RICHARD CŒUR DE LION: FIGHTING QUEENS, GOTHIC POLITICS AND HETEROSEXUAL PLEASURE ON THE ENGLISH STAGE

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, it was possible for an idea of the medieval past to play a constitutive role in a variety of political discourses and cultural practices. Broadly gothic themes, locations, and plots, including idealisations of the chivalric past, were sought by writers wishing to cater to a new taste for the past. Many of these investments might reasonably be described as possessing a broad political affiliation. The commitment was rarely party-political, but the gothic, whether in fiction on stage, or elsewhere, was most often associated with patriotic or loyalist positions, especially during the final decades of the century.[1] To images of castles, damsels, knights, and other gothic business it was possible to add affecting images of kings and queens that justified the role of modern monarchs. Thomas Warton is a fine example of such gothic politicking. He took his position as poet laureate seriously, penning works in praise of the King and appearing to deploy the distant past to justify the present and shape the future. His verses to George III commend his resolution in war, kindness in peace and, in a nice turn for phrase, as a 'patron king'. Warton was equally interested in kings as warrior figures, 'in azure steel array'd', praising King Richard I, styled *Cœur de Lion* directly in 'The Crusade'. Warton's 'Ode for the New Year' continued this thought by comparing George III to Richard I, while Warton took the role of Richard's 'favourite minstrel', Blondel de Nestle, placing himself by his sovereign's side.[2] These were bold moves. Richard I was not an embodiment of modern kingship, being rather a feudal monarch used to holding sway, and a swaggering conqueror. Several writers, including Robert Burns and John Wolcott [Peter Pindar], found Warton's framing of George III as a warrior king worthy of complaint.[3] Nigel Leask has described how Burns deplored Warton's verse, before offering his own complex reflections on the place of kings.[4] Not all respondents to Warton were so thoughtful. Richard Tickell and Joseph Richardson, members of a group of satirists, the Esto Perpetua Club, supported by the Foxite Whigs, mocked Warton in their *Probationary Odes for the Laureateship*. They deplored his clumsy installation of kingly authority on crusading terms. Nor were they minded to indulge Warton's cos play elevation of George III into an exemplary monarch.[5]

This tussle over the meanings of the past is indicative of the 1780s, as British culture sought to process its most recent trauma. The decade has often been seen as a decade concerned, in both cultural and political terms, with the lengthy process by

which a nation defeated in American reached what Linda Colley terms its 'apotheosis', finding a new direction under George III.[6] The period has recently been reconsidered by Daniel O'Quinn, who has characterised 1780s Britian as gripped by a 'post American condition', a cultural moment dominated by a near-feverish attention, especially in the theatre, to the task of finding an imaginable and bearable future at once compatible with the aspirations of the middling sort, and with a recalibrated sense of the nation's moral purpose. The performance of gender, on stage and off, he argues, embodied a realm of affect, with leading players acting as avatars of deeper cultural longings.[7] O'Quinn's valuable work recovers the fractious particularity of the 1780s, on which this essay also focusses, revealing it as a decade of difficult and troubling peace. As Britons were to discover, war is never over, even if you want it. The experience, of course, was varied; if some prospered, others did not. For the most culturally prominent opposition group, the Foxites, this was distinctly the case. For much of the decade they were out of power, and unlikely it seemed, to ever return. They had triumphed early in April 1780 with John Dunning's successful motion that 'the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished'.[8] Since that high point they had been beaten and bowed. Briefly in government in 1783, in coalition with Lord North, they lost office when George III, partly motivated by dislike of their leader, Charles James Fox, had instructed a Lord of the Bedchamber, Lord Temple, to alert the House of the Lords to his inevitable displeasure should it pass Fox's India Bill, a clumsy attempt to restrain the East India Company's worst excesses. The Lords duly complied.[9] Ignominiously ejected, though still supported by newspapers like the *Morning Chronicle* and *Morning Herald*, the Foxites retreated into pleasure, denied government they enjoyed themselves enormously, though they still maintained their opposition to presumptive, kingly power. In clear and present contrast, stood William Pitt, the King's newly favoured Prime Minister, austere and seemingly abstemious, loyal, and very much in charge.[10] Such evident opposition of habits, preferences, opinions, and affiliations constituted its own deeply personal biopolitics of personal performance, in turn creating an atmosphere in which all forms of culture became mediated as political claims, even when not couched explicitly in the language of party.

It was into this political and cultural environment, that both licensed theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, launched productions of the French comic opera, *Richard Coeur de Lion* during the autumn of 1786. Both productions were lavish, with specially-commissioned sets, musical arrangements, and fine costumes making them

