

# 1 Politics of colonial sensation

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Within a month of the news of Britain's capture of Trinidad having reached London, Covent Garden theater registered the victory. On May 11, 1797, the career of the opera *Abroad and at Home* was interrupted by the performance of "A New Musical, Dramatic Spectacle, called The Surrender of Trinidad or, Safe Moor'd At Last."<sup>1</sup> The theater provided a venue for empire's penetration of metropolitan culture. Events of the day, particularly the war with France and its allies, were quickly brought to the stage. These were desperate times for Britons, abroad and at home. The day following the first performance of *Surrender of Trinidad*, the mass naval mutiny at Spithead spread to the royal fleet at the Nore, threatening to leave British shores unprotected from French invasion. The same number of the *True Briton* which carried news of a British fleet transporting troops under the command of General Sir Ralph Abercromby as poised to attack Trinidad, reported Victor Hugues, the French revolutionary commissioner based on Guadeloupe, as ready to invade the British island of Dominica at the first opportunity.<sup>2</sup> By this time, moreover, it was clear to the government that Britain would abandon its four-year occupation of the revolutionary island of Saint-Domingue, ending an operation that proved staggeringly expensive in terms of monetary funds and military lives.

*Surrender of Trinidad* offered audiences some patriotic relief. As a one-act after-piece, it was described as "a hasty production" composed by John Cartwright Cross; the play enjoyed a popular run. In dramatic dialogue and song, the piece celebrated the recent naval engagement in which Britain captured the island of Trinidad from Spain, featuring "a Representation of the Conflagration of the Spanish Fleet."<sup>3</sup> The play

<sup>1</sup> *True Briton*, May 1, 1797, 1; *Monthly Visitor*, May 1797, 454, and June 1797, 539. I am most grateful to Jenna Gibbs for directing my attention to this play and providing me with references to its performance.

<sup>2</sup> *True Briton*, Apr. 18, 1797.

<sup>3</sup> *Monthly Mirror*, June 1797, 370; *True Briton*, May 1, 1797, 1.

reflected the introduction of hybrid genres, combining music and drama, to London's licensed theaters and the turn to patriotic melodrama as regular fare. The same month as the piece was first performed, Covent Garden staged the nationalist *Britons Aroused!*, followed several months later by the melodramatic *England's Glory*. By 1797 loyalist order had been imposed on the theater and its socially diverse audience.<sup>4</sup> *Surrender of Trinidad* opens on the forecastle of a British man of war with the ship's Captain Blueline rousing his crew to lift their mugs of grog and drink a toast, "Come, Lads, success to our Expedition," to which Jack Rattling responds, "And to every expedition old England's honour is concerned in." Jack gives the character of the common British sailor a patriotic boost, declaring himself willing to die for England: "Why then let 'em say as I'm sow'd up in my hammock, there goes a true shipmate."<sup>5</sup> The melodrama's plot turns on the plight of the sailor William and his true love Susan, who followed him to war but whose vessel was captured by the enemy off Martinique. Having fallen into Spanish hands, poor Susan, who loves both her country and William, says, "I'd fight for one, and die for the other," languishes in Spanish captivity. In scene 3, "Inside Prison. A door in the centre leading to an interior Dungeon," Susan continues to resist the sexual advances of the wicked jailor, Gasper, who is resolved to have his way with her. The heartless blackguard delights that "she is now in my power." The comic, black-faced character Cymbalo comes to the rescue.<sup>6</sup> He tells Gasper, "Oh! Your heart blacker dan poor Negro's face." In a somewhat muddled scene, Cymbalo and Susan, disguised like her black companion in native garb, effect their escape from prison and the lascivious Spaniard's clutches. In the final scene, the Spanish fleet burns in the background, as Trinidad's black soldiers drop their arms when ordered to attack the British. The governor of the island surrenders the garrison; William and Susan embrace; and Captain Blueline closes with a paean to British successes as a harbinger to peace.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Jenna Marie Gibbs, "Performing the Temple of Liberty: Slavery, Rights, and Revolution in the Transatlantic Theater," Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles (2008), 284–309; Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performances, Politics, and Society, 1793–1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> For the image of Jack Tar in this period, see Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750–1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), chap. 4.

<sup>6</sup> For blacking up, and "blacks" as comic figures, see Felicity A. Nussbaum, "The Theatre of Empire: Racial Counterfeit, Racial Realism," in Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 71–90.

<sup>7</sup> A copy of the play can be found in the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, Larpent Ms. 1116, and is also available on the microfilm "Three Centuries of English and American Plays, 1500–1830."

*Surrender of Trinidad* was clearly not a sophisticated drama; it was meant to provide light entertainment, music and spectacle, to round out an evening at Covent Garden. The after-piece allayed the tensions of war, empire, racial violence, and the insurgent challenge of democrats at home and abroad. In this light fantasy, common sailors went cheerfully into battle; people with black faces, in either the comic figure of Cymbalo or African soldiers who refuse to fight against the British, pose no threat, and no demands are made for their freedom; lovers separated by war are re-united; and evil is shifted onto the Gothic figure of the Spanish jailor intent on violating the sexual purity of an English woman. In the theater, the audience might at least briefly suspend its disbelief.

### In King's Bench

Nearly a decade later, a different sort of performance opened in the court of King's Bench, at Westminster Hall. Two days after the funeral of William Pitt, on February 24, 1806, the case of General Thomas Picton came before Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough and a special jury. Picton had been the first British governor of Trinidad. He was indicted for a misdemeanor, "in causing the Torture to be inflicted upon Luisa Calderon, a free Mulata" in 1801. The young girl whose torture brought the former governor to trial and whose case became a *cause célèbre* now appears at the fringes of British history, given a walk-on part in histories of Trinidad.<sup>8</sup> Picton is generally remembered not as a colonial governor but for his role in the Peninsular campaign and as the highest-ranking officer killed at the battle of Waterloo; his portrait hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, and his heroic death is commemorated by a statue in St. Paul's Cathedral (see Figure 1).<sup>9</sup>

This chapter returns to Picton's trial at King's Bench and to Calderon's cause with a purpose that goes beyond the obligation of retelling. We are interested in how this instance of colonial misrule came "home." We are after the conditions of this story's telling, its fashioning, circulation, and entangling with other stories and texts, and with asking how it worked most deeply on contemporary sensibilities. Moreover, if its absence from Britain's historical narrative is emblematic of the recording of that history,

<sup>8</sup> Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *Beyond Boundaries: The Intellectual Tradition of Trinidad and Tobago in the Nineteenth Century* (Wellesley and Boston, MA: Calaloux, 2003), 11–21, marks the exception; see also Daniel Alan Livesay, "Children of Uncertain Fortune: Mixed-Race Migration from the West Indies to Britain, 1750–1820," Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan (2010), 355–72.

<sup>9</sup> H. B. Robinson, *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton*, 2 vols. (1835); Robert Havard, *Wellington's Welsh General: A Life of Sir Thomas Picton* (Aurum, 1996).



1 Statue of General Sir Thomas Picton, St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

the brief sensation created by Picton's trial also reveals pertinent truths. In current debates over how aware or oblivious ordinary British people were of their empire, it is worth remarking on the recurrent scandal of empire as a critical way in which empire returned to haunt metropolitan imaginings.<sup>10</sup> Although distorting in its overwrought emphasis on the singularity of abuse, colonial scandal could unsettle distinctions thought to set Britain off from less civilized spaces, underscoring the disjunction between a national self-image of humane governance and the realities of colonial rule. As such, Calderon's cause represents but one episode in the long and occasional history of colonial sensation, one fragmentary vision of inhumanity.<sup>11</sup> The case, and its broader context, reminds us (if we need reminding) of the violence of empire and of the asymmetrical ordering of

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Culture, and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Compare Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire," in Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–31.

<sup>11</sup> For the most sustained and important of colonial scandals, see Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

exchanges between metropole and colony.<sup>12</sup> Simultaneously, this particular “exchange” points to the uncertainties of British rule in the Caribbean and metropolitan anxieties about the exercise of that rule. Publicity produced by Picton’s trial for torturing Louisa Calderon exhibited colonial injustice for a domestic public shielded from the casual, day-to-day violence of empire.<sup>13</sup> If, as Partha Chatterjee observes, metropolitan power was founded on “a rule of colonial difference,” the rule of difference, and the hierarchy of categories on which difference was based, often proved unstable.<sup>14</sup> This particular episode of colonial sensation illuminates most forcefully the discordant tangling of cultural idioms and the juxtapositions of conflicting versions of law, rights, and authority that challenged the maintenance and full recovery of critical markers of difference.

The brief background to the trial is as follows. In 1797 Colonel Picton had been placed in charge of Trinidad after the island’s conquest; in 1801, as the island was ceded to Britain, he was appointed civil governor and promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. Picton and his subordinates operated on a lawless frontier thrown into further confusion by war, revolution, and the uncertain fate of the island. Among the uncertainties loomed the question of what constitutional or legal guarantees pertained to inhabitants in a territory newly seized by Britain, but where Spanish law remained in force. On his assumption of power, Picton was advised that the whole power of government was, in effect, combined in his office.<sup>15</sup> In summer 1802, however, the government decided to replace Picton as governor of Trinidad with a three-man commission headed by Colonel William Fullarton, with Picton retained as second commissioner. Fullarton and Picton clashed violently over matters of colonial governance and the administration of

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Christopher Tomlins, “Law’s Wilderness: The Discourse of English Colonizing, the Violence of Intrusion, and the Failures of American History,” and Richard Price, “Dialogical Encounters in a Space of Death,” both in John Smolenski and Thomas J. Humphrey, eds., *New World Orders: Violence, Sanction, and Authority in the Colonial Americas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 21–46, 47–65.

