The Planter's Fictions:
Identity, Intimacy, and the Negotiations of Power in Colonial Jamaica

By

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2008

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ABSTRACT

By the latter quarter of the eighteenth century, as the movement against the slave trade increased in Britain, Creoles, those of British ancestry born in the West Indies, were increasingly criticized for their involvement in slavery. Simon Taylor, a Jamaican-born planter of Scottish ancestry who lived most of his life in the colony, attempted to negotiate competing and often contradictory sensibilities and subject positions as both British and Creole.

One of the central challenges to Taylor's negotiation of identity was his long-term relationship with Grace Donne, a free mixed-race woman of colour. An examination of their relationship highlights the ways binary discourses and exclusionary practices devised to create and reinforce rigid racial boundaries were regularly crossed and blurred, even by an individual like Simon Taylor, a person well placed to benefit from the policing and maintenance of those boundaries.

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Finally, I would like to thank my family. There have been many instances in the past two years when I felt I could not finish. In those moments I would often hear the words of Maya Angelou, “Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise.” These words have been an eloquent reminder to me from where and from whom I have come. I am humbled by the lives of those who have come before me, whose struggles and sacrifices have enabled me the opportunity and privilege to pursue my interest in history. I am where I am only because of my family, those still here and those who have passed on, who have shown me great love and support over the years and continued to dream and hope for me when I had given up. I am deeply and truly grateful to you.

This project is dedicated to Courtney Primo, whose life and death has taught me so much about love, struggle, loss, and forgiveness. You are my heart, now and forever.

Introduction:
Identity, Intimacy and Performance

Here lie the remains of the Honorable Simon Taylor, a loyal subject, a firm friend, and an honest man. Who after an active live, during which he faithfully and ably filled the highest offices of civil and military duty in this island, died.
---Inscription on Simon Taylor's gravestone, Lyssons, Jamaica.

Shortly after his death in the summer of 1813, the body of Simon Taylor was exhumed from its burial place at his Prospect Pen estate near Kingston, Jamaica, and moved sixty kilometers away to another family estate in St. Thomas-in-the-East. The means by which his body was carried to St. Thomas created a stir in the sugar colony. The body of Simon Taylor, one of Jamaica's wealthiest settler at the time of his death, was moved to its final resting place on the back of a mule-drawn cart. The Lieutenant-governor of Jamaica, Edward Morrison, wrote in a local newspaper that the whole process "was done in not a very decent manner." It was an insult to the memory of Simon Taylor, a leading figure and planter in the colony, for his body to be carried to its final burial on a "common mule cart."[1] During his life, Taylor had worked to embody the very definition of respectability in the colony. The son of a Scottish merchant and Jamaica-born mother of British ancestry, Taylor was born in St. Andrews parish, Jamaica on December 23, 1738. Besides a short period when he attended Eton College in England as a child and studied business in Holland, Taylor spent most of his life in Jamaica where he worked his way up the ladder of colonial society from an estate attorney to the owner of several plantations

[1] Memoir of Lt. Governor Edward Morrison in the Kingston Chronicle cited in J.H. Lawrence-Archer, *Monumental inscriptions of the British West Indies from the Earliest Date* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), 298.

and over two thousand slaves. From custos and head of the militia to his involvement in the Jamaican House of Assembly, his administrative roles in Jamaica established him firmly within the plantocracy, a small group of large plantation owners who controlled most of the wealth and political life in Jamaica. To many of the colonial elite Taylor was, as his gravestone reads, "a loyal subject, a firm friend, and an honest man." The focus of this study however is not Taylor's embodiment of colonial respectability, but rather the ways in which his life reflected the conflicts and complexities of eighteenth-century Jamaican slave society. Using the letters of Simon Taylor written to his family, friends, and business associates from 1779 until his death in 1813 as my principal primary source, this thesis will explore colonial identities and the place of interracial intimacy in slave society. I begin this project by setting out the main theoretical arguments that frame and inspire my work. These arguments revolve around three main ideas—the precarious nature of racial and national identity formation in the colony; the colonial anxieties that developed in Jamaica; and the importance of examining social performance and intimacy in order to understand representations of identity and claims of power and cohesion. These are the themes woven throughout this chapter and the focus of this project.

Identity Formation: Power, Knowledge and the Other

From the conclusion of the Second World War through the 1970s, large-scale protests for civil and labour rights, gender equality and decolonization occurred throughout the world. Both the political and social changes that characterized this period stimulated in the following decades discussions amongst feminist, cultural, post-Marxist,

and third-world scholars in Britain around identity politics, race, and national belonging. Many argued that identity was an unsettled space where a number of discourses intersected—class, race, gender, family, and religion. As cultural theorist Stuart Hall writes, identity is "a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation."[2] Moreover, there is a "fictive dimension" in the formation of identity that ensures that it will always be unstable and in flux—a historical process that is "tentative, multiple and contingent, and its modalities change over time."[3] Identity is therefore not static or universal, but the result of multiple factors, including interactions in everyday life, that are specific to when and where we live.

For several decades scholars have been exploring the connections between identity and power. In 1975, Michel Foucault wrote that "power produces knowledge . . . power and knowledge directly imply one another." In addition, "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[4] Along with discourse or fields of knowledge, identity is also created and maintained through interactions and struggles for power. Edward Said expanded on Foucault's idea of power and knowledge in his 1978 book *Orientalism*. Said argued that the study of "oriental" cultures—those of Northern Africa, the Middle East and Asia—by European scholars was highly politicized and at the very root of European imperialism and identity. Said

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[2] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews,* ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 2000), 21.
[3] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), 3.
[4] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1995), 27.

writes that "the Orient…helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[5] As European imperialists attempted to know the cultures of the Orient and exert politic control, their own identity and cultures were formed in opposition. Thus, identity is not only dynamic and unstable, but also relational—we know who we are only in response to who we think we are not.

Two decades before Said and Foucault's discussions on the interplay between identity, knowledge and power, Frantz Fanon articulated a similar understanding in his seminal study *Black Skin, White Masks* published in 1952. In his description of the psychological impacts of colonialism on identity, Fanon writes that the black man was woven from a "thousand details, anecdotes, [and] stories" created by Europeans that fixed him into a knowable category of difference. In the interactions between colonizer and colonized and master and slave, "the white gaze" was the "only valid one." Only in that gaze is a person recognized as black, as the other.[6] What Said and Fanon both speak of are mutually constitutive gazes through which we are defined by who we are not and also by who we are recognized to be. No identity exists without this "dialogic relationship."[7] As Stuart Hall so succinctly puts it, "far from only coming from the still small point of truth inside us, identities actually come from outside, they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions which others give us. Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition."[8] Discussions of identity

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[5] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1979), 1-2.
[6] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks,* 1st Edition 1952 (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 91 and 95.
[7] Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference."
<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/l/leekellerh/Hall,%20Ethnicity_Identity_and_Difference.pdf > (17 June 2010).
[8] Stuart Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identity" in *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology*, ed. Gregory Castle (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 286.

and the role of power and knowledge in discourse are critical elements in understanding British identity within colonial "contact zones" and encounters with the other.

Throughout his life, Simon Taylor identified as both British and Creole—a term used in eighteenth-century Jamaica to mean those born in the colony.[9] This negotiation of multiple, and at times conflicting, identities was a constant source of anxiety for Taylor, although such negotiations were not unique to him. Historian Linda Colley has shown how older local and regional loyalties complicated the formation of British identity following the 1707 *Act of Union* that unified the Kingdoms of Scotland and England (including Wales) into the Kingdom of Great Britain. Those living along the borders, such as people living in Northern England and Lowland Scotland, often shared more in common with each other than with those in their respective countries or in the broader nation. In this way, people in eighteenth-century Britain often held multiple loyalties and identities along regional and local lines and negotiated them "according to the circumstances."[10]

Local, regional and colonial identities did not exclude individuals from larger national narratives. According to Colley, despite the existence of multiple loyalties, a new sense of national identity was "superimposed" over local identities as a result of British participation in several wars with France and Spain between 1685 and 1815, wars that were also fought off the British coast and in the colonies. Regional loyalties were

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[9]Although the term Creole meant island-born and could be applied to both those of African or European ancestry, throughout this thesis I use the term to refer to those of European ancestry and African Creole to refer to those of African ancestry born in Jamaica.

[10] Linda Colley, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument," *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (October 1992): 315. See also Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

often put aside for the sake of a goal that was beneficial to all of them, namely, the expansion of the Empire and the accumulation of wealth.[11] This did not mean that regional conflicts and divisions no longer existed, but only that regional identities were often obscured in the construction of British national identity. Britishness was thus "forged in a much wider context" than England, Scotland, and Wales. It was "in conscious opposition to others beyond their shores" that British national identity emerged and was strengthened.[12]

Similar to Colley's arguments, recent historians of the British Empire have argued that British national and cultural identity can only be understood in relation to its colonies. As Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper state, "metropole and colony, colonizer and colonized, need to be brought into one analytical field."[13] This is not a particularly new argument. For instance, in *The Black Jacobins*, published in 1938, C.L.R James argued that the French Revolution was, at least in part, caused by the accumulation of wealth by the bourgeois in the Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue and that the Saint-Domingue revolution was inspired by the politics that developed in revolutionary France.[14] James's study debunked the idea that colonies were peripheral to metropolitan politics. As Fanon expressed it, "Europe was literally the creation of the Third World."[15] The constant flow of money, sugar, coffee, rum, people, and ideas attested to this interdependence. While this process of exchange has been generally understood in histories of the Caribbean, recent scholars of British colonialism and empire—for

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[11] Colley, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument," 316.
[12] Colley, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument," 316.
[13] Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World,* ed. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15.
[14] C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*: *Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 1st Edition 1938 (New York: Vantage Books Edition, 1989).
[15] Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth,* 1st Edition 1961 (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 102.

example, Clare Midgley, Catherine Hall, and Kathleen Wilson—have emphasized this point in their work, often making it a central framework in their studies of British and colonial cultures.

This project draws heavily upon the understanding that colony and metropole must be studied within the same analytic framework and attempts to highlight the importance of movement and mobility within the British Empire, not just of individuals, but also of ideas, fortunes, affection, and social position. Colonists in the West Indies, even if they spent most or all of their lives in the colony, as Simon Taylor did, were concerned with and affected by the cultural, social and economic changes occurring in Britain and other parts of the British Empire. Similarly, the metropole was concerned with the legislation and activities in the colonies. Simon Taylor's identity cannot be accurately understood unless we examine the discourses that shaped him and take into consideration the metropolitan gaze and its effects on colonial identity. As chapter two will demonstrate, Taylor was captivated by the discourses on the Creole that circulated within Britain. Although he spent most of his life in Jamaica and regarded the colony as his home, he thought of himself and other colonials in the West Indies as a central part of the British Empire.[16]

Identity is formulated on the basis that while some belong, others do not. In the formation of British national identity, racial discourse was a key agent in determining where one stood. As Kathleen Wilson writes, *nation* once referred to "a breed, stock or race"; and, although by the eighteenth century "the idea of nation as a political entity was gaining ascendancy, the more restrictive racial sense [based on customs, manners, and

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[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 5-7.

religion] remained embedded in its use."[17] New imperial histories that have emerged since the 1980s have suggested new ways of understanding and theorizing categories of difference that highlight understandings of belonging in the formation of national identity. Many of these scholars have argued that understandings of race that developed in eighteenth-century discourses were entangled with a reimagining of class and gender. For instance, Wilson's study of the Captain Cook voyages highlights the centrality of gender misrecognition and desire in the development of racial discourses of the South Pacific. As Catherine Hall puts it, "the time of empire was the time when anatomies of difference were being elaborated, across the axes of class, race and gender."[18]

Discussions of race, as many scholars have argued, are geographically and temporally specific and need to be historicized and studied within context. Race is "a floating signifier"—a socially constructed category of difference whose meaning is always in flux, challenged, and negotiated.[19] In eighteenth-century Jamaica, race was not only based on skin colour and facial features, as it is commonly understood today, but also on older understandings of difference, such as religion and place of origin. For instance, the term "white" in the seventeenth-century British West Indies was used to describe only those of English ancestry and excluded Catholic Irish people. Long-standing antagonisms between the (Protestant) English and the Catholic Irish continued unabated in the colonies. As Roxanne Wheeler argues, "rarely was there a complete break with older ways of thinking," despite changes in location.[20] In the eighteenth

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[17] Wilson, The *Island Race*, 7.
[18] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 16.
[19] Stuart Hall. *Race, the Floating Signifier* (Media Education Foundation, 1997).
[20] For more on English and Irish antagonisms in the Caribbean, see Hilary Beckles, "A 'Riotous and Unruly Lot': Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644-1713," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 47, No. 4 (October 1990): 503-522 and Roxanne Wheeler, *The*

century, as the African slave population in the Caribbean rose, "white" came to encompass the Irish and even Jewish settlers, although the English continued to discriminate against them and regarded them as "lesser whites" in the island.[21] Thus, in eighteenth-century Jamaica, along with complexion and physiognomy, race was also constructed based on a number of often contradictory notions of difference, such as "racialized nationality, defined by origin, descent, and religion."[22]

The multiple and conflicting understandings of difference that proliferated in the late eighteenth century suggest the need to move away from a binary model of analysis of race to one that engages with the spaces in-between—the "uncertain crossing and invasion of identities" that occurred in Jamaica, and the contradictions and anxieties that emerged from this crossing.[23] Boundaries established in racial discourse that separated the "races," although at times firm, were incomplete and routinely crossed in day-to-day interactions between individuals. The large number of mixed-race people in Jamaica by the end of the eighteenth century and the substantial amount of property bequeathed to them by their white fathers attests to how frequently racial divisions were blurred. As Catherine Hall argues, "it is not possible to make sense of empire either theoretically or empirically through a binary lens: we need the dislocation of that binary and more elaborate, cross-cutting ways of thinking."[24] Although the language of self/other and master/slave is very useful in understanding national and racial identity formation and power, such dichotomies cannot fully capture the complex and nuanced interactions of

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Complexions of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 9.

[21] For greater discussion of Irish settlement and racialization in the Caribbean see Beckles, "A 'Riotous and Unruly Lot'."

[22] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 148.

[23] Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 2.

[24] Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 16.

people, especially in colonial "contact zones" like Jamaica. "Cross-cutting ways of thinking" are needed in the examination of Jamaican slave society in order to understand the detailed hierarchies of race and difference and the complicated movements and exchanges between individuals in the colony.

Colonial Anxieties: Creole, Slippage and Contagion

In studies of colonial spaces, numerous historians have pointed to the anxieties that engrossed European settlers. Part of this thesis will explore the precarious position of Simon Taylor by highlighting his colonial anxieties, many of which originate in metropolitan discourses about Creoles and colonial culture and differences between colonial and metropolitan sensibilities. The term "Creole" implies an intermixing or cultural exchange in which a new culture, a Creole culture, emerges. Creole culture and manners were often seen by metropolitan observers to be contradictory to emerging British discourses of civility and respectability, an argument I develop more fully in chapter two. Historians Vincent Brown and Kathleen Wilson have shown that within eighteenth-century British discourse, the West Indies was often regarded as a dangerous place, a place where civilized Britons, especially women and children, could easily "slip" into uncivilized Creole ways. Wilson describes "slippage" as "the distressing tendency for supposedly 'natural' characteristics to degenerate into their opposites: Englishness into savagery, masculinity into effeminacy, femininity into vulgarity."[25] British visitors to Jamaica described those in the colony, both white and black Creoles, as being sensual, indolent, and ostentatious. These values were completely antithetical to ideas of civility that circulated in England at the time—namely "taste, refinement, discernment, [and]

[25] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 6 and 14.

generosity of spirit."[26] The hot tropical climate, and the supposed uninhibited passions and loose morals that came from living in such weather, were often used to explain Creole degeneration. The most common cause of "slippage," however, was attributed to the amount of time Creoles spent with their slaves and black or brown mistresses.[27] Those of African or partial African ancestry were racialized in British discourse as having "gross mannerisms, savage temperament and promiscuous appetites [which] irreversibly infected" white Creoles.[28] Thus many believed that Britons who settled in the islands would soon, "like wax softened by heat," melt into the depraved "manners and customs" of the island.[29]

Anxieties around identity "permeated British conceptions of national belonging throughout most of the eighteenth century."[30] As we will see in chapter two, however, Taylor's anxieties did not come from the fear of being "contaminated" by his close contact with people of African or partial African ancestry—he was actually known to surround himself with black and brown women. The source of his anxiety was the fear that under the metropolitan gaze he would be *perceived* as having been contaminated by his close interactions with people of colour or of having become a "degraded copy" of British identity.[31] For this reason, Taylor was vigilant in upholding and adhering to tropes of British respectability in order to prove to English observers that his civility, his

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[26] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 144.
[27] Throughout this thesis, I use the terms "black" and "brown" to distinguish between women of African ancestry and women of mixed African and European ancestry, respectively. Mixed-race women were not considered black women in eighteenth-century Jamaica, but brown or yellow and were thus treated differently.
[28] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 145.
[29] J.B. Moreton cited in Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 33.
[30] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 14.
[31] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 14.

Englishness, was very much intact despite his long-term residency in Jamaica. Balancing British sensibilities and ways of behaving with his identification as Creole fostered in Simon Taylor a sense of uncertainty, a particularly precarious position for a man of his status.

Performativity and the Politics of Belonging

In order to better understand the spaces between self and other, and the anxieties inherent in negotiations of multiple subject positions, two theoretical frameworks, those of performance and intimacy, guide this project. Throughout this thesis, the language of performance enables me to speak about Simon Taylor's anxieties and his attempts to negotiate and shore up his identity. Cultural and feminist theorist Judith Butler was perhaps the first to discuss identity as "performative." Butler defines performance or performativity "not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but rather, as the reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains."[32] Identity is brought to life by repetitious and authoritative statements and acts that are then enforced by the customs, laws, and manners of a society. Social performance should not be understood as isolated acts, like a theatrical performance, but as a continuous way of being and interacting shaped by discourses of the time. Butler argues, for example, that gender, the primary focus of her studies, results from a reiterated performance that creates a narrative or understanding of what "normal" gender behaviour looks like. In society, individuals are labeled either "boy" or "girl" based on their sex and then ascribed either masculine or feminine ways of behaving considered "normal" depending on their assigned gender. This narrative attempts to make

[32] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), 2.

invisible the contradictions, complexities, and instability of individual gender acts through cultural norms and laws. Thus, more than being a social construction, gender is "instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self."[33]

Kathleen Wilson draws heavily on Butler's understanding of gender performativity in her discussions of British national identity. Wilson argues that national identity required individuals to insert themselves into collective narratives and to identify with a shared experience through representation. As such, national identity should be understood as "a 'phantasmatic staging,' an event that takes place in the imaginary, a psychic as well as social production."[34] In her study of gender, race and nation in eighteenth-century Jamaica, Wilson discusses the "performance of difference"—the "non-referentiality constituting the imagined internal difference of character it was supposedly expressing, that separated white from black, English from Irish, and so on." She argues that colonials took part in displays of "conspicuous consumption, extravagant hospitality and notorious brutality" in order to enact and maintain their social power in the colony and the distinctions between rank, class, and race in the colony.[35] This "enactment of difference," often financed by credit, allowed Creoles who could afford it to differentiate themselves from "lesser" whites and from the non-British with whom they shared their geographical space.[36] The way they dressed and socialized, what they ate, and the grand feasts they prepared for elite visitors were all markers that served to

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[33] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" *Theatre Journal,* Vol. 49 (December 1988): 519.
[34] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 3.
[35] Wilson, *The Island Race*, 151.
[36] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 152.

validate their position of power in the colony and their association with English civility. Even the willingness of the planter elite to kill or maim their slaves, an expensive asset, was a part of this performance.[37] The "enactment of difference" is not a new observation. Several Caribbean scholars, including Lucille Mathurin Mair and Edward Braithwaite, have documented the ways in which colonists tried to maintain ties to British heritage through ostentatious displays of wealth. Understanding these displays as performative, however, helps to illuminate the "fictions of identity, difference and community that come into play"—the ways colonists in Jamaica attempted to shore up multiple and unstable identities and their positions of power in the colony.[38]

The language of performance illuminates the ways colonials attempted to negotiate multiple identities, as Creoles and Britons, and differences in colonial and metropolitan sensibilities. Threatened by the fear of slippage and "cultural contagion," by adhering to the specific tropes associated with British respectability, colonials attempted to represent themselves as "authentic" British men and to situate themselves within the larger British colonial project.[39] Ironically, these extravagant displays of difference in the colonies were often seen by metropolitan observers to be outward displays of the inward degeneration of colonials and their distance from British civility.