expensive to stage. Star performers were recruited to play opposite each other. The promise of competing productions generated much press interest, as it was surely designed to do.[11] Such direct competition is unusual, even within the fiercely competitive duopolistic conditions determined by the Stage Licensing Act, though it could sometimes happen that rival Shakespeare productions battled for audience share. But on this occasion both theatres sought prestige, political alignment, and revenue by pursuing expensive, musically rich, and spectacular productions of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, a work not previously staged in Britian. Entertainments like *Richard Cœur de Lion* or James Cobb and Stephen Storace's *The Haunted Tower* from 1789, that required actors to sing, rather than using the professional singers employed for oratorios, were a high point of any theatrical season. This essay, by returning critical attention to a moment of theatrical competition, hopes to encourage further interest in a form of drama that held a vital place in the repertoire at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane. These productions have been overlooked, and their several purposes (securing finance, promoting celebrity, and offering spectacle), sidelined in favour of seemingly more serious dramas, yet they were instrumental in keeping both houses afloat. It is equally the case that musical entrainments and comic operas could play, as will be demonstrated here, key roles in the political orientation of each house. Never simply facile diversions, musical entertainments operated within what has been termed the 'continuous political argument' of the repertoire.[12] Their success relied in part on the deployment of celebrities in astonishing roles, enabling deep parasocial connections with the audience, that ensured that such entertainments were part with the 'domiciliary' turn Gillian Russell has claimed as defining late Georgian culture, as public spaces were appropriated and privatized.[13] In the case of Drury Lane's *Richard Cœur de Lion* what we see, in addiction, is a cleverly staged resistance to the growing influence of the Crown, via a proffered identification with sexualised celebrity power. To fully grasp this deeply Foxitie achievement, we need first to be clear about the kind of resources textual, technical, and otherwise upon which both theatres could draw.

Rival Richards: Paris, London - Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

Richard Cœur de Lion first appeared as an *opera comique* by Michel-Jean Sedaine and André Ernest Modeste Grêtry in Paris two years before its first production in England. The opera staged Blondel's fabled quest for King Richard I, imprisoned in Austria after he had been waylaid returning from the Crusades. The opera opens with Blondel

arriving at the house of Sir Williams and his daughter Laurette. Sir Williams (a Welsh squire living in an Austrian village), reveals that there is a mysterious prisoner held at a nearby castle. Soon after Laurette confesses that she is in love with Florestan, the castle's governor. Sensing that his search might be nearing its end, but not knowing how to proceed Blondel sings 'O Richard, Ô mon Roi' [Oh Richard, Oh my King]. His song lamenting his monarch's loss and his anguished loyalty: 'L'universe t'abandonne;/Sur la terre, il n'est que moi/Qui s'interesse à ta personne', which translates roughly as: the universe has abandoned you/On earth there is no one but me/ Who is interested in you. Countess Marguerite, who is also searching for King Richard, enters soon afterwards and extends her assistance. Blondel goes to the castle alone, and there sings of his burning ardour ['Une fièvre brûlante']; to which the King sings in reply. This is the great moment of the opera, a unity of voices, but also of subject and monarch. Their singing attracts Florestan's attention, and his soldiers seize them. Blondel secures his release by offering to broker a meeting between Florestan and Laurette. Having returned to the village, Blondel reports he has seen the King and a plan for his rescue is commenced. During the final act the Countess's soldiers storm the castle, releasing their King. The victorious soldiers, sing 'Ah! quel bonheur, quel plus beau jour/C'est un Roi qui vous doit un si beau jour' [What happiness, what a beautiful day/ It is a king who owes you such a beautiful day].[14] This triumphant scene brought together fighting knights, reunited lovers and much patriotic singing. Despite a theatrical *levèe en masse*, it is Blondel's discovery of Richard that is the work's central drama: the subject saving his King through the devoted performance of his art. Countess Marguerite, by contrast, is little more than a cypher, merely bringing forth necessary the troops. Scholars have largely agreed that Sedaine and Grêtry's *Richard Cœur de Lion* enacts its creators Royalist aspirations which, like Warton's verses, it articulated through a recreation of the Angevin monarchy as gothic spectacle.[15]

The multiple gothic elements offered by the French *Richard Cœur de Lion* – falling battlements, fighting knights, and bardic minstrelsy - suited to the fashionable tastes of the late-century London, but there were others that were not. English audiences often decried French or Italian dramas as supercilious or unduly ornate. Nor was kingship understood in England as it was in France. For Drury Lane, owned by the Foxite Whig politician Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the opera was distinctly awkward. Idealizing the Revolution of 1688, the Whigs cherished the role of Parliament and even, under certain restrictions, the People. The Norman Yoke had been thrown off for good,

they believed, and the People, that is 'independent' men, ought to govern the Crown properly restricted; as Sheridan expressed it in *Pizarro* some years later: 'The throne WE honour is the PEOPLE's CHOICE'.[16] From this perspective, Blondel's passionate loyalty could easily appear too credulous, or the actions of a mere favourite (and the Foxites had had enough of those by 1786). Such reservations did not trouble Covent Garden for whom *Richard Cœur de Lion* provided a welcome chance to stage a rousing historical spectacular. Although the Covent Garden eschewed the musical challenge posed by Grêtry's score, introducing simpler English ballad tunes instead (mostly by William Shields), its staging spared no expense reflecting the ebullience of Thomas Harris's management of that theatre. Nor was Harris, as has been claimed for Sheridan, making his theatre a 'supplementary site' for Whig politicking. His politics were quite different.[17] Creating the script needed by Covent Garden, Leonard McNally expanded Sedaine's pastoral subplot, adding bawdy scenes between servants and rustics, notably during a surprisingly long scene in which the hunting of rabbits is treated comically.[18] Referring to a well-known source of bawdy jokes, the *General Advertiser* thought that it obvious that the 'Covent-Garden translator has called Joe Miller to his assistance'.[19] If it was regretted, the change of tone was not unexpected. When the *Morning Post* anticipated the rival productions it had understood that 'the *humours* of pieces are widely different', a view that the published play texts as well as the reviews of the performance fully support.[20] Macnally's text is bawdy, even vulgar, and the whole enterprise is much rougher, more immediately comic than anything which the French opera had contained.

