

Introduction

V. S. Naipaul's book *A Way in the World* (1994) is perhaps most strikingly about obsession. About historical figures obsessed by an idea: about dreams of new worlds, the fulfillment of large schemes, and the universal failure of such visions. In his long chapter "In the Gulf of Desolation: An Unwritten Story," Naipaul imagines the wasted year that the Venezuelan revolutionary Francisco de Miranda – the man who came before Simón Bolívar – spent on the island of Trinidad in 1806, marooned after an abortive insurrection across the gulf on the mainland of Venezuela. Nine years before Miranda's arrival in Port of Spain, Trinidad had been part of Venezuela and the Spanish empire. "Now it is a British territory," writes Naipaul. "Most of the island is forest, but it is empty forest: the aboriginal population has almost ceased to exist." He continues by describing the social and racial composition of the island:

The planters are refugees from Haiti and other French-speaking islands to the north. The planters are not all white. There are many mulattoes and blacks among them, and they are known, in the caste language of the time, as "free people of colour;" they are not called Negroes. An usually high proportion of the slaves in Trinidad are "new Negroes", freshly imported from Africa.

The island is dominated by plantations: no place "for a metropolitan man like Miranda."¹

Yet Naipaul's work centers on the often hidden or forgotten exchanges between metropolitan spaces of empire and subjugated spaces of colonization. At Port of Spain, Miranda is met by General Thomas Hislop, the British lieutenant-governor. If Miranda will be known to history as the "Precursor," the man who came before the "Liberator," Hislop was known, in his own day, as the governor who came *after* General Thomas Picton, Britain's first governor of Trinidad. "Hislop is a man of jangled nerves," Naipaul tells his readers. And for good reason. The brutal repression of incipient slave revolt – "the

¹ V. S. Naipaul, *A Way in the World* (Minerva, 1995), 239–40.

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hangings and the mutilations” – have raised legal questions back in London. Much of Naipaul’s chapter centers on imagined conversations between Miranda and Hislop. Hislop is troubled by uncertainties, by the very shaky foundations of Britain’s Trinidad regime and his responsibility for actions, inhumane and possibly illegal, to maintain order. Most particularly, he is anxious about the investigation of Picton’s rule and by the trial and conviction of Picton at King’s Bench. “Strange,” Hislop observes, “that all the bigger charges of hanging and theft should have been thrown out, and this case of petty theft should have brought Picton down. Signing the order that the very respectable magistrate brought him for the torture of the young mulatto girl.”²

In fact, this glancing reference to an anonymous “young mulatto girl” marks a return, a reworking of themes and characters that Naipaul introduced twenty-five years earlier in *The Loss of El Dorado: A History* (1969). As he notes, his earlier book “is made up of two forgotten stories,” two moments when his native Trinidad “was touched by ‘history’,” or emerged from obscurity within Europe’s historical consciousness.³ The first marks the final chapter in the search for El Dorado with Sir Walter Raleigh’s return to Trinidad in 1617; the second story is that of Louisa Calderon, the young mulatto girl whose torture brought Governor Picton to the court of King’s Bench and whose case became a *cause célèbre*. In his Nobel prize lecture for 2001, Naipaul describes growing up without a sense of his own family’s historical past; his comments reflect more generally on the position of the colonial subject and the postcolonial writer.

As a child I almost knew nothing, nothing beyond what I had picked up in my grandmother’s house. All children, I suppose, come into the world like that, not knowing who they are. But for the French child, say, that knowledge is waiting. That knowledge will be all around them . . . In Trinidad, bright boy though I was, I was surrounded by areas of darkness.

Those “areas of darkness . . . became my subjects,” and that darkness sent Naipaul “to the documents in the British Museum and elsewhere, to get the true feel of the history of the colony.”⁴ Naipaul is himself a difficult writer to place; he speaks to the ambiguities governing the postcolonial condition.⁵ *A Way in the World* opens, “I left home more

² Ibid., 249, 287.

³ V. S. Naipaul, *The Loss of El Dorado: A History* (Penguin, 1973), 13–14, 17.

⁴ V. S. Naipaul, “Two Worlds,” in V. S. Naipaul, *Literary Occasions: Essays* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 190–91.