<sup>13</sup> See Anupama Rao and Steven Pierce, “Discipline and the Other Body: Humanitarianism, Violence, and Colonial Exception,” in Steven Pierce and Anupama Rao, eds., *Discipline and the Other Body: Correction, Corporeality, Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), particularly 19–23; Richard Price, “One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture,” *JBS*, 45 (2006): 602–27, particularly 622, 626–27.

<sup>14</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>15</sup> See James Millette, *Society and Politics in Colonial Trinidad* (Port of Spain and London: Omega and Zed, 1985), pt. 2, for a full account of Picton’s rule.

justice. Fullarton was responsible for bringing his fellow commissioner before the Privy Council on capital charges. The conflict between the two men, and among their supporters, produced a minor pamphlet war, resulting in a series of libel cases. With Fullarton bringing charges against Picton, the chaos of the Caribbean, and rivalries born there, spread to the imperial core.

The path to trial was complicated. The case against Picton for torture first appeared in King's Bench in 1804, but was sent on a writ of mandamus to Port of Spain for further information.<sup>16</sup> The trial, however, was itself a residue of a larger cause, one element in a multi-layered legal proceeding. The case behind the case, the real case as it were, was for twenty-nine counts of death "unlawfully inflicted," which Fullarton brought under an Henrician statute (33 Hen. VIII c. 23), designed to try persons for either treason or murder committed outside the realm.<sup>17</sup> In November 1803, Picton was taken into state custody in order to face charges set before the Privy Council.<sup>18</sup> In such cases, the Privy Council acted solely as an investigative body, with powers to inquire into offenses against the government and to commit offenders for trial in some other court. As Calderon's case involved torture rather than murder, it was quickly separated from the principal charges and transferred to King's Bench, where Picton was charged under the recently modified Colonial Governors Act (42 Geo. III c. 58).<sup>19</sup> He was the first colonial official tried under the revised and seldom-used statute, which allowed the government to try colonial officials in either the locality of the offense or in England.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> A writ of mandamus is an order, most often pertaining to an infringement of a public right or duty, directing an inferior court to do something beyond the ordinary course of legal action.

<sup>17</sup> *Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (1810–28), vol. III, 823–24.

<sup>18</sup> See William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979; first published 1765–69), vol. I, 228–32.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Roberts-Wray, *Commonwealth and Colonial Law* (New York and Washington, DC: Praeger, 1966), 312–13; R. W. Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power: Victorian Empire and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 380–81. Under this law, the option to try executive officials in England did not apply to a felony charge; thus Picton was charged with a misdemeanor.

<sup>20</sup> As well as full press coverage, we have at least four pamphlet accounts of the trial. The most complete records are published in *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 226–960: "Proceedings before the King's Bench, in the Case of Thomas Picton, Esq . . . 1804–1812." *ST* relies heavily on the most complete contemporary trial text, *The Trial of Governor T. Picton, for Inflicting the Torture on Louisa Calderon*, published by B. Crosby (1806). In addition, there is a pamphlet edition of the mandamus proceedings at Port of Spain in 1805, and manuscript records pertaining to these proceedings in KB 33/10/1.

Pursued under three different administrations, the Privy Council's proceedings dealing with the most serious charges dragged on from December 1803 to January 1807, when Picton was finally released from all charges and from his enormous bail of £40,000.<sup>21</sup> Among the list of death penalties administered without trial, the most serious (at least in the minds of privy councillors) was Picton's decision to hang a young artillery soldier, Hugh Gallagher, without court-martial proceedings. To comprehend the seriousness of Picton's situation, we need only note the fate of Joseph Wall. The year before Picton's own arrest, the former governor of the West African slave-trading base of Goree had been found guilty at King's Bench under the same sixteenth-century statute for having had a soldier flogged to death without court martial. An estimated nearly 60,000 spectators crowded outside Newgate prison to witness his execution.<sup>22</sup> It was Wall's case that was cited as clear precedent for bringing Picton to justice; no doubt it was Wall's end that kept Picton awake at night.<sup>23</sup>

This brings us back to King's Bench. On the day of the trial, the court was reported to have been "extremely crowded, among whom were a number of ladies"; the proceedings lasted from 9 a.m. to just after 7 p.m.<sup>24</sup> The trial was notable for several reasons. Firstly, since Picton was never brought to court on the more serious charges, the trial acquired significance as the occasion for bringing him to justice, opening the case's broader issues to full public review. As noted in the press, the full case against Picton was "one of the most important to our national character and honour which has occurred for a vast number of years."<sup>25</sup> Secondly, Picton was found guilty, although he was never sentenced. Thirdly, the importance of the case was signaled by the role of William Garrow, a barrister renowned for his courtroom skills, who led the prosecution.<sup>26</sup> The prosecution was officially brought and financed by the government, although Fullarton worked behind the scenes, securing

<sup>21</sup> Privy Council proceedings left a huge cache of documents at PC 1/3557.

<sup>22</sup> *The Authentic Trial of Joseph Wall, Esq. . . for the Wilful Murder of Benjamin Armstrong* (n.d., c. 1802); *The Genuine and Impartial Memoirs of Governor Wall . . . Exhibiting Details of Other Unparalleled [sic] Cruelties . . . by a Military Gentleman* (1802), 38–39, estimate of crowd.

<sup>23</sup> It was Wall's case that occasioned Parliament's modification of the never-used Colonial Governors Act (11 & 12 Will. III c. 12) in 1802.

<sup>24</sup> *Trial of Thomas Picton . . . Late Governor of the Island of Trinidad for Torturing Louisa Calderon . . . Taken in Short-Hand by Pierre F McCallum, Esq.* (1806), 31; *Edinburgh Advertiser*, Feb. 26, 1806, 133. The importance of the trial was widely noted; see *Times*, Feb. 26, 1806, 3–4; *MC*, Feb. 25, 1806, 3; *St. James Chronicle*, Feb. 25–27, 1806, 2; *Courier*, Feb. 25 and 26, 1806, 3, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Daily Advertiser and Oracle*, Dec. 26, 1803, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Garrow took over the case from Thomas Erskine.

witnesses from Trinidad. Fourthly, the case raised questions about whether Spanish or British law pertained following the British conquest of Trinidad. And if, indeed, Spanish law were appropriate, did the legal code sanction torture and under what specific conditions? Finally, as we will see, the case posed intriguing questions about relations of gender, sexuality, race, and the uncertainties of colonial rule.

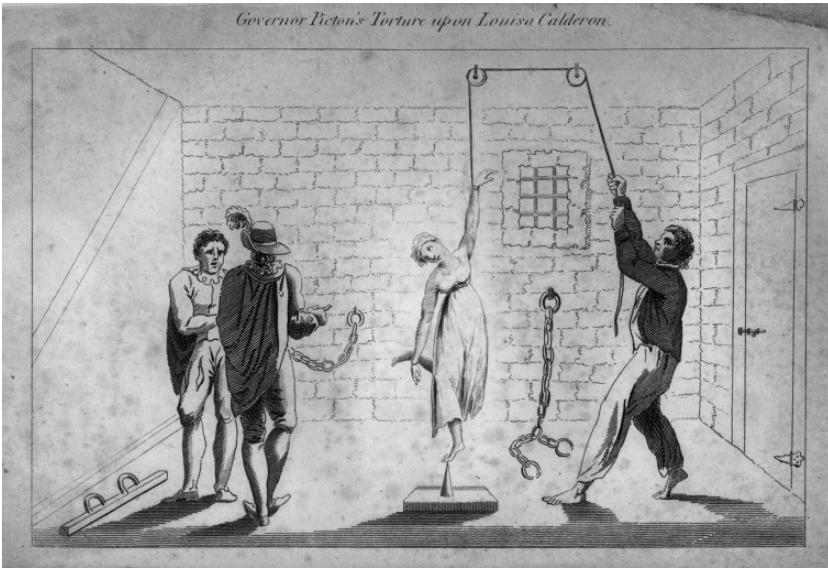
So what was the case against Picton? Garrow opened by expressing his outrage that Picton as “representative of our sovereign, and governor of one of our colonial dependencies,” and thus “bound to protect his fellow-subjects,” had “disgraced the country to which he was born.” “British character” had been “stained” by the infliction of the cruelties of torture. Garrow maintained that after the British conquest of Trinidad Spanish laws were to be continued, but that these laws were “most cruelly perverted to gratify the savage tyrannical disposition to oppress his Majesty’s subjects.”<sup>27</sup> Against Picton’s perversion of British character, Garrow carefully introduced the character of Louisa Calderon. At the tender age of ten or eleven she had been “seduced” by Pedro Ruiz “to live with him as his mistress.” Garrow explained to the court that although such conduct “may to us in this country appear singular . . . yet in that hot climate where the puberty of females is much accelerated, it is common for them to become mothers frequently at the age of twelve; at that early period they either marry, or enter into a state of concubinage.” While living with Ruiz, Calderon “was engaged in an intrigue” with one Pedro Gonzalez. She provided Gonzalez with access to Ruiz’s house, allowing him to rob Ruiz of a substantial amount of cash.<sup>28</sup> Both Gonzalez and Calderon were taken into custody. Under questioning she refused to implicate Gonzalez in the robbery, and on the request of the interrogating *alcalde* or magistrate, Saint Hilaire Begorrat, Picton personally signed the infamous order, “*Inflict the torture upon Luisa Calderon.*”<sup>29</sup> She was first brought to the room of torture, and shown two or three female slaves who “were to undergo the same severities, on a charge of sorcery and witchcraft.” “Here then,” Garrow continued, “we behold a British governor for the first time introducing torture into a British settlement, as a punishment for sorcery and witchcraft, and as a means of extorting [a] confession from a person under accusation.” Despite this demonstration,

<sup>27</sup> [P. F. McCallum], *Trial of Thomas Picton . . . Late Governor of the Island of Trinidad for Torturing Louisa Calderon* (1806), 14.