There was more to Covent Garden's *Richard Cœur de Lion* than mere bawdy, as it retained the fundamental chivalric quest, and its resolution via Blondel's loyal craft. McNally's script is arguably most remarkable for its emphatic patriotism. Blondel's is central to this project, as he was for Sedaine and Grêtry. In McNally's translation he sings: 'RICHARD, my liege, my gallant king,/The universe abandon thee;' continuing: 'A British minstrel hopes to prove,/His loyalty and love,/Nor seeks reward but from above'. Finally claiming: 'Richard, my friend, my patriot king,/Blondel remains/To break thy chains'. Kings are right and deserve their subject's loyalty. The idealization of a patriot king (Warton had only echoed this appelation) had first appeared in Viscount Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism* in 1738, becoming a maintainstay of opponents of Robert Walpole's Ministry. The term was claimed by George III and his supporters after 1760, making Macnally's deployment of it a politial gesture.[21] To make

such loyalism still more unmistakable a chorus of knights sing: 'Soldiers strike home!/Britons ne'er flee;/ Glory's our cause'/Richard we'll free'.[22] The opposition-supporting *Morning Chronicle* duly denounced such 'violent professions of loyalty' and 'elaborate encomiums on our free constitution' as wholly inappropriate to the offered entertainment.[23] Little wonder then that George III, dressed nattily in a 'velvet blue suit' (the Queen wore a 'silk pompadour gown'), soon attended Covent Garden to enjoy the performance.[24] McNally and Covent Garden had also been quick, holding their premier on 16 October, with their rival lagging more than a week behind, the Drury Lane production appearing only on 24 October.[25] While the delay placed Drury Lane at a commercial disadvantage, the theatre had assets which would enable their eventual triumph. It is upon those efforts and developments upon which we will now focus, keeping in mind the political agenda that had been set by the Covent Garden production, and the different theatrical and political habitus which would frame a production of *Richard Cœur de Lion* at Drury Lane.

***Richard Cœur de Lion*: Translated, Revised, and Repurposed**

To gain their success, Drury Lane benefited from Thomas Linley's greater talent as their director of music. His skills meant they retained much more of Grêtry's musical score, something appreciated in advance by *Morning Post*.[26] A further factor in Drury Lane's success was scenographer Thomas Greenwood, responsible for the construction of the magnificent castle required for the final act (fig. 1). Perhaps most usefully of all, they could draw on John Burgoyne as their dramaturge. He had already proved adept at writing for the stage, both before and after his disastrous role in the American War. Burgoyne's pedigree as a sentimental dramatist doubtless helped alert the *Morning Post*, that the '*humours*' of rival versions would be distinct. There would be no bawdy at Drury Lane. Drury Lane's cast which included John Philip Kemble and Dorothy Jordan, then in her second season at the theatre, was superlative. Though Covent Garden had employed Elizabeth Billington, Margaret Martyr, and George Inchbald they lacked the celebrity draw of their Drury Lane rivals. James Boaden's remembrance of Drury Lane's production in his *Life of Mrs Jordan*, stresses the importance of the acting talent Drury Lane was able to deploy:

> The vast popularity of Sedaine's *Richard Coeur de Lion*, in Paris, graced or rather *informed* by the divine music of Grêtry, set both our theatres to work to prepare it for the English stage. [Burgoyne] with great happiness,

> introduced Richard's Queen, in the situation of Blondel, and Mrs Jordan accepted the part of Matilda; while the majestic figure of Kemble was seen by the audience taking his melancholy exercise in the prison of Leopold, Duke of Austria ... Perhaps no production ever had more effect than the Richard of Drury Lane; and so fascinating was its *ensemble*, that no alteration made afterwards, in the cast was felt otherwise than as an injury; and more voice or more science in the principals only told the opera intruders that there was a truth and a grace beyond *their* reach, and that if you did not touch the *heart*, you did nothing.[27]

Boaden emphasises the opera's multifaceted production while underlining the emotional impact of the performance, especially its passionate appeal to the heart. He is probably thinking of the moment when Kemble's King Richard sings to his Queen and later when they are reunited after the storming of the castle. These scenes, discussed below, united music and terrific visual spectacle. With no expense spared, *Richard Coeur de Lion* was the triumph of Drury Lane's season. Brought forward as an afterpiece, initially paired with *The Winter's Tale*, it was performed a total of thirty-eight times in its first season, a rarely matched achievement. Revenues, crucially, were consistently high.[28] Newspaper reviewers could be more equivocal. Some lamented the opera's French origins, others questioned individual performances, but overall, the production was very well received. Such commercial and popular success was the result of much effort on the part of the Drury Lane, not least in the provision of costumes and scenes, as reviewers were more than happy to acknowledge.[29]