⁵ Naipaul’s literary “politics” have come in for sharp criticism. See, for example, Edward W. Said, “Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World,” *Salmagundi*, 70–71 (1986): 53, 78–79, and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 19, 54. Nonetheless, Naipaul expresses, with profound literary force, the predicament of cultural

than forty years ago, I was eighteen.” The author’s life straddles the late colonial and postcolonial periods; his writings, not least of all his travel books, traverse continents. A Trinidadian of Indian descent, living and writing in London, he is an outsider whose work soon entered the “English” literary canon.⁶

The postcolonial moment has been one of recovery, altered perspectives, rethinking identities, redrawing connections. It also presents an intractable difficulty in evaluating the break between the colonial and postcolonial, between an ending and an aftermath of continuities. Inside and outside, home and away, core and periphery, binaries once felt to be fixed refuse to hold firm. The blurring of spatial and cultural boundaries has led historians, as well as novelists and other writers, to rethink the boundaries of our own work, sending us back to the archives to get “the true feel,” or at least a new sense of the history of Britain and how “Englishness” has been constituted.⁷ As Antoinette Burton explains, “the imperial turn” “is not a turn toward empire so much as a *critical return* to the connections between metropole and colony, race and nation,” signaling both the “inadequacy” and the “indispensability” of the nation.⁸

In my own case, having worked on early nineteenth-century political trials, I must have brushed past Picton’s case countless times, ignoring

“in-betweenness.” On this point, see Sara Suleri, “Naipaul’s Arrival,” *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 2 (1988): 25–50.

⁶ From the large critical literature on Naipaul, see Fawzia Mustafa, *V. S. Naipaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Rob Nixon, *London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Timothy F. Weiss, *On the Margins: The Art of Exile in V. S. Naipaul* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *V. S. Naipaul: A Materialist Reading* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); Michael Gorra, *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁷ From among many important works, see Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), introduction; Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Englishness in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), chap. 1; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994); Kathleen Wilson, “Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities,” in Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–26; Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56; Frederick Cooper, “Postcolonial Studies and the Study of History,” in Anita Loomba et al., eds., *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 401–22; and Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), chaps. 1–5, for an introduction to key issues and terms.

⁸ Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: On the Inadequacy and Indispensability of the Nation,” in Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 2.

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legal proceedings that fill almost an entire volume of *State Trials*. Reading *A Way in the World* and then assigning it to a class of undergraduates sent me back to the archives, initially to read the trial text.⁹ Unwittingly, I retraced the way in which the British public in the early years of the nineteenth century discovered the scandal of colonial rule in the newly ceded island of Trinidad. Seized from Spain in 1797, the colony was among the few territorial acquisitions Britain retained by the terms of the Peace of Amiens in 1802; by the following year, the former governor was in state custody, charged in a series of capital cases, and in 1806 he stood trial for Calderon's torture. As Chapter 1 argues, empire's return "home" in scandal's guise registered a sense of dislocation within metropolitan culture: an anxiety that was neither simply subversive nor supportive of the imperial project, but that sought resolution, inviting a reconfirmation of colonial will.¹⁰ The book's opening chapter revisits the case against Picton and the cause of Calderon; it introduces many of the book's central themes, pertaining to the rule of law and norms of colonial justice, contested representations of British rule and the status of the British subject, colonial violence and its justification, intersecting hierarchies based on race, gender, and sexuality. My broad purpose is to register the cultural modes by which empire troubled the metropolitan imagination and to move beyond colonial sensation to flesh out a complex imperial circuitry shaped by material conditions, cultural meanings, state actions, and personal lives, including the failures and fantasies of empire, and the brutalities of and resistance to colonial power.

While *Scandal of Colonial Rule* opens at the metropolis with the cultural resonances produced by Picton's trial, the remaining chapters move the story progressively back to Trinidad during the first decade of British rule (1797–1807); the work is not organized, however, as a chronological narrative, but around a set of overlapping themes. To appreciate what was at stake in the British Atlantic some background is necessary. Firstly, the West Indies remained of crucial financial and military importance to Britain and France.¹¹ The scale of economic commitment was staggering. The cost of establishing a sugar plantation

⁹ Naipaul's own interest was sparked by reading Picton's trial in the Panther paperback edition of the *Newgate Calendar*.