<sup>28</sup> William Fullarton, *A Refutation of the Pamphlet which Colonel Picton Lately Addressed to Lord Hobart* (1805), 27, refers to Ruiz as “an agent of Colonel Picton’s.”

<sup>29</sup> Begorrat was among the island’s largest and most influential planters.





2 Louisa Calderon on the picquet. From *The Trial of Governor T. Picton, for Inflicting the Torture on Louisa Calderon* (1806).

Calderon persisted in declaring her innocence, at which point the punishment was applied. The mode of torture was that of “picqueting.” The victim was tied by one wrist to a scaffold, her other wrist was tied to her ankle, she was then lowered by means of a pulley onto a wooden spike, the full weight of her body resting on her naked foot (see Figure 2). The punishment lasted for 53 to 54 minutes, as timed by Begorrat’s watch. According to Garrow, this was done “not from any fear that she might suffer too much, but because there was some notion of a supposed law, that the torture could not be inflicted for more than an hour.” Calderon confessed, but her confession was deemed incomplete: she gave up Gonzalez but claimed not to know where the money was hidden. The next day the torture was repeated for 24 minutes.<sup>30</sup>

“Picqueting” was a British military punishment, but Garrow claimed that it would be a libel upon the military punishment to call the torture inflicted on Calderon by the same name; rather the practice should be designated “*Pictoning*,” “that it may be described by the most horrid name by which it can be known, and be shunned as a disgrace to human nature.” Against such barbarous practice stood the real character of

<sup>30</sup> *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 451–54.

British law and history. Garrow skillfully played on the image of the common law's superiority over continental systems of justice. What was Picton's rightful duty? Garrow answered that it was to have "impressed upon the minds of the people of this new colony, a conviction of the perfect security they would acquire, of the abundant advantages they would derive from the mild, benign, and equitable spirit of British jurisprudence." He cited Blackstone's *Commentaries* to show that judicial torture – the administration of physical pain to elicit proof of a criminal act – was unknown to English law. Garrow promised to present the victim of Picton's cruelty to the jury.<sup>31</sup>

Louisa was the star witness. In a typical newspaper report, the *Sun* found that "Her appearance was extremely interesting, and her countenance, which was that of a Mulatto, extremely pre-possessing and agreeable." Other reports added that she was "dressed in white, with a turban tied on in the *costume* of the country. Her person was slender and graceful."<sup>32</sup> She was now aged around sixteen, and her testimony required two interpreters, one for Spanish and one for "the Creole corruptions." Garrow took her through the details of the case.<sup>33</sup> She was unable to say in what year, 1799 or 1800, she went to live with Ruiz, replying that she was "not used to distinguish the years in this way."<sup>34</sup> She described her arrest and the circumstances of her torture. She was told that if she did not confess who had taken Ruiz's money "the hangman Ludovigo was to put his hand upon me." She named the men present at her torture, including Begorrat, who interrogated her, Jean Baptiste Vallot, the jail keeper, and "his negro hangman" who administered the torture, and two lesser officials. Asked to give an account of her torture, "she accompanied her explanation by placing herself in the attitude she so described," demonstrating how she was bound by the wrist to the pulley ("*the left-hand, raising her*") and her right hand tied to her left ankle and her right foot lowered onto the spike. Garrow next showed her "a drawing in water colours . . . representing in striking manner her situation with the *executioner* and his attendants during the application of the torture."<sup>35</sup> She confirmed that it was an

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 453–56; Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. IV, 320–21; John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien Régime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

<sup>32</sup> *Sun*, Feb. 25, 1806, 3; *MC*, Feb. 25, 1806, 3, describes her as "genteelly dressed in white"; see also *Inhuman Torture!! Fairburn Edition of the Trial of Thomas Picton* (n.p., n.d., c. 1806), 8; William Jackson, *The New and Complete Calendar; or, Malefactor's University Register*, 8 vols. (1818), vol. VII, 313.

<sup>33</sup> See *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 456–60, for Calderon's testimony.

<sup>34</sup> *Trial of Governor T. Picton*, Crosby edn., 13. <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–16.

accurate representation. Turning to Ellenborough, Garrow remarked that he wished that his lordship's position could have allowed him to have seen "the involuntary expression of the sensations of the witness upon looking at the drawing." However, Ellenborough strongly objected to "exhibiting drawings of this nature before the jury." He allowed it to be shown only with the consent of Robert Dallas, the lead defense counsel, instructing the jury that "nobody wishes that any improper impression should be made by the drawing." Calderon told the court that she had twice fainted on the picquet: "I was totally insensible."<sup>36</sup> She was revived by Vallot applying vinegar to her nostrils. Suffering from excruciating pain, in her side and wrist, and from a badly swollen foot, she was placed in irons (the *grillos*) in a crouching position between sessions. She remained imprisoned for eight months without trial, only to be released just before Fullarton's arrival and his discovery of the inhumane prison conditions. Her testimony concluded with exhibiting the permanent marks of her torture in the form of "a seam or callus formed on both wrists."<sup>37</sup>

After presenting two witnesses from Port of Spain, Raphael Chando (an *alguacil* or constable) and Juan Montes (a military assistant to British engineers surveying the island), to confirm the details of Calderon's account of her torture and imprisonment, Garrow concluded the prosecution's presentation of evidence. Dallas opened the defense by noting that the case was not merely "novel and extraordinary," but of the greatest importance to Picton and the public at large. In judging Picton's conduct, Dallas argued, the jury must contemplate the difference between Britain and the West Indies. Britain was a country whose law had truly been called "the perfection of reason," characterized by "mildness and humanity"; the West Indies were remote, "in a distant clime and in a different circumstance," where "a system diametrically opposite" to that of Britain might prove "absolutely necessary." Louisa was redescribed as "living as a domestic in the house of Ruiz and living in a state of prostitution with him," while "indulging herself in a criminal intercourse" with Gonzalez. Dallas reminded the court that even according to the "mild and merciful law of this country," she would have met her end on the gallows; "for . . . if a domestic servant becomes a party to a robbery of this description . . . the law is invariably suffered to take its course, and the crime is expiated by an ignominious death."<sup>38</sup>

The facts that Picton had introduced the picquet to Trinidad – first to the barracks yard to discipline soldiers and two years later to the prison

<sup>36</sup> [McCallum], *Trial of Picton*, 20.

<sup>37</sup> *Trial of Governor T. Picton*, Crosby edn., 18, 21.

<sup>38</sup> *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 467–70.

chamber to torture slaves – and that he had ordered Calderon’s torture were not in dispute. Dallas stressed, however, that Begorrat had requested Picton to sign the order only after all other means had been resorted to. As it was established that Spanish law was to be continued under British rule, Picton’s case rested on proving that Spanish law sanctioned judicial torture and that in applying this law he had acted without malice. Dallas pressed the distinction between Britain and Trinidad: “You, gentleman, well know, that no two systems of jurisprudence can be more opposite, than the law of our West Indian colonies and that of the mother country.” He offered the following example. Suppose a gentleman who had held magisterial authority for many years in the island of St. Vincent was on returning to England taken into custody on charges brought by a witness who appeared in court “horribly maimed and disfigured with his nose slit and his right hand amputated” and testified that this was inflicted by the defendant for having resisted a constable “who was taking him to be flogged for having lifted his hand against some cruel task-master.” Suppose that instead of being maimed the person had been publicly executed, Dallas continued, “would not every Briton, possessing feelings and principles founded upon the law of his country, hearing that a punishment of death had been inflicted upon a man for raising his hand against a constable, instantly and emphatically exclaim, ‘The man who hath done this thing shall surely die!’” But when the defendant pointed to the law in St. Vincent, stating that a slave resisting a constable was liable to the death penalty, the judge would immediately direct an acquittal. “What is this?” Dallas asked, “not the law of Spain, but the law of an English colony, and which was passed in that colony, upon a petition to his majesty at home.”<sup>39</sup>

At issue was the Spanish law as it was to be administrated in Trinidad; a British court was required to interpret Spanish legal practice. Dallas described the island as a site of social chaos, having become a receptacle for every description of undesirable and dangerous refugee from other islands.<sup>40</sup> Picton was no civilian; a rough man of war, he had been entrusted with maintaining order amid colonial chaos. As for the form of torture itself, Dallas sought to counter the image of inhumane practice and Garrow’s “theatrical exhibition” of this practice. The mode of punishment inflicted on Calderon was exactly as described in “any Dictionary of Arts and Sciences” under the term “picquet.”<sup>41</sup> Dallas

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 467–75. <sup>40</sup> *Trial of Governor T. Picton*, Crosby edn., 46.

