *No One's Enemy But His Own*, two productions each of Samuel Foote's *The Minor* and *The Liar*, two each of George Farquhar's *The Constant Couple* and *The Inconstant*, two productions of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, and numerous afterpieces. The lion's share of these plays was produced after Howe tendered his resignation as commander in chief. As he waited for a reply from Germain, he refused to carry out any further offensive operations.

Howe and his officers were generally held in contempt for the reckless pursuit of luxurious entertainment and diversion during the occupation. And the theatre was a site of both recrimination and self-recognition. According to Jared Brown,

Captain Johann Heinrichs, a Hessian mercenary with the British army, captured the spirit of that winter when he wrote in his letter book, "Assemblies, Concerts, Comedies, Clubs, and the like make us forget that there is any war, save that it is a capital joke."

Benjamin Franklin also noted Howe's inability to put military matters ahead of social ones. When he was informed that Howe had captured Philadelphia, he is said to have responded, "No, Philadelphia, has captured Howe."<sup>5</sup>

This critique of the sociability of the British officers in Philadelphia was mobilized both by figures such as Franklin, obviously critical of the British cause, and by someone like Heinrichs, who was putatively on the side of Howe and his officers. Despite this widespread critique of luxury, many of the loyalist families of Philadelphia threw themselves into the whirlwind of social activity associated with the military theatre.

After his recall, Howe, like Burgoyne, struggled to defend himself before the public and before Parliament, and at least part of his difficulty can be ascribed to a divided sense of purpose. He stated in his letter of defense that,

although some persons condemn me for having endeavoured to conciliate his majesty's rebellious subjects, by taking every means to prevent the destruction of the country, instead of irritating them by a contrary mode of proceeding, yet am I, from many reasons, satisfied in my own mind that I acted in that particular for the benefit of the king's service. Ministers themselves, I am persuaded, did at one time entertain a similar doctrine, and from a circumstance not now necessary to dwell upon, it is certain that I should have had little reason to hope for support from them, if I had been disposed to acts of great severity. Had it been afterwards judged good policy to turn the plan of the war into an indiscriminate devastation of that country, and had I been thought the proper instrument for executing such a plan, ministers, I presume, would have openly stood forth, and sent clear, explicit orders. Ambiguous messages, hints, whispers across the Atlantick, to be avowed or disavowed at pleasure, would have been paltry safeguards for the honour and conduct of a commander in chief.<sup>6</sup>

Howe's repeated concern for avoiding the "devastation of the country" can be ascribed equally to ostensible sympathies for the colonists, and to the more pragmatic recognition that "indiscriminate devastation" was not in Britain's economic interests. Whatever the motive, the complexity of Howe's position could be perceived as tentativeness, and that perception, regardless of the degree to which it was matched by much of the thinking on war in America, was politically destructive. As Gruber states,

Howe was an accomplished soldier. In more than half a century of service he proved himself a knowledgeable and meticulous officer and a skillful commander. Yet because he did not end the American rebellion when it seemed most vulnerable he was widely criticized. . . . It is now clear that

he was not the victim of instructions that required him to combine force and persuasion, of cautiously conventional strategic thinking, of his own lethargy, or even of a rebellion too well established to be ended by force. Rather, he failed because he persisted in trying to make peace when empowered to make war. His efforts were especially destructive of the British government's plans for ending the rebellion because he had the skill and reputation to place him beyond the government's direction or recall until an army had been lost and the Anglo-American War had become a world war.<sup>7</sup>

Howe's critics had little time for this kind of geopolitical complexity and opted instead to make him the epitome of misrule.

The terms on which that attack were mounted are particularly interesting, not only because they turn on questions of character but also because they were accepted by and were useful to both hard-line British critics of the Ministry and equally committed patriots rebelling against British rule. Some British critics of Howe concurred with a blistering issue of *The Crisis*, in which Thomas Paine stated provocatively, "That a man, whose soul is absorbed in the low traffic of vulgar vice, is incapable of moving in any superior region, is clearly shown in you by the event of every campaign."<sup>8</sup> This rare moment where patriots on both sides of conflict come together turns on their reception of a now infamous entertainment called the *Mischianza*, which was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in August 1778. This chapter contends that a full consideration of that celebration's relation to precursor events and its complex mediation in both London and the colonies allows one to discern not only a number of important dynamics in the representation of British imperial relations in the midst of the American conflict but also a range of issues pertaining to the stylization and performance of masculinity at this historical juncture. As we will see, the formal complexity of the *Mischianza* does not lend itself to straightforward interpretation or authoritative statements about its meaning. In what follows, I want to give a sense of how its own hybridity reflected an emerging diffidence about the progress of war in the American colonies, and how that diffidence was first registered and then contained. I then offer a speculative reading of the final theatrical effort of the British officers in occupied Philadelphia: a production of John Home's *Douglas* staged in the Southwark Theatre on 19 May 1778, the day after the *Mischianza* on the day of Howe's departure for Portsmouth.

### “I shine in setting”: Captain André’s Mischianza

In response to the escalating criticism of Howe’s command in the fall of 1777 and winter of 1778 in both Britain and America, Captain John André staged the Mischianza on the eve of the disgraced general’s departure from occupied Philadelphia in the spring of 1778. Held on 18 May 1778, the event was essentially a succession ceremony, with command of the British forces in America transferring from Howe to General Henry Clinton. The question of succession will become quite significant later in this chapter, but for the moment it is important to recognize that within metropolitan print culture Howe was returning to Britain to face allegations of incompetence. In the face of specific criticism of Howe’s leadership, André’s lengthy letter to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* describing the Mischianza was aimed explicitly at generating a counterdiscourse, whose objective was to emphasize the confidence of Howe’s officers in his command:

For the first time in my life I write to you with unwillingness. The ship that carries home Sir William Howe will convey this letter to you; and not even the pleasure of conversing with my friend can secure me from the general dejection I see around me, or remove the share I must take in the universal regret and disappointment which his approaching departure hath spread throughout the whole army. We see him taken from us at a time when we most stand in need of so skillful and popular a commander; when the experience of three years, and the knowledge he hath acquired of the country and people, have added to the confidence we always placed in his conduct and abilities. You know he was ever a favorite with the military; but the affection and attachment which all ranks of officers in this army bear him, can only be known by those who have at this time seen them in their effects. I do not believe there is upon record an instance of a Commander in Chief having so universally endeared himself to those under his command; or of one who received such signal and flattering proofs of their love. That our sentiments might be the more universally and unequivocally known, it was resolved amongst us, that we should give him as splendid an entertainment as the shortness of the time, and our present situation, would allow us. For the expenses, the whole army would have most cheerfully contributed; but it was requisite to draw the line somewhere, and twenty-two field officers joined in a subscription adequate to the plan they meant to adopt.<sup>9</sup>

André's expression of officer corps' confidence in Howe's leadership is figured as a species of love, and at one level the Mischianza metaphorically stands for the officers' affection and loyalty. But the love demonstrated here is also manifestly political in intent: the event is staged so "that our sentiments might be the more universally and unequivocally known." In a very real way, the Mischianza happens in order for it to be recounted in the London papers and in prominent monthlies such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*.<sup>10</sup> All this would be simply politics as usual, except that the way that martial subjectivity and love come together in the Mischianza is so radically overdetermined.

The Mischianza has been frequently proffered as a particularly embarrassing moment of patrician British officers either misrecognizing their historical situation or explicitly hiding from the signs that all was not well. The crippling loss at Saratoga was only seven months in the past, the British army had suffered recent defeats at Trenton and Princeton, and, despite holding Philadelphia, Howe's forces had not fared well in engagements with Washington's forces in Pennsylvania.<sup>11</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult not to read the Mischianza's excesses as an embarrassing spectacle. The event combined a complex regatta on the Delaware River with a faux-medieval tournament at Knight's-Wharf at the northern extremity of Philadelphia. During the tournament, prominent officers under Howe's command, masqueraded as either Knights of the Blended Rose or Knights of the Burning Mountain and contended for the hearts of fashionable Philadelphia women, who were costumed by André in what he fantasized was Turkish dress, and who were attended by African Americans dressed up as harem eunuchs. The festivities then progressed to an elaborate dinner and ball, which bears comparison to Burgoyne's *fête*, and concluded with illuminations and fireworks. Linda Colley's appraisal of the event reads the event as a symptom:

Superficially, the event was just one more manifestation of that taste for gothic romance and orientalism that was so prevalent in European polite culture at this time. Yet more was at stake here than just a stylish entertainment. Chivalry's essential function, Maurice Keen has written, is always to hold up an idealised image of armed conflict in defiance of the harsh realities of actual warfare. By definition, chivalry also reaffirms the paramount importance of custom, hierarchy and inherited rank. General Howe's tournament occurred just seven months after the crushing British defeat at Saratoga and was organized, we know, by a set of idealistic young army officers from comfortably landed backgrounds. As such, it can be

seen as a window on the minds and manners of an élite under stress. After three years of indecisive war in raw, uncongenial territory, and in the face of doubt, disappointment and vague premonitions of defeat, the cream of the British officer corps sought a brief escape in an ordered and glamorous past. Sword-in-hand and on horse-back, they reconstructed the war with the American colonists as they would ideally have liked it to be: a splendid crusade fought according to the rules by men of birth, and fought successfully.<sup>12</sup>

I have repeated Colley's analysis here at length because in the effort to configure the *Mischianza* as a symptom of patrician martial psychology attempting to frantically shore up its crumbling foundations, it fails to read either the event itself or its representation in metropolitan print culture. And along the way it makes some rather symptomatic errors of its own, which have a significant bearing on how we think about Howe and André's conflicted performance of martial subjectivity.

Pressure needs to be put on the suggestion that the tournament and the faux hand-to-hand combat staged for the ladies of Philadelphia were somehow a phantasmatic reconstruction of the conflict between Britain and the Continental army. This would suggest that the Knights of the Blended Rose and the Knights of the Burning Mountain somehow allegorically represented opposing sides. The evidence is quite to the contrary: officers appear to have been assigned to either side, and the conflict itself is no more resolved than the American war was at this time. The "conflict" is called off in the ladies' name before any decisive conclusion, and the company retires for dinner. This sense of attenuation, rather than closure, is also evident in the tickets to the event (fig. 3.1). The central image of a setting sun is inscribed with the words *Luceo discedens aucto, splendore resurgam*, or "I shine in setting; I shall rise in greater splendor." This figures Howe's departure as a lapse into darkness, which promises an even brighter future. And yet for all its optimism, such an image retains a sense of stasis, not decisive success, most notably because it projects victory into a mythic future. In the simplest sense, the tickets suggest that the event is staged to mark a hiatus in British fortunes due to a temporary lack of confidence in Howe's leadership among the Ministry. At least part of the objective is to argue that this exhibition of diffidence on the part of the Ministry is a failure in policy, and thus the event is far more critical than Colley suggests.