¹⁰ This paraphrases Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2–4, 7. See also Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹¹ This paragraph draws on Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and War against Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), chap. 1.

far outstripped that of setting up a Lancashire cotton factory.¹² The West Indies dominated British long-distance trade; an eighth of all British seamen were involved in this trade.¹³ It followed that the Caribbean was an endemic and deadly zone of war and plunder.¹⁴ Secondly, not only were the West Indies the largest depository of British and French investment overseas, they were also the most vulnerable. A small number of whites – the Privy Council in 1789 reported 50,000 in all the British islands – lived alongside over 10,000 free men and women of color and nearly 500,000 slaves, a number that rose to 775,000 by 1807.¹⁵ This vulnerability was exacerbated by war and revolution; the French revolution's universalist message of *liberté* combined with indigenous forces of resistance among the enslaved, free people of color, and creole Europeans as rebellion swept the Caribbean.¹⁶ Thirdly, Trinidad was something of a special case. The island's plantation economy and the large-scale importation of African slaves were very recent, and connected predominantly with newly arrived sugar planters who moved from neighboring French islands following the *cédula* of 1783 which reversed Spain's policy of exclusion and opened the island to foreign settlement. Previously a Spanish backwater, Trinidad over night became an open frontier.¹⁷

In a sense, as Kathleen Wilson observes, “empire as a unit was a phantom of the metropole; all empire is local.”¹⁸ In

¹² Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of British Colonies in the West Indies*, 5 vols. (1819), vol. II, 287–89, estimates the cost of establishing a sugar plantation at not less than £30,000.

¹³ William Young, *The West-India Common-Place Book: Compiled from Parliamentary Official Documents* (1807), 85; Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688–1959: Trends and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 87, table 22; Jacob M. Price, “The Imperial Economy,” *OHBE*, vol. II, 81, 101.

¹⁴ Young, *West-India Common-Place Book*, 218–23; Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 106–14, chap. 14; David Patrick Geggus, “The Cost of Pitt’s Caribbean Campaigns, 1793–1798,” *HJ*, 26 (1983): 699–706.

¹⁵ Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 18; B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 74, 77, tables 4.1 and 4.2; J. R. Ward, “The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition, 1748–185,” *OHBE*, vol. II, 432–33, table 19.2.

¹⁶ See, in particular, Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848* (Verso, 1988), particularly chaps. 5 and 6; Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), and *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1963).

¹⁷ Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783–1962* (Kingston and London: Heinemann, 1981), chap. 2; James Millette, *Society and Politics in Colonial Trinidad* (Port of Spain and London: Omega and Zed, 1985), 15–19.

¹⁸ Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (Routledge, 2003), 213, n. 74.

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another sense, local, regional, and national histories must take in the global.¹⁹ Trinidad's place in the British Atlantic world was unlike that of older and more developed Caribbean colonies, such as Jamaica, Barbados, or St. Kitts. From Trinidad our vision shifts, producing an enhanced awareness of Spain as an imperial rival and imagined imperial "other." Eliga Gould proposes an enlarged view of the English-speaking Atlantic, one of "entangled" imperial histories in which societies mutually constituted each other through complex and ever-shifting interconnections.²⁰ Situated at the southern tip of the chain of Caribbean islands, Trinidad was geophysically linked to Venezuela, separated only by the Gulf of Paria; its principal city, Port of Spain, was pivotal to the movement of people, information, and goods from South America throughout the circum-Caribbean. For the British, its location offered dual military and commercial advantages; the prospect of opening the Spanish Main to British trade encouraged schemes to assist or foment revolution in Spain's South American provinces. In the early nineteenth century, however, Trinidad's military, legal, and cultural standing as a British territory remained tenuous. As a Spanish colony, the island had become the site of refuge and settlement for an extraordinarily cosmopolitan population of whites and free persons of color. At Trinidad the precocious modernity of the Caribbean had only begun to show itself; the plantation complex was still new.²¹ As part of the third major phase of British Caribbean expansion, it beckoned as a new colonial frontier, a place where modernity might be fully realized or reimagined on the periphery of empire – a periphery, we should note, that suddenly became central to British thinking about colonial development, in the context of revolution and the impending abolition of the British slave trade. Trinidad stood as a colony brought to a very specific moment of possibility, as intersecting local, national, and world forces over-determined its significance as an imperial site.

Without entering into on-going debates as to the merits or inadequacy of various concepts of either the British Atlantic or Caribbean as units of study, the "British Atlantic," referred to in this book's title, is situated within a broader global frame.²² Trinidad became a site of dense spatial

¹⁹ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 2.

²⁰ Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," *AHR*, 112 (2007): 764–86.

²¹ See Philip D. Morgan, "The Caribbean Islands in Atlantic Context, circa 1500–1800," in Felicity A. Nussbaum, ed., *The Global Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 52–64.