<sup>41</sup> Francis Grose, *Military Antiquities Respecting a History of the English Army from the Conquest to the Present*, 2 vols. (1801), vol. II, 107, describes the “picket” as used

noted, “in this land of liberty which is proverbial for the humanity of its laws, the punishment of the piquet prevails; upon whom is it inflicted? upon those brave men who shed their best blood, and risk their lives in the service and for the defence of their country.” Moreover, Spain was notorious for its repertoire of torture; set beside forms of Spanish cruelty, the picquet was a “slight” punishment.<sup>42</sup> What proved difficult was settling the precise terms of Spanish law pertaining to judicial torture in the West Indies. The defense was unable to shake the prosecution’s evidence that until Picton’s arrival no judicial torture had been practiced in Trinidad. A key witness for the defense was Archibald Gloster, Trinidad’s attorney general, a friend and supporter of Picton’s.<sup>43</sup> He was reduced to a figure of ridicule as it became clear, under Garrow’s cross-examination, that he knew little about Spanish law, conceding his inability to read Spanish without the aid of a dictionary. The coup de grace was administered by Pedro Fermín de Vargas, who was called in rebuttal. As a Colombian lawyer who had lived throughout the Spanish West Indies, he testified that he knew of no law sanctioning torture.<sup>44</sup>

The case boiled down to a single point: did the Spanish law sanction judicial torture in Trinidad? Ellenborough rejected the defense’s argument that the prosecution must show that Picton acted with malice.<sup>45</sup> As Garrow maintained in his summation, Picton should have known better. He might not be a lawyer but “he was an Englishman and governor of a British settlement” who should have asked himself what law, English or Spanish, “could justify him in making this unhappy creature his victim.” It remained for the jury to do their duty as Britons to “protect those, who by the prowess of the British arms have become your fellow-subjects; and you will show the poorest individual in the territories of England has the opportunity of bringing his oppressor, however high his rank, to answer for his misconduct before a court of justice.”<sup>46</sup> The jury quickly returned a verdict of guilty, but this was hardly the end of the story.

chiefly by the cavalry and artillery, but as largely in disuse because it “lamed and ruptured many soldiers.”

<sup>42</sup> *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 476–82. See, for example, John Marchant, and others, *Review of the Bloody Tribunal; or the Horrid Cruelties of the Inquisition, as Practised in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the East and West Indies* (Perth, 1770); J. N. Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain, 1500–1700: The Formation of a Myth* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), chap. 8.

<sup>43</sup> *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 509–14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 516–28. Vargas was an adjunct to Fullarton and an associate of Miranda.

<sup>45</sup> The second trial reversed the findings of the first, showing that Spanish law did indeed sanction torture and thus opening the way for a special verdict.

<sup>46</sup> *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 528–36.

Dallas immediately moved for a new trial. A case that had begun with Calderon's torture in 1801, that had first appeared in King's Bench in 1804, that had been sent on mandamus to Port of Spain, and returned to King's Bench in 1806, was retried two years later resulting in a perplexing special verdict, finding torture to be legal in Trinidad at the cession of the island to Britain and Picton not to have been influenced by malice against Calderon, "independent of the illegality of the act" as based on British law.<sup>47</sup> But the case refused to come entirely to rest as legal argument on the special verdict continued through the summer of 1810. In Hilary term 1812, the court ordered the defendant's recognizances respited until further ordered; the case was left unresolved.<sup>48</sup> According to a note in *State Trials*, had the court delivered a judgment it would probably have gone against Picton, but the punishment would have been "so slight, and so little commensurate with the magnitude of the questions embraced by the case, as to have reflected but little credit upon the prosecution." Picton never received sentence on the verdict, although the suit had cost him £7,000.<sup>49</sup>

### Louisa's cause

What kind of cause was Louisa Calderon? At one level, Picton's case and the scandal surrounding his regime in Trinidad were indicative of intense personal rivalries. Indeed, personal vendettas pursued within a gentlemanly elite provided a common source for revealing colonial wrongdoing. As Dallas told the court, Colonel Fullarton was the real prosecutor. Calderon was a pawn in someone else's political game. Yet important issues were at stake. Among other things, the case illustrated the difficulty of maintaining a clear separation between metropolitan and colonial codes of justice, between zones of law and violence.<sup>50</sup> Louisa's cause played subversively with settled fictions of British identity. Her own in-betweenness ramified this subversion of categories. What was her legal status; was she to be accorded the rights of a British subject? The case raised troubling questions. If British national character was defined in contradistinction to the character of other European nations as well as

<sup>47</sup> At the second trial, Ellenborough cited precedent to demonstrate that the crown had no authority to continue torture as a mode of interrogation or punishment. *ST*, vol. XXX, col. 865.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 539–960; *In the King's Bench, the King against Picton, Mr. Dallas's Speech on the Motion for a New Trial in the Case of Louisa Calderon* (1808).

<sup>49</sup> Robinson, *Memoirs*, vol. I, 228.

<sup>50</sup> See Eliga H. Gould, "Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772," *WMQ*, 60 (2003): 471–510.

those less civilized parts of the world available for colonial conquest, how did such views square with Picton's torture of Calderon? What did it say about England's constitutional superiority in the universe of nations, if a British governor rather than the Spanish brought judicial torture to Trinidad? What did it say about British enlightenment, of Protestantism's triumph over Catholic superstition, if Picton believed in the danger posed by enslaved women practicing witchcraft and necromancy?

Part of the dilemma of Picton's defense was that while stressing the geographical, legal, and moral distance separating England from Trinidad, Dallas unwittingly drew Trinidad closer to "home." In order to counter accusations of Picton's inhumanity, Dallas compared the relative mildness of Calderon's torture and imprisonment with the certain death that she and Gonzalez would have faced in London for the same crime.<sup>51</sup> In addition, there was nothing unusual or foreign about her torture; picqueting was a standard punishment meted out to brave British soldiers. Indeed, Picton had first erected the picquet in Trinidad to discipline his own troops. This line of reasoning, meant to mitigate Picton's actions, had the troubling effect of demonstrating the severity of Britain's own civil and martial law. Nor did the shocking example from St. Vincent of the poor man with his slit nose and amputated hand present Britain as a benign colonial power; indeed, British slave laws were generally harsher than those of either Spain or France.<sup>52</sup>

The trial rehearsed many of the general anxieties of critics of British colonialism in the West Indies. The case exploited various representational modes used by humanitarians and abolitionists to produce sympathy for the oppressed, as well as for portraying the decadence of the Caribbean. Louisa was not a slave, but she was a woman of color who, according to her sympathizers, had been forced into child prostitution. Much evidence had been produced during the investigation at Port of Spain to determine her exact age and stage of physical development at the time of her torture, since under Spanish law no person under fourteen could be made subject to the "question." So, for example, Juana Talavera, Gonzalez's wife, testified that when Louisa went to live with Ruiz, "she was not a woman, [she] had no breasts."<sup>53</sup> In contrast to this view, Picton and his friends were outraged by portrayals of Calderon

<sup>51</sup> Gonzalez was imprisoned, fined, and then banished from Trinidad.

<sup>52</sup> E. V. Goveia, *The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century* (Mona: Caribbean Universities Press, 1970), particularly 19–35; also Diana Paton, "Punishment, Crime, and the Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," *JSH*, 34 (2001): 923–54.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Picton, *Evidence Taken at Port of Spain . . . in the Case of Luisa Calderon . . . with a Letter Addressed to Sir Samuel Hood* (1806), 61; *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 231–450, for the full mandamus hearings.

as an innocent victim of suffering. Picton protested that a specious appeal had been made to the “humanity of the public, in favour of a common Mulatto prostitute, of the vilest class and most corrupt morals,” who had formed “a criminal connection with a Sambo, or Negro” whom she introduced into the household of her partner, “an industrious tradesman,” “to pollute his bed” and rob him of his life savings. According to Begorrat, her fainting was affected: two days after her torture, Calderon walked to the scene of the crime without trouble: “she was smoking a segar all the time.”<sup>54</sup>

Rivalry between two men was played out around the figure of a woman of color; her racialized sexuality went to the heart of colonial sensation. In the role of either prostitute or victim of pain, Calderon’s body became a site of contention, generating many of the terms of the case. In turn, the atrocities against slaves in Trinidad were condensed and displaced onto the spectacle of Calderon’s martyred body. By a function of proximity, her torture worked to remind a British public of the horrors of colonial slavery. A newspaper report reminded readers that in order “to make this terror [of torture] irresistible, they brought a negroe to practice upon to shew her what she was to expect.”<sup>55</sup> “Sensation,” particularly the portrayal of intense or excited feelings, was crucial to producing humanitarian sympathy, a collective concern for distant others. As a commercialized genre, sensation came into its own in the Victorian period, but sensation as a politics of feelings had a long pre-history, one closely linked to colonial rule, helping to identify those subjects worthy of being regarded as human. It obviously shared overlapping meanings with the cult of sensibility, sentimentalism, humanitarianism, romantic notions of sympathy, and the aesthetics of the sublime; sentimental rhetoric and sensational depictions of suffering figured prominently in abolitionist discourse.<sup>56</sup>

Particularly important was the way in which Louisa “spoke” to the court. Although she gave formal testimony through interpreters, the

<sup>54</sup> Picton, *Evidence Taken at Port of Spain*, vi, 84; see also *AJR*, 30 (July 1808): 273.

<sup>55</sup> *Sun*, Feb. 25, 1806, 3.