We also need to look closely at the generic claims regarding chivalric romance. As James Watt has ably demonstrated, both Gothic romance and historical

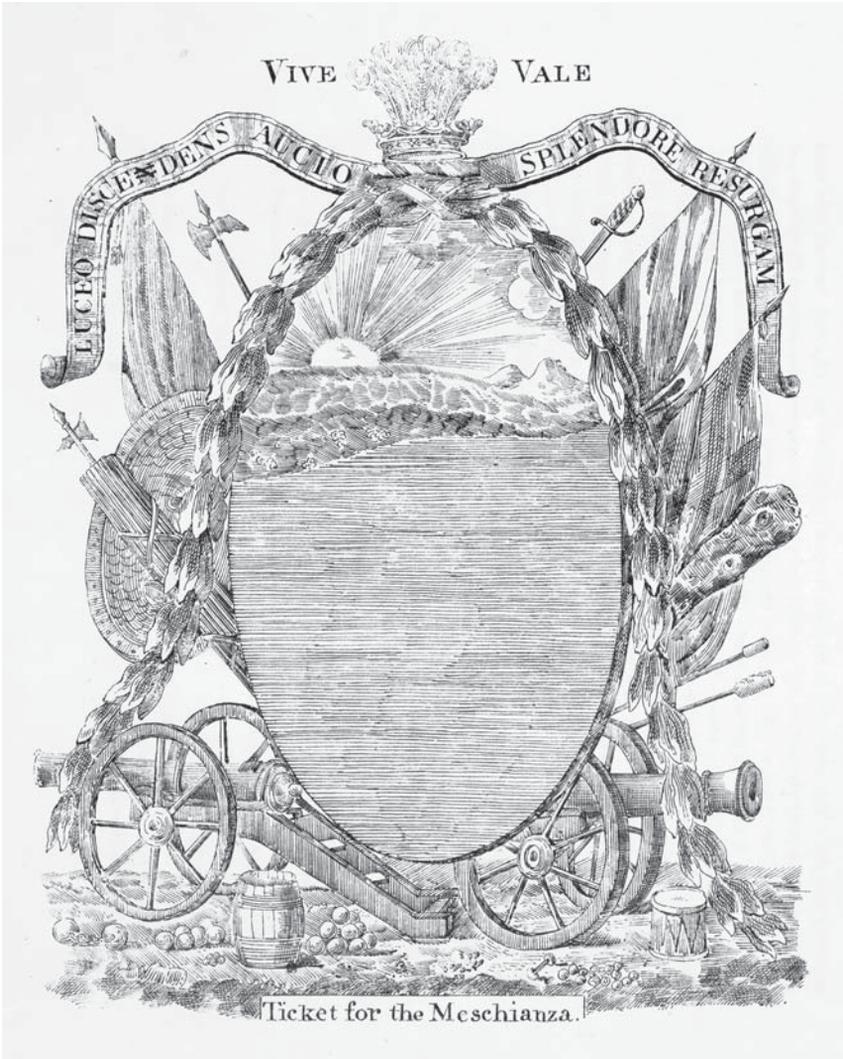


Figure 3.1. Meschianza Ticket, designed by John André (1778). Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

accounts of chivalry were anything but unified fields, and the relationship between these genres and the world of politics in the 1770s was extremely complex. Watt distinguishes between the strategies of bricolage mobilized by Walpole in the formal structure of both his estate at Strawberry Hill and his novel *The Castle of Otranto* and the allegorical strategies of the kind of loyalist romance that

emerged after the American war.<sup>13</sup> The *Mischianza* is staged between these two deployments of chivalry, and it cannot be read solely in terms of one discourse and not the other. As its very name indicates, it is a blended entertainment; Brown notes that “the word is derived from two Italian words: *mesce*, to mix, and *mischiare*, to mingle.”<sup>14</sup> This formal quality draws it into the orbit of Walpole’s self-conscious mixing of old and new, high and low in his Gothic productions of the 1760s. As Watt states,

Rather than being a proto-historical novel preoccupied with the accurate description of medieval customs and manners, *Otranto* like Strawberry Hill seems to have been based upon a recourse to the past which was mainly concerned about, on the one hand, subsuming eccentricity for a modern, leisured audience, and, on the other, confounding those readers without the necessary discrimination to accommodate such novelty. *Otranto*, like Strawberry Hill, offered (at least) a “doubled” meaning, but the nuances of the higher or private perspective were at first available, it seems, only to a select group who were initiated into a knowledge of what Walpole was doing.<sup>15</sup>

As in Burgoyne’s earlier staging of the *fêtes galantes*, the proliferation of meaning at the heart of the *Mischianza*, combined with its self-conscious frivolity, asks the reader to recognize that chivalry is being mobilized as a form of parodic aristocratic display aimed at mocking the very military tropes Colley argues it is ostensibly allegorizing. The *Mischianza*’s tournament is less of a historical reenactment, as Simon During has recently suggested, than an occasion to test the reading skills of the audience.<sup>16</sup> Those among Howe’s critics who read the tournament “straight,” such as Paine and the anonymous author of the *Strictures on the Philadelphia Mischianza*, only displayed that they did not understand, or chose to demonize, the event’s relation to aristocratic performance, and the importance of frivolous diversion to patrician subjectivity.

That said, the event also shares some strategies with loyalist romance, especially its hypostatization of military signs immediately following the tournament. As Watt argues, “During the period that encompassed the loss of the American colonies and the protracted conflict with France, the drive to refashion the self-image of Britain led to the ‘historical’ category of Gothic being purged of its associations with either democracy or frivolity and defined increasingly in terms of a proud military heritage.”<sup>17</sup> Throughout the final years of the American war right through to the early nineteenth century, narratives of ancestral heroes such as Edward III, Alfred the Great, and the Henries began to proliferate

in all media.<sup>18</sup> This is significant to the story of the *Mischianza* because Edward III is an explicit reference point for André's celebration of militarism, and he is indebted to Richard Hurd's analysis of the function of jousting for the code of chivalry. What is so complicated about the *Mischianza* is that Walpolean frivolity is itself mingled with military allegory; in fact, they abut one another in the central episodes of the entertainment. My subsequent reading of the celebration demonstrates not only how these competing discourses are deployed but also how their very incommensurability is suited to the historical predicament faced by André, Howe, and, by extension, Britain at this point in the American war.

Colley's assumptions about the participants also need to be more carefully scrutinized. The major organizers of the event were not men of "comfortably landed backgrounds." André, the man most directly involved in the planning and execution of the *Mischianza*, came from a family of Genoese immigrants working as accountants in the City, and at least part of his role here is, like that of Alexander Hamilton on the American side, who would write so eloquently about André's execution for espionage two years later, that of a young man on the make, seeking to better his social standing through his loyal service to his superiors.<sup>19</sup> In other words, there is a significant element of sycophancy in this entire proceeding, which is part of the competitive structure of military life. I agree with Colley's suggestion that this entertainment was a diversion, but it was part of an extended program of entertainment and thus needs to be considered in relation both to other theatricals in Philadelphia and to similar entertainments in England.

As with the diversion staged by Burgoyne at The Oaks, there was more at play here than a combination of displacement and forgetting. All diversions carry an implicit sadness, and the *Mischianza* is no exception. In this instance, the sadness is directly stated in André's preamble to his description of the celebration. The *Mischianza*, like Burgoyne's entertainment, is structured around a complex argument about the place of elite masculinity in what many of the participants understood to be a civil conflict, a conflict among brothers. The *Mischianza* gives us a sense of what happens when martial subjects use love to make war, but in this case the war was waged not against the enemy but rather against the state itself, which sought to hold Howe responsible for a set of irresolvable contradictions in imperial rule. And the locus of the battle was squarely in the realm of the newspapers.

The *Mischianza* was an event staged to be written about. And like other accounts of elite entertainment in the 1770s, Captain André's representation of the *Mischianza* is deeply aware not only of the intensely intertextual world of the

newspapers but also of the keenly contested status of diversionary entertainments in metropolitan life. As Gillian Russell has argued, the diversification of private domiciliary entertainment by prominent and often notorious women had considerable impact both on the structure of sociability and on the trajectory of commercial entertainment in the 1760s and 1770s.<sup>20</sup> Innovators like Teresa Cornelys, whose entertainments at Carlisle House exerted significant pressure on conventional sites of “manly” national entertainment such as the theatre, prompted a range of responses both in the press and in other cultural venues. The success of Cornelys’s musical entertainments, and of the proliferation of sites of elite sociability such as Almack’s, the Coterie, and above all the Pantheon, had a profound impact on the social dynamics of theatrical life and eventually impinged on the formal parameters of dramatic representation. As we have already seen in relation to Burgoyne’s *Fête Champêtre*, and Garrick’s production of Burgoyne’s *The Maid of the Oaks*, one of the most important responses to women’s ever more prominent presence in public entertainment, was a co-optation of strategies developed by Cornelys and other purveyors of nonlicensed entertainment. Burgoyne’s *Fête Champêtre* can be understood as a masculinist rehearsal of the kind of masques staged at Carlisle House and the Pantheon, and its reformist agenda needs to be read in the context of this cultural war against aristocratic dissipation and the feminization of public life. Similarly, the formal experiments of *The Maid of the Oaks* are a direct response to the very popularity, and commercial success, of the kind of freewheeling entertainments offered in these ostensibly private sites.

This cultural conflict is relevant here because the *Mischianza* exhibits specific elements of two prior entertainments. If we look carefully at the formal structure of the *Mischianza*, we can discern three separate sections that are separated by important transitional phases. The event starts with a regatta, which was based on the Thames Regatta of 23 June 1775.<sup>21</sup> After a somewhat messy disembarkation, the company then proceeded to a space marked by two pavilions for the aforementioned quasi-medieval tournament. This tournament appears to have no obvious precursor and thus is the *Mischianza*’s most innovative element. Its fusion of chivalric and orientalist tropes accords it a level of specificity that bears careful analysis. After the tournament, the company undertakes a complex procession, which also quotes from the regatta, and retires to a temporary building for dancing, fireworks, supper, and a series of toasts, which clearly cite the second masque of Burgoyne’s *Fête Champêtre*.<sup>22</sup> In other words, the *Mischianza*, as its name suggests, is a rigorously blended entertainment. All of the papers reporting on the event explicitly make the connection to

the Thames Regatta and the Fête Champêtre.<sup>23</sup> André's celebration takes elements of two very famous parties, which already had an implicitly oppositional relation to one another, and reorients them to produce a new aesthetic and social experience. And this formal accommodation is not only subtle but also quite aware of the arguments surrounding gender, aristocratic dissipation, and the public sphere, which were very much a part of the precursor performances. The *Mischianza* satirizes both events and, in so doing, opens up a middle way for the performance of martial masculinity that navigates between the Scylla of petticoat government associated with the organizers of the regatta and the Charybdis of misplaced bellicosity that Howe associated with Burgoyne.