²² See, for example, Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic

and cultural exchange, reaching throughout the Caribbean region, across the Atlantic, and into Asia. This study aims to capture this fluid connectivity. Trinidad offers a natural site from which to break down the division between the north and south Atlantic systems.²³ As a burgeoning sugar-producing colony, Trinidad was drawn into the pan-Atlantic trade in slaves, but it also became a space onto which a future beyond slavery might be projected.

Recently, historians and historical geographers have been preoccupied with the spatial dynamics of empire. This includes the study of how imperial careers were shaped and reshaped through movement among different colonial locations.²⁴ In Chapter 2, “A gentleman’s way in the world,” I take up the theme of “imperial careerism.” The chapter traces the career of the agent responsible for bringing Picton to justice; it examines the experience, ideological commitments, and expectations that Colonel William Fullarton brought with him when he was appointed, in 1802, to head the commission charged with charting Trinidad’s future development. It seeks to uncover motivations beyond those of personal rivalry to explain how two men, each committed to his own imperial vision, produced an extraordinary situation of local discord that traveled inexorably back to Britain for investigation and public display. Fullarton’s self-fashioning as a gentleman, politician, and improver of humankind was played out within Britain and across the world. His understanding of nation, empire, and self emerged within a mobile cultural and geographical field. He offers a rather nice example of the contingent ways in which a person defined himself and his ideas while ever on the move. When he arrived on Trinidad, in 1803, he came possessed of a reformer’s conception of the codes and responsibilities of British colonial rule. His views had been formed at an earlier place and moment of imperial crisis. He had served in India during the second Mysore war (1780–84), and on his return to Britain joined Edmund Burke’s campaign against Warren Hastings, India’s former governor-general. His career, moving from India to Trinidad, measured the political distance, the change in imperial attitudes that occurred in the

History,” in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11–27; Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *AHR*, 111 (2006): 741–57; Peter A. Coclanis, “Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?,” *WMQ*, 63 (2006): 725–42; David Eltis, “Atlantic History in Global Perspective,” *Itinerario*, 23 (1999): 141–61.

²³ See J. H. Elliott, “Atlantic History: A Circumnavigation,” in Armitage and Braddick, eds., *British Atlantic World*, 233–49.

²⁴ See David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careerism in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 65.

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period between the trials of Hastings and Picton. Moreover, for Fullarton Trinidad reactivated an ambition of his youth to open South America to British trade and influence, a recurrent national fantasy. Thus it seemed as if his life had circled back upon itself, as an opportunity came to act on an older imperial dream. In the event, Trinidad proved the final stop on his traveling career, and a profound personal disappointment.

Chapter 3, “Only answerable to God and conscience,” takes the story to Trinidad, covering the early years of British rule. Governor Picton’s authoritarianism and its metropolitan ramifications highlight crucial questions about how colonial rule was enforced and legitimated. Picton placed himself outside the law; subversion was, however, a construct of the law, and the fruits of subversion appeared ripe. The French revolution and ensuing global warfare intensified the authoritarian drift of Britain’s governing elite. The Haitian revolution, in turn, sent shockwaves across the Caribbean; “scenes of St. Domingo” preyed heavily on the imagination of the small white minority who aspired to total power over their world.²⁵ Picton’s harsh rule must be placed, then, within broader shifts in and challenges to the practice of colonial and domestic power. The chapter addresses a series of interrelated themes, concerning colonial violence and the exercise of power, the sanction of law, conflict over the rights of British subjects, and norms of governance. The sheer violence of Picton’s rule reminds us of the inherent violence of colonialism in the West Indies. In most basic terms, order relied on solidarity among whites, neutralizing the opposition of free persons of African descent – in Trinidad they actually outnumbered whites – and keeping the enslaved subdued by means of physical and psychological coercion.²⁶ As a newly conquered territory subject to Spanish rather than British law, without a legislative assembly or constitutional guarantees such as trial by jury, Trinidad offered an extreme example of a more general problem of how to define legitimate modes of colonial governance. Rule of law appeared to slip between the cracks of legal pluralism. Sheltered by the silence of the colonial frontier – a pervasive

²⁵ For the broader context, see the essays in David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²⁶ On the causal violence on the ground, and the relationship between colonial violence and law, see Richard Price, “One Big Thing: Britain, its Empire, and their Imperial Culture,” *JBS*, 45 (2006): 602–27, at 626; Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice: White Violence and the Rule of Law in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jock MacCulloch, “Empire and Violence, 1900–1939,” in Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 220–39.

condition of colonialism – Picton’s lawless regime hardly registered at “home”; in fact, ministers commended the military order that had been brought to the new colony. Only with the breach in the essential solidarities of white rule did colonial silence turn to metropolitan scandal. The breakdown was itself the product of alienated British subjects (“subversive” elements according to Picton), mainly merchants, shop-keepers, and professionals, who demanded the extension of British law and constitutional liberties to Trinidad.