<sup>56</sup> See, in particular, G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Julie Ellison, *Cato’s Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), particularly 1–13; Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760–1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* (New York: Norton, 2007), chaps. 1 and 2; Alan Lester, “Obtaining the ‘due observance of justice’: The Geographies of Colonial Humanitarianism,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 20 (2002): 277–93.



spectacle of torture, the untranslatable, imagined measure of pain and human suffering was perhaps more important to the jury than anything she said. As Elaine Scarry has movingly demonstrated, the pain of torture is “language-destroying.”<sup>57</sup> In effect, at trial and through the publication of trial texts, the prosecution sought to recover the voice of pain through presence, the bodily presence of Louisa Calderon. Garrow had her reenact her torture, and then re-engage her feelings when shown the drawing of the torture scene, generating her “involuntary” expression of “sensations.” By having her perform her torture and by providing visual representation to the court, the inexpressible was given extra-linguistic expression, the unshareable was shared. As spectacle, Louisa communicated directly to the court, and her gestures required no translators. The spectacle of pain and violence testified to Picton’s barbarity.

In fact, Garrow’s presentation of the drawing to the jury was among the proceedings’ most controversial aspects. Dallas had allowed the drawing to be presented in court against Ellenborough’s better judgment.<sup>58</sup> It is worth pausing to note the court’s unease about the visual production of sensations, particularly given that spectacle and performance were hardly absent from British legal culture. The requirement that criminal defendants conduct their own case, which prevailed until the eighteenth century, was partially rooted in the belief that truth was revealed by the defendant’s demeanor.<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, later in the same year of 1806 when Samuel Whitbread introduced impeachment charges against Lord Melville (the former Henry Dundas) to the House of Lords, he raised just this point, citing Calderon as his example. He recollected that in a recent case, “the sudden pang and shrug of horror upon seeing the representation of a witness’s former suffering” gave “proof more strong than words can convey of the truth of the story that unhappy female was about to relate.”<sup>60</sup> We must presume that Ellenborough’s displeasure derived from the way in which sensation was being appropriated and produced in court – perhaps from a regard for the convention that

<sup>57</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4–5, 35. See also Kathleen Canning, “The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History,” *Gender & History*, 11 (1999): 499–513.

<sup>58</sup> *ST*, vol. XXX, cols. 468–9, 480–1; *Trial of Governor T. Picton*, Crosby edn., 34, 51.

<sup>59</sup> J. M. Beattie, “Scales of Justice: Defense Counsel and the English Criminal Trial in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Law and History Review*, 9 (1991): 221–67; John H. Langbein, “The Criminal Trial before Lawyers,” *University of Chicago Law Review*, 45 (1978): 263–316.

<sup>60</sup> *The Trial, by Impeachment, of Henry Lord Viscount Melville, for High Crimes and Misdemeanors, before the House of Peers* (Edinburgh, 1806), 291; *ST*, vol. XXIX, cols. 1428–29.

attorneys exercise restraint in prosecuting criminal charges.<sup>61</sup> He may also have been distressed by how the culture of the street circulated in and out of King's Bench. Picton had returned to London in October 1803 to find himself vilified in the street and in the public press as "the blood-stained Governor of Trinidad." Before the case came to trial, "coloured drawings were paraded through the streets, calling forth the public commiseration, by exhibiting the '*picture of the girl, pulley, spike, and the grillos*.'"<sup>62</sup> The most complete version of the trial, Crosby's, reproduced the actual drawing that Garrow presented in court. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* decried this reproduction "as a contempt of court," in light of Ellenborough's expressed hope that it not be shown out of doors. "Nor can we forbear noticing, the inflammatory and malignant placards which disgrace the walls of this metropolis, announcing the shop where this trial is to be sold."<sup>63</sup>

One of Picton's most vehement supporters, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Alured Draper, told readers that he had rushed his own *Address to the British Public* into print in order to counter the effect created by widespread circulation in London of the drawing of Louisa which "so irritated and prejudiced the temper and opinions of the larger part of the community, the middling and lower classes, and has been turned to such vulgar and dishonorable purposes by the enemies of Colonel Picton." Moreover, the placards exhibiting her innocence and the cruelty of her torture circulated outside the metropolis, having been "exported in wagon loads in octavos, duodecimos, and quartos cut down, in pamphlets, all at reduced prices, to wholesale and retail dealers in the country."<sup>64</sup> Draper wondered sarcastically "at the wonderful art and dexterity" with which Garrow played the court, springing the drawing on his audience: "The *effect* was so sudden, so unexpected, so electric, so full of all necessary qualities to call forth surprise, astonishment, and 'delightful horror,' that Burke himself, if he were alive, would have gone to school again, and taken a lecture from him to add to the next edition of his 'Sublime and Beautiful.'"<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See Allyson N. May, *The Bar and the Old Bailey, 1750–1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 99–105.

<sup>62</sup> Robinson, *Memoirs of Picton*, vol. I, 139–42.

<sup>63</sup> *AJR*, 23 (Apr. 1806): 428; also *ibid.*, 24 (Aug. 1806), appendix, 508.

<sup>64</sup> Edward Alured Draper, *An Address to the British Public, on the Case of Brigadier-General Picton* (1806), ix, 159. For the extensive market in cheaper prints, see Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 19–21; see also Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 42–43, for the "placarding system."

<sup>65</sup> Draper, *Address*, xi–xii.

Draper's catalogue of terms – “sudden,” “unexpected,” “electric,” “surprise,” “astonishment,” “delightful horror,” “sublime and beautiful” – directs us to the Gothic. In the complaints of Picton and his defenders, a concern can be seen about how, as well as for whom, sensations were being produced. At stake was the very mode of expression; Calderon's cause was suspect because of its production of emotional excess, permitting intense feelings to overwhelm the intellect. According to its critics, this was precisely what was wrong with the Gothic mode. This summoning of emotional excess contrasted to the balance required by the culture of polite sensibility, which, by the 1790s, had itself become increasingly suspect as effeminate and foreign.<sup>66</sup> The meaning of the word “sensation” was itself in flux, shifting from notions of sensory perception to violent emotions that might overwhelm persons and engulf communities.<sup>67</sup> The success of Gothic drama as mass art depended on spectacular stage effects, on new techniques of lighting, mood music, and a particular style of acting.<sup>68</sup> Louisa and her story were spectacular in design and effect. The politics of Gothic representation are best viewed as neither inherently conservative nor revolutionary.<sup>69</sup> Poised between “high” and “low” culture, dealing often with confrontations between the high and the low, the Gothic possessed subversive potential; it was a contested genre or “domain.”<sup>70</sup>

Calderon's story was framed by familiar conventions of Gothic romance. Gothic elements were freely adapted to her case. Newspaper reports and trial texts appealed to Gothic sensibility. “While the unfortunate object of the defendant's barbarity was giving her evidence,” the *Edinburgh Advertiser* commented, “an unmoistened eye was not to be seen, and in particular when the drawing was shewn to her, which gave a

<sup>66</sup> Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, chap. 7; John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (HarperCollins, 1997), 121; Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), chap. 6.

<sup>67</sup> James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 11–13.

<sup>68</sup> Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pt. 3.

<sup>69</sup> See Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789–1830* (Longman, 1989), 49; Robert Miles, “The 1790s: the Effulgence of Gothic,” in Jerrold E. Hogle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41–62; David Worrall, “The Political Culture of Gothic Drama,” in David Punter, ed., *A Companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 94–106; Ronald Paulson, “Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution,” *English Literary History*, 48 (1981): 532–54.

<sup>70</sup> James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

representation of her sufferings, she shrunk from it with a look of horror which excited the most lively sensations.”<sup>71</sup> Similar embellishments are found throughout the press reports. As if to signal her innocence and virtue, Louisa appears “genteelly dressed in white”; in illustrations of the torture scene her complexion appears “white.” The villainous Picton wears black: “Governor Picton walked the Hall of the Four Courts, during the whole of the trial. He is a tall man, of very sallow complexion, apparently about fifty years of age, and was dressed in black.”<sup>72</sup> The description was generic. Compare it with the introduction of Schedoni, the evil monk, on the first page of Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian* (1796), pacing “behind the pillars” of a portico. “There is something too extraordinary in the appearance of this man . . . He was of a tall thin figure, bending forward from the shoulders; of a sallow complexion, and harsh features.”<sup>73</sup> As the tyrannical governor of a former Spanish island, still ruled by Spanish law, Picton translated into the persona of the Latin villain so prevalent in Gothic fiction. The Gothic villain was an “alien,” a displaced representative of what Englishness was not.<sup>74</sup>

The prison of Port of Spain, with its picquet, irons, and slaves chained on hard boards, constituted a classic Gothic space of darkness and horror, transporting contemporaries to a remote place ruled by an equally distant past. Fullarton arrived in Trinidad and uncovered the guilty secrets of Picton’s dungeon. His visit to the prison first alerted him to the horror of Picton’s inquisition; within a month of landing, he wrote to the colonial office of “the Reign of Terror” that prevailed.<sup>75</sup> In a file marked “Full Account of All Crimes and Punishments,” that Fullarton ordered to have compiled, we first encounter a description of Calderon’s punishment: “She was taken off the picquet almost lifeless so that Vallot threw vinegar on her Face and poured wine down her Throat in order to bring her to herself. She was so young at the time that she had not breasts [in the margin is written ‘no avia pechos’] but cannot tell by years how old she is.” She was imprisoned for eight months, held without trial on Picton’s authority, “sometimes loaded with three pairs of Fetters”; she now could not work “and sometimes cannot lift her hands to her head.”<sup>76</sup> The colonial archive was colored

<sup>71</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser*, Feb. 28, 1806, 133.

<sup>72</sup> *The Trial of Governor Picton, for having maliciously and with a view to oppress Louisa Calderon* (1806), 17.

<sup>73</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1796; reprinted Penguin, 2000), 5.

<sup>74</sup> Cannon Schmitt, *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), especially introduction and chap. 1.

<sup>75</sup> CO 295/4, fol. 37, Fullarton to Sullivan, Feb. 19, 1803.