To bring a French opera successfully to the English stage, Burgoyne had responded to the challenge posed by the politics of Sedaine's *Richard Cœur de Lion* in several ways, methods which are best characterised as a careful avoidance of the political strictures he had inherited. While he kept most of the existing work, translating Sedaine's words rather than replacing them (as MacNally had done) Burgoyne sank much of their political resonance in sentiment and forms of heterosexual identification, the confident ebullience of which was entirely and deliberately congruent with the social and cultural manoeuvres of the Foxite Whigs, of whom Burgoyne, like Sheridan, was emphatically a part.[30] Burgoyne called his work 'An Historical Romance', abandoning the comic opera designation preferred by Sedaine and MacNally. The shift made gender and desire more critical to the drama. Sedaine and Grêtry had scarcely used their Marguerite, save for one emotive song: it was all Blondel.[31] MacNally

followed suit - though he granted her, to some mockery, the name of Richard's Queen, Berengaria. Burgoyne called her Matilda, a more English name.[32] He transformed the part too. His well-judged Advertisement to the print edition explained his adaptation:

> *In adapting the following scenes to the English stage, no adventitious matter has been introduced: some liberty, however, has been taken in effecting the principal incidence of the piece: the discovery of* Richard's *confinement being now given to* Matilda *in place of* Blondel; *as well to increase the interest of the situation, as to avoid the less affecting interposition of the heroine in the latter part of the drama. – The elegant author of this Romance will pardon a freedom which has been taken with no other view than that of giving the best assistance of our stage to his admired composition.*[33]

His swipes at Macnally's 'adventitious' additions aside, Burgoyne recalibrates genre and its meanings carefully. Owning the 'liberty' taken when replacing Blondel with Matilda, he adds that the move serves to '*increase the interest of the situation*': this will prove to be the crucial shift as this would be the part for Jordan. Commenting on this passage in its review of the text, the *European Magazine* reflected that the: 'alteration …does great credit to the taste and judgment of the person who made it, since it gives the whole piece and its business a natural, and more powerful interest'.[34]

Several theatrical and political purposes were served by the substitution. The significance of Jordan's presence and the recalibration of her part was understood, even before the Drury Lane version made its first appearance as hugely significant. On the day before the premier the *Morning Chronicle*, reflected on the likely change to the tone of the repertoire at that theatre, hitherto dominated by Sarah Siddons's tragic performance of 'exemplary filial piety'. If reports received from the Green Room were to prove true, the paper predicted, *Richard Cœur de Lion* 'cannot fail of having an extraordinary run; if so, we must probably for a little time bid adieu to the *Queen of Tears*'. Jordan who had been all 'ease and veracity' in a production of *Twelfth Night* a few nights earlier, would soon hold sway.[35] The creation of a larger part for Richard's consort certainly changed the story significantly, placing its focus firmly on a woman searching for her lover. A woman alone did indeed heighten the '*interest of the situation*', especially because Jordan was young, beautiful, and talented. Her introduction changed the genre of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, intensifying its focus on the predicament of women, directing it away from the loyal pieties of Siddons's tragic

muse, towards an easier, more politically ductile performance, imaginable as consistent with Foxite Whiggery, and, just as vitally, bourgeois self-projection.[36] Burgoyne effectively re-aligned Sedaine's opera within the gendered conventions of gothic romance, which frequently suggested, to the dismay of critics like Bishop Hurd, that women could take important roles, making interventions as fighting queens, plucky fugitives, or cunning nuns.[37] Amidst these changes the casting of Jordan had a double capacity: she provides a locus for romance and the performance of femininity; but also alters the way in which the politics of the plot are articulated. Jordan's own status – practically a third capacity – was doubtless also telling. As Chelsea Philips has argued, Jordan's personal and theatrical predicaments, projected and theatrical, real or just imagined, were a key part of her mounting celebrity. Later commentaries on the production in the newspapers single out Jordan, as if she were the dramatic focus above all else.[38] It is worth noting here that Jordan was yet to become the reputed mistress of the Duke of Clarence, so her connections with royalty were entirely theatrical.[39]

Without forsaking an appreciation of *Richard Cœur de Lion* as a celebrity-driven entertainment, we will see that Burgoyne's text differed considerably from the rousingly patriotism that appeared at Covent Garden or Sedaine's scripted Royalism. According to Linda Hutcheon any act of translation entails many acts of re-framing and re-calibration. As a text moves from one language to another, it is made to fit an enitre new context, often serving a new purpose. This re-purposing, which she calls, 'indigenization' reflects conscious choices, undertaken for traceable ends.[40] Burgoyne working for Sheridan, and part of the social group that had burlesqued Warton, felt these pressures, and saw these opportunities keenly enough. What resulted was still a gothic, unquestionably heteronormative drama, well suited to Foxite ends. Gender, as point of both identification and difference, is crucial, as re the operation of genre and repertoire, as subsystems of meaning production. Much of this weight entailed in this process came down on precise point of actor's performance in roles that have been re-imagined, even created afresh within a newly, or newly indigenised Whig setting. To capture this condensation of imperatives, each in service of the other, Burgoyne's achievement is best described as an instance of sentimental gothic. The term incorporates a mode or performance in which women or values associated with women are displayed conspicuously, but which also caters to a viewing position that caters to a chivalric impulse. On stage chivalry is encouraged, framed by the medieval discourses present within the action and dialogue. Such chivalric display exists dramatically in

relation to the commercialised and frivolous leisure culture described by Russell and O'Quinn when it was enjoyed as pastiche. Equally important, as we have seen, was the presence of actresses, who as Felicity Nussbaum has best explained, inhabited a duality performing as portrayed and real women, enjoying a certain celebrity in each guise.[41] The complex work undertaken by the Drury Lane *Richard Cœur de Lion* ensured that these opportunities were knotted together with a political imperative, Foxite in its broad aspiration to establish a mutually beneficent relation between the Monarch and the actions of the People. Such a public ambition had to be reconciled with more extravagant attractions to women, often figured as a certain susceptibility to beauty and to sexual impulses otherwise denied in Georgian society, alongside horse racing, other forms of gambling, and theatrical nights out. Heterosocial and heterosexual, Foxites were rarely keen to separate public and private with any degree of care. Overspill often the defining feature of their behaviour, as heterosexual dalliance came to characterise elite cultural forms.[42]