The Threat of Sentiment

Colonial anxieties were a part of the Jamaican landscape; fears of rebellions, mass murders, and invasion are expressed regularly in journals, diaries, and letters of

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[37] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 152.
[38] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 28.
[39] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 6.

eighteenth-century Jamaican colonists. In addition to these anxieties was the fear of the intimate—the close proximity and regular interactions that white Creoles had with enslaved Africans—and the threat that the inappropriate "distribution of sentiments" posed to colonial authority.[40] Throughout this thesis, I use the study of intimacy and sentiment as a way of looking at the contradictions between colonial policy and custom and the actual lived experiences of individuals—the "discrepancy between prescription and practice."[41]

In her book *Many Tender Ties*, historian Sylvia Van Kirk argues that relationships between European fur traders and Aboriginal women were not just private affairs, but "constituted an important contribution to the functioning of the [fur] trade" and the political organization of fur-trade society.[42] In addition, Van Kirk argues that Aboriginal and mixed-race women in intimate relationships with white men were "active agents"; their stories complicate narratives of fur-trade societies as male-dominant spaces and Native women as passive victims. The title of the book was taken from a statement made by the governor of Vancouver Island, Sir James Douglas. Douglas, whose wife Amelia was of European and Cree ancestry, commented that Aboriginal and mixed-race women were important in maintaining the fur trade and that the "many tender ties" made life bearable for European fur traders in the colony. In many ways Douglas, who was of mixed African and Scottish ancestry, and his family embodied the contradictions and the role of affection in colonial spaces, both in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Caribbean

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[40] Ann Laura Stoler, "Affective States," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics,* ed. Joan Vincent, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd, 2004), 6.
[41] Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge,* 2.
[42] Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 14.

and Canadian colonies.[43] His assessment of the Western frontier, the fur trade, and the role of women in these environments serve as the basis of Van Kirk's book.

Drawing from Van Kirk's work, Ann Laura Stoler writes that interactions in colonial spaces involved not only "many tender ties," but ties that were "tense" as well. In her studies of nineteenth-century Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, Stoler argues that the policing of intimate relationships, sexual and domestic, between Javanese and Europeans was a central preoccupation of the colonial government and policy. Authorities feared that some European men would hold "sympathies and sensibilities out of order and out of place" from the larger colonial project. Moreover, colonial administrators were concerned that white men in the colonies would align themselves based on sentiment rather than race or nation and in doing so blur the boundaries between colonizer and colonized that were important in maintaining Dutch colonial authority. The study of intimacy—exchanges of affection where colonial inequities were produced, challenged, and traversed—provides a complex and nuanced understanding of the negotiations of family, power, and race in colonial spaces.

This thesis project draws heavily upon Stoler's argument that intimacy and sentiment played a central role in colonial society. Although Stoler's work is set in a different time and space than this study, I argue that the "distribution of sentiment" was of major concern for colonial authorities in Jamaica and had a significant impact on the organization of the colony. An examination of intimacy will highlight the fractures in what may at first appear to be hegemonic discourses of racial domination and oppression. Moreover, the framework of intimacy will enable me to seek out the nuances that

[43] For more on discussion on James Douglas and Amelia Connolly see the forthcoming article: Adele Perry, "'Is your Garden in England, Sir?' Nation, Empire, and Home in James Douglas' Archive," *History Workshop Journal,* Issue 70 (Summer 2010).

characterized colonial space, beyond the binaries, and engage with "cross-cutting ways of thinking" about interactions between people from different social positions in slave society.

In studies of slave societies, intimacy between white men and black or brown women is an uncomfortable and complicated subject. This discomfort may be attributed to the reluctance of many scholars to recognize enslaved or marginalized peoples, the oppressed, as possibly colluding in, accommodating to or accepting the systems that oppressed them. The most standard narratives of slave society have focused on interactions of dominance, oppression or active resistance and have not allowed for even the possibility of sentiment in the interactions between white men and black or brown women.[44] Many scholars who have studied slave society and sexual/domestic intimacies have argued that "true sentiment" was not possible within the power dynamics in existence, or have dismissed it as irrelevant to larger more important issues.[45] As Stoler writes, "attachments and affections – tender, veiled, violent, or otherwise – get cast as compelling flourishes to historical narratives, but as distractions from the 'realpolitik' of empire, its underlying agenda, and its true plot."[46] It is uncomfortable and difficult to speak of enslavers and the enslaved as sharing affection, particularly when we consider the large power differential and the general brutality and violence that characterized many, if not most, exchanges between white men and black or brown women within

[44] Some exceptions include Hilary Beckles' study of a mixed-race family in Barbados and Trevor Burnard's study on Thomas Thistlewood. See Hilary Beckles, *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999) and Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire.*

[45] For discussion on the politics of intimacy in slave society, see Jenny Sharpe, *Ghost of Slavery: A Literary Archaeology of Black Women's Lives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) and Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[46] Stoler, "Affective States," 6.

slavery.[47] However, as Foucault argues, power is not static or unidirectional, but "exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations."[48] Furthermore, sexuality or intimacy is "an especially dense transfer point for relations of power."[49]

In American historiography there have been several studies done on interracial intimacy and sexuality in slave society. For instance, works by Joshua D. Rothman, Nell Irvin Painter, and Martha Hodes have explored liaisons between African Americans, both free and enslaved, and European Americans in antebellum America.[50] Scholarship on the relationship between American president Thomas Jefferson and his enslaved housekeeper, Sarah "Sally" Hemings, is an example of work that has brought to the forefront the interconnections between interracial intimacy and broader questions of power and oppression. Several recent studies on the Jefferson-Hemings relationship have raised difficult questions around enslaved women's agency and "individual subjectivity" that complicates the picture of slavery and sexuality.[51] In her prize-winning book, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, historian Annette Gordon-Reed traces members of the Hemings family enslaved at Jefferson's Virginia estate, Monticello, and their relationship

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[47] Differences in the treatment of people of African and mixed African and European ancestry in slave society in the Caribbean and the U.S. continue to impact African-American and African-Caribbean communities today. Referred to as "colourism," the politics around skin complexion complicates current discussions around identity politics and race. For more on this issue, see Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose* (Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004) and 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.

[48] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 94

[49] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 103.

[50] Joshua D. Rothman, "Notorious in the Neighborhood: Sex and Families Across the Color Line in Virginia, 1787-1861," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (February 2001): 73-114; Nell Irvin Painter, *Southern History Across the Color Line* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Martha Hodes, "The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (January 1993): 402-417; Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[51] Painter, *Southern History Across the Color Line*, 4-5.

with him and other members of his white family. Gordon-Reed argues that historians need to take into account the personal motivations and desires of enslaved people and explore the possibility of intimate and affectionate relationships between slaves and masters.[52] Emily Honey's work on the Hemings-Jefferson family has called upon historians in a similar way. Honey argues that the American public and many scholars are uncomfortable with the possibility that Sally Hemings may have willingly engaged in a long-term relationship with her white owner, Jefferson, and may have even sacrificed her freedom in order to remain with him and to keep their family together at Monticello. As a result of this discomfort and "in the effort to keep our cultural delusions intact," Honey argues, the figure of Sally Hemings and what she may represent has been left out of history and scholarly studies, "in the background along with the problems that she poses."[53] By exploring the possible motivations, desires, and reasoning of those in the Hemings-Jefferson family, both Honey and Gordon-Reed point to the need for historians to seek out the complex subjectivities of enslaved men and women and to engage with them "as fully formed persons with innate worth and equal humanity."[54] As Gordon-Reed reminds us of enslaved people, "slavery did not destroy their ability to observe, remember and reason. It did not prevent them from forming enduring and meaningful attachments."[55]

In recent years, a few historians of Caribbean slave society have also begun to pay closer attention to the role of intimacy in slave society. For instance, in his book

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[52] Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 2008.
[53] Emily Honey, "Taking the Wolf by the Ears: Ann Rinaldi and the Cultural Work of Sally Hemings," *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 41, No. 1, (2008): 71-90.
[54] Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, 32.
[55] Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello,* 28.

Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire, Trevor Burnard examines the intimate relationship between Phibbah, an enslaved woman, and Thomas Thistlewood, an English slave owner in Jamaica. Burnard argues that the intimate relationship that Phibbah had with Thistlewood enabled her to negotiate a more advantageous position for herself and her family, while Thistlewood was able to rely on Phibbah, at times, for emotional and financial support.[56] The strength of Burnard's study lies in the way he draws out the nuances and constant negotiations by people from various social positions and thereby complicates the standard narratives of oppression and domination.

Chapter three examines Simon Taylor's relationship with his housekeeper, Grace Donne. The framework of intimacy will allow me to explore and illuminate the contradictions between the ideals of British respectability that Simon Taylor attempted to maintain, especially under a metropolitan gaze, and his feelings of affection towards Grace Donne and his mixed-race family. In addition, I will attempt to situate Grace Donne, a free woman of colour who lived with Simon Taylor for thirty-six years, as a central actor in his life, despite her conspicuous absence from his letters. I use the story of Simon Taylor and Grace Donne as a case study to show the ambiguities inherent in Jamaican slave society and to highlight the ways in which intimate interracial relationships threatened to undermine the hierarchies needed to maintain slave society. On occasion, sentiment as much as skin colour or class was the basis on which alliances were fashioned, boundaries crossed, and power negotiated.

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[56] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire.*

My Place in This Story

As much as the theoretical arguments so far discussed have framed my thesis, so too have my own experiences shaped how I have approached this project. Taking up the argument made by many feminist scholars that we all have a place in the histories we construct, this is my attempt to situate myself in the history that I explore.

This thesis is an exploration of identity—who we think we are, who we are to others, the fictions we create and the contradictions and complexities in between. I began this project by thinking about belonging, home and race. These are questions that have been central in my own life, the questions I have pondered for many years. I am the child of an immigrant family. My parents joined the flow of outward migration in the 1960s and 70s from the former British colonies of Jamaica and Guyana. Unlike other relatives who chose to go to England, my parents chose another former British colony—Canada. For my parents, migration out of the Caribbean was a movement of opportunity; however, for me, their migration was a second break from what I imagined to be my "homeland"—the first being the forced migration of my African ancestors over two hundred years earlier. Thus, I felt that I was "twice diasporized," as Stuart Hall once wrote, dislocated twice from the geographies to which I imagined I belonged.[57] Although Canada was where I was born, it was not home. How could it be when from an early age I knew that the colour of my skin, in addition to the food I ate and the clothes I wore, set me apart from "real" Canadians; by "real" I am not referring to indigenous peoples whose ancestors first populated these lands, but the predominantly white Anglo-Saxons whose ancestors colonized and settled there. In the working-class suburb of Toronto where I grew up in the 1980s and 90s, those I encountered on a regular basis often perceived me

[57] Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities," 284.

to be an outsider and thus it was not long before I began to feel like an outsider. The racist attacks that I so often experienced and the constant, although perhaps well meaning, questions about where I was really from, reinforced in me a sense of un-belonging. Even if I was Canadian by birth, my skin colour excluded me from the national narrative. I may have been born here, but it was not my home. It was not where I really belonged.

I always imagined my "real" home to be in the Caribbean. In the mountains of St. Thomas where my father was born or along the red-sand banks of the Mahaica River where my mother played, these are the landscapes that I imagined when I thought of home. And yet, trips back to Jamaica and Guyana during my teens and twenties dispelled such myths. In the Caribbean I was "from foreign"; there too I was an outsider, a foreigner. It did not matter that I could sit in the church where my ancestors had worshipped for almost two hundred years, walk through the cemetery where they had been buried, or hold the soil from the land my great-grandfather and great-grandmother had tilled and laboured upon almost a century ago. My parents migration in search of opportunity had forever separated me from those places of belonging.

As I have grown older, I have had to re-conceptualize the meaning of belonging and what constitutes "home." What do these words mean? Can home only be located in a geographic space? Is it necessary for us to have a historical connection to the land in order to feel that we belong somewhere? Or is it all a state of mind? I have often felt that I live between worlds; I belong everywhere and yet nowhere. This is my story of diaspora and displacement, of belonging and home.

As I read the letters of Simon Taylor I recognized similar anxieties and insecurities. I saw in the words he wrote and the life he led similar personal conflicts and negotiations. As distant as I am from Simon Taylor, I saw mirrored in the faded and weathered pages of his letter books a similar search for home. I do not mean for this project to be a sympathetic or apologist history of planters in slave society. It is not my intention to make Simon Taylor out to be a saint; however, neither is it my intention to depict him as a monster. As much as I would have liked to hate him, a white slave owner who likely owned my own ancestors on one of his estates in St. Thomas-in-the-East, I cannot ignore the complexities of a man who was very human and whose search for belonging and home, surprisingly, resonated with my own.

Chapters Outlined

Three chapters form the body of this thesis. Chapter one outlines a biography of Simon Taylor and a social history of the world in which he lived and died. In chapter two I argue that despite his place in Jamaican slave society as part of the planter elite, Simon Taylor held a precarious position in the island and was very anxious about his identity. In the third and final chapter my primary focus is on Grace Donne, a mixed-race woman with whom Simon Taylor lived for over three decades. The chapter will explore the relationship between Simon and Grace, but also the role that intimacy played in unsettling seemingly fixed binaries in slave society. Within colonial Jamaica, even as hierarchies emerged that attempted to categorize people and create polarities and social order, these categories of difference were never fixed, but were constantly being renegotiated, traversed, and redefined individually and communally.

The Silences: A Final Note

There are many absences throughout this work. The most glaring and regrettable one is the absence of enslaved people in the narrative, those from whom Simon Taylor built his wealth and over whom he wielded his power. I do not attend to the lives of enslaved peoples in any real detail partly because Simon Taylor does not attend to them in his letters. He speaks of "negroes" and "slaves" only in relation to the production of sugar; they appear more as beasts of burden than humans. And yet, it was these people, their labour and the system of slavery that oppressed them that Simon Taylor depended so desperately upon. Those black and brown bodies were central in his life, yet there are very few such individuals present in his letters. Despite Taylor's silences, the ghost-like presence of slavery and the enslaved is very real throughout both his letters and this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE:
Simon Taylor and His World

Before an exploration of Simon Taylor's identity can be considered, he must be placed within the social context of eighteenth-century Jamaica. Who he was and how he lived was of course rooted in the political, social and ideological climate of his time. The shifts in interpretation of Simon Taylor, from his own time to the present, reflect the changing ways in which wealthy slave-owning men have been viewed. Many of his contemporaries, both Creoles and Britons, saw him as an outspoken man of high principles and morality. Jamaican Governor George Nugent, for instance, described Taylor in 1806 as a man with the "most extraordinary manners"; a person who "has had an excellent education, is well informed and is a warm friend to those he takes by the hand."[58] Nugent's wife, Lady Maria, wrote that she "was as much surprised as affected by [Taylor's] manner, for he has the character of loving nothing but his money; and yet I have experienced such continued kindness from him, that he has shown me almost the affection of a father."[59] All did not share the Nugents' high regard for Simon Taylor. For many, especially in the period following the abolition of slavery, Taylor represented the evils of slavery and was heavily criticized as a result. For instance, English missionary Reverend W.J. Gardner in 1873 described Taylor as "a man of degraded habits" and an "imperious, vulgar man."[60] Recent studies about Simon Taylor present a similarly varied picture. In a 1971 article, Richard Sheridan describes Taylor as a "Sugar Tycoon," while in a 2008 study Sarah Pearsall describes him as a "classic patriarch,

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[58] Maria Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805,* 1st Edition 1839, ed. Philip Wright (Kingston: University of the West Indies, 2002), 318.
[59] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 241-2
[60] W.J. Gardner, *A History of Jamaica* (London: Elliot Stock, 1873), 346-7.

exercising his powers in the most terrifying ways possible." Christer Petley's study suggests a slightly more complicated and nuanced way of viewing Taylor. Petley argues that Taylor constantly negotiated and affirmed his identity in the colony and within the larger British Empire.[61] Like Petley, this study uses the life of Simon Taylor as a way to highlight the many contradictions and complexities within slave society and in colonial identities; however, where Petley's discussion focuses on Taylor's anxieties and performance of identity, this thesis expands further on the ways in which Taylor attempted to defend his place within the emerging British national narrative, and to defend the rights of the colony against anti-slave trade advocates and other metropolitan attacks. In addition, this project explores Taylor's relationship with Grace Donne and the ways in which their relationship contributed to his anxieties as a respectable British man and the blurring of lines between those with structural power and control in the colony and those without.

Jamaica: The "Land of Springs"

Jamaica is one of the largest islands in the Caribbean Sea. It is approximately 234 kilometers in length and eighty kilometers wide. In the center of the island is a limestone plateau that divides east from west, while in the east are large mountains, towering about 7000 feet over the coastal plains. The original Taino inhabitants called the island Xaymaca, meaning the "Land of Springs." When Christopher Columbus claimed the

[61] Richard B. Sheridan, "Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica, 1740-1813," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (October 1971): 285-296; Sarah M.S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*: *Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Christer Petley, "'Home' and 'this country': Britishness and Creole Identity in the Letters of a Transatlantic Slaveholder," *Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue 1 (2009): 43-61. See also, Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture During the Era of Abolition* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009). Christer Petley's work has guided my own assessments of Simon Taylor, especially in chapter two; however, Petley is primarily concerned with broader explorations of planter identity.

island for the Spanish crown in 1494, Xaymaca was renamed Santiago. It took Spanish settlers forty years to establish a capital on the island, which they called Villa de la Vega, located at the site of what later became known as Spanish Town near the south coast of the island. For 160 years the Spanish struggled to maintain control of Jamaica, fending off attacks from other European powers and privateers, as well as internal attacks from the dwindling population of indigenous peoples and small numbers of Maroons—runaway slaves who had settled in the central plateaus and mountains of the island. By 1655, the Spanish settlers were no longer able to hold the island. After a series of attacks, Admiral William Penn and General Robert Venables seized the island for the English crown and Jamaica was established as a British colony.

Between 1655 and 1664, the British Army ran Jamaica as a conquered territory. The approximately 2000 soldiers who first settled the island were assisted by 2500 additional settlers, free men from other British colonies in the Americas such as Bermuda, New England and Suriname, and convicts and indentured labourers from England, Scotland and Ireland. In addition to European settlers, approximately 1500 enslaved Africans lived in the colony in the mid-seventeenth century, brought to Jamaica's shores as a result of the slave trade that had been established over a century before.[62]

Like the Spanish settlers before them, the early British settlers were mostly herdsmen and small-scale farmers. However, the early settlement was not very prosperous because of natural disasters, such as the hurricane of 1689 and the earthquake of 1692, in addition to raids from French privateers and continuing attacks from

[62] Edward Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society in Jamaica* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005).

Maroons.[63] During this period, however, sugar was becoming an increasingly profitable commodity in overseas markets.[64] Sugar production had been a part of the Jamaican landscape from a very early period. According to eighteenth-century historian Edward Long, the early Spanish settlers had cultivated sugar cane, although only for their own consumption. Following the English settlement some officers, those who were able to acquire large land grants, developed small-scale sugar plantations; however, they had little knowledge of how to properly cultivate it and their efforts soon failed.[65] In June 1664, Sir Thomas Modyford, an Englishman who had immigrated to Barbados, was appointed Governor of Jamaica. Modyford brought with him the knowledge of sugar production acquired from his thirty-seven years in Barbados.[66] Sugar production, and jobs related to it, soon became the primary occupation for settlers in the colony. It was not long before Jamaica became known as a sugar-producing colony.