<sup>76</sup> CO 295/5, fols. 72–73, Mar. 20, 1803, testimony of Louisa Calderon.

by Gothic hues. Here Louisa Calderon joined other figures of suffering. Along with slave women, accused of practicing witchcraft, necromancy, and the black art of poisoning by charms, she was imprisoned and tortured for her confession; like the common soldiers punished for infractions of military discipline, she was hoisted onto the scaffold and lowered onto the picquet's spike.

This material formed part of the charges brought against Picton to the Privy Council. Reproduced here were the horrors of Trinidad's poisoning commissions empowered to deal with the mysterious deaths of enslaved men and women on various large plantations. Thisbé was conducted before the tribunal and condemned as a sorceress. She was hanged, her head was then cut off, and her body was burnt; the following day, her severed head was fixed on a pole on the high road close to the plantation on which she had labored.<sup>77</sup> Thisbé was among a dozen or so enslaved people accused of poisoning and witchcraft who were either hanged or burnt alive on Picton's authority. Touching so closely on the brutal execution of these persons of African descent, Louisa's cause presented a colonial regime of punishment to a public possessed of metropolitan sensibilities. For Michel Foucault's genealogy, the period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was pivotal to the emergence of modern penal practice: "a few decades saw the disappearance of the tortured, dismembered, amputated body . . . The body as the major target of penal repression disappeared." Yet in slave societies established by Europeans, rather than dying out, Foucault's "gloomy festival of punishment" flourished with added force.<sup>78</sup> As Vincent Brown shows, rituals of spectacular terror – the gruesome deaths, the mutilations, defiling and exhibiting of dead bodies – aimed "to give governing authority a sacred, even supernatural dimension," allowing "the plantocracy's power to reach into the spiritual imaginations of slaves."<sup>79</sup> Yet such practices could not be safely contained, but came to haunt metropolitan as well as colonial consciousness.

At the heart of much Gothic fantasy, we find the female body – tortured, imprisoned, cloistered, caught in a labyrinth of darkness, prey to the

<sup>77</sup> William Fullarton, *Substance of the Evidence Delivered before the Lords of His Majesty's Honourable Privy Council, in the Case of Governor Picton* (Edinburgh, 1807), 64–65.

<sup>78</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 8. Compare Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 228–30; Diana Paton, *No Bond but the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780–1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 10–13.

<sup>79</sup> Vincent Brown, "Spiritual Terror and Sacred Authority in Jamaican Slave Society," *S&A*, 24 (2003): 24–53, at 27 (quotation).

villain's lust. Humanitarian discourse shared in this fascination with the tortured female body. And, as Karen Halttunen argues, the sympathetic identification of viewers and readers with the body in pain might engage what she terms "the pornography of violence." The guilty pleasure derived from others' pain was "humanitarianism's dark side."<sup>80</sup> In the case of Louisa Calderon, humanitarian sympathy was produced through a troubling fascination with her sexuality and pain.<sup>81</sup> Her case played on a fascination with the forbiddenness of colonial difference. While desired for their beauty, mulatto women signified a breaking-down of racial and sexual boundaries; they were often viewed in European travel writing as temptresses, distinguished by their lasciviousness, arrogance, and unwillingness to work.<sup>82</sup> As feminist scholars have demonstrated, European discourses on sexuality cannot be charted without reference to a "racially erotic counterpoint."<sup>83</sup> This imagined racial sexuality resisted colonial confinement; as mapped onto the bodies of white women, particularly those of the lower class, the erotically charged "other" might threaten the domestic virtue of British womanhood.<sup>84</sup> The presence of persons of African descent

<sup>80</sup> Karen Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *AHR*, 100 (1995): 303–34. See also Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Mary A. Favret, "Flogging: The Anti-Slavery Movement Writes Pornography," in Anne Janowitz, ed., *Essays and Studies 1998: Romanticism and Gender*, new series, 51 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998), 19–43.

<sup>81</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 60–61, for comments on the simultaneous appearance of Sade's pornographic works and "the tales of terror." Also see Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 212–19, which links Sade to the Black Code, importing "the plantation into the metropole."

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the Years 1774 to 1776*, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1921), 112–13; Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), chap. 2; Patricia Mohammed, "'But most of all mi love me browning': The Emergence in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Jamaica of the Mulatto Woman as the Desired," *Feminist Review*, 65 (2000): 22–48. Gothic romance also derived power from anxieties about breaking down boundaries of the female self. See Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), chap. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 5–7, and *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 41–78; Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (Routledge, 2003); Philippa Levine, "Sexuality, Gender, and Empire," in Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 134–55.

<sup>84</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995),

in Britain stirred fears of miscegenation and national debasement.<sup>85</sup> Within Caribbean society, the sexual economy of what Doris Garraway terms “colonial libertinage” not only underwrote the exploitative power of European creole elites, but shifted the blame for interracial intimacy and desire onto slave women and free women of color.<sup>86</sup>

Placed on display for European eyes and appetites, Calderon moved along an imagined boundary between disgust and attraction. She was a victim of torture but she was also an object of sexual exchange. In turn, metropolitan publishers accompanied editions of Picton’s trial with illustrations of her torture in order to boost sales. The frontispiece of one version of the trial (Figure 3), published by P. F. McCallum, has particular interest, as it portrays Calderon with her breast exposed, dangling in balletic pose from the scaffold.<sup>87</sup> Readers are invited to view her suffering beauty, allowed to delight in her chaste sexuality. This rendering employs odd symbolic elements: the watch timing the torture and the black hangman, Ludovigo, with a rope hanging around his neck and his back to the torture. Moved outside prison walls, the scene feels more pastoral than Gothic. Louisa’s figure is aestheticized; classically draped, “white,” and beautiful, she wears a cap of liberty, symbol of revolutionary allegiance. The drawing clearly draws on contemporary representations of “Liberty,” linking the erotic female body to the body politic.<sup>88</sup> It also perhaps draws on compositional elements of William Blake’s illustration “Flagellation of a Female Samboe Slave” (Figure 4), produced for John Gabriel Stedman’s *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (1796), an image which became part of the anti-slavery movement’s visual vocabulary.<sup>89</sup> In both illustrations, the gaze of those present is directed away from the victim, as if they would be compromised by viewing her suffering. But the female slave is more exposed; nearly naked, she is a starker figure of innocent suffering. Yet both illustrations trade on a sexual frisson, invite a voyeuristic gaze coming close to the pornographic.

introduction; Deirdre Coleman, “Conspicuous Consumption: White Abolitionism and English Women’s Protest Writing,” *English Literary History*, 61 (1994): 341–62.

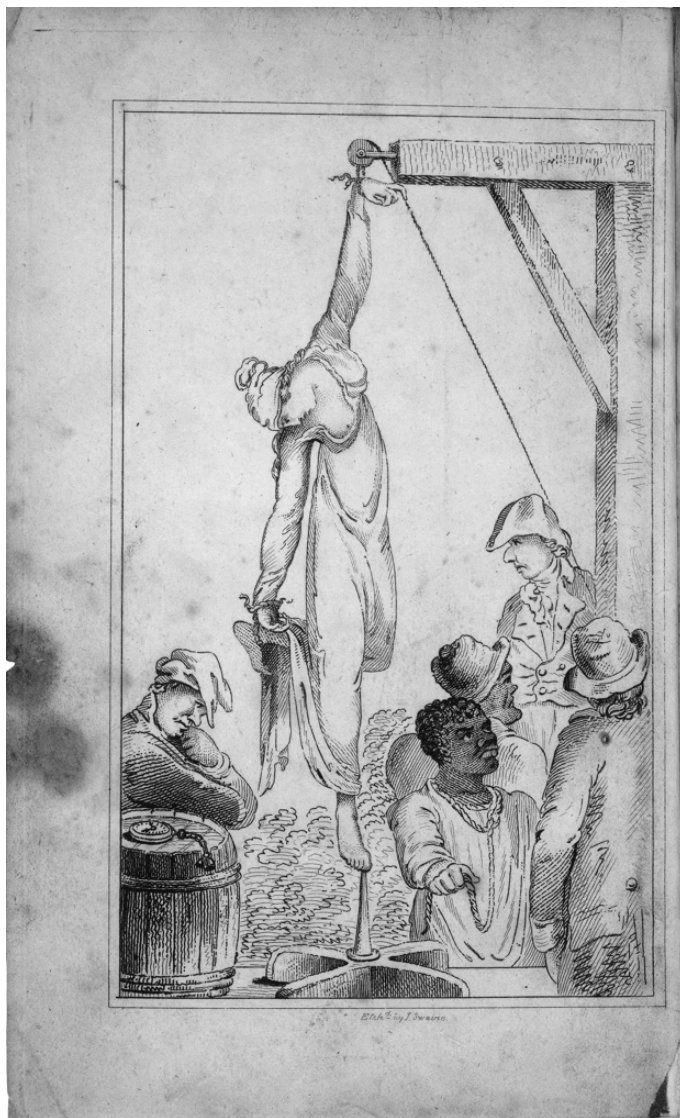
<sup>85</sup> William Cobbett, for example, claimed not only that “the negro” would always find a white woman “to yield to his filthy embraces . . . amongst the notoriously polluted and abandoned part of the sex,” but more shockingly that the white woman would “become his wife, to breed English mulattoes, to stamp the mark of Cain upon her family and her country.” *Cobbett’s Political Register*, vol. III, 935, June 16, 1804.

<sup>86</sup> Doris Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), xiii–xiv, 1–2.

<sup>87</sup> [McCallum], *Trial of Thomas Picton*.