The Medieval Past as Sexual and Sentimental Spectacle

Burgoyne's alterations gave Jordan a more prominent part at the heart of a coherent sentimental plot. Her lovelorn femininity becomes the opera's keynote, supported by what had been Blondel's much-repeated theme ['Une fièvre brûlante'], which gained fresh impetus from the gender switching. At the end of her life Jordan told Helen Maria Williams that she had appreciated the role of Matilda, as it gave her an opportunity to attempt a more plaintive demeanour. The role, she said, 'savoured of the pathetic'. Fiona Ritche is sceptical on this point, suspecting the correcting force of anxious retrospective.[43] But it might be useful to think how the performance of a certain quality of plaintiveness on Jordan's part combined with the appearance of presumed sexual availability (the attribute Ritchie suspects Jordan was seeking to deny) served to enhance the ideological work of Burgoyne's refashioning of the opera. This potential would have been evident from the outset. When Jordan first appeared on stage she was disguised, and hence cross dressed as a blind minstrel (a bandeau over her eyes) and led by Antonio, a soprano role taken by Maria Theresa De Camp. Consequently, it is Matilda, not Blondel, who first sings of her love for the King:

> Oh, Richard! Oh, my love
> By the faithless world forgot;
> I alone in exile rove,

To lament thy hapless lot (8).

Fidelity and infidelity are the central themes of the aria: Matilda's love is contrasted with the faithlessness of friends and the irregularities of fortune. Matilda sings of her 'One faithful heart,/From tenderest truth,/Tho' hopeless, will never depart'. Love is privileged above all else, such that Matilda seems the artless victim of her own chaste desire, while Richard is elegantly passive, an object of female admiration (6). Sedaine's version is different in its purpose and meaning: Blondel sings of Richard's abandonment with a subject's love, making his declaration of loyalty the expression of a political passion: a desire to serve his King, a monarch he regards as exemplary. MacNally had his Blondel sings: 'Richard, my liege, my gallant King'.[44] When Matilda sings of her love for Richard it re-writes the political implications of Sedaine's text, replacing loyalty with love. A woman singing about her lover, albeit their king, is different from a servant singing about his master, who is their King. There was equally a difference of voices. Sound was supported by spectacle with Jordan disguised and cross dressed she is the centre of the audience's attention. Jordan's capacities as a singer were notable, not least for its plaintive evocativeness. Her voice would have avoided the sonorous power that characterised the Blondel songs when then had been sung in Paris by Jean-Baptiste Guignard, a renowned tenor. What Jordan offered, was precisely the capacity to provide an audience with opportunities to savour the 'pathetic' that saw her cast as Cora in Sheridan's sentimental-cum-anticolonial *Pizarro* in 1799.[45]

Burgoyne did not only invent Matilda, he changed Richard too, softening his character and making him more dependent on the efforts of others. This was to recast a monarch, who in the words of David Hume's *History of England*, 'passionately loved glory', was 'haughty, and cruel' and consequently 'oppressive, and somewhat arbitrary': in plain speech a brutal Norman king.[46] Burgoyne's Richard is different. He is not a tyrant, but a lonely captive. Where Drury Lane's production coincided with Hume's preoccupations was in its deployment of affect and felt proximity to historical figures, a key feature, as Mark Salber Philips has commented on eighteenth-century sentimental historiography.[47] With this in mind, it is important to reflect upon what King Richard signifies in this more emotive scenario, not least as Richard's recalibration is a fundamental part of the sentimental gothic the opera becomes. While Burgoyne's action focuses on the efforts of a woman, Richard remains important as the object of the romance quest, but is essentially passive, awaiting rescue. His subdued appearance is apparent at the beginning of Act II when he is seen for the first time.

Alone on the castle's battlements he is taking what Boaden called his 'melancholy exercise' with the castle's governor in close attendance. When Florestan departs the King soliloquises. The speech is unique to Burgoyne's text:

> Oh heart! Burst not! – Oh God! – oh misery! Is this to be my lot forever! In the vigour of my days, circled with conquering laurels, the Christians shield! The scourge of haughty Palestine? Am I doom'd, Am I doom'd by a vile traitor's craft, to wear away my life away in ignominious bondage! O that the efforts of my fierce despair could reach the ears of my brave distant soldiers! How would it fire their hearts to learn that their king! – their leader! but Richard is forgot, deserted by his people – by the world! – O my glory! – O ye records of my valour! O memory of my victories! What do you avail? (*he looks on a picture*) – Image of her I love! – come – O! calm, console my heart – soothe for a moment the keen sorrows that destroy me! (24)