By 1748 the West Indies held a central place in the British colonial project. Around this time the Caribbean colonies accounted for only ten percent of British imports and exports; however, that number continually rose so that by 1815 the islands accounted for approximately twenty-eight percent of total British imports and twelve percent of British exports.[67] Although it had a slow start, by the late eighteenth century Jamaica accounted for two-thirds of the total trade from all fourteen British West Indian

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[63] Braithwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 3-6.
[64] Braithwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 7.
[65] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume I (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 435.
[66] Hilary Beckles, "Plantation Production and White 'Proto-Slavery': White Indentured Servants and the Colonization of the English West Indies, 1624-1645" *The Americas*, Vol. 41, Issue 3 (January 1985): 21-45.
[67] J.R.Ward, "The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition, 1748-1815," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century,* ed. William Roger Louis, Alaine M. Low, and Peter James Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 415 and 423.

colonies.[68] The Caribbean colonies were also important in sustaining England through its involvement in a series of wars with other European countries throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For instance, during the Napoleonic Wars from 1799 to 1815, the colonies provided the metropole with industrial raw materials, especially cotton; sustained trade and shipping; and provided strategic military bases.[69] Perhaps most importantly, the revenue England was able to make from heavy taxation of the colonies funded its war efforts and kept the country afloat while other European countries experienced sharp economic decline.[70]

In addition to national wealth amassed in Jamaica, many of the wealthiest individual Britons made their fortunes in the sugar colonies of the Caribbean. In 1774, the average per capita wealth of Britons or British Creoles in Jamaica was £2201, with men averaging approximately £4403. These sums were dramatically more than in England and Wales, where average per capita income was £42.1 sterling and in the thirteen colonies where the average was around £60.2 (in New England the average per capita income was £38.2). The average white person in Jamaica was thus 36.6 times wealthier than the average free white person in America and 52.2 times wealthier than the average white person in England and Wales.[71]

This startling discrepancy in individual incomes between Jamaica and other British regions is partly explained by the fact that a large proportion of wealth in Jamaica was derived from the value placed on enslaved people. In 1812, 320,000 people of

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[68] Sheridan, "Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica," 286.
[69] For an interesting discussion on the central role of the colonies during European conflicts, see Eliga H. Gould, "Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 60, No. 3 (July 2003): 471-510.
[70] Sheridan, "Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica," 285-286.
[71] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire,* 15.

African ancestry were enslaved in Jamaica and valued at approximately £19,250,000—thirty-four percent of the total wealth of the colony.[72] In this way, members of Jamaica's property owning class were some of the richest people in the British Empire in the eighteenth century.[73] Jamaica, along with the other Caribbean colonies, had a key place in the functioning and prosperity of Britain. As one mid-century observer commented, Jamaica was "not only the richest, but the most considerable colony at this time under the government of Great Britain."[74]

Colony and Metropole: Jamaica's Place in the British Empire

The most powerful body within Jamaica was the Jamaican House of Assembly. Established in 1661, the Assembly had "constitutional parity" with the House of Commons in Britain.[75] It was comprised of representatives from each of the twenty parishes elected from among white property owners.[76] Each parish had two representatives in the Assembly, except for Kingston, Port Royal and Spanish Town, the main political and commercial centers of Jamaica, which each had three. Only men with the rights of an English citizen, twenty-one years old, and in possession of a freehold worth at least £300 annually or a personal estate worth at least £3000 could be elected to the Assembly, which thus limited membership and access to political authority to elite

[72] According to Burnard's calculation, private wealth in Jamaica in 1812 totaled £57,130, 000. Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire,* 15.
[73] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire,* 15.
[74] Patrick Browne cited in Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 9.
[75] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1781-1834* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 1.
[76] The number of parishes in the colony fluctuated throughout the eighteenth century; for instance, between 1770 and 1813 there were twenty parishes.

white males.[77] The Crown appointed a governor, usually from Britain, and twelve Assembly members were chosen to sit on the governor's advisory council. Through the control of taxation in the colony and supplies, the Jamaica House of Assembly was able to negotiate with the House of Commons; however, the colony's power was limited and it was always at the mercy of the British government.[78] Any legislation passed by the Assembly in the colony had to be cleared in Westminster, including the trade in slave labour. As a result, beginning in 1682, the Assembly employed agents in London to represent their interests in the metropole, as did other colonial governments in the Caribbean and North America. These agents were employed to track political trends in London, to provide representation of the colony independent of the governor, and to organize lobbies on issues of importance to the colony, such as the maintenance of protected markets for West Indian sugar.[79] For most of the eighteenth century the primary concern of the "West India interest," as these agents and other pro-planter actors were known, focused on various commercial policies; however, in the final quarter of the century, issues relating to slavery and the slave trade came to dominate their discussions.[80]

In the last decades of the eighteenth century, a growing number of Britons began to oppose slavery and the slave trade. While some people were moved by moral concerns, a topic I take up more in chapter two, others, including many politicians, came

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[77] Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 44.
[78] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1781-1834* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 1- 2.
[79] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 2.
[80] For more on the West India Interest, see Lillian M. Penson. "The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century," *The English Historical Review,* Vol. 36, No. 143 (July 1921): 373-392.

to see the trade as an economic burden on Britain.[81] This position can be attributed, at least in part, to Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* published in 1776, which argued that a free market and the end of protected or regulated trade from the colonies was needed in order for Britain to progress to an advanced capitalist nation. According to Smith, increased competition in a free market would appropriately regulate prices while increasing the services and products available. Such competition was based on individuals being able to pursue their own self-interest. Slave labour was not beneficial to society since enslaved people were forced to work not out of self-interest, but as the result of threat of violence. As Smith wrote:

> The experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any. A person who can acquire no property, can have no interest but to eat as much, and to labour as little as possible. Whatever work he does beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any interest of his own.[82]

Smith's argument greatly affected both commercial policy in the latter eighteenth century and the emerging movement to abolish the African slave trade. Smith's ideas also inspired many politicians, including Whig leader Charles James Fox, to take up an anti-slave trade position in parliament.[83] Although the West India lobby was able to exert influence in parliament through the many supporters they had, and despite the centrality of Jamaica to the economy of the British Empire, the principal concern among politicians and bureaucrats in London was not what was best for the colonies but what was best for

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[81] See Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2006) and Thomas Cleveland Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992) for lengthy discussion on the motivations behind the antislavery movement in Britain and in Jamaica. Also see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944) for further discussion on the links between the rise of capitalism and abolition.

[82] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Volume I (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), 393.

[83] Ward, "The British West Indies," 424-25.

the metropole. The colonies were seen as a "strategic asset" and were there to "serve the national purpose," whatever that was deemed to be by those in London.[84] The colonies were there for the benefit of the metropole and the colonists' concerns could be disregarded, although not completely ignored, if not in line with the desires of the mother country. This attitude towards the colonies, as we will see in chapter two, was a sore point for Simon Taylor and a major source of his frustration and tense relationship with the metropole.

Social Order and the Hierarchies of Difference

By the late eighteenth century there were four legal classes or categories within Jamaican slave society: whites, which comprised people of ostensibly "pure" European ancestry; "free coloureds" and "free blacks"—those of African or partial African ancestry— who received special privileges; "free coloureds" and "free blacks" without such privileges; and enslaved "blacks" and "coloureds."[85] Within these four classes were further divisions depending on class, religion, colour and place of origin, which although not instituted in law, were ingrained in the society through custom and practice.

In her study of colonial Virginia, Kathleen Brown describes the ways in which lawmakers worked to subsume a heterogeneous population into a "template of binary difference" that created categories of white and black correlating with freedom and slavery—thereby, making "white" an exclusive category of identity.[86] A similar situation developed in Jamaica; however, although the legal status of all white Christian

[84] Ward, "The British West Indies," 424.
[85] *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* 9-10 (1791-1802): 647. The terms used in eighteenth-century Jamaica to distinguish black and people of colour was commonly "Negroe" and "Mulatto" or "blacks" and "coloureds" respectively.
[86] Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches & Anxious Patriarchs,* 213.

men may have been the same, in practice class, ethnicity and religion impacted a white person's status in Jamaica.[87] The majority of white people living in the sugar colony were not wealthy landowners, despite common representations of eighteenth-century Jamaica. The exact numbers are not available and so we must rely on estimates by different scholars. According to estimates by Braithwaite, by 1820 between 18,000 and 24,000 "lesser whites"—poor artisans, bookkeepers, overseers, small pen keepers, servants, soldiers, and other white people with little property or wealth—made the island their permanent or temporary home. Wealthy landowners, called the plantocracy, along with professionals and merchants who formed the "upper class" in the colony, numbered around 6000. Historian Charles H. Wesley presents similar estimates. According to Wesley around the same period there were 400 "rich" whites, 5,500 white people "in fair circumstances," a category that included merchants and professionals, and 22,900 whites who were "absolutely poor" living in Jamaica.[88] Akin to the gentry class in England, the "rich" whites formed an oligarchy that controlled most of the land, wealth and political influence in the colony. Many also had familial connections to the social elite in England and often secured estates for themselves in the metropole.[89]

Members of the planter elite dominated the colonial government. In addition to the Assembly, each parish had a custodes or chief magistrate, magistrate of the petty session court and a judge at the assize courts. The small number comprising the white elite filled all these positions. As a result, political power in Jamaica throughout the

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[87] Laws were passed in the early years of the eighteenth century that restricted the rights of Jewish settlers. See Mordehay Arbell, *The Portuguese Jews of Jamaica* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 2000).
[88] C.H. Wesley, "The Emancipation of the Free Colored Population in the British Empire," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (April 1934): 140.
[89] Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society*, 135.

eighteenth century was concentrated in a very small white "squirearchy" totaling about fifty families. This was the class segment to which Simon Taylor came to belong.[90]

Jamaica was home in the late eighteenth century to Europeans from various socio-economic backgrounds, religions and places of origins, including English, Scots, Welsh and Irish, and other non-Protestant Europeans, particularly Jews and French refugees of the Saint-Domingue Revolution. Within colonial contact zones like Jamaica, earlier ideas of difference located in religion, ethnicity, manners, or dress appear to have been less divisive than in the metropole. As discussed in the previous chapter, notions of difference centered on physiognomic race that developed in Jamaica allowed predominantly white male colonists to take positions of power and create hierarchical divisions to maintain that power; however, the degree to which the small white population was an egalitarian community is debated within Caribbean historiography. Trevor Burnard, for instance, argues that in Jamaica "herrenvolk" egalitarianism developed—a spirit of "conscious equality" that allowed all whites to socialize together and interact on a fairly equal plane within an otherwise highly stratified society. The small number of whites in Jamaica united together in an effort to protect themselves against what they viewed as the often tyrannical rule of the metropole, the threat of foreign invasion, and the dangers the large proportion of enslaved people posed to the small white population.[91] Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy also argues that "racial divisions transcended class divisions" and that in the Caribbean despite the "extreme dichotomy of wealth within white society," there was no "social class struggle" like that which occurred in North America. Wealthy whites required the support of poor whites

[90] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 2.
[91] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire,* 71.

on the plantations and to serve in the militia against foreign invasions and internal slave rebellions. In return, O'Shaughnessy contends, white elites passed laws throughout the eighteenth century to prevent the growing number of people of colour from taking the jobs of poor whites, such as huckstering and various trades.[92] Cecilia Green proposes a more nuanced view of whites in Jamaica. According to Green, while a person's skin colour may have fostered some camaraderie, class divisions within the hierarchy of the colony often meant that in practice lesser whites rarely socialized with wealthier whites, and at times had more of an affinity with free blacks and people of colour instead.[93]

Simon Taylor's letters describing life in Jamaica suggest that place of origin, in addition to class, colour and religion, had a definite impact on how individuals socialized and were treated. Although Taylor often spoke in terms of white and black, he also made more nuanced distinctions among those classified as white based on place of origin or ethnicity and religion. When searching for young white men to work on his estates, Taylor requested Scottish men in particular. According to Richard Sheridan's study of Taylor, part of his success as a planter and manager had to do with his close relationship with his overseers and other estate mangers, who were of "Scots descent and of a clannish disposition."[94] The large concentration of Scottish people in the east of the island, where Taylor owned and managed most of his estates, also suggests a community or network amongst Scottish immigrants or Scottish Creoles.[95] Although he may have had a preference for Scots, Taylor was also open and willing to do business with other

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[92] Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000), 29.
[93] Cecilia A. Green, "Hierarchies of whiteness in the geographies of empire: Thomas Thistlewood and the Barretts of Jamaica," *New West Indian Guide,* Vol. 80, No 1 and 2 (2006): 5-43.
[94] Sheridan, "Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica," 289.
[95] For detailed discussion of Scots in Jamaica see Alan Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

whites. For instance, when recommending a counting house in Kingston to an associate seeking a place for his son, Taylor wrote that while "it is with a Jew…his [counting] house carries on an immense Sense of Business."[96] The fact that the Jewish-run counting house had "an immense Sense of Business" made it palatable to Taylor. In another example, Taylor was adamant that his niece should not marry an Irish man. In a letter to his cousin Robert, he wrote, "I would undeniably rather that my Nieces should intermarry into English or Scottish Families…[A]s to Irish ones[,] I hope to God they never will have the least idea of marrying one of that Nation[.] [T]here may be good People among them of that Country but it has not been my luck to know any of them."[97] These examples clearly show that Simon Taylor did not regard all white people as the same, but made distinctions and maintained preferences and prejudices based on more than the colour of a person's skin. Still, although Jamaica's white population was certainly diverse and not always cohesive, as Thomas Burnard notes, by the latter eighteenth century "the ubiquity of slavery…put a premium on whiteness."[98]

Despite Jamaica's reputation as a place of illness and violence, the sugar island, along with other West Indian colonies, held a wide appeal for many white people. The islands "attracted the younger sons, older daughters and otherwise disadvantaged offspring of the British Isles" who hoped to secure wealth during as short a stay as possible.[99] As John Stewart comments about Jamaica in the early nineteenth century, Europeans came to Jamaica "with one invariable view—that of making or mending their

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[96] Cambridge University Library and Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London (hereafter) ICS, Plantation Life in the Caribbean Pt. 1, Jamaica, c. 1765-1848: the Taylor and Vanneck-Arcedeckne Papers (microfilm), I B 2, Simon Taylor to Hugh Innes, Kingston, 1 November 1798.
[97] ICS, I G 35, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, October 1805.
[98] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 21.
[99] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 130.

fortunes."[100] This was particularly true for white men who aspired to make their fortunes in the colony while enjoying patriarchal autonomy and freedoms from social norms at home. Plantations and pens were like little independent "kingdoms" where owners and managers could rule as "sovereign lords" living, for the most part, free from the laws of the church or the rule of law.[101] As Petley notes, "mastery, and all of the public privileges that went with it, was central to the gendered identities of these white slaveholding men."[102] This was certainly the case for men, but even some white women were able to achieve a level of respectability and independence unattainable for them at home. According to one early eighteenth-century observer, women who immigrated to the colonies "are such who have been Scandalous in England to the utmost Degree." [103] Teresia Constantia Phillips was one such woman who found "home" and refuge in Jamaica during the latter eighteenth century. Although a former courtesan and infamous bigamist in England, she was accepted into respectable circles in Kingston and Spanish Town and achieved some level of social standing during her residency in Jamaica.[104] In this way, the "Atlantic space" not only "transmogrif[ied]" racial communities, as Steve Garner writes, but also changed notions of respectability in the colonies for women, allowing those, such as Teresia Phillips, to go from a ruined woman in the metropole to a respected woman of some social standing within the colony.[105] The colonies provided opportunities, particularly for white British men but also for some women, that would

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[100] John Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 179.
[101] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire,* 20-1.
[102] Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture During the Era of Abolition* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), 11.
[103] Edward Ward (1698) cited in Wilson, *The Island Race,* 144.
[104] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 145.
[105] Steve Garner, "Atlantic Crossing: Whiteness as a Transatlantic Experience," *Atlantic Studies,* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (April 2007): 117-132.

otherwise be unavailable to them in the metropole—economic prosperity and access to freedom from many of the social obligations in Britain. Such power and freedom were privileges colonists were adamant to protect against all threats.

The hierarchy among non-whites was even more complex. A caste system based on one's mixture of European and African ancestry existed within the black and coloured populations of Jamaica, whether they were enslaved or free. At the bottom of the caste- or colour-based hierarchy were those of pure African ancestry, either born in Africa or on the island, who were often referred to as African or black Creoles. The non-white population, both enslaved and free, was around 200,000[106] in 1774 and just under 400,000 in 1815, about ninety percent of the total population of Jamaica.[107] The children of a black person and a white person were described as *mulatto*. The children of a mulatto person and a white person were described as *quadroon*; and the children of a quadroon and a white person were described as *mustee* or *octoroon*. If a mustee had a child with a white person that child, a *mustifino*, was considered legally white in Jamaica and granted the legal rights of an English-born citizen.[108] In addition, although the term *mulatto* was used to describe a person of half African and half European ancestry, it was also often used to speak broadly of anyone of mixed racial ancestry. There are no exact numbers of how many mixed-race people lived in Jamaica; however, according to Mair's estimate in the 1770s the population totaled around 23,000 and 60,000 in the 1830s—

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[106] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 16.
[107] Philip D. Morgan, "The Black Experience in the British Empire, 1680-1810," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century,* ed. William Roger Louis, Alaine M. Low, and Peter James Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 468.
[108] According to a 1733 law, a person four generations removed from African ancestry was deemed white and given all the rights of English citizen. See Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 261.

approximately ten percent of the total population of Jamaica.[109] There were also specific terms used to describe a mulatto, quadroon, or mustee person who had a child with a black person. For instance the term *sambo* was used to describe the offspring of a mulatto and black person; however, they were often placed within the same caste or category as a black person. Such careful organization of some people of colour and disregard for others suggests that those who could pose a challenge, even visibly, to the boundaries between whiteness and blackness had to be carefully categorized and monitored.

Where a person was positioned in the colour- or caste-based hierarchy had numerous implications for their life within the Jamaican colony. Although distinctions between "Negroes" and "Mulattoes" were not generally recognized under the law—at least not until the turn of the nineteenth century by which time antislavery rhetoric and activity lessened discriminatory laws against free people of colour—in practice blacks and people of colour were regarded and treated differently. There were clear correlations between a person's colour and his or her class and status in the colony. For instance, although there was only one slave code that was applied to all who were enslaved, enslaved domestics or tradesmen were usually mulatto, quadroon or mustee, and tended to have more "privileges" than black people who most commonly worked in the fields or in the processing of sugar.[110] In addition, people of colour were more likely to be freed, usually by or with the assistance of their white fathers. According to Arnold Sio's

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[109] Lucille Mathurin Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655-1844* (Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2006), 268.

[110] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica.* The term "privilege" is problematic because it does not recognize the vulnerable position many domestics were in or the frequency of rape or "petty violence" against them by members of the white household. See Beckles, *Centering Woman* for discussion on the problems with the term.

estimates, in 1793 eighty percent of freemen were of colour and twenty percent were black.[111] Similar to those who were enslaved, as we will see in chapter three, the free population of colour and the free blacks generally held the same status under the law. However, free people of colour were more likely to be given an act of privilege—an act granted by the Jamaican Assembly which gave to a select number of free people of colour many of the rights given to whites in the colony. People of colour were also more likely to inherit property from their white fathers.[112] Evidence suggests that even when differences between free blacks and free people of colour were not recognized in law, they were recognized in custom. What played out in practice was not necessarily encoded in law.

The "Social Fabric" of the Colony

More than any other feature, the system of slavery characterized eighteenth-century Jamaica. Jamaica was a slave society, as opposed to the slave-holding societies in parts of the American mainland such as New England; its "entire social fabric" was made up of the system of slavery that bound whites, free non-whites and slaves into one economic and social system.[113] As Braithwaite put it, if the Assembly could be seen as "the head, arms, and legs of the body politic" within Jamaica throughout the eighteenth century, then "slavery was certainly its back, guts and thighs."[114] The number of enslaved people in Jamaica steadily increased throughout the eighteenth century as the

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[111] Arnold A. Sio, "Race, Colour and Miscegenation: The Free Coloured of Jamaica and Barbados," *Caribbean Studies* 16 (April 1976): 7.
[112] Sio, "Race, Colour and Miscegenation," 8-9 and Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica.*
[113] Micheal Craton, "Slavery and Slave Society in the British Caribbean," in *The Slavery Reader*, ed. Gad Heuman and James Walvin (London: Routledge, 2003), 104.
[114] Braithwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 179.

demand for sugar grew in the metropole, so that by 1748 the enslaved population had risen to approximately 116,000—eighty times more slaves than when the island was first taken by the English in the mid-seventeenth century. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century Jamaica had the largest slave population in British America.[115] By 1815, there were approximately 339,000 enslaved people in Jamaica.[116] Jamaica, and by extension the British Empire, was heavily dependent on these thousands of people of African ancestry that toiled, struggled and died on the plantations and pens of the Caribbean. Slavery was the very foundation of the colony and central to every person who lived there, whether they were white, black or of colour, free or in chains. It was not an abstract institution but an ever-present reality for all—a brutal, violent system of oppression and degradation that had long-term psychological and social effects on enslaved people, their descendents and the wider society as a whole.