<sup>88</sup> See Lynn Hunt, ed., *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

<sup>89</sup> I have drawn on Wood’s discussion of this print, in *Blind Memory*, 236–37.



3 Louisa Calderon's torture aestheticized. From [P. F. McCallum], *Trial of Thomas Picton* (1806).

The paradox of Louisa's story was that it brought the spectacle of the tortured colonial body "home," only to risk reinstalling the imaginative distance between metropole and colony. While Gothic representational modes were undoubtedly effective in terms of their





4 William Blake's illustration of the torture of a female slave. From John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, 2 vols. (1796), vol. I.

familiarity and popular appeal, by representing the inhumanities of colonial rule in such terms an emotional distance was produced. For the Gothic traded on the unreality of its own terror, transforming fear into a pleasant emotion by keeping it at a safe distance.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, the

<sup>90</sup> Compare Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 20.

erotic fascination produced by the illustration for McCallum's text also served to distance the suffering subject and to compromise the viewer's sympathy with her pain.

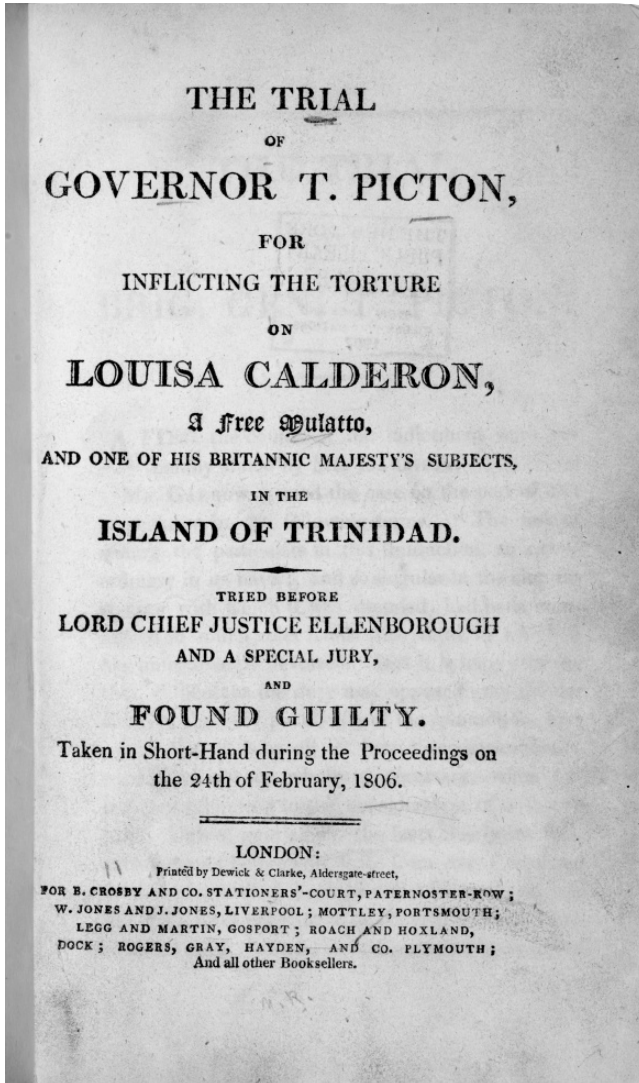
Something needs to be said about the publisher, as it was through McCallum that Calderon's cause touched on that of popular radicalism. His career as a member of radicalism's trans-Atlantic underworld forms the subject of Chapter 5. During his visit to Port of Spain in 1803, Picton had him arrested as a subversive and thrown into a dungeon cell. McCallum clearly identified with Calderon as a fellow victim of tyranny, having been a prisoner in the same jail where she had been tortured; he was present at King's Bench to record the trial. More problematically, he viewed her as a British subject denied the boasted rights of free-born Britons. The title page of Crosby's account of the trial (Figure 5) echoed Garrow's claim, describing Louisa Calderon as "One of His Britannic Majesty's Subjects." It was no coincidence that various radical pressmen brought out cheap accounts of the trial.<sup>91</sup> The uncertain properties of the subject or citizen were present in the politics of Calderon's cause. Slave, free woman of color, colonial subject, impressed British seaman, British soldier subject to the lash, Lancashire weaver, the weaver's wife: in the age of revolution what separated the subject from the citizen, the slave from the free-born Englishman?

The question is not merely rhetorical. As P. J. Marshall asks more generally, was "British subject in any respects a uniform category?" Under what circumstances "were British subjects who did not live in Britain to be regarded as 'Britons'? In particular, how far did the powerfully emotive concept of the 'rights of Englishmen' apply outside England?"<sup>92</sup> Such questions were posed with particular force in the colonial Caribbean, where slave insurgents in both Saint-Domingue and Guadeloupe voiced claims for citizenship in republican terms.<sup>93</sup> Recruiting black regiments

<sup>91</sup> *The Trial of Governor Picton, for having Maliciously and with a View to Oppress Louisa Calderon, one of His Majesty's Subjects . . . by Inflicting THE TORTURE ON HER* (n.d., c. 1806) sold for sixpence as did Fairburn's *Inhuman Torture!!*; both were linked to radical pressmen and booksellers.

<sup>92</sup> P. J. Marshall, "Britain and the World in the Eighteenth Century, IV: The Turning Outwards of Britain," *TRHS*, 11 (2001): 1–15, at 3. See also Jack P. Greene, "Liberty, Slavery, and the Transformation of British Identity in the Eighteenth-Century West Indies," *SE&A*, 21, no. 1 (2000): 1–31; Sudipta Sen, "Imperial Subjects on Trial: On the Legal Identity of Britons in Late Eighteenth-Century India," *JBS*, 45 (2006): 532–55; Maya Jasanoff, "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire," *WMQ*, 65 (2008): 205–32; Hannah Weiss Muller, "An Empire of Subjects: Unities and Disunities in the British Empire, 1760–1790," Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University (2010).

<sup>93</sup> Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4–6 and pt. 2;



5 Title page from B. Crosby's edition of *The Trial of Governor T. Picton* (1806).

in the British Caribbean inescapably raised the prospect of freedom for slaves serving in these regiments, and questions about the legal status

Malick W. Ghachem, "Introduction: Slavery and Citizenship," *Historical Reflections/ Reflexions historiques*, 29 (2003): 7–17.

and rights pertaining to such service.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, in Trinidad part of the resistance to extending British law and establishing an elected colonial assembly arose from apprehensions about the reaction of free persons of color, mainly French and believed to be imbued with revolutionary principles, who would protest exclusion from full colonial citizenship. And what then about the picquet itself, an instrument of military punishment, moved from barrack yard to prison and used to exact confessions from slave women and other prisoners? British sensibilities were troubled by soldiers treated in the same manner as slaves and criminals, abolitionist literature having primed the metropolitan public with terrible scenes of West Indian overseers flogging half-naked male and female slaves. Radicals campaigned against the brutality of corporal punishment, framing their arguments in terms of the status of soldiers as citizens and “free-born” Britons.<sup>95</sup> Thus by a chain of association might Calderon’s cause too come within the reach of citizenship.

### Limits

How then are we to assess the historical significance of this particular scandal? For that matter, how significant were colonial scandals more generally either for shaping official minds or for influencing broader metropolitan understanding of colonial rule? These questions are not easily answered, for much depends on specific historical circumstances.<sup>96</sup> Clearly, it was not by virtue of this incident’s typicality, but rather through its remarkable density that key issues were opened and cultural fault lines exposed. As the story of Calderon’s torture circulated through the colonial archive, London streets, the courtroom, trial narratives, newspaper reports, journals, books, and pamphlets, it picked up cultural energy produced in terms of humanitarian sentiment, Gothic horror, pornographic fascination, and scandal. The story’s fashioning was critical to its popularity, as well as ultimately to its political limitations. The story had movement, not just in terms of its expressive modes, but geographically and socially; it resisted containment and thus

<sup>94</sup> Roger Norman Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795–1815* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979); Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “Arming Slaves in the American Revolution,” in Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Arming Slaves from Classical Time to the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 180–208.

<sup>95</sup> Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (Jonathan Cape, 2002), 330; E. E. Steiner, “Separating the Soldier from the Citizen: Ideology and Criticism of Corporal Punishment in the British Armies, 1790–1815,” *SH*, 8 (1983): 19–35.

<sup>96</sup> Compare, for example, Lester, “Geographies of Colonial Humanitarianism.”

challenged distinctions on which both colonial and domestic authority relied. Calderon herself embodied the breakdown of various categories of difference. Just as the principal case against Picton moved outside the discursive space of the Privy Council's Whitehall chambers, colonial codes of conduct and authority were brought "home," to be tested against metropolitan understanding. The incident highlights the circuits connecting metropolitan society to its colonial periphery, and the historical difficulty in maintaining a separation between these domains. Indeed, it may prompt us to ask what it means to regard the West Indies as a periphery, encouraging an alternative conceptualization of a metropolitan-imperial network of sites linked through dynamic cultural and political interaction.<sup>97</sup> By the early nineteenth century, Britain's imperial and domestic regimes had become more authoritarian, hierarchical, and militarized.<sup>98</sup> Nonetheless, recurrent unease about abridgments of the responsibilities of imperial rule and the attendant rights of colonial subjects surfaced sporadically. Covent Garden's restaging of Britain's imperial glory occasionally contended with less comforting reenactments of colonial rule. The scandal of empire returned as a repressed awareness, disrupting the taken-for-grantedness of empire.