This is little more than a succession of exclamations. No argument, or even much sense, is advanced. Richard runs through a gamut of emotions – rage, jealousy, hope, recrimination, and despair. The imprisoned Richard makes successive appeals as he runs through his emotional range: the soldiers who are enjoined to rescue him yet rebuked for not having done so; his esteem of his own glory but mounting sense that it amounts to little and is 'forgot'. Finally, he focusses on Matilda, who is longed for. The feeling audience, to which sentimental gothic was directed, could see his doubts and fears; might offer their own sympathetic response to them; but without necessarily subordinating or sacrificing their independence to do so. As a performer, Kemble became renowned for his ability to convey strong, contrasting emotions and the part was doubtless created by with this potential in mind. It certainly would have required Kemble's gift for 'brooding inaction' to make the scene work, for Richard seems almost entirely static, fixed in a typically 'vast tableaux'.[48]

Kemble's role as Richard instances the eighteenth-century investment in the performed legibility of the speaking body, with the speaker's authority deriving from the physical sincerity of their expressed feelings.[49] Such an effect might seem to be threatened by the dissonance of the Richard's emotions which, even in a comic opera, appear scarcely compatible with the demands of medieval kingship. It is not gothic in that way, but sentimental. A King of England has been re-created a sentimental spectacle, there to be seen in his lonely isolation, his masculinity and majesty troubled

but not completely undercut. Despite his captive stasis Richard is emotionally dynamic – he becomes, at least in part, like other captive figures familiar from sentimental literature, such as Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*.[50] The portrayal of the crusader King as a man of impassioned but imprisoned sentiment is apparent when it is compared with scenes Burgoyne took directly from Sedaine. For example, Richard's abject speech upon his losses, appears in stark contrast to the ways in which he had been recollected at the end of the previous act by Sir Owen (replacing Sedaine's Sir Williams). The song (sung by Blondel's in Sedaine's opera) relishes Richard's exertions against 'Sultan Saladin': 'Coeur de Lion loves the wars,/Richard's joy is blows and scars'. [51] This is King Richard as the hyper-masculine warrior king, not the moping captive seen on the battlements of Florestan's castle. Sir Owen, himself a devotee of the bottle, stresses Richard's independent, vigorous masculinity. Race plays a decisive role in this realignment because Saladin, by contrast, is at once servile and tyrannical.

Let the Sultan Saladin,
Play the rake in Palestine,
While he claims his subjects duty,
He is himself a slave to beauty,
Wearing baser chains than they (21).

Although Sir Owen's boozy lines veer towards a cruder point, what articulated here is an alignment of toxic masculinity with unpalatable kingship (22). Saladin's race and gender appears deviant because he lacks the power to win loyalty through anything other than force; he can only ever be a 'rake in Palestine', neither free himself nor able to do other than subjugate others. His susceptibility to women is not an admirable form of heterosociability, but a specifically gendered failing.

The importance of sexuality propriety and consequently sexual expression is confirmed when Matilda, still disguised as a blind minstrel, sings under the castle's battlements, and Richard answers. The only visual record of the production reveals that this scene was dominated by a massive castle which fills the stage (fig. 1). What is striking is how diminished the actors look, how large the distances between them appear. This is most likely a representation of the visual *coup de theatre* created by the set, rather than its actual dimensions; but it does indicate just how important the act of singing across such a void would have been. The picture reveals, in conjunction with the music and the words, an intention to create a scene of tremendous scale and emotional poignancy, rather than regal display. This occurs most obviously when,

having found each other, Richard and Matilda sing. First, she recollects their 'earliest love in happy days of love for her, who now uncertain of his fate, yet shares his misery'. She then sings a fond lament: 'One night in sickness lying,/A prey to grief and pain'. Hearing her voice from within the fortress, Richard is instantly struck by her voice, exclaiming 'O God, that voice!' (26); encouraged Matilda continues her song: 'When aid of man was vain…' When she stops to listen Richard is, according to Burgoyne's stage direction, gripped by '*the extremes of surprize, hope, and joy'* but sings in reply:

The gentle tears soft falling
Of her who I adore,
My tender hopes recalling,
Did life and love restore.

Hearing him, Matilda '*appears greatly agitated; she even appears almost fainting*. But sings her reply:

A mighty king doth languish,
"Within a prison's gloom;
Ah! Could I share his doom.
Ah! could I soothe his anguish (27)

There is not much here to exemplify Richard as haughty or cruel. The moment of their reunion hinges on the performance of agitation, this time shared. Their communion is completed when they sing in parallel:

RICHARD	MATILDA
"The gentle tears soft falling	"My gentle tears fast falling,
"Of her so long ador'd,	"For him so long ador'd,
My tender hopes recalling,	"His tender hopes recalling,
"Have love and life restor'd	"Have love and life restor'd (27).