As I have already argued, one can detect in the reporting of the Thames Regatta an uneasiness with the foreignness of the Venetian model for the event, with the staging of elite entertainment for a necessarily mass audience (the plans and ballads being sold at the event come under particular pressure), with the proliferation of gambling, with the prominent place of women in this "floating town," and, above all, with the role played by impresarios such as Teresa Cornelys in the organization of the event. But it is precisely these suspect elements—gaming, commerce, and the spectacle of elite women in the public sphere—that are so important to Howe's officers' replication of the river entertainment in the *Mischianza*. The organizers of the *Mischianza* retain the level of spectacle of the precursor event, but André's account eschews the critical tone of the press's account of the Thames Regatta and rigorously highlights the naval elements of the display, while downplaying any sense of the nonparticipant spectators' involvement in the event:

A grand regatta began the entertainment. It consisted of three divisions. In the first was the Ferret galley, having on board several General-Officers, and the number of Ladies. In the center was the Hussar galley, with Sir William and Lord Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, the Officers of their suite, and some Ladies. The Cornwallis galley brought up the rear, having on board General Knyphausen and his suite, three British Generals, and a party of Ladies. On each quarter of these gallies, and forming their division, were five flat boats, lined with green cloth, and filled with Ladies and Gentlemen. In front of the whole were three flat boats, with a band of music in each—Six barges rode about each flank, to keep off the swarm of boats that covered the river from side to side. The gallies were dressed out in a variety of colours and streamers, and in each flat boat was displayed the flag of its own division. In the stream opposite the center of the city, the Fanny armed

ship, magnificently decorated, was placed at anchor, and at some distance a-head lay his Majesty's ship *Roebuck*, with the Admiral's flag hoisted at the foretop-mast-head. The transport ships, extending in a line the whole length of the town, appeared with colours flying, and crowded with spectators, as were also the openings of the several wharfs, on shore, exhibiting the most picturesque and enlivening scene the eye could desire. The rendezvous was at Knight's-Wharf, at the northern extremity of the city. By half after four the whole company were embarked, and a signal being made by the *Vigilant's* manning ship, the three divisions rowed slowly down, preserving their proper intervals, and keeping time to the music that led the fleet. Arrived between the *Fanny* and the Market Wharf, the signal was made from one of the boats a-head, and the whole lay upon their oars, while the music played, *God save the King*, and three cheers given from the vessels were returned from the multitude on shore. By this time the flood-tide became too rapid for the galleys to advance; they were therefore quitted, and the Company disposed of in the different barges. This alteration broke in upon the order of procession, but was necessary to give sufficient time for displaying the entertainments that were prepared on shore.<sup>24</sup>

This has the effect of temporarily erasing the importance of both gambling and commerce to this kind of entertainment. Gambling, and particularly women's gaming, returns later in the *Mischianza*, but here these unsettling elements of domiciliary entertainment regularly associated with Teresa Cornelys are thoroughly subordinated to military and national display. Ships of the British navy become prominent props, and the officers themselves—both General and Admiral Howe, General Clinton, and others—replace suspect men of fashion such as the Duke of Cumberland in this version of the floating town. Rather than sellers marketing satirical ballads “rhyming Royal family with liberty,”<sup>25</sup> we are presented with a fully staged rendition of “*God save the King*” and a completely scripted, because military, response. In short, Howe's officers have co-opted the regatta, in which national purpose and elite sociability were represented as perhaps not quite in sync, to present a seamless revision where patrician military rule and women's subjection mutually consolidate one another. Gone are the gaming, the corrupted members of the *Ton*, and the promiscuous masses. And gone is Cornelys herself, for there is no question of women organizing or leading this event; the young belles of Philadelphia are simply and truly ballast, to use a word from the earlier reporting of the Thames Regatta, helping to keep this gendered fantasy of public display afloat.

But this is not all that is being excised or contained here. As I argued in chapter 2, the Thames Regatta was insistently linked to pro-American voices both in the City and in the parliamentary opposition. And its manifest failures, the scant supper, the tattered pavilion, and the general confusion on the water became prophetic signs of the Ministry's inability to successfully avert or put down the rebellion in America. The Mischianza restages this event in a fashion that not only elides the insistence of pro-American voices in Britain but also reconstitutes the broken props of naval supremacy and ministerial competence. In this sense, Howe's officers' reenactment of the Thames Regatta on the Delaware shares a great deal with Burgoyne's *Fête Champêtre*. It not only cites a notable instance of sexually and commercially suspect sociability in order to argue for reforms that impinge on the performance of masculine martial homosociality but also repairs the broken signifiers of martial and imperial rule that had made themselves available to oppositional readings of elite governance.

What is intriguing, however, is the degree to which André has to direct the reader's attention away from the audience—that is, from the shoreline—to maintain his reformist agenda. For readers cognizant of how Cornelys's entertainments were represented, and in particular how the Thames Regatta was framed by the promiscuous commerce of urban life, the nonrepresentation of the Philadelphian audience becomes paramount. Unlike the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary," which staged the presence of the "codlings" in order to develop a complex rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion, André's letter curtails dissent by not representing the citizens of Philadelphia, except those young women who have been hand chosen to figure so prominently in the tournament. This is no doubt because the shoreline in this case was a space not simply of class otherness but rather of colonial subjection and political contestation. What André has excluded here is the fact of occupation, conflict, and resistance, which everywhere surrounds this celebration. That exclusion is fundamental to the Mischianza's reformist agenda in the realm of sociability. But this act of rhetorical exclusion has the unintended effect of failing to provide a place for the reader in the scene, which ends up locating the reader in the same space as the occupied Philadelphians. This rhetorical error allows readers unsympathetic to Howe's commission to hold the Mischianza up as an embarrassing spectacle that vindicates much of the American colonists' resentment of British rule. But if this rhetorical error opens André to charges of flattery and corruption, and Howe to charges of willfully misrepresenting his military actions, it also provides a certain level of stability from which to engage more fully with Burgoyne's previous attempt to co-opt Cornelys's innovations in the social life of the elite.

For all it shares with Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre, the Mischianza also offers a critique of that performance as well, and its target is Burgoyne's hypostatization of bellicose masculinity. The Mischianza replaces the second half of the Thames Regatta—the events at Ranelagh—with the tournament and the modified version of the second masque of the Fête Champêtre. Or, alternatively, one could argue that the Mischianza replaces the first masque of the Fête Champêtre—the Watteau-like masque of shepherds and shepherdesses—with the regatta and the tournament. Whichever way you choose to read it, the most problematic elements of the precursor performances are either suppressed, satirized, or contained. For example, in my prior reading of the Fête Champêtre, I argued that the Watteauesque *fête galante* of the first masque is staged as an exemplification of a style of sociability that the second masque rigorously critiques. It operates as that which the rest of the performance argues against. In the case of the Mischianza, I would suggest that the first movement, the regatta on the Delaware, cites a similar instance of suspect sociability much as Burgoyne cites Watteau. But the Mischianza diverges slightly from Burgoyne's practice, because in citing the Thames Regatta it also reforms it: first, by containing all instances of gender and class impropriety and, second, by occluding the response of the nonparticipants. This latter strategy is in some sense dictated by the fact that the fantasy of subjection that underwrote the representation of the nonparticipant observers, or the codlings, in the "Oak Gazette Extraordinary" was simply not tenable in occupied Philadelphia. In addition, there is a further formal divergence that comes with introducing the tournament between the regatta and final celebration in the temporary building. How the placement of the tournament operates in this complex agenda of critique is somewhat cryptic until one looks carefully at how André and his associates rehearse the Fête Champêtre's second masque.

That rehearsal is remarkably true to the narrative trajectory and the spatial strategies of Burgoyne's earlier diversion. The company moves from the garden into a hall "painted in imitation of Sienna marble, enclosing festoons of white marble: the surbase, and all below, was black," which opened onto adjoining apartments, one of which would eventually house the faro tables. From this antechamber, the guests were

conducted up to a ball-room, decorated into a light elegant stile of painting. The ground was a pale blue, pannelled with a small gold bead, and in the interior filled with dropping festoons of flowers in their natural colours. Below the surbase the ground was of rose-pink, with drapery festooned

in blue. These decorations were heightened by 85 mirrors, decked with rose-pink silk ribbands, and artificial flowers; and in the intermediate spaces were 34 branches with wax-lights, ornamented in a similar manner.

On the same floor were four drawing-rooms, with side-boards of refreshments, decorated and lighted in the same style and taste as the ball-room. The ball was opened by the Knights and their Ladies; and the dances continued till ten o'clock, when the windows were thrown open, and a magnificent bouquet of rockets began the fire-works. These were planned by Capt. Montresor, the chief engineer, and consisted of twenty different exhibitions, displayed under his direction with the happiest success, and in the highest style of beauty. Towards the conclusion, the interior part of the triumphal arch was illuminated amidst an uninterrupted flight of rockets and bursting of balloons. The military trophies on each side assumed a variety of transparent colours. The shell and flaming heart on the wings sent forth Chinese fountains, succeeded by fire-pots. Fame appeared at top, spangled with stars, and from her trumpet blowing the following device in letters of light, *Tes Lauriers sont immortels*. —A sauteur of Rockets, bursting from the pediment, concluded the *feu d'artifice*.