Simon Taylor viewed slavery not as an oppressive system, but as a benevolent one. As far as he was concerned, slavery was not the evil it was made out to be by abolitionists and antislavery advocates; nor was freedom necessarily preferable to slavery (for the enslaved, at least). For instance, although Taylor supported the manumission of his cousin's mixed-race mistress and children, he did not choose to free his only enslaved daughter.[117] Instead, upon his death, Taylor had his executors invest £700 and from the interest place another slave on Golden Grove estate, an estate he managed but did not own, in place of his "quadroon" daughter, Charlotte Taylor. Whatever remained of the interest was to be used for Charlotte's living costs and upkeep. When she died the

[115] O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 8-9.
[116] Ward, "The British West Indies," 433.
[117] When an overseer on one of the estates he managed requested the manumission of his children, Taylor supported the manumission although the owner of the estate did not. Also, when John Tailyour, Simon's cousin, requested the manumission of his mixed-race children Taylor granted it.

principal was to be given to her children. Taylor did not provide a clear reason for why he did not seek Charlotte's manumission, stating only that he preferred "this mode of providing for [her] to the purchasing [of] her freedom."[118] As Christer Petley notes, many planters shared the sentiment that when a person was freed, they were likely to become destitute.[119] Perhaps Taylor saw slavery as a more secure means of providing for his daughter and, in his view, freedom was not as important as personal security. This was likely not a position shared by Charlotte or other enslaved people, but the decision was Taylor's to make.

Simon Taylor's views on slavery must be understood within the ideological context of both eighteenth-century Jamaica and Britain. Although Jamaica was "not a propitious environment for cultivating the life of the mind," people in the colony did engage with eighteenth-century enlightenment thought.[120] The Kingston lending library, for instance, had copies of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Comte de Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*, and David Hume's *History of England*, among other influential works of the time.[121] Taylor was likely influenced by these works, in addition to William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, a treatise that he once wrote "every gentlemen" should read.[122] Blackstone's *Commentaries* was one of several texts during this period that argued that the rights of an individual depended on their status in relation to others within a natural

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[118] National Archives of England, Simon Taylor's Will, PROB 10/7400/7, fols 2-4, folio 59.
[119] This view was the impetus behind a local law that required planters who manumitted slaves to provide them with a £15 annuity to ensure they did not become a financial burden on the colony. Nevertheless, many freed people remained very poor. Christer Petley, "'Legitimacy' and Social Boundaries: Free People of Colour and the Social Order in Jamaican Slave Society," *Social History,* Vol. 30, No. 4 (November 2005)
[120] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 116.
[121] The Royal Gazette, 5 July 1788 cited in Christer Petley, "British links and the West Indian proslavery argument," *History In Focus* 12 (Spring 2007).
[122] ICS, I D 15, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brissett Taylor, Kingston, 14 May 1800

hierarchy or the "Great Chain of Being."[123] Taylor seemingly understood this to mean that slavery was a natural state for some people, as natural as his own subordination to king and God. Slavery was not antithetical to Christian values, as many antislavery advocates had argued; the idea that slavery was inhumane or unchristian, as far as Taylor was concerned, was a "Whole Jargen [sic] of Nonsense."[124] Instead, Taylor believed that social hierarchies and subordination were the very foundation of an orderly society.[125]

Rise in the Plantocracy

Simon Taylor depended for his livelihood upon the system of slavery and the wealth derived from it. For most of his life, Taylor worked as an attorney for absentee planters, Creoles and Britons who lived full-time in the metropole but owned plantations in Jamaica. The practice of absenteeism increased throughout the eighteenth century and accounted for approximately two-thirds of the planter population in Jamaica by 1800.[126] The large numbers of absentees in Jamaica created opportunities for upward mobility and substantial wealth for young white men, like Simon Taylor, as managers or attorneys. As an attorney, Taylor was responsible for many of the day-to-day tasks, including looking after the provision of plantation supplies; the purchasing of slaves; the shipment of sugar and rum; hiring and firing the overseer, bookkeeper and other white employees on the plantation; and, writing reports on the general condition of the plantation.

Taylor continued to work as an attorney until his death in 1813; however, this was by choice and not because of financial need. By the time he died, Simon Taylor owned

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[123] ICS, I D 15, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brissett Taylor, 14 May 1800. For more on the Great Chain of Being and constructions of race refer to Wheeler, *Complexions of Race,* 217-218.
[124] ICS, I G 2, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, 20 August 1804.
[125] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 72
[126] O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided.*

four sugar estates—Holland, Haughton Court, Lyssons, and Llanhumney. In addition, he also owned three cattle ranches or pens—Burrowfield, Montrose and Prospect. Taylor's properties, according to Richard Sheridan, earned him approximately £47,000 Jamaican currency a year, a very substantial income. Just over 2200 enslaved people, worth £124, 578 sterling or twelve percent of his total wealth, worked on his seven properties, cultivating sugar and working as tradesmen or as domestics.[127]

The relatively small white population in Jamaica, about ten percent of the total population throughout the late eighteenth century, allowed ambitious white men with the right connections and letters of introduction the opportunity to take up important roles in the administration of the colony, as discussed above. This was the case for Simon Taylor. Taylor's position in Jamaica was not achieved solely because of his accumulation of vast wealth, but also because of his widespread involvement in colonial politics and civil society. Shortly after his return to Jamaica from Holland in 1760, Taylor became a member of the House of Assembly, representing Kingston from 1763-1781 and St. Thomas-in-the-East from 1784-1810. He also served as the custos for St. Thomas-in-the-East from 1774-1813. In addition, he was Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and Lieutenant Governor of Militia. Taylor was clearly a prominent member of Jamaican society with connections to influential members of British society. For instance, Taylor entertained people such as Sir William Trelawney, a member of Parliament and Governor of Jamaica, and his family; Lord and Lady Nugent; and British war hero Horatio Nelson. Taylor's substantial income and position in the political administration of the colony made him one of the most prominent residents in Jamaica by the time of his death. His upward mobility, from an attorney to part of the planter-

[127] Sheridan, "Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica."

merchant elite, was particular to the colonial context and such mobility would likely have been unavailable to him in Britain.

A Modest Beginning

When Simon Taylor died he was a part of the planter-merchant elite and one of the wealthiest men in Jamaica; however, his beginnings were modest. Simon was the first child of Patrick Tailzour and Martha Taylor. His father was a Kingston merchant originally from the area around Montrose on the east coast of Scotland. Patrick had joined the flow of young Scottish men who immigrated to Jamaica in search of "independence" in the early part of the eighteenth century and he settled in Kingston in 1728.[128] Upon his arrival in the colony, Patrick found work as a merchant in Kingston, although he was said to be a carpenter by trade, and soon developed a clientele amongst the planter elite. He met and married Martha Taylor, daughter of George Taylor, a Creole from the Cayman Islands, and changed his last name from Tailzour to his wife's name, Taylor. The Taylors lived well, likely from Martha's "little Fortune" and the money Patrick made in trade.[129] They had five children, of whom Simon was the eldest. In his letters, Simon wrote very little about his life growing up; we know only that he attended Eton College as a child and then received training in business and economy in Holland. He makes only occasional references to his father; his mother is completely absent from his letters. Taylor had deep respect for his father, whom he referred to as a "a very clever Man in Business and of unwavering Industry."[130] Patrick taught his son the importance of diligence and frugality, values Taylor would prize for the rest of his

[128] Refer to Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun* for more on Scottish migration to Jamaica.
[129] ICS, I I 13, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 17 February 1807.
[130] ICS, I I 13, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 17 February 1807.

life. When Patrick died in 1758, Simon returned to Jamaica to take his father's place in business and as head of the family. "By carrying on business to the time of his death," Patrick was able to leave his children "a very handsome revenue" in the amount of £51,751 sterling, although most of this consisted of debt owed to him.[131] To his son Simon, Patrick left his list of planter clients and his property in Kingston, including his merchant house. Among the list of clients Patrick left for his son was Chaloner Arcedeckne, owner of Golden Grove plantation in St. Thomas-in-the-East and a prominent member of parliament. Taylor worked with Arcedeckne for most of his life and the two became close friends, in addition to business associates. Besides the material items Simon inherited from his father, Taylor also received a firm sense of business and notions of middle-class British respectability and responsibility that impacted his role within his family and the larger colony.

Simon's closest relationship was with his younger brother John. Sir John Taylor also attended Eton College, but unlike his brother, he remained in England. John later purchased a baronetcy, married Elizabeth Haughton, a Creole woman from a prominent planter family in Jamaica, and bought an estate in the outskirts of London. Nicknamed "Old Boneless" by his peers in Jamaica, Sir John had little taste for life in the colony, "never having taken to business" or endeavored "to accumulating anything."[132] When he married Elizabeth, he inherited Lyssons estate in St. Thomas-in-the-East; however, his aversion to Jamaican life meant he was rarely in the colony and left the running of the estate to his brother Simon. Sir John enjoyed a life of opulence in England, to the complete frustration and disapproval of his brother, and upon his death in 1786 from

[131] ICS, I I 13, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 17 February 1807.
[132]Enid Shields, *Vale Royal: The House and the People* (Kingston: Jamaican Historical Society, 1993), 18 and ICS, I I 13, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 17 February 1807.

gout—the "rich man's disease"— was highly indebted. Despite his criticisms of his brother's lifestyle, Simon shared a close relationship with his brother, writing to him often with words of guidance and encouragement. As Sir John acknowledged, Simon was more like "a Father" to him than a brother.[133]

When Sir John died, Simon took responsibility for his brother's family, including John's wife Lady Elizabeth Taylor, two daughters Margaret and Martha, and son Simon Richard Brisset Taylor. As Simon wrote in a letter to Lady Taylor shortly after his brother's death, "my Anxious wishes [are] for yourself and Children… I am working and toiling for no other purpose, but to sett them out decently in the World … I am not so anxious for them to be great in the World, but happy."[134] Soon after this letter Taylor made his brother's son, Sir Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, his principal heir and upon Simon's death his nephew became perhaps "the richest commoner in England."[135]

Conclusion

When Simon Taylor died on 14 April 1813, his total personal property was estimated to be around £1,000,000 sterling, including livestock, household furnishings, stores, slaves, utensils, sugar, rum, government securities, debts and cash. Unlike many Creole men of his wealth and status, Taylor made his home in Jamaica and spent most of his life there. His wealth and status in the colony, in addition to the over 500 letters to family, friends and associates readily accessible through the archives in London, have made Simon Taylor a central figure in discussions of eighteenth-century Jamaican slave society during his own time and today. He was a powerful figure within the structures

[133] ICS, II B 29, John Taylor to Simon Taylor, 1 May 1783.
[134] ICS, III B 8, Simon Taylor to Lady Taylor, 9 April 1787.
[135] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 65.

and institutions established in Jamaican slave society, structures intended to grant privileges, profit and power to the small minority while exploiting the majority. By situating him within eighteenth-century Jamaica, we can gain a better understanding of the particular political, social and ideological impacts that shaped his identity—who he was and how he lived—and the anxieties and contradictions in his personal life, the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO:
A Relatively Precarious Position

The European expansion and exploration that characterized the late seventeenth century ushered in an age of national self-reflection and identity building throughout the eighteenth century. As British national identity was being forged and consolidated the movement of European peoples outward to colonies across the globe and contact with colonized peoples raised difficult questions for those "at home" and "abroad" about what national identity actually meant. Such explorations around questions of identity required the construction of the "other" to serve as a mirror, allowing Britons to establish and define boundaries around "Britishness," boundaries that were never fully established, but unstable and malleable. Thus, for many colonial men and women living in Jamaica, the latter eighteenth century could accurately be described as a period permeated by a sense of anxiety and insecurity regarding identity and notions of "home" and belonging. This chapter will focus on the complexities and contradictions within Simon Taylor's identity. His letters to family, friends, and colleagues, predominantly in Britain, reflect anxieties and tensions common among white West Indian colonists in the eighteenth century whose identities were as slippery, tentative, and disjointed as the society in which they lived. Amidst growing criticisms from the metropole, Simon Taylor, like many other colonists, attempted to negotiate both British and Creole identities in order to situate himself within the larger British Empire. An examination of Taylor's letters reveals the intersections and divergences between metropole and colonial identities during the "age

of abolition," as well as how one man attempted to find his place—how and where he sought to belong.[136]

Creoles in the Metropolitan Gaze

As noted earlier, in the British West Indian islands, the term Creole was used to describe a person of either European or African ancestry who had been born or spent most their life in the West Indies. Despite the ways in which British Creoles may have attempted to present themselves and the colony as an extension of Britain, by the end of the eighteenth century they were commonly represented in English discourse as distinct from metropolitan Britons, culturally and in other ways. Metropolitan observers often regarded Creoles as having their own distinct culture and customs—in speech, diet, dress, architecture, values and behavior. These were seen to result from the mixing of various ethnic British and African cultures and from their distinct colonial setting.[137] In addition to these differences, some observers saw Creoles as physically different as well. Edward Long, a prominent figure in eighteenth-century Jamaica and one of the first historians of the island, remarked on the physical differences between Britons and Creoles. In his 1774 book on Jamaica he stated:

> The native white men, or Creoles, of Jamaica are in general tall and well shaped; and some of them rather inclined to corpulence. Their cheeks are remarkably high-boned, and the sockets of their eyes deeper than is commonly observed among the natives of England… Although descended from British ancestors, they are stamped with these characteristic deviations.[138]

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[136] Although the "age of abolition" is usually regarded as the period between 1787, when the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade was first organized, and 1833 when slavery was abolished in the British empire, David Lambert refers to this period beginning in 1780 in his study. David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[137] Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 306-7.

[138] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 261-2.

Long went on to suggest that the physical differences between Creoles and Britons were the result of the hot Caribbean climate, which, according to Roxanne Wheeler's study of British conceptions of race, was the most common secular explanation of human difference in the eighteenth century.[139] Climate theory was based on the idea that the body, along with the mind and emotions, developed or regressed in response to the environment. The temperate climates of Europe, for instance, were thought by many Europeans to have optimal effects on the body and explained what they saw as their superior physical and mental state over those in the frigid climates of the north and torrid climates of the south. The torrid zones of Africa (and the Caribbean), according to climate theory, made people "indolent" and "lascivious" and societies in these parts of the world "subject to tyranny."[140] Long's views on the physical differences of Creoles suggest that he believed in the power of climate to effect physical change on Creoles in Jamaica, even if they were of British ancestry. His underlying observation that Creoles were different from Britons, not just physically, but also in a much more profound way, was certainly an outlook popular among outside observers, although not necessarily shared by those native to the islands.

Creoles were portrayed in a number of ways in the prevailing discourses that circulated throughout the metropole toward the end of the eighteenth century; these portrayals were often ambivalent. For instance, although Edward Long wrote that there is "no people in the world that exceed the gentlemen of this island in a noble and disinterested munificence," he also subscribed to more salient discourses that associated

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[139] Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*
[140] Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race,* 21-28.

colonials with less benevolent tropes.[141] These tropes could be summed up as portraying Creoles as ostentatious and lacking refinement; licentious, passionate and without self-control; tyrannical; and degraded from their British ancestry. Creoles were regarded as tainted by "the smear of black Jamaica"— that is, by their close proximity and involvement with slavery and enslaved Africans.[142] Thus, as one supporter of slavery lamented, by the end of the eighteenth century there existed in Britain a "shoal of calumniating libels against the colonists, with which the tables of every public house and reading shop throughout the country are loaded."[143]

Creoles in Jamaica were often represented as degenerate Britons. As Kathleen Wilson notes, Britons feared that "the national character, acquired through propinquity, could when removed from the structures of civilized life quickly give way."[144] Many feared that one's civility, one's very Britishness, would "slip" into a degenerated form once the structures of civility were left behind in the metropole. Within British discourse the colonies were viewed as a wild and untamed space, on the periphery of or even beyond respectability and civilization.[145] The close proximity in which Creoles lived with enslaved and free peoples of African ancestry added to this notion of "slippage" within the colonial space. As one British observer noted of Creoles, because they were "bred…at the Breast of a Negro slave," they became accustomed through the "precept and example" of their black wet nurses, nannies and other enslaved domestics, to the "sensuality, selfishness, and despotism" that characterized the Caribbean islands and

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[141] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 263
[142] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica*, 127.
[143] A.E. Furness, "George Hibbert and the Defence of Slavery in the West Indies," *The Jamaica Historical Review* 5 (1965): 67.
[144] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 15.
[145] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*.

those who lived there. In this way, the intimate interactions between white children and their black wet nurses, and the supposed habits of enslaved Africans were thought to be contagious and posed a real and constant danger to white Creoles.[146]

Such observations were not restricted to a metropolitan gaze. Mary Prince, a formerly enslaved woman who sought freedom in England, also commented on the degeneracy of Creoles living in the West Indies. In her appeal to the "good people of England" published in 1831, Prince wrote:

> How [can] English people can go out into the West Indies and act in such a beastly manner [?] But when they go to the West Indies, they forget God and all feelings of shame, I think, since they can see and do such things. They tie up people like hogs—moor them up like cattle, and they lick them, so as hogs, or cattle, or horses never were flogged.[147]

Prince's narrative, although likely heavily edited by a British abolitionist, speaks to the commonly held notion that Creoles were not civilized English men, but degenerate barbaric "others" who treated those they enslaved no better than animals.

The idea that Creoles were degenerate Britons was also applied to those who returned to and settled in the metropole. Although many of these Creoles may have risen to become a part of the colonial elite in Jamaica and may have been wealthier than most of the aristocracy in England, they were not always welcomed into the upper echelons of English society. The response among the English elite to Creoles in England is well described in *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771), by Tobias Smollet:

> Every upstart of fortune…presents himself at Bath, as in the very focus of observation—…planters, negro-drivers, and hucksters, from our American plantations, enriched they know not how…men of low birth, and no breeding,

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[146] John Fothergill, *Considerations Relative to the North American Colonies* (London: Printed by Henry Kent, 1765), 411-12.
[147] Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave,* 1st Edition 1831*,* ed. Moira Ferguson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 83-4.

> have found themselves suddenly translated into a state of affluence, unknown to former ages; and no wonder that their brains should be intoxicated with pride, vanity, and presumption. Knowing no other criterion of greatness, but the ostentation of wealth, they discharge their affluence without taste or conduct, through every channel of the most absurd extravagance.[148]

This lack of "taste or conduct" and the "ostentation of wealth" that Smollet describes illustrate well how Creoles were often regarded and the traits associated with colonials in the metropole. Most common were the depictions of the ostentatious colonial of questionable background. Ironically, the elaborate displays of wealth within the colonies that were a common and acceptable way for Creoles to emulate respectable British gentility and display one's connection to the metropole was regarded in England as a mark of West Indian difference.[149]

Creoles and other colonials in the metropole were often described as *parvenu*, their attempts to enter genteel English society resented. However, this criticism was not lodged against Creoles alone. The dramatic increase in consumption of colony-produced "luxuries" amongst various economic groups, including the poor and middling classes, in eighteenth-century Britain suggested a "dubious spirit of equality and emulation" and created a sense of fear amongst the elite.[150] Similarly, West Indians in the metropole, particularly those of "dubious" birth who had made their fortunes in the colonies, were viewed as a danger to the boundaries of class and distinction. According to Michal Rozbicki's study of colonial America, both the urban mercantile classes in England and the "upstart" planters of the colonies engaged in a common "legitimizing process" in

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[148] Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker,* 1st Edition 1771 (London: Penguin Classics, 2008) 44.
[149] Wilson, *The Island Race*, 152.
[150] Michal J. Rozibiki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman: Plantation Legitimacy in Colonial America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 28.

which British gentility was the model and the goal.[151] A similar goal seemed to have existed amongst many Jamaican colonials, although some, such as Simon Taylor, still clung to their middle-class roots. Throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, just as members of the wealthy commercial classes sought entrance into genteel social circles, many colonial elites, both planters and merchants, returned home to the metropole with newly acquired wealth and attempted to enter upper-class society through various means, such as the purchase of a country estate and title or by using their connections to enter Parliament. No matter how their fortunes had been made, whether from the taint of trade or the taint of slavery, landownership and political involvement might secure the ambitious a place amongst the English gentry. But this is not to say they were always welcomed. On the contrary, in their attempts to socialize with the "old" gentry, Creoles, particularly those without influential familial or business connections in the metropole, were often met with snobbery.