This is a gorgeous effusion of sentimental love. Although a gendered distinction is maintained by the selection of differing pronouns, Richard is deeply affected. He is not free and independent; but is not rakish either. It was doubtless this somewhat unmanly effusiveness that prompted Horace Walpole to complain to the Lady Ossory 'that 'turning the ferocious Richard into a tender husband is intolerable'; a remarkably stern and normative judgment given that Walpole had previously told her that Burgoyne had 'written the best modern comedy' because of his grasp of high life and the correct tone required for its dramatic representation.[52]

The reunited lovers barely finish singing before Matilda is captured by Florestan's guards, and the King returned to his cell. Matilda secures her own release, as Blondel does in other versions of the scene, by tempting Florestan with her knowledge of Laurette and the village feast planned for the following evening (30-2). The exchange establishes a moment in which male susceptibility to women (embodied in Jordan's Matilda) occurs in opposition to a sense of duty represented by Florestan. In this exchange acceptable masculinity resides between heterosexual interest and masculine resolve. Simple abstinence would be counter generic and against the expectation and wishes of audience. Love must conquer all. This performance of male sexuality, deeply fixated on its chosen object, differs sharply from the rakish Saladin, who is incapable of permanent longing. The willingness, on Richard's part, equally on the audience's part too, to succumb to the attractions of Matilda-Jordan can be evidenced by a candid letter written by Drury-Lane insider Mary Tickell to her sister Elizabeth Sheridan, recounting her experience of seeing the scene performed:

> [T]he Audience were all ears & eyes, they c:d not bear the smallest interruption to their attention - [during] the prison Scene between Mrs Jordan & Kemble, I believe you might have heard a Pin drop in the Upper Gallery – but when the Guards seiz'd Matilda & Kemble was oblig'd by the Governor to retire… the whole of the Situation struck so forcibly on the minds of the audience, that it was like an electric Shock – and they gave such repeated Applause & Bravo's that it was quite charming I never saw an audience applaud so properly, and with such genuine feeling in my Life.[53]

Only days earlier, Tickell had been suspicious of Jordan' performance, believing that she brought too much attention upon of herself.[54] On her later account, the audience delighted in the poignant dynamic between Queen and King, Jordan and Kemble, torn asunder by grand historical circumstances and the petty officiousness of the castle's guards. The focus of sentimental gothic on the predicament, but also ingenuity of a woman at once active, yet engagingly vulnerable achieves much in the way of theatrical affect. Gothic history, which in some senses is Crusader and a white history, becomes romance. Royalist politics reduced in favour of modern chivalric pleasure.

With much of its ideological work completed, the final act of *Richard Cœur de Lion* is concerned with preparations for the King's rescue. In quick succession Matilda reveals her true identity to Blondel, just as the Seneschal sent by her father arrives with a retinue of knights. They immediately return to the castle, which is stormed by the

Seneschal's knights and Sir Owen's peasants. The stage direction is long. A battle involving several phases is described; eventually the castle's walls collapse and Sir Owen and Blondel join Richard in routing the remaining guards. Matilda enters only as the fight concludes but she dominates it visually. By the time she strode the battlements Jordan had made a costume change, eschewing minstrel's breaches, for a dress of white satin, seemingly to very good effect.[55] 'God Save the King' was then sung an inevitable if anachronistic celebration (50). Released Richard speaks to his liberators, and to the audience, confirming Matilda's crucial role:

> Oh love! Oh gratitude you impede and not inspire my efforts to express the fond transports which swell here – Neglected by my subjects, forsaken by the thankless world. – When sorrow had beat down my heart's defence – courageous hope! But oh! – Matilda! What can I say to thee, my soul's beloved! My deliverance! My reward! (*Embraces her.*) (*To* Sir Owen, &c.) I have more thanks to pay. My heart feels all it owes. And when to my native England I return, so may I prosper in my subject's love, as I cherish in the memory of my sufferings here – a lesson to improve my reign – compassion should be a monarch's nature – I have learn'd what 'tis to need it – the poorest peasant in my land, when misery presses, in his *King* shall find a friend (51).

Richard is choked with emotion, chastened too; humbled by his release. Grateful to a woman, he might seem unmanned. He is certainly overcome: 'My heart feels all it owes' His full heart seems to prompt his promise that he will to return to England a better man and a superior King. From now on he will be protector of the poor, made aware of the necessity of compassion by his own need for it. This happy consummation reanimates the most liberal version of Richard's return (the good king reclaiming his throne after a period of tyranny), one that it often central to the Robin Hood legend. This is a Whig fantasy of kingship (a king restored by the PEOPLE'S CHOICE), utterly different from Hume's grim monarch.

Love's Redemption

Richard Coeur de Lion did not end with the redemption of the King, not quite. The not quite is important, as the addition of some further material prevents the apotheosis of Richard I from having the final word. Instead, the subplot has the last flourish when Matilda brings Florestan and Laurette together. As she does so, Matilda commends her

husband's erstwhile gaoler for his 'honour' and 'justice', emphasizing his masculine duty only as it is subsumed by Romance. Watched by the remaining cast members, all three sing:

Oh! Blest event! – Oh! glorious hour!
Liberty and love we sing;
Oh! may they with resistless power,
Protect the blessings which they bring! (50-51).