At twelve supper was announced, and large folding doors, hitherto artfully concealed, being suddenly thrown open, discovered a magnificent saloon of 210 feet by 40, and 22 in height, with three alcoves on each side, which served for side-boards. The ceiling [*sic*] was the segment of a circle, and the sides were painted of a light straw-colour, with vine leaves and festooned-flowers, some in a bright, some in a darkish green. Fifty-six large pier-glasses, ornamented with green silk artificial flowers and ribbands; 100 branches with three lights in each, trimmed in the same manner as the mirrors; 18 lustres each, with 24 lights, suspended from the ceiling, and ornamented as the branches; 300 wax-tapers, disposed along the supper tables; 430 covers, 1200 dishes; 24 black slaves, in oriental dresses, with silver collars and bracelets, ranged in two lines, and bending to the ground as the General and Admiral approached the saloon: all these, forming together the most brilliant assemblage of gay objects, and appearing at once as we entered by an easy descent, exhibited a *coup d'oeil* beyond description magnificent.<sup>26</sup>

André's description here is remarkably attentive to architectural detail, because, in both scale and design, the building is a copy of Adam's pavilion for the Fête Champêtre. Adam's classical motifs, which figured so prominently in

the decorative plasterwork, appear to have been replaced by mirrors, but that simply cuts to the chase of Adam's allegorical arabesques. The classical figures in his pavilion figured forth imperial rule and implicitly linked Britain and Rome. In this case, perhaps because of time constraints, the guests simply looked at themselves and dispensed with the pretense of allegory altogether. It is a fascinating move because it simultaneously signals confidence—we need only look to ourselves—and diffidence. Perhaps the Roman comparison carries with it too many counterreadings.

Furthermore, the progressive expansion of the entertainment space after the fireworks precisely replicates the order of events in Burgoyne's celebration. And the regulation of desire is similarly achieved through explicitly martial tactics: fireworks led by the corps of engineers and toasts by the preeminent officers. But again, the divergent features are intriguing. Unlike in the Fête Champêtre, where the explosions terrified the guests and signaled the expansion of space, the Mischianza expanded the firework display and shifted the terms of reference from the sublime to the beautiful. This allowed for a significant escalation in content. Suddenly the fireworks carried discernible meanings, rather than forcing the observers to contemplate the loss of meaning. The illumination of Fame and the phrase "*Tes Lauriers sont immortels*" are clearly intended to refer to Howe's leadership, but André's description, perhaps in spite of itself, indicates that these pyrotechnic displays did not instill awe but rather incited the guests to further pleasure. One could argue, therefore, that, unlike Burgoyne's critical manipulation of social desire in the Fête Champêtre, the Mischianza's rehearsal of Burgoyne's tactics consolidate the officer corps through the consumption of feminized and feminine pleasure. This means that unlike Burgoyne's martial regulation of the Temple of Venus, André and his associates have succumbed, even in their martial practice and homosocial affiliation, to the idealized women in their midst. The fact that these same women, as colonial subjects, are also ostensibly under British rule gives this almost parodic rehearsal of the Fête Champêtre a complex political valence, which needs further elucidation. What appears to be a counterintuitive self-satire is explicitly adopted by André later in his account of the event.

The most revealing part of the Mischianza is captured in an element of the performance that was apparently not presented but nevertheless given prominent place in André's account. This is the address to the company, penned by André and intended for the Herald of the Blended Rose. This Herald, as André emphasizes earlier in his letter, wore a tunic bearing the emblem of two crossed

roses and the motto “We droop when separated.”<sup>27</sup> The motto is a remarkable compression of the sexual politics of the event because it suggests quite bluntly that potency is not a matter of individual masculine performance but rather one of group cohesion. In the context of Howe’s recall, the implication is that by removing Howe from command, the Ministry has compromised the masculinity of all whom he commanded. This is homosociality figured forth as a fantasy of national sexual power. This has rather unexpected implications for the tournament itself, but in the context of the final portion of the entertainment it marks a rather significant shift from Burgoyne’s program of martial and marital reform. This is because the Herald of the Blended Rose plays the role Burgoyne scripted for the Druid. Like the Druid, he interrupts the supper and hails the company into an expression of national solidarity:

Towards the end of supper, the Herald of the Blended Rose, in his habit of ceremony, attended by his trumpets, entered the saloon, and proclaimed to the King’s health, the Queen, and Royal Family, the Army and Navy, with their respective Commanders, the Knights and their Ladies, the Ladies in general; each of these toasts, was followed by a flourish of music. After supper we returned to the ball-room, and continued to dance till four o’clock.<sup>28</sup>

However, unlike the Druid in the *Fête Champêtre*, he directs his encomiums not at the figural King and Queen of the Oaks but rather at the literal King and Queen of England. In the former occasion, the figurality of the address allowed for a fairly straightforward equation of the space of The Oaks and the nation. In this context, the literal invocation of the King and Queen raises a question concerning the space in which this event takes place. All of a sudden, the fact of occupation and rebellion comes flooding into the event. To complicate matters further, the Druid’s praise of the conjugal fidelity of the King and Queen of the Oaks and the Hymeneal pantomime that concluded the second masque of the *Fête Champêtre* are here aligned with George III and Queen Charlotte. The idealization of royal conjugality is not a problem, but if there is any instability either in the spatial metonymies that align the Oaks event with the *Mischianza* or in the perceived cohesion of the martial elite here celebrating itself in the face of widespread criticism, then the entire figural assemblage has the potential to unravel into a satire of itself.

This is why André’s address is such a vexed document, because, unlike in Burgoyne’s second masque, the agents of Mars do not contain and regulate the forces of Venus but, rather, succumb to them:

MARS, conquest-plum'd, the Cyprian Queen disarms;  
 And Victors, vanquish'd, yield to Beauty's Charms.

*After banging the wreath on the front of the pavilion, he was to have proceeded thus:*

HERE then the laurel, here the palm we yield.  
 And all the trophies of the tilted field;  
 Here Whites and Blacks, with blended homage, pay  
 To each Device the honours of the day.  
 Hard were the task, and impious to decide  
 Where all are fairest, which the fairer side.  
 Enough for us, if by such sports we strove  
 To grace this feast of military love,  
 And, joining in the wish of every heart,  
 Honour'd the friend and leader ere we part.<sup>29</sup>

In this opening stanza, the Herald indicates that the Knights, whose status as victorious figures is somewhat strained in that the tournament is itself inconclusive, are subject to the Cyprian Queen.<sup>30</sup> Venus's representatives here are colonial women, and however loyal or disloyal they may be, their power over the British officers has the potential to be deeply disruptive.<sup>31</sup> At the very least, the stanza suggests that martial aptitude is subservient to desire. At the worst, it suggests that these men are already in the thrall of the women of Philadelphia. This latter possibility is crucial because it helps to explain why André costumed the women in turbans: like many fantasies of eastern sexuality, it turns on the feminization of the sultan by his profligate desires. No commentator as far as I know has dealt with the strange collocation of chivalric and orientalist motifs in the *Mischianza*, and I would argue that this combination of signs is more than simply a result of enthusiasm for gothic and oriental tales, as Colley suggests, but rather a specific formal and political decision that marks the very specificity of André's intervention in the political situation of Howe's recall. André's allusion to subject orientalized women ruling over the forces occupying Philadelphia reconstructs military failure as a function of the kind of sexual excess associated with weak despotic rule. And that weak despotism, symptomatic of corrupt ruling subjectivity, is firmly located not only in the officer class of Howe's army but also in the highest echelons of the state. How one reads this representation of Howe determines, in André's eyes, one's capacity to correctly read the scene and, by extension, one's capacity to judge the progress of the war.

What I am suggesting here is that André's undelivered address and the Mischianza's parodic rehearsal of the Fête Champêtre are part of a broader strategy of satire aimed at entrapping Howe's critics. We know from André's biographer Winthrop Sargent that this kind of satirical critique of Howe's leadership by his own officers had occurred before, and it utilized a cognate set of tropes. As he states, in the opening campaign of 1778

Sir William was looking about for an opening to cover his retirement with an active lustre; stimulated, perhaps, thereto by the friendly satire of his subordinates, one of whom (afterwards General Meadows, then the lieutenant-colonel of the 55th, Howe's own regiment) bluntly reproached his commander's slothful devotion to pleasure, and asked him if he did not think it was now time to get out of his bed and to get on his horse.<sup>32</sup>

This is Howe as the dissolute sultan, too mired in pleasure to attend to the affairs of state, and I would argue that the entire company is figured forth in this way in order to stage a counternarrative capable of recuperating Howe's entire command.

Immediately after his declaration of the disarmament of the agents of Mars by Beauty's charms, André's address shifts gears and calls forth a specific scene where victory was snatched from almost certain defeat, namely the Battle of Poitiers of 1356, where Edward the Prince of Wales, despite being massively outnumbered and almost surrounded by the French King John, routed the French forces:

When great in arms our brave forefathers rose,  
And loos'd the British Lion on his foes;  
When the fall'n Gauls, then perjurd too and base,  
The faithless fathers of a faithless race,  
First to attack, tho' still the first to yield,  
Shrunk from their rage on Poitiers' laurel'd field;  
Oft, while grim War suspended his alarms,  
The gallant bands with mimic deeds of arms,  
Thus to some favourite chief the feast decree,  
And deck'd the tilting Knight, th'encountering steed.  
In manly sports that serv'd but to inspire  
Contempt of death, and feed the martial fire.  
The lists beheld them celebrate *his* name  
Who led their steps to victory and fame.

Thro' ev'ry rank the grateful ardor ran;  
 All fear'd the chieftain, but all lov'd the man;  
 And, fired with the soul of this bright day,  
 Pay'd to a *Salisbury* what to *Howe* we pay.<sup>33</sup>

The parallels between Edward at Poitiers and Howe at Philadelphia are hopeful to say the least, especially after Howe's failure to engage with Lafayette in the months before the *Mischianza*, but they offer a framework within which to read the deployment of medieval and chivalric tropes in the *Mischianza*. Edward's victory at Poitiers emerged from apparent defeat—he was retreating when he was hemmed in by the French—and it was followed by a storied act of chivalry: he waited on the vanquished king at table. In the context of Howe's recall and France's entry into the war, the clear suggestion is not only that Howe possessed strategic acumen similar to Edward's but also that it would be a historical error to abandon him after temporary signs of reversal. As James Watt has argued, Edward III is frequently deployed in later loyalist gothic romance not only to critique (frequently Gallic) corruption but also to celebrate a time when "true subordination of ranks and degrees was observed."<sup>34</sup> In other words, this refiguration of Howe as Edward III is aimed at critiquing both the martial masculinity of those critical of his command and the degeneracy of the state itself. And that charge of degeneracy is subtly tied to how one reads jousting.