The negative discourse that surrounded colonials and that permeated English society in the late eighteenth century was fuelled further by the emergence of popular Christian and antislavery rhetoric that viewed slavery as barbaric and Creoles who engaged in it as "un-English." Fundamental to this representation was the notion that Englishness was incompatible with slavery. As David Lambert puts it, "a British 'free world' norm was articulated" in opposition to "a slave world 'other'."[152] By the latter quarter of the eighteenth century as the antislavery movements took cultural root in Britain, there emerged a "widespread conviction that New World slavery symbolized all

[151] Rozibiki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman,* 28.
[152] Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition,* 12.

the forces that threatened the true destiny of man [sic]."[153] Slavery became widely regarded as an "aberration" to the English norm, as were those involved in the practice.

Insecurities in the Grey Space: Simon Taylor and his Anxieties

Over the course of the eighteenth century Creoles came to occupy a grey space, somewhere between the civilized English and the uncivilized "other" in the metropolitan gaze. As discussed above, Creoles were not always well regarded, or likely received, in the metropole. Perhaps Simon Taylor, like other Creoles, even felt the sting of prejudice firsthand during his time spent in Windsor attending Eton College. Like so many West Indian children from affluent families, Taylor was sent to England to be educated. Perhaps his way of speaking, his "drawling, dissonant gibberish," or his "vulgar manners" adopted from close contact with "Negroe Domestics" and other African Creoles in the colony may have set Taylor apart from his British-born schoolmates and marked him as different, as Creole, at least upon first arrival.[154] Although Taylor makes no mention of his own experience living in England and attending Eton, he cautions other Creoles against sending their children to "Westminster, Eton or Winchelsea all which places I look upon to be the first Introduction of the Ruin of Creole Children which they finally complete when they go either to Oxford or Cambridge."[155] It is possible then that his contempt for these popular private schools had as much to do with his own negative experience there

[153] David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41.
[154] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 278.
[155] ICS, I A 10, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, Kingston, 15 September 1780.

as it did with his disregard for the useful education such institutions could provide Creole children.

Whether or not Simon Taylor experienced discrimination firsthand, he was surely aware of the negative ways in which Creoles were regarded in the metropole and was likely "flustered by their faltering image."[156] Representations of Creoles by metropolitan observers situated them on the periphery of British society—outside and not within, in contrast to the way many colonists regarded themselves. As a result of this marginalization and criticism, Creoles like Taylor were often in the precarious position of having to defend their Britishness—their rights and connection to the metropole— against representations that placed them far removed from those at home.

Despite widespread discourse that represented Creoles as beyond English norms of respectability, the products of slavery—sugar, cocoa and rum for example—had become intrinsic to British cultural identity and the Creole a "necessary evil" for the metropole. Even as the polite and leisured classes maintained a certain disdain for those involved in "trade," local merchants and provincial colonials included, polite sociability revolved around the fruits of their trade. As poet William Cowper wrote in 1788:

> I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
> And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
> What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans
> Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.
>
> I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
> For how could we do without sugar and rum?

[156] Sarah E. Yeh, " 'A Sink of All Filthiness': Gender, Family, and Identity in the British Atlantic, 1688-1763," *The Historian,* Vol. 68, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 85.

> Especially sugar, so needful we see?
> What? give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea![157]

Cowper expresses quite eloquently the ambivalent sentiment shared among many Britons both in the colony and metropole in the latter eighteenth century. British reliance on the resources produced and shipped from its Caribbean colonies required colonials loyal to Britain, who would not only defend the island from other European powers in competition for colonial assets, but also manage the large number of enslaved peoples needed to produce the luxuries that had become such a fundamental part of British culture.[158] Thus, the debates that emerged around the holding of slaves and economic progress represented what David Lambert terms the "tensions of empire"—a struggle around the very meaning of "Englishness."[159]

Despite a language of othering, Creoles were still accepted to some degree in the metropole. Their monetary wealth, political and social connections, and whiteness ensured that Creoles were never racialized in the same ways as Africans or Native Americans. Still, acceptance did not negate the fact that within the prevailing discourse that dominated the late eighteenth century Creoles were regarded as "different," that they encompassed "in experience, imagination and representation an ineffable otherness."[160]

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[157] William Cowper, "Pity for Poor Africans," 1788. <http://www.yale.edu/glc/aces/cowper.htm> (1 July 2010).
[158] Joanne De Groodt, "Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections: Reflections on Consumption and Empire," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan culture and the Imperial World,* ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 166-190.
[159] Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition,* 2-15.
[160] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 130.

Performance and Negotiations: Maintaining British Ties

In an attempt to maintain ties to the metropole as legitimate English citizens overseas, colonials, both in the West Indies and America, often engaged in a kind of performance that was "imitative" of metropolitan values and customs.[161] In their various interactions and relationships, Creoles relied on what they perceived to be acceptable British traits in performances of identity.[162] Taylor, for instance, engaged acceptable tropes of British respectability and masculinity in order to situate himself within, and not separate from, representations of British national identity, while at the same time negotiating his identity as a Creole. Through an examination of Simon Taylor's performances, we can begin to understand how Taylor constructed his identity and how he connected his life to larger British models.[163]

Simon Taylor's letters to his friends, family and associates in Britain are filled with performances, that is "plausible" narratives "deliberately constructed" in order to allow Taylor to adhere to the varied roles required of him.[164] This process is not unique to Taylor—we all have multiple subject positions and must navigate and perform these positions accordingly. In Taylor's case, an important part of his performance involved being selective about what he revealed about himself and his life to the recipients of his letters. Generally, he was more open with the distinctly Creole aspects of his life, such as slavery and intimate relationships with women of colour, when in communication with those who held a "shared colonial knowledge"—the men who held a shared experience of

[161] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 102.
[162] Sarah Pearsall, "'After All These Revolutions': Epistolary Identities in an Atlantic World, 1760-1815" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2001), 15 and Wilson, *The Island Race,* 4.
[163] Pearsall, "'After All These Revolutions'," 15.
[164] Pearsall, "'After All These Revolutions'," 13 and Petley, "'Home' and 'this country'."

life in the colonies, whether Creole or Britons.[165] In contrast, those not privy to this knowledge, whether through lack of colonial experience or by gender, were presented with a different kind of narrative. In such correspondence, Taylor performed character types that would resonate with acceptable ideals of British masculinity, and silenced aspects of his life that would identify him as diverging from those ideals.

In letters to his nephew and heir, Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, for example, Taylor outlines repeatedly the character and manners to which the young Simon should aspire in order to become a respectable middle-class British gentleman. According to Taylor, a gentleman should be a "professional man of extensive information," an "Independent Man" and a "Credit to [your] Connexions [sic]."[166] He should be a "credit" to his family, as well as "a usefull Member of society," and not a burden.[167] Taylor repeatedly warned his nephew to stay away from "Indolence [,] lazyness, Vanity [,] self confidence [,] Pride and ignorance," all of which "will not do it."[168] He should avoid debt and extravagance, and character types associated with the English upper class, such as the "Fop", "Pleasure lover" and "Man of Fashion." Instead, Taylor encouraged his nephew to become a "man of industry," responsible and modest.[169] Taylor's directives to his nephew resonate with what Davidoff and Hall found to be a common practice of "support and control" in the upbringing of sons and nephews among the upper-middle classes in England.[170] Taylor likely viewed such "support and control" as especially necessary for his "legitimate" heir who would one day inherit substantial family property,

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[165] I am indebted to Laura Ishiguro for this term.
[166] ICS, I C 8, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 7 May 1799.
[167] ICS, I A 10, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, Kingston, 15 September 1780.
[168] ICS, I C 8, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 7 May 1799.
[169] Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun,* 54. And Pearsall, "'After All These Revolutions'," 15.
[170] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson Education, 1987), 210.

most of which Taylor laboured to accumulate, and take the role as head of the family. As he warned his nephew, "I am determined as sure as there is a God in Heaven not to give up my property to any one that will throw it away on Horses, Carriages, Gambling Drunkards, [and whores] nor to support idleness, lazyness, indolence or any vice whatever. I have laboured too hard and too long for it to be disposed of that way."[171] Although Taylor was extravagantly wealthy and part of the colonial elite, he maintained middle-class values. He was adamant that his nephew, who like his father was more attracted to a life of opulence and leisure, should become a man with strong middle-class principles, even if economically he was on par with the aristocracy of Britain. Thus, wrapped up in his notions of masculinity and respectability were characteristics directly related to class and family.

In his letters, Taylor emphasizes the ways he adheres to these models of British middle-class respectability. As a sign of his manliness he regularly informed his relatives of the sacrifices he made for their financial security through his own industry. In one letter to his nephew he stated, "had I been Indolent Lazy or inactive God only knows what your Father would have did or where you or your Sisters would have gott Bread to eat had your Mother died."[172] As discussed in the previous chapter, Simon was a father figure to his younger brother. He managed his brother's estates in Jamaica and assisted him financially. When Taylor finally persuaded his brother Sir John to return to Jamaica in order to look about his estates, he complained that his brother did nothing but enjoy the "sweets of life," while he had "all the Toil."[173] After his brother's death, Simon continued to provide financially for Sir John's family, paying off his debts, managing the

[171] ICS, I C 8, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 7 May 1799.
[172] ICS, I C 8, Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Brisset Taylor, 7 May 1799.
[173] ICS, I A 52, Simon Taylor to Robert Graham, 15 July 1785.

sugar estates his underage nephew inherited, and providing Lady Taylor and her children with a regular allowance. Taylor saw himself as the head of the household, even if they were divided by an ocean, and strove to maintain the security and prosperity of his family. The language of industry, self-sacrifice, virtue and loyalty—all the virtues of an English middle-class gentleman—abounds throughout Simon Taylor's letters.

In all his letters to his family rarely does Taylor divulge the aspects of his life that are distinctly colonial or may be considered "un-English." As selective as he is about what he includes in his letters, he is just as selective about what he leaves out. One glaring absence in Taylor's many letters to his nephew and nieces is his mixed-race family. Taylor had at least two long-term relationships with women of colour and fathered at least two mixed-race children in Jamaica. While relationships between white men and black women in Jamaica were not officially sanctioned, they occurred frequently enough to be regarded within the colony as a Jamaican "tradition." White men, particularly those of means, routinely took a black "wife," mistress or "housekeeper," and passed over legal marriage to a white women, just as Taylor did. This topic is explored further in chapter three. Despite the customary nature of mixed relationships in Jamaica, it was still regarded as taboo in the metropole and was certainly not something a Creole gentleman would discuss openly, except perhaps with other men. When his niece, Margaret Graham, proposed a visit to Jamaica to stay with her beloved uncle, Taylor denied her request. He claimed to be afraid that she would contract Yellow Fever and for this reason, dissuaded her from coming to visit him.[174] However, in a letter to his cousin Robert Taylor, Taylor explained the real reason for refusing the visit. Taylor confided in Robert that Margaret's visit "would never do for I am an old Bachelor,

[174] ICS, I B 29, Simon Taylor to Margaret Graham, 30 October 1798.

and am constantly going from Estate to Estate[.] [B]esides," he wrote, "I have an old Housekeeper who has lived with me there thirty years. I cannot turn her away, she knows all my ways has attended me in all my sickness and I am too old to alter my way of life while I live here."[175] Taylor seemed to fear that the presence of his "housekeeper," the free mixed-race woman Grace Donne, at his principal home at Prospect Pen would have been viewed as a clear indicator of his deviation from acceptable British custom. As Taylor's confession reveals, his real concern was not for his niece's health, but to prevent her from bearing witness to his Creoleness.

It is certainly plausible that Taylor's selective choice of discussion in his letters to his niece and nephew may also have related to his parental role in their lives; however, in his interactions with other Britons to whom he had no such role, Simon Taylor maintained a similar performance. The use of such obfuscating detail reveals a clear anxiety in Taylor's sense of identity. In her journal Lady Maria Nugent, wife of the governor, recounts one peculiar incident that occurred in 1802 at one of the estates Taylor managed, Golden Grove, in St. Thomas-in-the-East. Lady Nugent wrote that during one visit,

> A little mulatto girl was sent into the drawing-room to amuse me. She was a sickly delicate child, with straight light-brown hair, and very black eyes. Mr. T. appeared very anxious for me to dismiss her, and in the evening, the housekeeper told me she was his own daughter.[176]

The little girl was likely Taylor's only enslaved child, Charlotte Taylor. Nugent approaches the incidence with amusement and curiosity, as opposed to the disdain or judgment Taylor likely feared. Taylor's reaction to the presence of his child in the

[175] ICS, I B 27, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, October 1798.
[176] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica*, 68.

company of his respectable British guest seemed to have had more to do with his own fears and anxieties— that he would be found out and his Creoleness revealed—than with disapproval or criticism from his guest. Like Grace Donne, the mixed-race child was another very visible symbol of Taylor's Creoleness and deviation from British norms.

Despite all of his anxieties and performances, Taylor's discomfort with interracial intimacies did not extend to those men familiar with Creole "traditions" and lifestyle—those who were familiar with that certain "shared colonial knowledge." In his correspondence with his male associates in London, Taylor discussed mixed-race relationships openly. In several of his letters to Chaloner Arcedeckne, the London merchant mentioned earlier, Taylor shared the details of local scandals between Creole men and their coloured wives.[177] Similarly, in a 1804 letter to George Hibbert, another West Indian merchant in London, he discussed quite candidly and at length his views on intimate relations with coloured women. Taylor goes as far as to suggest that the survival of Jamaica as a British colony depended on the relationship between mixed-race women and white men, discussed further in chapter three.

While sex between white men and black women was often associated with Creole sexual licentiousness and impropriety, other tropes associated with slaveholding were also to be avoided. One of these negative representations was the slaveholding tyrant. As early as the 1770s Creoles were often represented as being cruel in their treatment of enslaved Africans, their conduct not only un-English, but also uncivilized. The high rate of mortality amongst slaves became the focus of a 1791 committee hearing on slavery in the Caribbean and the slave registration legislation of 1815 in Parliament. As Vincent

[177] Betty Wood and Martin Lynn (eds), *Travel, Trade and Power in the Atlantic 1765-1884* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2002), 24 and 64.

Brown notes, "the accumulation of dead black bodies" on the plantations of the West Indies became "an important dimension of debates over the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery."[178] Reports of vicious beatings, torture, and sexual violence that reached the metropole placed West Indian whites beyond acceptable notions of civility and genteel behavior and often left planters—like Taylor—on the defensive.

Taylor was very careful to distance himself from such representations of Creoles that proliferated during this period. One of the ways he did this was by making no mention of the negative living conditions of those enslaved on his plantations. On the contrary, he often makes a point of expressing the better living conditions of enslaved peoples in the colonies in comparison to poor whites in England. For instance, in a letter to Chaloner Arcedeckne in 1788, he wrote:

> As for Cruelty there is no such thing practised on Estates, I do not believe that the Mad Men [antislavery advocates] at home wish to hurt themselves, but they should endeavour to regulate their own Police, and show Humanity to their own Poor, before they think of making regulations for our Slaves, who think themselves well of it as matters are at present situated, and do not wish for their Interference. God knows if they were treated as these Miscreants report, they would have cutt all our throats allready, from what they have allready heard from home.[179]

In defense of his civility, Taylor tried to assure Arcedeckne that slaves viewed themselves as well treated, and to paint a picture of benevolence and mutual affection between the enslaved and planters. According to Taylor, abolitionists—those "Miscreants" and "Mad Men" in England—made assumptions about the treatment and living conditions of the enslaved without real experience or knowledge.

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[178] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden,* 160 and 162.
[179] ICS, 3A 1788 10, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, 29 May 1788.

In another instance, Taylor became incensed when he was accused of mismanagement and the ill treatment of the enslaved peoples on Albion Estate, which he managed for the Millward family. An enslaved woman named Leticia twice ran away from the estate in order to complain to her mistress, Mrs. Millward. Leticia complained "that she and all the Negroes receive such [usage] from Mr. Forbes [the overseer] as will oblige them to run away from the Estate and fly for shelter to any one who will redress their wrongs." Likely informed by the increasingly frequent reports by abolitionists of brutal punishments on plantations, Mrs. Millward wrote to Taylor to ask about the treatment of those on her estate. In his response to Mrs. Millward's letter of accusation, Taylor presents himself and his overseer as industrious and compassionate. He assures the Millwards that the enslaved are treated well, even better than white workers. Taylor questions ironically whether those enslaved were discontent because they had received "settling Grounds" or were "in plenty while all the rest of the Estate are starving"; here he points out that the enslaved workers had their own provision grounds while white workers did not. Moreover, Taylor chastises Mrs. Millward, who seemingly had just inherited the estate from her father, arguing that had she in the first instance sent Leticia "to the Workhouse, and acquainted [Taylor] of it she would not again have come down to have made a second Complaint." The fact that Leticia challenged his authority by complaining directly to his employer, and that the Millwards trusted the opinion of a "negroe" over his own, enraged Taylor.[180] He was angered by Mrs. Millward's' attack on his skill as a manager and, perhaps more so, on his respectability. This accusation,

[180] ICS, XX B 4, Simon Taylor to Mrs. Millward, March 1786 and ICS, XX B 10, Simon Taylor to Thomas Millward, 25 September 1787.

and others like it, threatened to shatter the image that Taylor created for himself—that of a benevolent and respectable gentleman—and to reveal the "tyrant" trope so often associated with Creoles. Taylor's insistent attempts to depict enslaved people as accepting of their position and of himself as a kind and fair slave-owner, further points to his discomfort and unease with the critical metropolitan gaze.

Simon Taylor performed English male gentility in other areas of his life as well. One clear and common way for British colonials to assert their affinity with Britain and their status as a part of the wealthy elite was through the "enactment of difference"—described by Kathleen Wilson as conspicuous consumption and extravagant displays of wealth, such as elaborate parties, assemblies and feasts or the entertaining of guests for long periods of time, which all served "the performance or rank, nationality and entitlement upon which the plantation system depended."[181] Such conspicuous displays of consumption were important in providing the elite class in the colony with the façade needed to set themselves apart from the diverse population that inhabited the island and to "magnify the distance between white and black" residents.[182] When the governor, George Nugent, and his wife, Lady Nugent, visited Taylor, he went out of his way to provide them with tremendous feasts and attentive hospitality. The party feasted so much that at their parting, Taylor admitted to Lady Nugent that he "must go home to cool coopers," by which he meant he must be "abstemious, after so much feasting."[183]

In a similar way, Taylor's estate Prospect Pen, just outside Kingston, and the large house at its centre, served as a visible sign of his status and connection to the metropole. Kathleen Brown notes of the American colonies that "a man's house revealed his vision

[181] Wilson, *The Island Race,* 152.
[182] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica*, 166.
[183] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 71.

of his place in the world as he wished it to be: it declared his cultural and economic ties to England, his preeminence in colonial society, and his authority over members of his household, including the slaves who generated his wealth."[184] A similar sentiment existed in Jamaica. In 1785, as his social position and wealth increased, Simon Taylor purchased Prospect Pen. Although pens were generally used to produce goods for market or to supply food to the white workers on an affiliated sugar estate, Taylor's pen was used mainly to entertain prominent visitors to Jamaica and host elaborate dinner parties. Despite its modest name, Prospect Pen spanned 119 acres and included an expansive parkland and garden. The eight cattle and 126 sheep and lambs raised at the pen were not intended for the market but were another prop to create an idyllic country-house atmosphere. The house was furnished with expensive silverware and imported china and furniture. Along with the sixty-eight enslaved people that lived and worked the pen, Prospect served as an "immediate indicator of Simon Taylor's wealth and status."[185] For Simon Taylor, his home at Prospect Pen and his conspicuous consumption were visible signs of affinity with English gentility and British identity, in addition to a way to set himself apart from the "others" in the colony.