Once called upon to mount a public defense of his ruling practice, Picton’s justificatory narrative presented a central principle of imperial sovereignty: the rule of extreme necessity or emergency, whereby the rule of law stood suspended or without force.²⁷ The clash between Fullarton and Picton thus went to the heart of some of the most troubling aspects of colonialism, including the sanction of extra-legal violence, the status of rule of law, and imperatives of power. Rather than reconstruct the short, disastrous history of the Trinidad commission that superseded Picton’s personal rule (the former governor was retained as second commissioner), Chapter 4 turns to the narratives produced by rival camps, and particularly by the two main antagonists. Fullarton described the pre-existing “reign of terror” that he discovered at Trinidad, while he saw his own policy of “conciliation,” humane government, and reform undermined by Picton and a set of ruthless planters. In contrast, Picton portrayed his fellow commissioner as a meddling “philanthropist,” whose enlightened theories and innovations placed the colony at risk; Fullarton was a metropolitan gentleman out of touch with the realities of slave society in the West Indies, sent out to destroy his own hard-won achievement and reputation. Other stories circulated. While we may think of colonial authority as exercised within the public realm, practitioners of the “new” imperial history have stressed the political stakes attached to the private sphere, particularly to the unequal and fraught dynamics of interracial intimacies, seen as domains of exclusion and difference.²⁸ “Ruling narratives” also informed on relations of colonial domestic space. People spoke of two discrepant households and two women – Fullarton’s wife, Marianne, and Picton’s colored mistress,

²⁷ Nasser Hussain, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), chap. 1. See also Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 63–72; Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chap. 7.

²⁸ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), particularly the editors’ introduction, “The Politics of Intimacy in the Age of Empire,” 1–28.

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Rosette Smith – who transgressed fragile codes of gender and racial hierarchy. In the case of Trinidad, the conflict that emerged between two gentlemen of empire involved more than strictly matters of public policy. The feud over political reputations illustrated how codes of elite masculinity and the ordering of domestic life were reconfigured within colonial settings, and the uncertainty involved in securing British identities abroad. In both cases, the management of their respective households produced controversy.

The Caribbean was a world in motion. Within this zone of mobility, Trinidad distinguished itself as a refuge for an extraordinary mixture of people. To this cosmopolitan society came the mysterious Pierre Franc McCallum, who wrote the most comprehensive contemporary history of the first years of British rule. Chapter 5, “The radical underworld goes colonial,” focuses on the author and his book *Travels in Trinidad* (1805). McCallum was a person with many faces – Scottish Highlander with a French name, Grub Street journalist, scandalmonger, ghostwriter, and blackmailer, informer and spy, traveler and man of the seas, student of the law, and democrat. He moved within the networks linking metropolitan radicalism to a trans-Atlantic world of radicals, sailors, displaced workers, and enslaved Africans.²⁹ On Trinidad, he made cause with the British opposition to Picton; he fitted comfortably into Port of Spain’s own radical underworld. During his three-month stay – before he was banished – McCallum composed his manuscript, which he managed to smuggle off the island. In itself a literary scandal, the book’s title, like its author, disguised its real purpose; it was anything but a standard travel record. Surveillance and counter-surveillance play major parts in McCallum’s narrative, reflecting both local conditions and the spirit of the age. Democratic movements and ideas of revolution challenged the *anciens régimes* of Europe, producing a culture of suspicion and a pervasive language of conspiracy, betrayal, and intrigue.³⁰ Colonial order demanded its own brand of surveillance, and produced its own suspicions and conspiracies, particularly within the slave societies of the West Indies. Subversion was in the air. McCallum was determined to expose the tyranny of British colonial rule to metropolitan view. He identified with Louisa Calderon as an ill-used British subject, attended Picton’s trial at King’s Bench, and published his own account of the proceedings.

²⁹ For these networks, see Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 2000).

³⁰ John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), introduction.