Scandals are by their nature difficult to sustain as politics, although in this instance the broader issues concerning the exercise of colonial authority remained troubling. Unless linked to wider programs of reform, scandals tend to fade from public awareness. Thus the scandal of "Old Corruption," popular radicalism's critique of the aristocracy's parasitic drain on taxpayers and the state, had staying power, becoming incorporated as a cornerstone of radical ideology.<sup>99</sup> In fact, in 1809 the radical pressmen John Bone and William Hone brought out an edition of Fullarton's *Substance of the Evidence Delivered before . . . the Privy Council, in the Case of Governor Picton*, in an effort to discredit a wider system of elite corruption and counter Picton's recent military reappointment. But the scandal had run its course. Despite its powerful

<sup>97</sup> Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (Routledge, 2001), 5–7; see also Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Atlantic Histories: A Response from the Anglo-American Periphery," and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "The Core and Peripheries of Our National Narratives: A Response from IH-35," *AHR*, 112 (2007): 1415–22, 1423–31.

<sup>98</sup> C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (Longman, 1989); P. J. Marshall, "Empire and Authority in the Later Eighteenth Century," *JICH*, 15 (1987): 105–21.

<sup>99</sup> Philip Harling, *The Waning of "Old Corruption": The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779–1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 91–104, 143–50; W. D. Rubinstein, "The End of 'Old Corruption' in Britain, 1780–1860," *P&P*, 101 (1983): 55–86.

reverberations, the sensational mode had distinct limitations. Scandals place reputations at risk; they reveal transgressions of social and political boundaries, serving to re-sanction legitimating norms.<sup>100</sup> Bringing the former governor to the bar had the effect of embodying colonial injustice in the person of one man, displacing the “fabric of colonial anxiety” onto an instance of extraordinary, personal misrule, and thus allowing the reconstitution of imperial authority.<sup>101</sup> In Trinidad, Picton’s troubles served as a warning to General Thomas Hislop, his successor, whose regime exercised greater circumspection. Britain’s government refused, however, to extend full British legal and constitutional guarantees to Trinidad.

The main characters in this drama moved on; we will learn more about them in the chapters that follow. The case against Picton was not altogether forgotten; it was canonized by its inclusion in *State Trials*, which placed it among the most important cases in the age-long struggle for British civil liberty. At the more popular level, editions of the *Newgate Calendar* continued to report the case. Over the decades, however, the framing of the narrative changed. The opening quotation from Voltaire – asserting “a natural compassion in the human heart, which makes all men detest the cruelty of torturing the accused into a confession” – remained. In 1810 Knapp and Baldwin’s edition ended its account by indignantly noting, “The convicted Governor of such an offense, is still at large, without judgement being pronounced upon him.” By 1825 the same publication presented the governor as a man whose reputation had been sullied and fortunes ruined by public sympathy mistakenly aroused for “a little strumpet, by the name of Louisa Calderon”; the report concluded, however, on a reassuring note, stating that Picton’s “honour and justice were established on the firmest basis, and to the perfect satisfaction of every upright mind.” In 1841 the *New Newgate Calendar*, published by Camden Pelham, repeated the same judgment: the tables were turned, Picton was the victim, now properly enshrined as a British military hero. The accompanying drawing of the torture had strangely altered in its representation of victim and perpetrator of colonial violence. Drawn by the illustrator of Charles Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers*, “Phiz” (Hablot Knight Browne), the scene was taken straight from the pages of Victorian melodrama (see Figure 6). The woman now appeared as a British damsel in distress, fully clothed and hoisted onto the spike by an evil monster, bearing a striking resemblance to the colonized demons

<sup>100</sup> Compare Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820–1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 8–11.

<sup>101</sup> The phrase is borrowed from Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 55; see also Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 29–32.



6 “The Torture,” illustration by “Phiz” (Hablot Knight Browne).  
From *Chronicles of Crime; or, the New Newgate Calendar*, 2 vols.  
(1841), vol. I.

later depicted in caricatures of the Indian mutiny.<sup>102</sup> Taken together, the summary of the trial, exoneration of Picton, and illustration of the torture scene constituted a confused assemblage, directionless beyond its sensationalism.

<sup>102</sup> *Chronicles of Crime; or, the New Newgate Calendar*, 2 vols. (1841), vol. I, 423–30. For the Indian “mutiny,” see Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), chap. 3.

What then about the *real* Louisa Calderon? What do we know about her life before she arrived in London? She was baptized at Port of Spain's parish church, the Church of the Conception of our Lady, the daughter of Maria del Rosario Calderon, a free woman who had migrated from Cariaco on the eastern coast of Venezuela, and Juan Santiago Bacuba, "a free mulatto." The date of her birth became a matter of dispute. Father Josef Maria Angeles later stood accused of having doctored the baptismal register in an effort to lower her age at the time of her torture and thereby enhance her aura of innocence. The forgery formed an element in the deep conspiracy to destroy Picton's reputation, or so Picton and his friends maintained.<sup>103</sup> Whether she was born in 1788 or 1786, her mother arranged for her to be taken into Ruiz's household as his mistress at a young age; she was subsequently linked to a crime committed by her other lover, and she suffered the consequences. This is all we know.

Once in Britain, Calderon was supported by government money funneled through Fullarton, who along with his wife took her under their charitable wing. Dining at the lord provost's house in Ayr, John Downie, a gentleman from Trinidad, observed in a letter, "mark my astonishment when I was told that, along with Colonel Fullarton, there had arrived with his lady a 'Mademoiselle Luise Calderon,' whom the Colonel and Mrs. Fullarton paraded about with them in their carriage, introducing her *wherever* they went as the 'blessed innocent' who was the devoted victim of Colonel Picton's tyranny."<sup>104</sup> Gloster commented similarly that the "injured innocent" was being introduced by Mrs. Fullarton to "select female friends in Scotland!" He added: "It must be particularly gratifying to Mr. Fullarton, that his virtuous young lady has insured a continuance of her fair race, by producing an heir to all her virtues, while under his philanthropic protection."<sup>105</sup> A failed object of moral reform, she remained an object of lust, now polluting beds in Britain. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* not only denounced Mrs. Fullarton for associating with "a mulatto prostitute," but hinted that the reputed father of Calderon's child was known to her.<sup>106</sup> In June 1808, Calderon again gave testimony before King's Bench at Picton's new trial.

<sup>103</sup> Draper, *Address*, 155–83, at 163 (the baptismal entry); Add. Ms. 36,870, fols. 51–52, Picton to Begorrat, Sept. 18, 1805; *Résumé des preuves, relatives, à l'instance formée, par le Colonel Thomas Picton . . . contre Don Josef Maria Angeles* (Trinidad, 1807), copy in CO 295/17, at fol. 284. Louisa's mother was illiterate, signing with her mark (*ST*, vol. XXX, col. 313).

<sup>104</sup> Draper, *Address*, 184; Robinson, *Memoirs*, vol. I, 177–78.

<sup>105</sup> Archibald Gloster, *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Buckinghamshire . . . Respecting Affairs in Trinidad in 1803* (1807), 23–24.

<sup>106</sup> *AJR*, 30 (May 1808): 100–02.



The *St. James Chronicle* reported, “she seemed to be much grown, and greatly improved in her knowledge of English, which she spoke with fluency and propriety.”<sup>107</sup> We find a request, in the colonial office records from Fullarton’s lawyer, that she be granted a passport to return to Trinidad.<sup>108</sup> She may be the same woman as the “Luisa Canderón” recorded in the baptismal records of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, in Port of Spain, as having given birth in 1810 to an illegitimate child: could this be the belated baptism of the child alluded to by Gloster?<sup>109</sup> A footnote in E. L. Joseph’s *History of Trinidad*, published in 1838, states simply that Louisa Calderon “died here [Port of Spain], in poverty, on 25th June, 1825.”<sup>110</sup>

There is more we would like to know about her life. And while we might be able to piece together a social history of free women of African descent, their individual voices and stories have largely gone unrecorded.<sup>111</sup> We face what Carolyn Steedman terms, in another context, “a crisis of documentation.”<sup>112</sup> How then should we regard Louisa Calderon? She left no narrative. A colonial subject, victim of powerful men, certainly. An object of both metropolitan empathy and scorn; a minor celebrity in London and Scotland. Her courtroom performance suggests a young woman of considerable poise and self-possession. Perhaps we also can see her as an agent maneuvering within the restricted boundaries accorded to a poor woman of color. Most surely, she had entered the cosmopolitan world of trans-Atlantic cultural exchange, brokering a range of fantasies, fears, and perhaps opportunities. In Louisa Calderon’s case, the silence of the archive frustrates our desire to know or give full narrative shape to her life; her broken story speaks to a deeper sense of loss that has moved many Caribbean writers to turn from the historical to the literary in an effort to recover the suppressed voices of their past.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *St. James Chronicle*, June 11–14, 1808, 2; *Sum*, June 13, 1808, 3.

<sup>108</sup> CO 295/20, fols. 134–36, James Pasmore to Castlereagh, July 15, 1808.

<sup>109</sup> I thank the officials of the cathedral for kindly allowing me to see these records.

<sup>110</sup> E. L. Joseph, *History of Trinidad* (1838), 210.

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

<sup>112</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Servant and Master: Love and Labour in the Industrial Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 8. See, however, Durba Ghosh, “Decoding the Nameless: Gender, Subjectivity, and Historical Methodologies in Reading the Archives of Colonial India,” in Wilson, ed., *New Imperial History*, 297–316.

<sup>113</sup> See Édouard Glissant’s reflections, in his *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, trans. J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), “The Quarrel with History” and “History and Literature,” 61–69, 69–87.