

Chapter 6: “Matters of Intimacy: *The Sugar-Cane*’s Asexual Ecologies”

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Abstract: The ability to sexually re/produce sugarcane through its flowering and seeds was not discovered until the mid-nineteenth century, a fact readily legible in James Grainger’s georgic poem *The Sugar-Cane* (1764). This essay argues that in Grainger’s poem, asexual reproduction for the colonial plantation becomes resolutely hidden behind a framework of heterosexual love and courtship. This particular framework of intimacy is repeatedly mapped onto the sugarcane’s relationship to the soil and even to the cane’s relationship to the enslaved Black laboring bodies that facilitate the crop’s non-sexual propagation.