It was only under a metropolitan gaze that Taylor showed any unease or embarrassment with aspects of his life that could be regarded as particularly Creole. His attempts to silence markers of his Creoleness in the presence of metropolitan observers and his efforts to display his affinity with British respectability suggest a deep angst about representations of Creole lifestyle. Taylor juggled "disjunct as well as overlapping identities" in order to situate himself within acceptable representations of British

[184] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 250.
[185] Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 228-30.

masculinity.[186] He may have adopted the traits that would mark him as a British gentleman as opposed to Creole, particularly in correspondence with certain family and in the presence of British elites in the colonies; however, he nonetheless regarded Jamaica as his home, the place where he belonged—an attitude that may have set him apart from many other Creoles.

Performance and Negotiations: Maintaining Creole Ties

Unlike the American colonies, eighteenth-century Jamaica was not intended as a permanent settlement for British settlers. The tropical climate, mountainous topography, many dangerous and unknown diseases, and threat of French or Spanish invasion, not to mention the ever-present fear of uprisings and attacks from enslaved peoples and Maroons, made living on the island an anxious and perilous endeavor. Instead of a permanent settlement, for most Jamaica was a means of amassing both personal and national wealth.[187] In his study of Scottish migrants in Jamaica, Alan Karras has argued that the Scots who ventured to Jamaica were in fact "sojourners," or temporary settlers, interested in Jamaica only as means to make money with the goal of one day returning "home" wealthy and independent.[188] Contemporary historian and Creole Bryan Edwards expressed a similar sentiment in 1784 when he stated "it is to Great Britain alone that our West India planters consider themselves as belonging." Edwards added, "even such of them as have resided in the West Indies from their birth, look on the islands as their temporary abode only, and the fond notion of being able to go home (as they

[186] Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 26.
[187] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden,* 12.
[188] Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun,* 1-9.

emphatically term a visit to England) year after year animates their industry and alleviates their misfortune."[189]

John Tailyour, Simon Taylor's second cousin, is an example of one Scot who appears to have been successful in this goal.[190] Born in Scotland near Kirkland, John Tailyour chose to go to Virginia in hopes of making his fortune. When the American Revolution and his loyalties to Britain forced him to leave, he ventured to Jamaica to work with his distant cousin, Simon Taylor. After a few years he was able to make enough money to return home to Scotland with his fortune and several mixed-race children in tow.[191] Thus, as Douglas Hall has insightfully pointed out, "it was not so much true that absentee-owners were residents gone abroad as it was that residents in the colonies were temporarily, they hoped, absentees from Britain."[192]

John Tailyour's success was by no means common for sojourning Britons in Jamaica. Many Britons who aspired to make their fortunes in the Caribbean and then return "home" were not able to do so, likely because much of their wealth was tied up in an intricate cycle of credit and debt between colony and metropole. Although a person might be wealthy according to their accounting books, much of that wealth was probably owed and not readily available. If they attempted to transfer their wealth from the colony to the metropole, they risked losing a large percentage of the debt, if they were able to collect any at all. In addition, a substantial portion of the wealth in the colonies was

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[189] Bryan Edwards, *Thoughts on the late Proceedings of Government Respecting the Trade of the West India Islands with the United States of America* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1784), 29.
[190] John Tailyour changed his last name to Taylor in 1784 after his arrival in Jamaica; however, for the sake of clarity and to keep him from being confused with Sir John Taylor, I retain the original spelling of his last name as Tailyour.
[191] Daniel Livesay, "Extended Families: Mixed-Race Children and Scottish Experience, 1770-1820," *International Journal of Scottish Literature,* Issue 4 (Spring/Summer 2008) <http://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/issue4/livesay.htm> (2 July 2010).
[192] Douglas Hall, "Absentee Proprietorship in the British West Indies to about 1850" *Jamaican Historical Review* 4 (1964): 27.

based on the value of slaves and land, both of which were not easily transferable to Britain. For many colonials, returning "home" did not fully compensate for the loss of wealth and status that may result. For this reason, a significant number of "sojourning" Scots and others chose, although often reluctantly, to become immigrants. Instead of spending a temporary stay in Jamaica, they lived and died in the colony.[193] Even for those who chose to settle in Jamaica, "home" remained across the ocean in Britain and those who could afford it would make frequent trips back to England. Thus, the concept of "home," as Catherine Hall reminds us, was complicated, "for many of these families lived across and between England and Jamaica, frequently leeching one to provide for a good lifestyle in the other."[194] Jamaica, although settled by a small number of Britons and other white people, for many never became "home" in the same way that some of the other American colonies did. Many retained their connections to Britain and still aspired to return some day.[195] Jamaica remained then, in many ways, a temporary place of exile, where they awaited the opportunity to one day make the ultimate return back to Britain.

Simon Taylor was an exception to this pattern. He may have had apprehensions about being "of the island" and, in many cases, spoke the language of the sojourning Briton—complaining about the inhospitable climate, the threat of Maroons and the ongoing threat of invasion, for example. However, despite his complaints, Taylor still held a very strong identification with the colony and regarded the island as his home, a feeling he expressed in his letters as early as the 1770s and right up to his death. He

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[193] Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun,* 51-3.
[194] Catherine Hall, "Britain, Jamaica, and Empire in the Era of Emancipation," in *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds,* ed. Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester, and Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art in association with Yale University Press, 2007), 11.
[195] Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun*.

regarded Jamaica as a British overseas settlement, similar in that respect to Canada or pre-revolution America, rather than the resource-based colony it was deemed to be by most other colonists who lived there. In a 1785 letter, Taylor wrote that he felt "not the least desire or inclination of leaving this country" and declared that it was "not probable I shall."[196] This feeling remained with him throughout his life and he was quite resolved two years before he died that he would "lay my bones" in Jamaica, what he called his "native land."[197]

Not only did Taylor regard Jamaica as his home, he seemed reluctant to return to Britain at all. In a letter to his brother, Sir John, in 1779 he wrote, "I can assure you that great as my Desire to see You… there is no one thing on earth but my Health or an Enemy driving me [out] of the Country would make me leave it… I may come [to England] for six months but have not the least desire to see England or any other Country but this."[198] He constantly and creatively made excuses to his family to explain why he could not visit them or permanently return. Besides the time he spent in the metropole attending Eton College, Taylor visited England only once in his life, in 1792, to petition parliament not to abolish the slave trade and to protect his interest in Jamaica—to defend his "native land." Simon Taylor's goal does not seem to have ever been to return to Britain. Instead, this Creole strove to achieve independence and wealth and remain in the land he loved, where he felt he belonged.

Taylor's desire to remain in Jamaica should come as no real surprise. His position in Jamaica— as a white, landowning man—secured him a place of power in society that would likely have been unachievable for him in the metropole. The small white

[196] ICS, I A 50, Simon Taylor to Robert Graham, 2 April 1785.
[197] ICS, I J 48, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, 19 September 1811.
[198] ICS, I A 1, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, 7 July 1779.

population on the island and the dependence on slavery provided ample opportunity for young white men, skilled in a variety of professions, to secure for themselves an "independence" or wealth. As discussed in the previous chapters, Jamaican society, so heavily based on the labour of enslaved Africans, demanded a severely hierarchical structure. Although some "old world" divisions may have remained, as people travelled to Jamaica the "Atlantic space…transmogrified collected identities," creating "imagined communities" of whites, blacks and coloured.[199]

Jamaica on the Periphery

Simon Taylor envisioned Jamaica, and the other Caribbean colonies, as an extension of Britain— central to its function and development as a civilized and dominant nation. Taylor, as well as many other white Creoles, shared the sentiment that they were "entitled" as British colonists to the "protection and the benefits of the English constitution."[200] Such sentiment had been codified in a proclamation in 1661 which promised that "the same privileges to all intents and purposes as our free-born subjects of England" be granted to all settlers in the island.[201] Although Jamaicans desired the right to control their local affairs, they were still loyal to the Crown and wanted to maintain close ties with Britain. Until the early years of the nineteenth century Taylor remained loyal to Britain and the King. For instance, in one letter written to his brother Sir John in the midst of the American Revolution, Taylor stated, "I hope you never will be such a Patriot as to wish to see a Rebellion in England and I wish every man who does

[199] Garner, "Atlantic Crossing."
[200] *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica,* 6 (1766-1776): 570.
[201] Quoted in Hall, *Civilising Subjects,* 74.

it was sunk ten thousand fathoms into Hell."[202] Taylor was loyal to Britain and had little respect for the "Patriots" in the American colonies. In another letter to his brother, written just a few months before America's victory over Britain, Taylor explains his position and the reasons for his loyalty to the Crown: "I wish for Peace and Harmony I want no Change of Government… it is every mans duty to endeavor to keep up that Constitution by which he has been protected."[203] Considering that Taylor's economic success depended on the production of sugar protected by British mercantile policies, his loyalty to the Crown is understandable.[204]

As abolition of the slave trade became inevitable as opposed to the imaginings of "Ministers" like William Pitt the Younger and "Madmen" like William Wilberforce, and following the imposition of heavy taxation of sugar from the colonies, Taylor's loyalty to Britain became more strained. As he put it in a letter to his associate in 1798, "[Britain] may be assured their and our ruins are inevitable the day they pass an Abolition of the Slave trade."[205] Taylor was certain that members of Parliament would cause the downfall of both the colony and the metropole, and such certainty was the source of many of Taylor's anxieties about his place in Jamaica and animosity towards England. Taylor viewed the abolition of the slave trade and the heavy taxation not only as a challenge to local authority and economy, but also a direct attack on Creole way of life and safety. In a letter to his friend and associate, George Hibbert, in June 1800 Taylor expressed his distress at the prospect of the end of the slave trade when he lamented, "I must acknowledge that nothing that ever has happened to me has ever given me more

[202] ICS, I A 6, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, 3 April 1780.
[203] ICS, I A 13, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, 10 February 1781.
[204] Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun,* 214.
[205] ICS, I B 2, Simon Taylor to Hugh Innes, 1 November 1800.

weariness than…in hearing you inform me that the Minister [likely the Home Secretary] had told you that his intentions were to abolish the Slave Trade or to render it impossible to be carried on by British Subjects."[206] Taylor saw the looming abolition as leading inevitably to the destruction of Jamaica, his home, as a white settlement. As Taylor stated in a letter in 1798, "while the Prime Minister [William Pitt the Younger] himself, his Friend [William] Wilberforce and his Antagonist [Charles] Fox and his Gang are sessions after sessions, blowing the Trumpett of Sedition among our Slaves and are agitating the abolition and while they do so there never can be neither the Peace to or Security in any of the Islands." In addition, by "adding tax upon tax daily & Oppression upon Oppression," Taylor wrote, Jamaica will "certainly be lost to Britain in a very few years [.] I am as certain of [this] as there is a God in Heaven." This "Oppression upon Oppression," according to Taylor, would prevent "anymore [white men] coming in the West Indies. [T]he White Population will be so reduced that there is an actual certainty," Taylor concluded, "that the Negroes will rise on the few that are left and act exactly the [same part] in the British Islands as they have done in St. Domingo…and not one single white person left alive in them."[207] As the passage suggests, Simon Taylor feared that if the abolition of the slave trade and slavery as a whole should come to pass, Jamaica would fall under the control of free and enslaved blacks and white Creoles would be murdered or expelled. He was convinced that ending of the slave trade would become "a Standard erected for the Negroes to rise sett Fire to Houses and Buildings both in the Country and Towns and to Massacre the Whites" and would lead to anarchy in the

[206] ICS, I D 22, Simon Taylor to George Hibbert, 13 June 1800.
[207] ICS, I F 62, Simon Taylor to George Hibbert, 28 July 1804.

colony.[208] Taylor was infuriated that members of Parliament, men he considered "little better than Boobies who have been [led] away by the black hearted," would deny the colonists their English rights and livelihood, put them in danger and write the "death warrant of the West Indian colonies."[209]

In his letters, Taylor frequently uses the language of oppression in his discussion of the relationship between colony and metropole and in this way uniting himself with other subjects forced to live under what he viewed as the tyrannical rule of England. For instance, in a letter to his associate Chaloner Arcedeckne in 1798 Taylor wrote that he was "very sorry to find a Rebellion has broke out in Ireland, & the People have had recourse to Arms. It has been long brewing & I doubt not but it will be traced in time to the [oppression] in England…the Pandora Box of all Evill." He continued, "the People that live in all Countries dependent on England are treated so exceeding ill, & have so many oppressions added to oppressions dayly" that it was no surprise to see rebellions occurring. "[F]or my part," Taylor wrote, "I positively assure you that if I possible could gett my Property from hence, even so seeing one half of it, I would instantly quit the Country & go live some where in the Northern States of America, merely to be rid of the Tyranny, Injustice, & Malevolence of the English Nation."[210] What Taylor saw as oppressive treatment of colonials was enough to lead him to threaten to leave his home in Jamaica and the Empire altogether, although he never followed through on that threat. Taylor was made vulnerable by the movement to abolish the slave trade, on which his

[208] ICS, I G 2, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, 20 August 1804.
[209] ICS, I A 6, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, 3 April 1780.
[210] ICS, 3A 1798 22, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, 23 July 1798.

livelihood and identity depended, and by the general disregard of the metropole for the colonies.

In Defense of His "Native Land": Simon Taylor's Response to Abolition

Although the "age of abolition" in the British Empire is said to have begun in the 1780, from a much earlier period antislavery sentiment was in existence, particularly amongst Quakers who viewed slavery and the Creoles who practiced it as un-Christian. Following the Somerset Case in 1772, when a precedent was set that was widely seen as outlawing chattel slavery in Great Britain, and the emergence of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787, a strong and organized effort to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire developed. However, antislavery sentiments were not shared by all Britons, nor were views on slavery neatly polarized between those who directly benefitted from slavery and those who did not. On the contrary, some Creoles who benefitted from the enslavement of Africans, influenced by antislavery rhetoric, evangelical teachings, and missionaries in Jamaica, were ambivalent about the abolition of the trade, as were those in Britain.[211] Slavery weighed heavily on the minds of all Britons, both those directly involved in the trade and the population at home that enjoyed the spoils. While motivation for the abolition of slavery, for many, came to rest on the notion that slavery was incompatible with British ideals of freedom and liberty—"a national disgrace and a stain on the country's honor"— and incompatible with Britain as a capitalist nation, property rights were just as integral to those ideals.[212] As mentioned earlier, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries discourse about slavery

[211] For example, Edward Barrett Moulton-Barrett discussed in Hall, "Britain, Jamaica, and Empire in the Era of Emancipation," 11. Also refer to Brown, *Moral Capital* and Holt, *The Problem of Freedom.*
[212] Hall, "Britain, Jamaica, and Empire in the Era of Emancipation," 14-15.

and freedom encapsulated these "tensions of empire." Thus, the movement to abolish the system of slavery was a struggle not only based on economics and Christian morality, but more broadly a battle to define the boundaries of morality within the constitution of the British nation.

While humanitarians of many stripes led the charge to abolish the slave trade in Britain, dissenting missionaries, particularly in the Black Baptist and Wesleyan Methodist churches, came to lead the local front in Jamaica. One of the first and most prominent preachers and missionaries in Jamaica was Thomas Coke. As a result of Coke's mission work throughout the West Indies, the first Wesleyan-Methodist mission was established in Jamaica in 1789. By the following year a chapel had been set up in Kingston that could accommodate 1500 people. The church garnered support from many free mixed-race and African Creole peoples, along with liberal-minded white Creoles. Some whites in Jamaica encouraged Christian teaching to enslaved peoples; however, this was not a sentiment widely shared, particularly among the landowning members of society.[213] The reaction of many elite white Creoles to the growing local movement of antislavery activism was very aggressive. Many planters viewed these missions as part of a conspiracy against them and a threat to the security of the island. These fears were expressed in a letter Taylor received from an associate in Edinburgh and read out to the Assembly in February 1800:

> I have just learnt that a large body of missionaries embark for Jamaica in the ship Moreland, to sail in January; I do not know what doctrine they may pretend to preach, but I know that their strenuous advocates and supporters are for no less than a total abolition of slavery; and, whatever outward professions they may make, I am well assured their hidden sentiments are the same. I rather conceive, therefore, that their introduction will be pregnant

[213] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 10-12.

> with mischief to the colony, and thought it my duty to give you the earliest intelligence I could on this head.[214]

Wealthy colonists feared that they were under attack—at war with missionaries. In response, white colonists wasted no time in making the new missionaries very aware that they would not be tolerated. In 1791 riots in Kingston, led by "respectable" members of the white Creole community, prevented churches from holding service after dark and attempted to destroy the Wesleyan church building. Although they were not successful and the riots were put down, it was clear that missionaries were not welcome in Jamaica. As Turner explains, "the pattern established in the first decade of mission work, uneasy tolerance by the authorities giving way in times of political stress to overt hostility, was repeated in 1802 and 1807. On each occasion opposition to the slave instructors [preachers] deepened."[215] Despite the opposition they faced, dissenting preachers maintained a local presence in Jamaica and increased their efforts to abolish slavery.

In addition to the West Indian Committee that advocated on behalf of the pro-slavery contingent in Parliament, the Jamaica Assembly, directed by Simon Taylor, made efforts locally to thwart the antislavery campaign. Although Taylor was near retirement by the time the antislavery movement really gained momentum in Jamaica in the closing years of the eighteenth century, he remained a strong director in efforts to prevent abolitionists, missionaries and other antislavery activists from disrupting the established hierarchy within the colony.[216]

As a member of the Jamaican Assembly in 1802, he directed efforts to pass a bill "to prevent preaching by persons not duly qualified by law." Prior to the 1802 bill, the

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[214] *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* 9-10 (1791-1802): 453.
[215] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 12-14.
[216] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 318.

Jamaican magistrates followed the *Toleration Act* (1689), passed in England and adopted by the Jamaican Assembly, and other English laws when dealing with the practice of religion in the colony. The *Toleration Act* allowed dissenting preachers to take an oath of allegiance before Jamaican magistrates and swear to abide by articles of faith set out by the Church of England. The preachers would then be provided with a license to preach anywhere on the island. The 1802 law changed all of this.[217]

Soon after the 1802 bill was passed, a Kingston missionary named Daniel Campbell left Kingston for St. Thomas-in-the-East where he set up a Wesleyan church in Morant Bay and preached to enslaved peoples throughout the parish. Taylor, who served as the custos of St. Thomas-in-the-East at this time, was infuriated by the church's presence. Taylor attempted to use the new law to charge Campbell with preaching illegally in St. Thomas Parish. Campbell was found guilty of not being "duly qualified" and forced to leave. Just after this ruling, the House of Commons ruled that the1802 bill was contrary to rules of toleration set out in English law. The bill and Campbell's conviction were disallowed by Parliament. Despite this intervention, the case became a precedent allowing magistrates in each individual parish to judge independently of magistrates in Kingston the qualifications of missionaries.[218] The case brought against Campbell by Taylor and the subsequent refusal of magistrates to grant licenses to the missionaries effectively shut down the Wesleyan chapels in Jamaica from 1807-14.

In addition to local efforts, Taylor was also active in the metropole. In 1791 Taylor set sail for London. The purpose of this trip was to give testimony before the House of Lords on the slave trade and slavery in the Caribbean. This visit to London is

[217] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries,* 15-17.
[218] Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 15-17.

particularly significant since it is the only time that Taylor, who had avoided visiting since he had returned from Europe thirty-one years before, crossed the seas to his ancestral home. From England Taylor explained to his cousin, John Tailyour, that "I do not stay here for the benefit of my Health or Pleasure for I like Jamaica ten thousand times better than England, but my reason is to see what the People in this Part of the world mean to do with the West Indies."[219] The issue of the slave trade was enough to bring Taylor north.

The abolition of the slave trade was not just about economics or political autonomy for Taylor; he was terrified of what the end of the trade would mean for him personally, for who he was and where he belonged. In an effort to shore up his identity and protect his "native land" and its white population, Taylor waged war against antislavery missionaries and activists. However, despite his vigorous efforts, Taylor and other Creole authorities were unable to prevent the onslaught of change.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the unstable nature of identity for one Jamaican Creole planter, Simon Taylor, and the ways in which he sought to negotiate and reinforce his multiple identities and subject positions. Taylor held precarious ties to the metropole and navigated his identity in various ways. He attempted to "perform" the British strand of his identity in his correspondence with his family in England and Scotland and in his interactions with metropolitan Britons, all in an effort to hold on to a national identity that he never quite fit and that was always on the verge of slipping away. Fear of the

[219] The William Clements Library, University of Michigan (hereafter) WCL, Tailyour Papers, Simon Taylor to John Tailyour, 4 January 1792.

successful uprising in Saint-Domingue, constant threats of French and Spanish invasion, the threat of abolitionist and humanitarian efforts in England, and the local missionaries all contributed to Taylor's increasing anxiety that Jamaica, as he knew it, would soon be no more.[220] The demise of Jamaica as a slave society would mean, in addition to his economic ruin, his departure from the island—the only real home he knew. As he grew older and such a future became more and more likely, Taylor fought tooth and nail to ward off the inevitable changes to his "native land." In the process of negotiating his precarious position, Simon Taylor performed an identity that traversed metropole-colonial binaries, that was neither firmly British, nor entirely Creole.