In the preceding passage, the account of the tournaments staged "while grim War suspended his alarms" amounts to a justification of the *Mischianza* itself. This brief gesture toward the political logic behind jousting partakes of Richard Hurd's account of the historical origin of tournaments within the governmental strategies of feudalism in the second *Letter on Chivalry and Romance*.<sup>35</sup> According to Hurd, because

there being little or no security to be had amidst so many restless spirits and clashing views of a neighbouring numerous and independent nobility, the military discipline of their followers, even in the intervals of peace, were not to be relaxed, and their ardour suffered to grow cool by a total disuse of martial exercises. And hence the proper origin of JOUSTS and TOURNAMENTS; those images of war, which were kept up in the castles of the barons, and by an useful policy, converted into the amusement of the knights, when their arms were employed on no serious occasion.<sup>36</sup>

The explicit linkage between amusement and governmental policy is crucial, because it suggests that if the "knights" appear frivolous, it is because their rulers

amount to little more than “petty tyrants” who fail to recognize the advantages of the security Howe was attempting to secure through diplomacy. It is from here that André explicitly attacks Howe’s critics:

Shame to the envious slave that dares bemoan  
 Their sons degenerate, or their spirit flown—  
 Let maddening Faction drive this guilty land  
 With her worst foes to form th’unnatural band;  
 In yon brave croud old British courage glows  
 Unconquer’d, growing as the danger grows.  
 With hearts as bold as e’er their fathers bore,  
 Their country they’ll avenge, her fame restore.  
 Rouz’d to the charge, methinks I hear them cry,  
 Revenge and glory sparkling from each eye,  
 “Chain’d to our arms while Howe the battle led,  
 Still round these files her wings shall Conquest spread.  
 Lov’d tho’ he goes, the spirit still remains  
 That with him bore us o’er these trembling plains.  
 On Hudson’s banks the sure presage we read  
 Of other triumphs to our arms decreed;<sup>37</sup>  
 Nor fear but equal honours shall repay  
 Each hardy deed where Clinton points the way.”<sup>38</sup>

By casting shame on those who critique Howe or his officers as degenerate, André argues that those critical of Howe’s record have been too hasty in their judgment. And in their haste they have mistaken Howe’s advocacy of diplomacy and his sponsorship of theatrical sociability—both in the theatre and in the *Mischianza*—as signs of degeneracy, when in fact the true degenerates are not only the “unnatural” combination of American Faction and French faithlessness but also the bellicose “petty tyrants” in Britain who see violent suppression of the colonies as the only effective imperial policy.

This preemptive failure in reading, here ascribed to Howe’s critics, is significant because it folds into one of the primary rhetorical strategies already discussed in relation to Burgoyne’s *Fête Champêtre*. As noted earlier, the “*Oak Gazette Extraordinary*” tests its readers’ ability to read the complex signs of sociability, specifically the way prior acts of social exchange are staged and resisted. André’s address states explicitly that there is a constituency that cannot distinguish the *Mischianza*’s staging of notable scenes of aristocratic dissipation, and of the subjection of martial masculinity to feminine colonial influence,

from the degeneration of British notions of liberty into the rebellious ideals of American autonomy and independence. That latter degeneration is signaled by the “unnatural” alliance with France, and the implication, I believe, is that those who have mistakenly recalled Howe have also failed to recognize the upstart colonists as a foreign threat whose enmity is akin to France’s historical threat to English sovereignty. Failure to read the *Mischianza*’s internal satire—its orientalist component—as a form of self-critique is a sign of a much more dangerous failure to discern the “real” historical situation. In other words, how one reads the central tournament, where the tropes of chivalry and oriental subjection are laced together, becomes a question of how one reads the political scene that surrounds its patently absurd rehearsal of “manly sports” and “Beauty’s charms.”

As noted earlier, the tournament and its ensuing procession occur between what we can now explicitly recognize as parodies of two famous examples of aristocratic sociability. The *Mischianza*’s parody of the Thames Regatta disengages it not only from the mutually constitutive practices of gambling and adultery but also from the suspect assertion of women in the public sphere. And the parody of the Fête Champêtre undercuts that performance’s rather simplistic equation of national strength with nativist tropes of patrician martial rule and conjugal fidelity. Put reductively, the *Mischianza* attacks two extremes of gender performance, petticoat government on the one hand and misplaced bellicosity on the other. Both imply a devolution in masculinity. What links both parodies is the importance of normative femininity to figures of national and martial strength, and yet the very sign of normativity—marriage—which was so important both to the critique of Cornelys’s entertainments and to Burgoyne’s revision of Cornelys-style social masquerade, is nowhere to be found. Instead André and his associates chose to explore rather different fantasies of feminine propriety and gendered power in the central episode of the *Mischianza*. What is so strange is that the very issues satirized in the opening and closing sections of the *Mischianza*—petticoat government and hypermasculine bellicosity—are staged in the tournament itself.

After alighting from the ships and barges on the Delaware, the participants in the *Mischianza* proceeded toward the previously described building,

bounding the view through a vista formed by two triumphal arches, erected at proper intervals in a line with the landing-place. Two pavilions, with rows of benches, rising one above the other, and serving as the advanced wings of the first triumphal arch, received the Ladies, while the Gentlemen ranged themselves in convenient order on each side. On the front seat

of each pavilion were placed seven of the principal young Ladies of the country, dressed in Turkish habits, and wearing in their turbans the favors with which they meant to reward the several Knights who were to contend in their honour. These arrangements were scarce made when the sound of trumpets was heard at a distance; and a band of Knights, dressed in ancient habits of white and red silk, and mounted on gray horses, richly caparisoned in trappings of the same colours, entered the lists, attended by their Esquires on foot, in suitable apparel, in the following order: — Four trumpeters, properly habited, their trumpets decorated with small pendent banners — A herald in his robes of ceremony, on his tunic was the device of his band, two roses intertwined, with the Motto, *We droop when separated*.

Lord Cathcart, superbly mounted on a managed horse, appeared as chief of these Knights; two young black slaves, with sashes and drawers of blue and white silk, wearing large silver clasps round their necks and arms, their breasts and shoulders bare, held his stirrups. On his right hand walked Capt. Hazard, and on his left Capt. Brownlow, his two Esquires, one bearing his lance, the other his shield.<sup>39</sup>

In this carefully arranged field of chivalric signs, one cannot help but notice the strange interpenetration of Christian and Turkish figures. If the officers are intent on staging some kind of chivalric romance, then why dress the women in Turkish habits? And why supplement the conventional knights' squires with slaves, here refigured as the sultan's minions? One could argue that the conjunction of these codes is simply aimed at maximizing the erotic economy. After all, injecting a harem fantasy into the gyniolatry of chivalric romance carries with it a double idealization, while retaining a sense of sexual subjection and hence accessibility. In other words, the fusion of these two codes simultaneously allows women to be worshiped and subjected. One could argue further, that these are simply two sides of the same misogynist fantasy, which is rather bluntly summarized in the homosocial motto inscribed on the Herald of the Blended Rose's tunic: *We droop when separated*.

But this fusion of codes also allows for the martial and erotic topoi addressed in the opening and closing sections of the *Mischianza* to be handled simultaneously. The highly charged social and political divisions that separate the men and women in this event bring the question of war and colonial rule directly into the scene. All of the women in Turkish habit are from elite loyalist Philadelphia families. But nevertheless, even the most loyal of these women remain fully

identified with colonial America in André's letter. Therefore, the displays of valor staged at the *Mischianza* amount to the performance of martial metropolitan men for the favors of elite, marriageable, colonial women. Within conventional romance scripts, the competition for women's favors through "mimic deeds of arms" substitutes sexual approbation for national or military glory. And the approbation sought among the homosocial community of the officer corps is understood to be from women who are "on the same side." At this level, placing these select women of Philadelphia in the scene of adjudication brings them over to the British side and alienates them from the Revolutionary cause. In this light, the faux conflict staged by the officers in the tournament already presupposes American autonomy and goes on to replace the Americans with themselves. It is as though they are saying: we own your women, we own your slaves, but not as you do. We own them rather according to fantasies of absolute dominion, according to specifically non-Whiggish understandings of sovereignty. And thus the imperial fantasy promulgated here relies on the figuration of the colonial population, not as a community of brothers related to their British kin, but rather as a radically other constituency of feminized objects. And that objectification partakes of all of the preexisting tools of religious xenophobia and misogynist fantasy.

Above all, it is the Turkish costume designed and perhaps fabricated by André<sup>40</sup> that marks the colonial women as different from the Knights of the Blended Rose and the Burning Mountain and forces the reader to consider where their difference lies (fig. 3.2).<sup>41</sup> Are the readers supposed to imagine that they have been rescued from the harem by the Crusader Knights? This would suggest that the occupation of Philadelphia, and the larger American conflict, is comparable to a crusade against republican despotism, against the perversion of British political ideals by American patriots. But this would presuppose consensus about the relationship between ancient constitutionalism and bellicose patriotism, which, as Brewer and others have argued, just was not tenable as the rhetoric of patriotism bifurcated in the 1770s.<sup>42</sup>

For many Britons, including Walpole, the American crisis was "the revenge of Old English political virtue upon modern English corruption."<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, reading the scene as one of rescue and liberation from despotic American political innovation does not fully account for the way the performance of martial valor is cut short in the name of the subject women:

After they [the black Knights of the Burning Mountain] had rode round the lists, and made their obeisance to the Ladies, they drew up fronting the



*Figure 3.2.* Costume design for women participants in the Mischianza, designed by John André (1778). Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

White Knights; and the Chief of these having thrown down his gauntlet, the Chief of the Black Knights directed his Esquire to take it up. The Knights then received their lances from their Esquires, fixed their shields on their left arms, and making a general salute to each other, by a very graceful movement of their lances, turned round to take their career, and,

encountering in full gallop, shivered their spears. In the second and third encounter they discharged their pistols. In the fourth they fought with their swords. At length the two Chiefs, spurring forward into the Centre, engaged furiously in single combat, till the Marshal of the Field (Major Gwyne) rushed in between the Chiefs, and declared that the Fair Damsels of the Blended Rose and Burning Mountain were perfectly satisfied with the proofs of love, and the signal feats of valor, given by their respective Knights; and commanded them, as they prized the future favors of their Mistresses, that they would instantly desist from further combat. Obedience being paid by the Chiefs to this order, they joined their respective bands. The White Knights and their attendants filed off to the left, the Black Knights to the right; and, after passing each other at the lower side of the quadrangle, moved up alternately, till they approached the pavilions of the Ladies, when they gave a general salute.<sup>44</sup>

André emphasizes that the faux jousting is stopped in the ladies' name by Major Gwyne, the marshal of the field, and thus we are presented with the spectacle of the officers not only fighting among themselves for the favors of the women but also speaking for the women in such a way that simply assumes their approval. This has the effect of containing both the threat of rejection or failure, which attends any conferral of sexual favor, and the threat of rejection or rebellion that attends the performance of imperial and colonial relations. In other words, the dangers of sexual exchange are as carefully managed as the dangers of colonial rule. And that management turns on the erasure and refiguration of colonial women as the commodity that underwrites the ascendancy of Howe's officer class.