So it all ends with 'Liberty and love', rather than the King's rescue. Consummation is finally more important than restoration. Indeed, despite the obvious temptation these lines provide, there is no need to rhyme 'sing' with 'king' unless you really want to. More important is what 'love and liberty' will 'bring' to all: a better future. Subtle and not so subtle politicking, as well as exuberant performance, came together during Drury Lane's *Richard Coeur de Lion* to make a political intervention. Where McNally's version is grossly patriotic, Burgoyne's text is more nuanced. It mediates the past, muses on kingship and about the relations between subjects and their monarch. Love is the theme, modulating the political. Such a sexual and reforming emphasis had been the Foxite preference earlier that year, when they had crowded at Drury Lane, and later to Lord Derby's townhouse, to applaud Burgoyne's *bon ton* comedy, *The Heiress*, starring Elizabeth Farren.[56] Farren, Derby's partner (only later his wife and Countess) played Lady Emily, forced to wait for her worth to be recognized. Only belatedly does her lover, Clifford, his own wealth restored, realize that he must love and marry her. But first they must recognize the value of the middle-class figures, whose kindness, propriety, and good sense has underwritten their return to fortune.[57] The acceptance of Farren-as-Emily as legitimate bride is, perhaps uniquely, both a social and parasocial phenomena with middle-class audience members and elites taking something from it, based on their identification or acquaintance with the leading player. The conclusion of the plot marked a considerable return to propriety (and wealth) that might tantalizingly prefigure the return of the Foxites to office, if only they could amend. Burgoyne rested his appeal to his friends – Fox, Tickell, and Sheridan all attended Derby's afterparty – on moments of restoration encapsulated in a love plot that was in part wish fulfilment, prediction of the future, and promise of reformation.

These connections, at once personal and national, were equally vital to the production and consumption of *Richard Cœur de Lion* because on it was on these heterosocial and heterosexual terms, that it was it possible to imagine the romance of

the gothic past, and hence the contemporary future, in ways that responded to, on the one hand the loss of America, and on the other resisted apparent tyranny. Men needed to reform, kings too, and the process must be guided by a woman as Matilda leads Richard. The crafty favourite is pushed into the background. To move the Royalist *Richard Cœur de Lion* to this position required a conscious decision to evade the generic and ideological weight of loyalist gothic. James Watt defines loyalist gothic, the broad discursive formation that Burgoyne's sentimental gothic exploits, as having an admonitory function, a tendency to rebuke the present, a legacy of the lost war for America. Common complaints are a lack of martial resolution, in contrast to the valour of the ancient past. Warton's Odes would be an instance of this investment. Watt identifies patterns of setting and scenery: castles feature prominently, but the supernatural rarely; the scenario is English and medieval, but above all the action is serious and high minded. It is also masculinist in nature, still harping on military glory and past triumphs. To this degree, loyalist gothic frequently sets itself in opposition to the 'feminised space of romance production'.[58] Burgoyne chose as he adapted *Richard Coeur de Lion* to offer a different gender politics, and in so doing to make a different political intervention. His *Richard Coeur de Lion* employs merely the scenery of loyalism. Masculinity is, in so far as Richard appears as its embodiment seems passive, even lovelorn, its martial exploits further in the past than its sexual present. Women cross-dressed or expensively turned out (they are both, of course), act as the true agents of most of the action. Normative, heterosexual masculinity is objectified, reduced to spectatorship. Loyalty to the monarch occurs, might even be said to be celebrated but only in relation to liberty. Such rational liberty gets a distinctly Foxite spin too, as befits its appearance at a site of commercialized as well as elite leisure. Specifically, liberty is best observed when a monarch is chastened politically; but not sexually.

This is a distinctly Foxite form of politics, such that it is possible to conjecture Drury Lane as a Foxite theatre, which having commissioned work from a known Foxite politician (Burgoyne was MP for Preston, as Sheridan was the Member for Stafford) had successfully appropriated and translated a French Royalist comic opera. If they had stopped short of what Hutcheon terms 'indigenization', they had certainly re-domesticated it. Changing its meanings and its emphases, they had re-made it in their own image. Sexual pleasure and sentimental identification replacing an equally deeply-felt homosocial fealty. Moreover, it was good to look at, Jordan especially. Even so, it remains not entirely appropriate to claim that Drury Lane's *Richard Coeur de Lion* as

an avowedly party-political drama, at least not consistently so. Kemble's role and performance is an obvious sticking point. Burgoyne's *Richard Coeur de Lion* is Foxite mostly on account of what chooses not to do. Yet it remains valuable to think about how the play might have appeared (or simply felt) Whiggish or to have functioned as a way of being a Whig theatre-goer, worried about kings and tyrants, yet keen for luxuriant pleasure and a good night out. Such ardent yet convivial affiliations need to be seen as a set of cultural assumptions, styles, and habits. The Foxites were sociable, distinctively heterosocial in many respects, though they enjoyed the masculine pleasures of gambling at their clubs. They were correspondingly homophobic as a result, mocking Prime Minister Pitt for his apparent aversion to the 'the fair'.[59] Fashionable women were figures around which events were organised, or parties held. Susceptibility to women, to their beauty, charm, or talents, whether truly felt or merely performed, was central to Foxite self-image, determining how they behaved in the quasi-public world of routs, assemblies, and theatres. Toying with the possibility of forsaking these pleasures, the Drury Lane *Richard Coeur de Lion* imagined a future which did not rely on either ultra loyalism or monarchical benevolence, but that rather enjoined the monarch to act for the people. It was the Foxites, figured as Matilda or Lady Emily, would lead this rescue of the nation. It is possible to imagine this alignment occurring most readily on an evening such as 20 November 1786, when Burgoyne chose for his benefit night a pairing of Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* and *Richard Coeur de Lion*. Then, with Farren as Lady Teazle and Jordan as Matilda, the house was full, and the ticket receipts were pleasingly high.[60]

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[31] Sedaine, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, 35-6.

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