[220] Braithwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 259.

CHAPTER THREE:
"Washing the Blackmoor White": Intimacy and Power

In the summer of 1804 Grace Donne died after "an illness of four or five days." In a letter to his cousin, Simon Taylor lamented that he was "like a Fish out of the Water by her loss, as she managed everything in the House for me."[221] For thirty-six years Grace Donne lived with Simon Taylor in Kingston, providing for him as his surrogate wife; however, despite her central role in his life, in over five hundred letters authored by Taylor to his family, friends, and associates, there are only a few references to Grace Donne threaded throughout. The relationship between Grace Donne and Simon Taylor presents a complicated narrative of interracial intimacy and of social interactions in Jamaican slave society.

In discussions of intimacy in Jamaican slave society between free or enslaved women of colour and white men the standard narrative is one of domination and oppression. Free and enslaved people of African or mixed African ancestry are described either as victims or resistors, and white Europeans as the oppressors in these dominant narratives.[222] As many scholars have documented, slavery was a system of brutal domination especially for black and brown women. These women often faced unrestrained violence from white men in their everyday lives, as well as from white women and sometimes from men of colour. However, interracial relationships, even in a slave society, cannot be accurately understood as rooted only in sexual exploitation and violence. As Tricia Rose reminds us, "slavery was an unevenly experienced, profoundly brutal form of physical, sexual, economic and psychological domination. Yet it's also

[221] ICS, I F 56, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, 18 June 1804.
[222] Some examples of historians who provide alternative narratives of intimacy include Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire* and Beckles, *Centering Woman.*

true that human bonds and behaviors have never fit neatly into the designated boxes we make for them."[223] It is important to highlight the humanity of women, both free and enslaved, who had complex personalities, desires and emotions. Women were not only powerless victims or radical resistors—but rather, could be independent agents and accommodators as well, negotiating a place for themselves in a society that privileged masculinity and whiteness.[224]

The study of intimacy in slave society provides insight into the fractures and lack of cohesiveness in colonial societies. Colonial encounters were comprised of, in Ann Stoler's words, many "tense and tender ties"—that is, intimate interactions that were sites in which colonial inequities were produced, traversed and renegotiated.[225] Although Stoler's work focuses on a very different colonial setting and time period, her central argument is helpful in exploring the many "tense and tender ties" that existed in Jamaican slave society between whites, blacks and browns and the ways in which these affective relationships at times challenged and reconfigured the distinctions between master and slave, oppressor and oppressed, white and black that colonial authorities relied upon to sustain the system of slavery.[226] As Nell Irvin Painter argues, "beyond even the most finely tuned categories lies something exceeding race, class, and gender: individual subjectivity." How a person lives is not always in line with colonial structures of

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[223] Tricia Rose, "Whose Story Is It, Anyway?" *Essence Magazine* (February 2001): 202.
[224] Examples of other studies that have stressed this point include: Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989) and Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*.
[225] Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History,* ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society*.
[226] Ann Laura Stoler, "Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen," in *Haunted By Empire,* 19.

power.[227] This chapter seeks to recover a narrative of Grace Donne and situate her as a central figure in the life of Simon Taylor. In doing so, it is also my goal to highlight the way intimacy allowed some women to negotiate relations of power. I begin the chapter with a brief discussion of the community of colour in Kingston during the eighteenth century. Next, I will explore the ways in which Simon Taylor, and other white Creoles, regarded mixed-race unions and people of colour during this period. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of Simon Taylor's relationship with his mistress, Grace Donne. An examination of the intimate interracial relationship between Simon Taylor and Grace Donne will reveal the ways in which affective bonds formed and were shaped between those from different social positions. The unstable and ambivalent understandings of race during this period will also become glaringly evident throughout this study. By expanding on the spectrum of possible social relations in slave society and making space for narratives of affection, we can begin to understand some of the complexities, contradictions and nuances that so profoundly shaped eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jamaican slave society.

Kingston's Free Community of Colour

Throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century, free people of colour occupied an ambiguous position in Jamaican slave society. Their status as free but non-white set them in a position somewhere between enslaved blacks and free whites. As their population increased, from around 23,000 or eleven percent of the population in the 1770s to 60,000 in 1830, what was once a scattered community began to unify and form

[227]Nell Irwin Painter, *Southern History Across the Color Line* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 4.

their own identity politics.[228] The ambivalent position that people of colour occupied in colonial discourse was reflected in a series of laws enacted throughout the eighteenth century that both granted limited freedom, while at the same time seeking to control and restrict their accumulation of wealth, property and power. Support for partial inclusion of the coloured community in the mid-1700s was fostered through the enactment of various laws that would allow free mixed-race (and sometimes free black) people to elevate their status. According to Winthrop Jordan, in British colonies like Jamaica with a much larger ratio of blacks than whites and men than women, inclusive legislation was often passed.[229] Legislation enacted by the Jamaican House of Assembly recognized the benefits of a free mixed-race population that would act as a buffer between whites and blacks. According to an act passed in 1733, "mustfinos," those four degrees removed from their African ancestry, were deemed white and allowed the same status as English citizens. The act stated that "no one shall be deemed a Mulatto after the third Generation, as aforesaid but that they shall have all the Privileges and Immunities of his Majesty's white subjects," which included the right to vote and other privileges.[230] The dramatic increase in the number of mixed-race people by the end of the eighteenth century may indicate the success of this legal encouragement to "whiten up" Jamaica.

Although the effort may have been broadly successful, to "move from one race to another in three generations" was a time-consuming process.[231] Thus, another statute provided both black and mixed-race colonists a faster means to achieve partial

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[228] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women,* 268 and Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny and Desire,* 16. For more on the emergence of a politically active community of colour, see Gad Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981).
[229] Winthrop Jordon, "American Chiaroscuro: The Status and Definition of Mulattoes in the British Colonies," *The William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, Vol. 19, No. 2 (April 1962): 195-197.
[230] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 261.
[231] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 90.

integration. Special acts of privilege granted "English status" to those deemed by the Jamaican Assembly to be civilized and worthy of such a status.[232] The rights granted were limited and varied with each individual. Those most likely to be granted an act of privilege first had to already have free status; they usually held property; they were members of the Anglican Church; and they had a Christian education. Most often, white men on behalf of their mistresses or children made a petition to the Assembly, although the suit could also be started by those directly involved in the case. Throughout the eighteenth century, a total of 128 acts of privilege were granted and often involved more than one person. For example, between 1737 and 1769, thirty-nine acts were passed affecting 145 people (sixty-eight men and seventy-eight women). The majority of those granted an act of privilege seem to have been of mixed racial ancestry. Between 1772 and 1796, of the sixty-seven petitions heard before the assembly and the 512 individuals involved, only one petitioner was black. The others were people of colour, mostly quadroons.[233] Despite the seemingly high number of acts passed, the "privileges" granted coloured and black people still excluded them from many rights available to white men, such as the right to hold office, serve on juries, sit in the assembly and in some cases, the right to vote.[234] Acts of privilege, along with the 1733 act, provided the coloured population of Jamaica with "limited freedom." However over time other statutes were enacted as a means by which the white wealthy class could continue to control what was not only a visibly growing community in the second half of the eighteenth century, but an increasingly wealthy one as well.

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[232] *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* 8 (1777-1791): 537.
[233] Of the 512 individuals, 245 were quadroons, 176 mulattoes, and ninety mustees. Only one was a free black person. See *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica,* 6-10 (1766-1802). Also cited in Braithwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 171-3.
[234] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 320. See also Sio, "Race, Colour, and Miscegenation," 8-9.

Throughout the era of slavery, free blacks and people of colour suffered many civil inequalities under the law. Up until 1796, they could not give evidence in court, even if they were involved in the case and until 1813 they could not appear in a case that involved a white person. In addition, they could not sit on juries or vote in local or assembly elections. These were not the only restrictions. The *Devises Act*, enacted in 1761 and repealed in 1813,[235] made it particularly difficult for black and communities of colour to get ahead.[236] In a colony where property equaled power, the increase in inherited wealth amongst the offspring of interracial unions became a serious and pertinent issue for white elites. White fathers, particularly those of means, would often not only manumit their mixed-race children, if they were not free already, but also bequeath to them large sums of money and property. According to the findings of a committee set up by the Jamaican Assembly to examine this "problem," the combined holdings among fifty free black and coloured people in Jamaica, twenty-eight of whom were women, equaled over £230,000, excluding real estate. Of those twenty-eight women, fifteen (four enslaved and eleven free) had been known mistresses of the testators.[237] The same committee also found that the devises, or the real estate bequeathed in last wills, to mixed-race children was between £200,000 and £300,000, including four sugar estates, seven pens, and thirteen houses in addition to other lands.[238] The *Devises Act of 1761* put limits on the value of assets or property that could be bequeathed to mixed-race children by their white parent. "Negroes" and "mulattoes,"

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[235] According to Sio's study, some free people of colour began to gain exemption from the *Devises Act* and other restrictive legislations as early as 1796. See Sio, "Race, Colour, and Miscegenation," 9. *Devises Act of 19 December 1761* was repealed 4 December 1813.

[236] *Devises Act of 1761* cited in John Henry Howard, *The laws of the British colonies, in the West Indies and other parts of America, concerning real and personal property, and manumission of slaves: with a view of the constitution of each colony,* Volume I (London: William Henry Bond, 1827), 58-60.

[237] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 89-90.

[238] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 323.

including children of interracial unions born out of wedlock, could not inherit property or cash exceeding the total value of £2000 local currency, thereby limiting the financial growth of the free population of colour.[239]

Wealth was a means by which individuals, including black and mixed-race people whose upward mobility was otherwise restricted by the colour hierarchy in Jamaica, could traverse such structures and threaten the power held by elite white men. Some white Creoles feared that such a disruption of power would cause harm to the larger society and that it was the duty of "good Government to restrain individuals from disposing of property to the particular prejudice and determent of their heirs and relations and to the injury and damage of the community in general."[240] All white colonists did not support the *Devises Act*. Some saw it as an infringement on their rights to dispose of their property as they saw fit, as was done in Britain; however, for supporters of the law, the system of slavery and racial hierarchy unique to the colonies required laws that were at times at odds with those in the metropole.[241] The *Devises Act* was, in many ways, colonial authorities' attempt to regulate sentiment. Laws such as this one often "stepped in to shore up distinctions that social practice frequently abridged, and that family, blood and business connections transected."[242] While such laws around inheritance certainly slowed the growth of economic power by the community of colour, it could not stifle that growth completely. For many women consensual relationships with white men, both short term and longer, were often a profitable means by which they could advance their own and their family's social standing.

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[239] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 95.
[240] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 95
[241] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 323.
[242] Wilson, *The Island Race*, 148.

Marriage and the "Mulatto" Mistress

Simon Taylor never married, but remained a self-declared "old bachelor" throughout his life. Although he spoke of marriage with his male colleagues he was convinced that a life of marriage, at least a Christian marriage to a white woman, was not for him. As he wrote in a letter to Chaloner Arcedeckne in England in 1768, "in reguard [sic] to Matrimony I have as yet no thoughts of it. You are in so fair a Climate must want a wife more than one who have been so long in this Hott Country."[243] Several years later Taylor still showed little interest in marrying when he stated, "I have not now or ever had any thoughts of Marry [sic] and Hardly think I shall."[244] Taylor was not alone in his decision not to marry a white woman. The "perilous" state of marriage among white people was of grave concern for many, both in the metropole and the colony, who feared the demise of the island if there was not a natural increase in the population of "legitimate" offspring, defined as white children born in wedlock.[245] According to Trevor Burnard's study of marriages in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Jamaica, marriages between white men and women were uncommon. Although in 1745 eighty percent of the white population in Jamaica consisted of adults of marriageable age, in Kingston only three to four percent of men actually married and for fifty percent of these it was a second marriage.[246] In 1778 Edward Long cautioned that if white men did not "abate of this infatuated attachment to black women" the colony risked becoming, like the Spanish American colonies, overrun by "a vicious, brutal, and degenerate breed of

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[243] Wood and Lynn, *Travel, Trade and Power in the Atlantic,* 64.
[244] ICS, II A 14, Simon Taylor to Sir John Taylor, 28 March 1775.
[245] For more on legitimacy and inheritance in Jamaica, see Petley, "'Legitimacy' and Social Boundaries."
[246] Trevor Burnard, "'Rioting in goatish embraces': Marriage and improvement in early British Jamaica," *The History of the Family*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (2006).

mongrels."[247] A century before Long's fears were recorded, colonists had expressed a similar concern. One seventeenth-century observer commented that with its high mortality rate, low population of white women and high population of black women, Jamaica had become "Sodom fill[ed] with all manner of Debauchery," a place so "infected" with vice "that it is almost impossible to civilize it."[248] For many white Jamaicans and Britons, the growth of the mixed-race population throughout the eighteenth century spoke to the degeneracy of the colony and the constant threat to Christian values and civility. As discussed in the previous chapter, many metropolitan observers viewed white Creole men as the prime agents in the corruption of the colony. The strongly negative discourse that developed around interracial unions did so in conjunction with criticisms of Creole attitudes towards sex and marriage.

There are no exact statistics for how many women, like Grace, were in relationships with white men. However, visitors to Kingston often commented on the frequency of interracial couples. John Stewart wrote in 1823 that at least nine-tenths of mixed-race women were "in the situation of housekeepers, as they are here styled, to white men."[249] Whether Stewart's estimate is accurate we cannot know; however, it does speak to the frequency of such matches in the colony. Interracial unions or marriages in Jamaica were never criminalized, although marriages were very infrequent. Between 1780 and 1815, there were no interracial marriages recorded in Kingston. This may have been the result of a general taboo against such marriages, but also because the Anglican Church in the city refused to marry mixed-race couples.

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[247] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 327.
[248] John Taylor (1690) cited in Burnard, "'Rioting in Goatish Embraces'," 189.
[249] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present,* 326-7.

White Creole men in Jamaican slave society seemed to prefer living with black and brown mistresses to marrying white women. For instance, in a 1765 letter to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Simon Taylor informed his friend of a recent scandal that had occurred in Kingston. According to Taylor, a mutual friend named Rose Price had run off with his "Black wife" instead of marrying "one Miss Patrick a Writing Master's Daughter at Spanish [Town]" and no doubt a white Creole women.[250] Simon Taylor's example demonstrates what was a commonly held aversion to Christian marriage among white Creole men and, as we will see below, a preference for relationships with black and coloured women. Unlike the American colonies where British familial patterns were more widely recreated, in Jamaica such households were a rarity. As contemporary historian Edward Long explained in the 1770s, many Creole men preferred to "riot in…goatish embraces" with black and brown women, than to enjoy the "pure and lawful bliss" of marriage with women of their own colour.[251]

While some Creoles and British observers saw interracial intimacies as a threat to the continuation of white-dominated Jamaica, others in the colony took a more positive view of the situation. Many Creoles shared the opinion that, while a strong white population was ideal, "it will be of some advantage, as things are circumstanced, to turn unavoidable evils to that benefit of society, as the best preparation that can be made for this breech of its moral and political institutions."[252] The "unavoidable evils" referred to here were the mixed-race unions and children that, throughout the eighteenth century, were increasing in number. Simon Taylor had a similar view of interracial intimacy and

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[250] Wood and Lynn, *Travel, Trade and Power in the Atlantic*, 24
[251] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 331.
[252] Long, *The History of Jamaica,* Volume II, 333. Long also supported the enfranchisement of every "mulatto child."

the mixed-race population. By 1800, as the ending of the slave trade became more certain, Simon Taylor sought means of shoring up his position within the colony. As discussed in the previous chapter, he was active in the fight to prevent the abolition of the slave trade. Taylor saw the inclusion of the mixed-race population among whites as a means by which the colony could remain in the power of white residents. In an 1804 letter to his London agent and friend, George Hibbert, Taylor expressed his opinion on the prospect for white inhabitants in Jamaica if the slave trade was abolished. He outlined a plan by which white people could become a majority in Jamaica and retain control of the island, even if abolition was passed:

> There is a new Generation that i[s] coming on and in time provided the Colonies are not ruined before that time comes…there will be [a] white population, but that will proceed from washing the Blackamoor white… for the law says that at the four descent from the Negro [the issue] shall be deemed white. I have a hundred and hundred times reflected on the Means of Establishing a White Population here [in Jamaica] but the experience of forty three years shows me it is impossible to be done *but in this manner*.[253]

As the passage suggests, Taylor viewed mixed-race people as potential "surrogate whites" and intermixing between white men and black and coloured women, as a necessary and strategic way for white Creoles to retain control and power within the island.

Taylor was also supportive of other white men in their efforts to put their mixed-race children in better social and economic positions. For instance, in January of 1790 John Tailyour, Simon's cousin who worked for him as his man of business in Kingston, asked for the freedom of his mixed-race lover, Polly Graham, and their children:

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[253] ICS, I F 42, Simon Taylor to George Hibbert, 14 January 1804.

> I take up the pen to request a favour of you, which tho [sic] I have often wished to do verbally I have not been able. It is that you would grant Polly her Freedom and that of her children and allow me to put Negroes on Lyssons in their place. Having now for several years experienced her care and attention both while I have been in sickness and health [,] I confess myself much attached to her and I find myself very much so for her children. [254]

John was very apprehensive about the request and how Simon would respond. "I hope you will not think in making this request I ask you to do anything improper, which I should be very sorry to do," he wrote to his cousin. "I feel myself more anxious to obtain this Favour than I can describe." John's unease was unnecessary in the end. Perhaps Simon saw Polly and her children as potential allies and John as "washing the Blackmoor white." Whatever his motivation, Simon viewed the arrangement John proposed favorably and granted the manumission. John was then able to return to England with his children and eventually put them "in a more respectable situation" than they had been living in Jamaica; his eldest son became an officer in the East India Company and his younger son a London merchant clerk.[255]

Taylor's actions, along with his letter to Hibbert, suggest that he was willing to support the inclusion of some mixed-race people into white society—those he deemed to be of a "decent class"— and ignore the differences. Although skin colour was a significant marker in the hierarchy of Jamaican society, for Simon Taylor distant African ancestry could be overlooked in a pragmatic effort to protect Jamaica as a British colony. Taylor's proposed solution, to wash "the Blackamoor white" through intermixing, reflects quite candidly one way in which the private and the political so often intertwined. Taylor may even have viewed his relationship with women of colour and his mixed-race

[254] ICS, XIV A 50, John Taylor to Simon Taylor, 3 January 1790.
[255] Livesay, "Extended Families."

children as his contribution to the whitening of the island and the preservation of what he considered to be his "native land." In this context, intimate relationships between white men and women of colour were not just a private matter between two individuals, but also had larger political implications in the colony.[256]

Instead of regarding them as a threat, Taylor saw some mixed-race people as potential—and necessary—allies. As Lady Nugent noted in her journal, Taylor had several mixed-race children on his various properties across Jamaica, although in my own research I have only been able to track two or possibly three. He had at least two long-term relationships with women of colour—with Sarah Blacktree Hunter, with whom he began a relationship sometime in the 1770s, and Grace Donne, who came to live with him at Prospect Pen around 1768. While Grace Donne will be the primary focus here, I will also briefly explore Taylor's relationship with Sarah Blacktree Hunter and their daughter, Sarah Taylor.