This is a startling shift from the politics of conjugality discussed earlier in relation to Burgoyne's *Fête Champêtre* in that women enter the scene only as the occasion for declarations of homosocial cohesion. The suggestion that the national task can be supported by exemplary aristocratic sociability, signaled explicitly through the idealization of aristocratic marriage in Burgoyne's celebration, is simply rendered obsolete by a reinvestment in signs of martial hierarchy and extramarital heterosexual appropriation. The latter is given ample rehearsal in the remarkably inconsequential list of devices and mottos that ornament the tunics of the knights. Images of two cocks fighting (André's device), of burning hearts, and of Cupid attacking all manner of hearts are aligned with stock phrases of fidelity, which remain nevertheless rigorously separated from any sense of familial or marital commitment. Any hint of affiliation would undercut

the fantasy of separation between colony and metropole that is so important not only to the tournament's performance but also to the satirical deployment of women in the parody of Burgoyne's *Fête Champêtre*.

The deployment of colonial women in the chivalric/orientalist scene of the tournament carefully stabilizes two mutually constitutive fantasies: one sexual and one imperial. Women are placed in a position of supposed otherness, only so that their grateful approbation of martial performance can appear to come from somewhere other than the men themselves. Likewise, these same women, as representatives of occupied Philadelphia, are placed in a position of alterity, in order to demonstrate that they have been liberated from their erstwhile Revolutionary captors and now wish to express their grateful "return" to their rightful masters. The circularity of the two fantasies provides both its primary strength and its fundamental weakness. In this tight circuit of hegemonic control, there is little for the women to do but play along. They are spoken for. But it is precisely this silence that necessitates the satirical gestures of André's address, because there is little separating the British officers' appropriation of these women and their figural "enslavement" by the "sultans" of revolution. The latter enslavement is a figure generated by the performance itself to characterize the political distinction between British officers fighting for their king and colonists fighting for their independence. But the former appropriation of the women of Philadelphia in performance is made manifest, or literalized, by the actions of the officers. In performance, the projection of eastern despotism onto the Americans is far less stable than the enactment of despotism by the men in the tournament.

Thus, André's address attempts to turn the literal subjection of the women in the performance, and by extension the subjection of the colonies to the king, into a figure. This explicit adoption of figurality is a complex rhetorical move because it demands that the reader recognize that the appropriation of colonial women's consent is part of a representational game in which the British play at the kind of absolutism that was not only ascribed to them by the Revolutionary colonists but also projected onto the Revolutionary colonists by the performance of the tournament itself. This sets up a rather strange situation where André satirizes the very power dynamics of the event in order to show the reader that the participants are knowingly staging hegemony. For this reason, Howe and the officers can be represented as despots who allow themselves to be "ruled" by the women they ultimately control. And by granting figural rule to the women, actual power can be retained by Howe and the Crown, and all manner of despotic figures can be projected onto the enemy. By performing the sexual weak-

ness associated with fantasies of eastern despotism, Howe's officers can forestall charges of real despotism. What this means is that the orientalist fantasies that suffuse the event are precisely the diversionary tactic required to allow for the political consolidation of the officers' mission in America.

And of no less importance is that the rhetorical gambit tests the reader's ability to recognize the figural strategies that allow André and his associates to simultaneously critique Cornelys's Thames Regatta and Burgoyne's Fête Champêtre. What André's representation of the Mischianza requires the reader to do is to isolate the sexual fantasies associated with both prior events and work through the way Howe's officers not only critique both prior events but also test out a divergent model for the consolidation of martial masculinity. Cornelys's regatta, like its patron, was associated with aristocratic adultery and suspect forms of commerce. The Fête Champêtre, like Burgoyne himself, was associated with the fusion of patrician bellicosity and normative models of heterosexual exchange. By 1778, both sets of associations were in equal disrepute. Cornelys and the kind of aristocratic sociability she propagated had long been the target of nationalist arguments about the degeneration of the ruling elite. Burgoyne's model of patrician rule had proved inadequate at Saratoga. As we have seen, the Mischianza rehearses both prior events but rigorously ejects the suspect element of Cornelys's Thames Regatta from the Delaware Regatta and subtly inverts the martial figures of the second masque of Fête Champêtre so that "Beauty's Charms" disarm the agents of Mars, and the explosions of the fireworks exhibit beauty rather than putting "the whole lively group into a consternation." In other words, the Mischianza displays the promiscuity and the bellicosity of the prior events at the same time that it renounces them. As we have seen, André's letter simply puts the question of promiscuous association in abeyance by scrupulously eliding the event's reception among the nonparticipants. This has the salutary effect of forestalling criticism of the officers' character and of the style of display itself. But how the event handles bellicosity is perhaps of more import, because Howe himself was critical not only of the Coercive Acts but also of the war in general. Unlike Burgoyne, he was not interested in punishing Massachusetts, and he would have preferred a resolution to the war that gave colonists the feeling of autonomy, while retaining monarchical control over the empire. In other words, he would have preferred an arrangement roughly analogous to that articulated in the tournament, where the colonists were given some measure of figural autonomy as long as their actions and utterances were scripted for them by the Ministry. But in this kind of hegemonic solution to the American crisis, what was the military to do?

The specific deployment of sexuality throughout the Mischianza consistently stages the subjection of Mars to Venus. However, I would argue that this playing at subjection in the tournament and the final ball is made possible by a scene of compensatory projection. I am referring to the remarkable procession that leads the company from the space of the tournament to the temporary building that housed the ball and the supper. Between these two spaces of erotic display and self-satire lay a space devoted entirely to the veneration of the military and, hence, to the veneration of themselves. After the tournament, the entire company was asked to demonstrate its allegiance to both General William Howe and Lord Howe, to both the army and the navy:

A passage being now opened between the two pavilions, the Knights, preceded by their Squires and the bands of music, rode through the first triumphal arch, and arranged themselves to the right and left. This arch was erected in honour of Lord Howe. It presented two fronts, in the Tuscan order; the pediment was adorned with various naval trophies, and at top was the figure of Neptune, with the Trident in his right hand. In a nich, on each side, stood a Sailor, with a drawn cutlass. Three Plumes of Feathers were placed on the summit of each wing, and in the entablature was this inscription: *Laus illi debetur, et a me gratia major*. The interval between the two arches was an avenue 300 feet long, and 34 broad. It was lined on each side with a file of troops; and the colours of all the army, planted at proper distances, had a beautiful effect in diversifying the scene. Between these colours the Knights and Squires took their stations. The Bands continued to play several pieces of martial music. The Company moved forward in procession, with the Ladies in the Turkish habits in front; as these passed, they were saluted by their Knights, who then dismounted and joined them: and in this order we were all conducted into a garden that fronted the house, through the second triumphal arch, dedicated to the General. This arch was also built in the Tuscan order. On the interior part of the pediment was painted a Plume of Feathers, and various military trophies. At top stood the figure of Fame, and in the entablature this device, — *I, bone, quo virtus, tua te vocet; I pede fausto*. On the right-hand pillar was placed a bomb-shell, and on the left a flaming heart.<sup>45</sup>

The triumphal arches, plumes of victory, the Latin tags, and other martial signifiers operate as the necessary reassertion of homosocial power between the two moments in the party when the colonial women are given Pyrrhic power over the officers. In this zone of mutual admiration, the silence of women

takes on a different significance, because they are not looking at themselves but at their rulers. If this moment amounts to little more than an elaborate mirror game for the officers, akin to the proliferation of mirrors in the ballroom, then it is a blunt assertion of difference and commodification for the women.

It was these expressly martial elements of the *Mischianza* that elicited the most strident resistance in metropolitan audiences critical of Howe's inaction and in colonial audiences critical of British arrogance. And these critiques took up the question of narcissism and hegemony respectively. As the British author of *Strictures on the Philadelphia Mischianza or Triumph upon leaving America Unconquered* succinctly states,

Upon what pretence . . . could this gentleman suffer himself to be crowned with laurels which he never won? Or encourage the *dedicating* a triumphal arch with plumes and military trophies to his honour, without his having once had the honour of a conquest?

A General with so extensive and uncontrolled a command, cannot want flatterers enough among his numerous dependents, who may have been promoted by his favour, or possibly enriched by his connivance.

But when so very extraordinary a method has been taken to persuade us of the high estimation in which he is held for his military abilities [even on the admission tickets, the General's crest was encircled with military trophies], it is a piece of justice due to the public, to produce the opinion of which the rest of the Americans entertain of him—so very different from that which is here given by his flatterers and dependents.<sup>46</sup>

The attack here explicitly mobilizes the combined rhetoric of weak despotism and aristocratic narcissism against Howe. The emphasis on flattery and sycophancy is a variant on the charge that Howe has, like the feminized sultan, succumbed to lassitude and the pleasures that surround him. Only such a corrupt official would allow himself to be represented in this way. This was precisely Thomas Paine's evaluation of Howe's command in *The Crisis*, and Paine's attack is cited at length in the *Strictures* and in a series of other precursor pamphlets. As noted earlier, Paine's attack closely aligns charges of vice with imputations of cowardice:

That a man, whose soul is absorbed in the low traffic of vulgar vice, is incapable of moving in any superior region, is clearly shown in you by the event of every campaign. . . . Let me ask, Sir, what great exploits have you performed? Through all the variety of changes and opportunities, which this

war hath produced, I know of no one action of yours that can be stiled masterly. You have moved in and out, backward and forward, round and round, as if your valour consisted in a military jig. The history and figure of your movements would be truly ridiculous, could they be justly delineated. They resemble the labours of a puppy pursuing his tail; the end is still at the same distance, and all the turnings round must be done over again.<sup>47</sup>

As this opinion is repeated in British pamphlets, it is bolstered by citations from André's account of the Mischianza, such that the celebration becomes a confirmation of Paine's critique. Here is one such example:

Such are the sentiments which the Americans entertain of this gentleman, and so great the contempt they express of him.

What would have been said of the Duke of Marlborough's vanity, if, after forty thousand enemies killed and taken at the battle of Blenheim, he had encouraged his officers and dependents to dedicate to him a triumphal arch, and had employed even the enemies standards taken in battle, in forming an avenue for himself and fellow conquerors to have walked through.

What then are we to think of a beaten General's debasing the King's ensigns (for he had none of his enemies) by planting all the colours of the army in a grand avenue three hundred feet in length, lined with the King's troops, between two triumphal arches, for himself and his brother to march along in pompous procession, followed by a numerous train of attendants, with seven silken knights of the blended rose, and seven more of the burning mountain, and their fourteen Turkey dressed damsels, to an area 150 yards square, lined also with the King's troops, for the exhibition of a tilt and tournament, or mock fight of old chivalry, in honour of this triumphant hero; and all this sea and land ovation made; not in consequence of an uninterrupted succession of victories, like those of the Duke of Marlborough; not after the conquest of Canada by a Wolfe, a Townshend, and an Amherst; or after the much more valuable conquest of all the French provinces and possessions in India, under the *wise* and *active* General Coote; but after thirteen provinces wretchedly lost, and a three years series of ruinous disgraces and defeats.<sup>48</sup>

Putting Howe's actions and the Mischianza in relation to the heroic past is devastating, but the most telling element of this critique is the suggestion that Britons and Americans can accede to the same opinion about this scene of self-

eneration. And it was precisely this collapse, this union of British and American opinion regarding Howe's command, that the Mischianza's deployment of sexuality was intended to obviate.

Despite the vigor of these attacks on Howe and the Mischianza, I would argue that the most eloquent response to the Mischianza's laborious attempt to find a way through this thicket of martial and sexual signs comes from one of the attending women silenced by André's letter. Captain Watson was the Chief of the Knights of the Burning Mountain, and he fought in honor of Miss Rebecca Franks, daughter of New York loyalist David Franks. During the toasts that interrupted the dancing, General Clinton, who had only just arrived to replace General Howe, called for the band to play "Britons strike home!" Known for her wit, Rebecca Franks corrected Clinton by simply asking for clarification: "Britons go home, you mean."<sup>49</sup> The play of citation and repetition here is apt, considering the degree to which the entire event cites and repeats both prior events and itself. Clinton's request for one of the chestnuts of naval patriotism aims to place current events in a long history of victory and national celebration. Rebecca Franks's simple repetition, with a difference, of Clinton's request subtly uses a synonym to reverse the meaning of the entire performance, and hence it injects a whole new level of satire. The gesture is not at all distant from the repetition of the central concepts of British political theory to argue against colonial rule, only here we have a loyalist parodying Revolutionary positions. Furthermore, in its performance this simple clarification undoes the circularity of the sexual tropes and punctures the scene of narcissism by suddenly giving free rein to the voice of the colonial woman, which had hitherto been so rigorously contained. And Rebecca Franks's imitation speaks specifically to the larger question of imitation here. In the mirrored space of the ballroom, as in the auto-reflective space between the triumphal arches, the question of mimetic truth is simply assumed by the officers, and only ever challenged by someone outside, yet projected into, the scene. Rebecca Franks's resistance is performative, wittily staged within a scene that blurs the distinction between private and public, not to mention the distinction between colony and empire, and which affords her a certain latitude for raillery, because she has been already deemed subordinate by virtue of her gender. So the author of the *Strictures* and Rebecca Franks share common ground—they are both ratifying Howe's recall—because their social and spatial location as readers of the performance gives them purchase on the representation. André's complex rhetorical gambit fails because words, whether printed in the metropolitan press or spoken inside the ballroom, cannot fully choose their audience.<sup>50</sup>

## To Rise in Splendor: *Douglas* in Philadelphia

It is doubtful that many of the Mischianza's hungover celebrants rose in greater splendor on 19 May 1778, but at least some of them were confronted with the task of performing John Home's tragedy *Douglas* that evening. The choice of Home's tragedy for the final British theatrical production in occupied Philadelphia seems out of character with the rest of the repertoire—it is the only tragedy presented by the officers at the Southwark Theatre—but I believe that this particular performance makes the argument of the Mischianza even more acute. As David Wheeler has argued, Home's *Douglas*, first performed in Edinburgh in 1756, emerges out of a renewed critical interest in the emotional response of the audience that also animates Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*.<sup>51</sup> We have already noted how the Gothic medievalism of Hurd's text infuses the Mischianza, and I would argue Home's tragedy provides another site through which to allegorize the present moment.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the analysis that follows attempts to account for the singularity both of this deployment of ancient dynastic struggles and of the performing company's manipulation of pathos.

The play was performed frequently by British officers at the Theatre Royal in New York from 1778 to 1782 under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, and there is reason to suspect that it was a favorite with him.<sup>53</sup> While Howe was occupying Philadelphia, Clinton—second in command of the British army in America—maintained the tradition of British theatricals in New York that Howe had commenced in 1777. The first production at New York authorized by Clinton was *Douglas*, and it played to much acclaim on 6 and 9 January 1778.<sup>54</sup> By the time Clinton saw the play again in Philadelphia after the Mischianza, much had changed. France had entered the war as an ally of the colonists in March, Howe was officially recalled, and the newly promoted Clinton was to oversee the evacuation of Philadelphia in order to better defend New York. He received these orders in May while in Philadelphia when he officially became commander in chief. The succession of command from Howe to Clinton was rife with acrimony. During the year and a half of fighting before the change of command, Clinton's actions were repeatedly frustrated by Howe's inaction. In 1776,

after becoming second in command and leading an abortive expedition to the Carolinas, he also failed to persuade Howe, the new commander-in-chief, to accept plans for trapping and destroying the continental army at New York. And in 1777, after a brief winter's leave in England, during which he learned the government's plans, Clinton was unable to convince

Howe that he was expected to co-operate with a British army advancing south from Canada in a summer campaign along the Hudson. Howe, ignoring Clinton's arguments and the government's plans, took his army to Pennsylvania by way of Chesapeake Bay. He left Clinton to hold New York city and to do what he could to favour the British forces from Canada. When in early October Clinton made a bold dash up the Hudson, Howe promptly stripped him of the troops he was employing to open the river. Clinton, thoroughly frustrated with Howe, asked to resign as soon as he learned that the Canadian army had surrendered.<sup>55</sup>

The government did not accept Clinton's resignation but instead had him replace Howe. Thus, Clinton's participation in the *Mischianza* and his attendance at the theatre for *Douglas* the next evening need to be understood as part both of a fraught transition of power and of a shift in policy aimed at prosecuting the war on a global level. Howe's orders had been to deal with rebellious colonists widely understood to be more like brothers than enemies. Upon assuming his position as commander in chief, Clinton "had temporarily to subordinate the American war to a wider war with France."<sup>56</sup>

The circumstances of command are important here because John Home's tragedy is not only deeply concerned with matters of succession but also with the very fine dynastic distinctions that separate the men in the play. Because so much of the theory of tragedy on which Home is drawing is concerned with the power of affective response, the bulk of the reception of *Douglas* revolves around the remarkable character of Lady Randolph. But it is important to remember that it is a thoroughly soldierly play. As Sandro Jung notes, *Douglas* was "inspired by the old Scottish ballad *Gil Morrice*," and Home embedded "his tragedy within a vague framework of patriotism for Scotland in which the Scottish chiefs defend their native soil against an invasion of the Danes."<sup>57</sup> This Danish threat looms everywhere in the tragedy but actual warfare is projected into the future beyond the tragedy's denouement. What this means is that the conflicts that drive the action do not involve "foreign foes" but rather arise among "a people similar, / As twins are to each other."<sup>58</sup> Lady Randolph's distinction between foreign and civil wars comes early in act 1 and refers specifically to Scotch and English wars, but as the play unfolds, the audience is forced to consider conflict within the ostensibly selfsame. In fact, one could argue that it is the unstable definition of sameness that made this tragedy so resonant in its initial productions during the Seven Years' War and makes it so applicable to the situation in Philadelphia in May 1778.<sup>59</sup>

The play's characters come from three dynastic clans: the houses of Malcolm, Douglas, and Randolph. The play's main character, Lady Matilda Randolph, is the daughter of Malcolm and married to Lord Randolph, the play's senior military figure. But unbeknownst to Lord Randolph, his wife was previously married in secret to Douglas. Matilda had been introduced to the younger Douglas by her brother Malcolm, who carries his father's name. The marriage was secret because of enmity between Malcolm and Douglas's father, who is also named Douglas. The doubled names of the fathers and sons emphasize the distinction between the houses, and clearly the secret marriage forms an alliance against the wishes of the patriarchs. Matilda and Douglas have a child, who inherits Douglas's name and who embodies the hybridization of the two houses. He is quite literally the reconciliation of dynastic conflict. However, before any of this can play out in public, not only are Matilda's husband Douglas and her brother Malcolm killed in battle but also the child is lost and believed dead. So, at the outset of the play, both the homosocial bond between Malcolm the younger and Douglas younger and the heterosexual bond between Matilda and Douglas are cut short. Into this vortex of grief comes the house of Randolph, kinsmen to Malcolm. Shortly after the death of Douglas and the disappearance of her child, Glenalvon, Lord Randolph's heir, attempts to rape Matilda. She is rescued by Lord Randolph and she, out of duty and respect for his moral character, agrees to marry him. Now Lady Randolph, she brings all of the fortune of the house of Malcolm into the marriage, but none of the affection or love shown for her former husband. The Randolph's childless marriage is a pathological state in which the wife mourns objects known only to her and in which the husband's masculinity becomes a perverse manifestation of excessive bellicosity. The corruption is further signaled by the fact that the former rapist, Glenalvon, remains the heir to the family fortune and plots all through the play to kill Randolph and ravish his Lady.

At the beginning of the play, therefore, on the eve of the Danish invasion, the Scots are represented only by Lord Randolph and Glenalvon, able yet fundamentally flawed soldiers. The representatives of the houses of Malcolm and Douglas are dead, and thus the Danish threat appears that much more fearsome. The complexity of the relationship between clans—they all have stakes in Lady Randolph—is narrated more than enacted until the appearance of a young stranger in the second act. He is of course Lady Randolph's son by Douglas, although neither character knows this until acts 3 and 4, respectively. Saved by Old Norval and raised as a shepherd, young Norval exhibits extraordinary bravery by saving Randolph from Glenalvon's assassins. He also demonstrates an unusual apti-

tude for warfare. Well before his birth is revealed, Norval embodies the martial bearing of a true noble. That revelation, staged for the audience in a sentimental scene between mother and son, is only belatedly conducted for Randolph. Recognizing a rival when he sees one, Glenalvon plots against both Norval and Randolph simultaneously by inciting Randolph's jealousy. Glenalvon's poison words make Randolph misrecognize secretly maternal and filial affection for adulterous desire.<sup>60</sup> The ensuing eruption of violence is precipitous. Glenalvon and Norval kill each other, Lady Randolph commits suicide after losing her son yet again, and Lord Randolph reengages his bellicosity with the hope of dying in battle. Whether this death will be honorable is unclear at the end of the play, for it seems to emerge as an expiation of his own guilt rather than as an expression of selfless patriotism. But most importantly, the audience is left at the end with no heir to the legacy of any of the houses. Glenalvon, both Malcolms, and all three men named Douglas are dead. Lord Randolph, the surrogate husband, promises to fight the Danes to his death, but the future of Scotland, both in war and in love, appears in jeopardy.

The complexity of *Douglas's* back story is belied by the simplicity of the tragic action. Basically, Norval is introduced in order to kill and be killed by the corrupt heir to Lord Randolph. As the embodiment of civic virtue, he is presented in order to be mourned.<sup>61</sup> However, his brief transit from obscurity to death is witnessed by Lady Randolph and her servant, and above all it is the alternative future that he represents that is of utmost concern. Immediately upon his appearance, he is cast as the great warrior hero who will save Scotland from the Danes, the true heir to Douglas's fortitude. Lady Randolph's grief for his loss both as a child and as a man is as much about the loss of her child as it is about the loss of her nation's future. Reaction to the appearance and loss of this alternative future is condensed in the extreme emotional responses of Lady Randolph. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that her performance of loss is aimed at consolidating audience response to what appears to be a political dead end for the nation. She is the only character who knows that Glenalvon is not a suitable heir to the house of Randolph and of Scotland, because he is cruel, vicious, and traitorous. Behind the mask of soldierly virtue, Glenalvon is a perverse internal threat to the unity of the Scottish cause. This is exacerbated by the fact that the play so insistently destroys homosocial and heterosexual ties between the houses: the friendship between Malcolm the younger and Douglas is prematurely cut off by their deaths, the new line emerging from Matilda and Douglas's marriage is prematurely cut off when Glenalvon stabs Norval in the back, and the Randolph marriage is childless. Paula R. Backscheider succinctly states

that “the fulfillment of hope seems within a character’s reach, then is cruelly and suddenly denied. Home has designed the play so that nearly every theatre-goer—wife, father, mother, youth—can be touched by the experiences of the characters.”<sup>62</sup>

How do we read the production of this tragedy for this audience at this historical moment? Captain André was undoubtedly involved with the design and painting of the Gothic forests and castles in which the play is set, but he may have acted a part as well. We have relatively few details about the actual cast except that the men were played by officers stationed in Philadelphia and that Lady Randolph was likely played by the mistress of a British officer. But even these scant details, when considered in relation to the *Mischianza* and the succession of command from Howe to Clinton, are resonant. For all its success on the stage, the role of Lady Randolph in *Douglas* was widely scrutinized on moral grounds. Her distress was deemed by many critics to be preposterous and her relationship to both her husband and restored son was disturbing to many viewers.<sup>63</sup> Thus, to see this role performed by someone of dubious moral character is itself intriguing, especially when what the audience was watching was a loyal colonial mistress expressing grief for her dead husband and desire for her returned son.

If we understand the colonial relation as a marital allegory, then what we have is loyal America grieving for a lost relationship with Britain. Further, she is currently trapped in a loveless relationship to a bellicose kinsman whose heir is actively attempting to kill him and take her by force. It would seem that Lord Randolph is an apt allegory for the bellicosity of Lord North and his Ministry, and Glenalvon figures quite well for the rebel colonists. Furthermore, the rape fantasy is perfectly in keeping with the deployment of sexuality in the *Mischianza* discussed in the previous section of this chapter. When faced with these alternatives, Lady Randolph transfers her lost desire for her dead husband onto Norval, the true heir to the house of Douglas, who she argues in act 4 will be restored to his rights and will lead the Scots to victory over the invading Danes. In terms of the marital allegory, this amounts to a desire for a true heir to Britain’s glorious imperial past. The implication is, I believe, clear: what Britain needs is someone capable of restoring the virtuous relationship between metropole and colony forged against the French during the Seven Years’ War—a relationship forged by men like George and William Howe and which included heroic soldiers such as Wolfe and George Washington.

In much the same way that loyalist women are conscripted into an erotic fantasy of supremacy in the *Mischianza*, the unidentified woman playing Lady

Randolph in the production of *Douglas* is caught in an impossible trap. Her loyalty, as expressed both in her actual relationship to a British officer and in her performance, generates a perverse relationship to her "husband" whether that be understood as the officer in question, Randolph or Britain, because it operates outside the codes of normative conjugal relations. Her relationship to Lord Randolph/North and to Glenalvon/rebel colonists is always that of potential victim. And her relationship to her "true son" is both a misrecognition of the future for the past—that is, her son for her husband—and a fruitless passion. When the new Douglas is destroyed by the collusion of Glenalvon and Randolph, of rebellion and bellicosity, what the audience was witnessing was the death of Howe's dream of conciliation between Britain and the colonies, for that too was based on a prior attachment between Britain and America generated during the battles against the French in the Seven Years' War. With France's entry into the war, this dream was no longer viable.

This is a contentious reading of the performance, but its deployment of the actual bodies of colonial women matches that which was so laboriously exercised during the *Mischianza* on the previous evening. Furthermore, the allegory is given even more traction by the very question of succession posed by the play. Put bluntly, Howe was replaced by someone who was willing to prosecute the war in a fashion more in line with the dictates of North's Ministry. In this, Clinton bears a close resemblance to the Scottish commander Randolph. As noted already, Douglas never appears in the play that carries his name, and his son is cut down before he can fully accede to his potential. Does this not allegorize Howe's present position? He is politically dead and yet hoping to return with honor intact. At this point, it is useful to remember the motto to the ticket to the *Mischianza*: "I shine in setting; I shall rise in greater splendor." When Lady Randolph reveals to Norval his true identity, it is through the splendor of a specific stage property. Through her servants, Lady Randolph intercepted Old Norval, who has a set of jewels that were secreted with the child and attest to the former glory of his father. When she presents them to Norval, he states "I saw them once, and curiously enquir'd / Of both my parents whence such splendor came? / But I was check'd, and more could never learn" (4.1.43). The splendor of these jewels becomes a sign of the virtue of both father and son and of their blood relation. I would suggest that it is this past and fleetingly possible future for martial subjectivity that André and his fellow officers were bringing into performance. But they staged this possibility not to venerate it but rather to mark its passing. After all, Norval dies, and his death forces Lord Randolph to reconsider his actions, to rethink his relation not only to his wife but also to his country.

Could we not argue that this bizarre succession ceremony was staged to transform the subjectivity of the commander in chief by turning his attention away from his dead wife and relations—that is, the loyal and the rebellious colonists—toward the external threat posed by foreign powers? *Douglas* thus becomes an allegorical motor for turning attention from civil disagreements to true enemies, from narrowly colonial to global concerns. The honorable second Douglas prepares the ground for Randolph to go to war against the foreign threat by eliminating the traitorous Glenalvon.

For this audience, in this space, at this time, that external threat is clearly France. I would argue that the self-sacrifice of the colonial woman in this allegory merely pushes the erotic dynamic of the *Mischianza* one step further in order to grapple with the new global significance of the American conflict. In the *Mischianza*, the colonial women were deployed as the exchange objects needed to guarantee the homosocial bonds of the officer class. In this supplementary production of Home's tragedy, Lady Randolph is sacrificed in order to provide an occasion for the officers to feel the emotion that attends the loss not only of the governmental relation between colony and metropole but also of the fantasy of civic virtue on which this obsolete notion of governmental harmony was based. What fascinates me here is that Lady Randolph's suicide resolves the problem of political agency for Howe, André, and their associates by eliminating the problem of America altogether. Read allegorically, loyal America kills itself upon its recognition that the embodiment of civic virtue is dead. Rebellious America has already been distanced from virtue by associating it with Glenalvon's attempts to rape and assassinate Lady and Lord Randolph—the loyal colony and the bellicose metropole. This clearing of the colonial ground ensures that the tradition of republican governance based on civic virtue would not migrate from Britain to America. In this allegorical schema, there are quite literally no heirs to republican political thought on American shores, and thus this deployment of Home's *Douglas* interrupts the historical process mapped by J. G. A. Pocock in *The Machiavellian Moment*.<sup>64</sup> And with this interruption, attention shifts away from the question of virtue altogether so that the audience is left contemplating not only Lord Randolph's capacity to repel the invading Danes but also Sir Henry Clinton's, and by extension the Ministry's, capacity to wage a global war.

Nestled within the allegorical link between Lord Randolph and Sir Henry Clinton is a subtle critique of the Ministry because the play intimates that Lord Randolph's future actions may themselves be suicidal. In this regard, Lord Randolph's desire to die in battle is reminiscent of Marcus's death in Joseph Addison's *Cato*. Like Marcus he is "bent on death."<sup>65</sup> This is significant in light of the

roughly contemporaneous performance of *Cato* by Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge on 11 May 1778—eight days before Howe's company's production of *Douglas*. The complex meaning of the production of *Cato* at Valley Forge has been admirably discussed by Randall Fuller and Jason Shaffer,<sup>66</sup> and I would like to suggest further that the divergent definitions of patriotic performance among American and British soldiers could be understood as a contrast between the republican ideals espoused and enacted in *Cato* and the emotions inculcated by *Douglas*.<sup>67</sup> As Shaffer argues, "Washington's attendance at the Valley Forge *Cato* . . . affirmed both his concern for the welfare of his men and his command over them, meanwhile acknowledging the stoic 'republican' virtue demanded of the army at Valley Forge."<sup>68</sup> And yet in a striking revision of *Cato*, the suicide of the hero is downplayed in light of a future where "the Continental Army might be able to embrace both liberty and life."<sup>69</sup> In contrast, the representative of civic virtue in *Douglas* is killed, and the emotions generated by his death are channeled into the histrionic mourning and eventual suicide of Lady Randolph. Howe is leaving, and his replacement is figured as Lord Randolph. In other words, the performance of *Cato* at Valley Forge, contrary to the plot of the play, imagines a future where republican thought can stay alive, whereas the performance of *Douglas* at Philadelphia propels its audience into an uncertain future disconnected from models of governance based on civic virtue. The former fantasy maintains a connection between past models of governmentality and future life, whereas the latter opens up a gap between the past and the future that is registered as a kind of sublime pain. In this context the generic differences between the two plays become decisive. *Cato*'s Augustan adaptation of Aristotelian principles "inculcates specific moral and ethical doctrines through pity and fear," whereas *Douglas*'s purpose, as understood by its apologists, was "the exercise and strengthening of the spectator's general faculty for sympathy."<sup>70</sup> Thus, for Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge, emotion was generated to inculcate republican virtue, whereas Howe's soldiers, through their deployment of the colonial woman in the role of Lady Randolph, were strengthening their sympathetic bonds to that which had been lost.