The Narrative of a Free Woman: Grace Donne

The records of Grace Donne are much more fragmented than those of Simon Taylor. Taylor mentions Grace only three or four times in approximately five hundred letters written between 1779 and 1813. His cousin John Tailyour mentions her about five more times and there are two possible references to her in the diary of Lady Maria Nugent who visited Taylor's home in Kingston in 1802 and 1804. While circumstantial evidence provides some insight into Grace Donne's life, the empirical evidence that

[256] However, Taylor did not support all interracial mixing, but was very explicit that the future white population "must all proceed from the [mixed-race] Females[,] for the [mixed-race] Boys and Men not being able to have any communication with any of the Women of a further remove than themselves."

exists would not fill a page. Furthermore, as is commonly the case for black and brown people during this period, I have no sources authored by Grace, although I know she was literate.

In his letters, Simon Taylor provides very few personal details about Grace Donne and their relationship. He tells us only that she was a free quadroon woman and that they lived together for thirty-six years, first at his home on Orange Street in Kingston and then at Prospect Pen, about four kilometers from Kingston. Since it was very rare for white women to have sexual relationships with men of colour during this period and Grace was described as "quadroon," we can assume that her mother would have been considered mulatto—half white and half black—and her father a white man.[257] Grace came to work for Simon Taylor around 1768 when he was about thirty years old and she likely in her late teens or early twenties. She may have been from Kingston; however, like so many other mixed-race women, she may also have migrated to the town in search of better opportunities. Throughout the years that Grace lived there, Kingston was a city at the heart of the Jamaican economy, pulsating with the hopes, dreams, failures and struggles of the people that moved within and through it. We can imagine what Grace must have seen, smelled, heard and experienced upon entering the city:

> Carriages, gigs, carts, and drays, drove furiously along the streets. Here, gentlemen were hurrying forward in one direction, there, ladies walked leisurely in another…boys and girls admiring the curiosities that dazzled in the windows of the variety shops while others, with books and slates were making the best of their way to or from their schools. Slaves linked together with huge iron chains and collars, were pulling along carts filled with rubbish, and others with long brooms of birch swept the streets, or moved wearily

[257] In St. Elizabeth Parish between 1780 and 1815, there were at least fourteen interracial marriages including brown men and white women. Most of the men that married white women were from the same family, the James. This suggests a pattern unique to this particular family. In Kingston during the same period there were no recorded interracial marriages. See: Burnard, "'Rioting in goatish embraces'."

> along, bearing heavy burdens on their heads while a host of peddlers roared out something which nobody even pretended to understand.[258]

And at the Parade, in the center of the city, were "handsome buildings which ornament the square…the imposing uniform and bright armour of the soldiers who were parading."[259] Within all this hustle and bustle Grace likely moved freely, networking and socializing amid a flourishing community of free people of colour.

There have been very few historical studies done on free women of colour in the late eighteenth-century Caribbean and America. In the Caribbean context, Gad Heuman and Mair both discuss, although only briefly, free mixed-race women during the slavery period. Historians such as Loren Schweninger, Adele Logan Alexander and Judith Kelleher Schafer have also explored the place of free women of colour during the same period in the American context.[260] The few studies that have been done on free women of colour in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century demonstrate remarkable similarities in their social position in the southern U.S. and Jamaica. For instance, from the latter part of the eighteenth century free mixed-race people, especially women, tended to gravitate to urban centers in search of work and more freedom. In Jamaica, many of these women lived in towns and cities such as Kingston, St. Ann's Bay, and Port Royal.[261] Kingston had the largest concentration of people of mixed ancestry. In 1774, according to Braithwaite's estimate, the free population in the town was around 1200,

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[258] Cyrus Francis Perkins, *Busha's Mistress, or, Catherine the Fugitive: A Stirring Romance of the Days of Slavery in Jamaica,* 1st Edition 1911*,* eds. Paul E. Lovejoy, Verene Shepherd, and David Trotman (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2003), 133.
[259] Perkins, *Busha's Mistress*, 133.
[260] Heuman, *Between Black and White.* In the American context, see Loren Schweninger, "Property-Owning Free African-American Women in the South, 1800-1870," *Journal of Women's History* 1 (Winter 1990): 13-44; Adele Logan Alexander, *Ambiguous Lives: Free Women of Color in Rural Georgia, 1789-1879* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991); and, Judith Keller Schafer, " 'Open and Notorious Concubinage': The Emancipation of Slave Mistresses by Will and the Supreme Court in Antebellum Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 27 (Spring 1987): 166-82.
[261] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 277.

almost tripling by 1807.[262] Whatever their level of education or position in life, there was work to be had in a variety of industries for free people of colour. Men often worked as artisans or tradesmen. If they were educated, as many were having been sent by their white fathers to Britain for an education or educated at one of the few schools in Jamaica like Wolmer's, free men of colour worked as clerks, schoolmasters or druggists.[263] Studies on free women of colour in Jamaica have shown that many women had much more limited opportunities available to them than men. According to Schweninger's study of free women of colour in Virginia, most women worked as cooks, servants, seamstresses, midwives, maids and laundresses.[264] Similarly, in Jamaica the majority of free women of colour worked as domestics, in addition to working in the retail trades or in brothels. Some women owned taverns or general goods stores, while others jobbed or rented out slaves they may have inherited or purchased. There were also some women who owned or managed lodging homes of "varying repute." By the early nineteenth century mixed-race women were praised as the "leading domestic entrepreneurs of accommodation."[265]

Despite representations of the community of colour in Kingston as "economically active and viable," most free people of colour likely lived close to destitution, "so near the borderline of poverty did many of [them] live that quite often they were buried at the

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[262] Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 169. Accurate numbers are not available.
[263] There have not been any comprehensive studies done on the number of mixed-race children sent to Britain to be educated during this period. However, according to rough survey of wills of white men in Jamaica, Daniel Livesay found that over seven percent of wills bequeath property to mixed-race children in or on their way to Britain. This figure suggests that there were more mixed-race children sent to Britain than may have previously been assumed. For more, see Livesay, "Extended Families." For more on education in Jamaica see Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 173 and Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica.*
[264] Schweninger, "Property-Owning Free African-American Women in the South," 107.
[265] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 278. And Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 174.

expense of their Church."[266] Grace, like so many other freemen and women, was likely not raised within the affluent community of colour, but had to seek out a means to support herself.[267] Instead of going into retail, selling "ribbons, silks, laces and gauzes," or opening up her own lodging house, Grace took a position as Simon Taylor's "housekeeper," a term often used interchangeably with mistress and, in Jamaican society, a status commonly regarded as a man's wife.[268]

It is unclear from Simon Taylor's letters how or where he and Grace Donne first met. Despite the commercial interactions that allowed for transgression of racial or colour boundaries in Kingston, social life in the port town remained fairly segregated between blacks, whites and people of colour.[269] Shut out from the general society of the whites and often unwilling to socialize with black women, mixed-race women "form[ed] a separate society of themselves."[270] These women were said to be very active in organizing a variety of social events and entertainments in Kingston and Spanish Town, such as "mulatto balls," which were well attended by their "admirers," usually young white men. Men of colour were also often excluded from many of these balls and other social events organized by women of colour.[271] The exclusion of black and mixed-race men perhaps allowed women of colour to socialize freely with the white men in attendance and make useful acquaintances that might help them carve out a more advantageous position in society. Perhaps it was at one of these "mulatto balls" that Simon Taylor and Grace Donne first met and their relationship began.

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[266] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica*, 277-79. And Trevor Burnard, "Prodigious Riches: the wealth of Jamaica before the American Revolution," *Economic History Review,* LIV, 3 (2001): 518.
[267] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 277-79.
[268] Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society,* 174.
[269] According Braithwaite's study, only theatres were not segregated, although blacks and people of colour had to sit in the upper boxes or gallery. Braithwaite, *Development of Creole Society,* 186.
[270] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present,* 329-330.
[271] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present,* 330.

Mistresses in the colonies, or colonial wives, provided their white husbands with invaluable services—as companions, sexual partners, nurses, mothers to their children and managers of their households. In addition to the domestic benefits of interracial relationships, women of colour may have served another function for white men—as symbols of status. Being a free quadroon woman, a woman almost white, Grace may have been a marker of Simon's status and wealth, much like his elaborate house at Prospect Pen, his expensive furniture from England, or the ostentatious feasts he served his guests. A white man of lesser status and means than Simon, such as a tradesman or soldier, could probably not aspire to form an attachment to a free woman like Grace. As some observers have noted, on rural estates, only planters had free, often mixed-race, women as mistresses. Those below this rank, such as bookkeepers, usually formed attachments with enslaved women.[272] Keeping a "mulatto" mistress could be an expensive endeavor for white men. As one young white man wrote about mixed-race women, "Girls of this description are frequently to be procured at a monstrous expense, far exceeding what frail ones in London cost."[273] In this way, relationships with women of colour were not necessarily social elevators for white men, but could serve as a visible indicator of a man's wealth, place and mastery in colonial society.

Interracial unions were not only beneficial for the men involved. At least some mixed-race women regarded relationships with white men as similar to a business transaction. The absence of white women and the low marriage rate in Jamaica provided many women of colour, both free and enslaved, with a certain level of "bargaining

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[272] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 270.
[273] William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey: Volume II, 1775-1782* (London: Hurst & Blackett, Ltd, 1782), 28.

power" by which they could negotiate their relationships with white men.[274] As was the case in marriages between affluent whites in Jamaica and in Britain during this period, rather than being led solely by romantic notions of love, many women of colour likely acknowledged their intimate relationships as a contract between two parties and a case of "mutual advantages negotiated."[275] In some cases, relationships between white men and black or mixed-race women were negotiated on behalf of the woman involved by her mother or other female relative who saw benefits in such matches; this was conceivably the case for Grace whose mother and sister also had relationships with white men.[276] Perhaps Grace had little choice in her partner and an arrangement was made on her behalf. It is also possible that Grace had witnessed her mother and sister's relationships with white men and thought it beneficial to procure a similar relationship for herself. She likely felt that her circumstances, and those of her family, would be greatly improved by her relationship with Simon Taylor. Whatever her motivation, in exchange for the security, wealth and relative status he could provide her, Grace offered Simon her body and, it seems, her affections.

The Inappropriate "Distribution of Sentiment": Simon Taylor's Will

The first time Simon Taylor mentions Grace Donne is in a letter dated 27 January 1783 addressed to his brother, Sir John Taylor, in England. By this time, Simon and Grace had already lived together for about fifteen years and had had possibly one child

[274] Burnard, "'Rioting in Goatish Embraces'," 188.
[275] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 282. Amanda Vickery argues the notion that genteel women and families in eighteenth-century England made "a clear-cut operatic choice between love on the one hand and lucre on the other crudely reduce the intricacies of human choice. For surely the strategic and the emotional are blended in all of us?" Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 44.
[276] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 285.

together, a son named after John. The letter accompanies what appears to be Simon Taylor's first will, in which he bequeathed property to Grace, and was written, in part, to explain to his brother the reasons for including his mistress: "You will say I have made so great provision for the Woman who lives with me[.] I own it," he acknowledged, "but she has been a faithfull [sic] servant to me and I never had Occasion to call her twice for anything or awake her in any of my very severe fits of sickness."[277] It is clear from this passage that Taylor was both dependent on and devoted to Grace. The passage also suggests that Taylor was apprehensive about how his brother would react to his devotion to his mixed-race mistress, a Jamaican "custom" so often criticized in the metropole as a marker of Creole degeneracy. Simon's apprehension, however, was unwarranted in the end. Sir John was supportive of his brother's bequest to Grace and expressed no concern of impropriety.[278]

Taylor made certain in his will that Grace would be well provided for upon his death by bequeathing to her £100 Jamaican, a £50 annuity, several enslaved "Negroes," furniture, a horse, as well as land, a house and other property in East Kingston.[279] Although the amount of cash Simon left Grace was not substantial in comparison to the sums he left other members of his extended white family, the inclusion of slaves would have provided Grace with additional financial support, as she would have been able to hire them out or sell them. Simon was unable to bequeath to Grace the house they shared on Orange Street, either because it was entailed to his brother Sir John or possibly

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[277] ICS, I B 36, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, 27 January 1783.
[278] ICS, II B 29, John Taylor to Simon Taylor, 1 May 1783.
[279] ICS, II B 36, Simon Taylor to John Taylor, 27 January 1783. According to Fernand Braudel, £1 sterling was worth about £1.4 Jamaican in the eighteenth century although the value of local currency tended to fluctuate. Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 278.

because of the *Devises Act*. Although he was unable to give Grace the house he still sought to ensure that she would not be uprooted and forced to move if he should die. Thus, he made arrangements with his brother that Grace could continue to live in the house until her death. In combination with the inheritance that he left her, Grace could rest assured that she would continue to live comfortably. The will and letter provide clear evidence that Simon Taylor felt strongly for Grace and had a sense of responsibility, concern and affection for her. Although Taylor held affection for his colonial wife and family, he still believed strongly in the system of white supremacy and patriarchy. Instead of making his own mixed-race children his principal heirs, Taylor bequeathed the majority of his wealth and property to his white nephew, Sir Simon, a man he was not close to and held in very low esteem.[280] Despite his adherence to dominant systems of oppression, Taylor still provided Grace with money and property, tools she could use to elevate herself and her family within the social hierarchy of Jamaica.

The Mistress of Prospect Pen

There are very few records that reveal what Grace's everyday life was like and so the historian is left to speculate. Grace was likely able to move freely around Kingston, visiting her mother and sister who lived in or near the city. Likely, in common with other colonial wives, she was able to "to dress finely, and dash about in style in…carriages, attended by servants in livery."[281] White visitors in Jamaica often commented on what

[280] Simon did not like the man his nephew grew up to be. He found him to be indolent and idle. They only met twice in their lives, once when Sir Simon was a baby and again when he was about twenty-two years of age and made a surprise visit to Jamaica after falling out of favour with his uncle. Simon wrote to Robert about his nephew's visit: "I could not well turn him out of Doors but am by no means pleased at his 'Visitt' and indeed I am very cool towards him…This I know he will be a very great plague to me and the sooner he returns to England the better." ICS, I J 50 Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, 29 January 1812.
[281] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present,* 326.

they saw to be ostentatious displays of wealth exhibited by free women of colour. Maybe it was Grace Donne they spoke of when they described the way mixed-race mistresses consistently outdid white women "in splendour, taste, and expensiveness of dress, equipage, and entertainment" in Kingston.[282] In a trope commonly called up to denigrate indigenous women and women of colour in colonial settings, Lady Maria Nugent, the governor's wife, found these displays in bad taste and referred to mixed-race women as "unfortunate" and pitiful.[283] However, for Grace such elaborate displays may have been markers of her wealth and "state of near-equality" with affluent whites in Jamaica and in her interactions with other black and brown people.[284]

Although Grace was likely shut out from wealthy white female society, much "as a moral stain in her character would do in European society," she could claim to have had an intimate audience with Lady Nugent at least twice.[285] After dinner during her visit to Prospect Pen in 1802, Nugent wrote that she took tea in her private room "surrounded by the black, brown and yellow ladies of the house." One of these ladies was almost certainly Grace Donne.[286] Two years later in April 1804, Lady Nugent once again dined at Prospect Pen. This time, in order to "please the old housekeeper," she gave audience to a "number of black and brown ladies"— to the disapproval of the white ladies she left waiting for her in the drawing room.[287] The "old housekeeper" Nugent sought to please was no doubt Grace Donne. These incidents suggest that Grace held a place of some respect with Lady Nugent. Nugent perhaps recognized Grace's place as the mistress of

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[282] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present,* 330-1
[283] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 214.
[284] Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica,* 283.
[285] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present,* 335.
[286] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 65.
[287] Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica,* 203.

Prospect Pen, the lady of the house. Even if Grace was excluded from elite white society, she did, at least at Prospect Pen, socialize with her lover's "respectable acquaintance."[288]

The incident described above also suggests that among the other "black, brown and yellow ladies of the house" Grace had a place of respect and authority. It is very likely that Grace was an intermediary between Simon and the enslaved people at Prospect Pen, as black and mixed-race wives often were. For instance, in January 1790 there was a fire at the Pen while Taylor was away in another part of the island. His cousin John wrote to inform him of what had happened. John was not there when the fire broke out and so he relied on Grace's account. According to "Gracey," John wrote, "this accident was occasioned by the Negro Boy (who went to supper the Horses) letting a candle fall amongst some dry grass, and in place of calling assistance, endeavoring to extinguish the Fires himself."[289] We have no records to tell us the outcome of this incident. We do not know whether the boy was punished, how or by whom; however, that John relied upon Grace's testimony speaks to her role at Prospect. The story she constructed, what she did or did not say, would determine the fate of the "Negro Boy." Like the incident with Lady Nugent, this episode suggests that Grace held a place of respect and some power within the household and among the other people of colour at Prospect. She was Simon Taylor's mistress, but it seems that she was also a mediator for the other sixty-eight people enslaved on the Pen.

Even as some women enjoyed the benefits and security they may have procured from becoming a mistress, others experienced the violence that characterized the lives of so many black and brown women in Jamaica. In his diary Thomas Thistlewood, an

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[288] Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present*, 335.
[289] ICS, XIV A 54 John Taylor to Simon Taylor, 22 January 1790.

English overseer and slave owner in Westmoreland, frequently documented his own acts of sexual violence and brutality against enslaved women. In addition, he also described many incidents in which both free and enslaved mistresses experienced violence at the hands of their white partners. For instance, Thistlewood described how his neighbour, Hugh Wilson beat his mistress, a free mulatto women named Miss Sally, several times between 1775 and 1781. Another of Thistlewood's associates beat his mulatto wife so badly she died.[290] That Thistlewood took notice and actually recorded these particular beatings when domestic and sexual violence was so common during this period may be an indication of the severity of the violence. Many white men seemed to share the attitude that "so long as she had any d---d black blood in her she couldn't do without the whip," whether she had free or slave status.[291] Perhaps Simon Taylor also shared this view. There is no evidence to suggest that Simon's relationship with Grace was violent; however, like other black and brown women in relationships with white men, even those in long-term relationships remained in a vulnerable position that required a constant renegotiation of power.

The Other Intimacies

Although she may have been his wife, Grace Donne was neither Simon Taylor's only lover nor the only woman of colour he held in deep affection. In addition to Grace, Taylor had another mistress, a "free Mulatto woman" named Sarah Blacktree Hunter, with whom he had a daughter named Sarah "Sally" Taylor sometime in the 1770s. It is unclear when exactly the relationship with Blacktree Hunter began or whether it was

[290] Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 237-8.
[291] Perkins, *Busha's Mistress,* 122.

ongoing. The absence of Blacktree Hunter in his 1783 will and her inclusion in an amended will of 1808 suggests that their relationship became closer sometime between these years. In his 1808 will, Taylor left Blacktree Hunter £500 Jamaican and some furniture. To his daughter Sally Taylor he originally left £1000 Jamaican, but increased the amount to £1500 Jamaican plus a £30 annuity in 1813 just before his death.[292] The large inheritance to his daughter Sally points to a fairly close relationship between father and daughter. An undated letter from Sally to her father asking for his assistance may also reflect an intimate relationship between the two. Sally wrote to ask for her father's assistance in stopping construction of an asylum that was being built beside her home. She implored her father to come by her house in order "to see the dreadfull and uncomfortable condition I am reduced to by this pest house, which has been placed next door to me."[293] We can only speculate how Simon responded to his daughter; however, that Sally felt she could write to him and ask for his assistance suggests that their relationship was a close one. To add to this, when Simon Taylor became ill in 1811, he called on Sally to take care of him. She moved in with him at Prospect Pen, along with her daughter (Simon's grandchild) and her mother. Sally continued to care for her ailing father until his death. Simon wrote to his cousin Robert to assure him that his daughter was taking "every pains to nurse me."[294] Sally's commitment to her father and his affection towards her speaks to the deep relationship they maintained until his death in 1813. Although Simon Taylor held a place of power within colonial Jamaica, clearly his

[292] National Archives of England (hereafter) NAE, Simon Taylor's Will, PROB 10/7400/7, fols 2-4, folio 59.
[293]ICS, XX A 6, Sarah Taylor to Simon Taylor, undated.
[294]ICS, I J 48, Simon Taylor to Robert Taylor, 19 September 1811.

wellbeing was dependent on the affections and good will of his mixed-race daughter in much the same way he had been dependent on Grace Donne.

Conclusion

The relative absence of Grace in Simon Taylor's letters, I believe, speaks more to his own anxieties around his identity as a respectable British gentleman in Jamaica than to her significance in his life. Grace had taken care of him when he was sick, kept his home, entertained his guests, mothered his child and most importantly, provided him with companionship during the thirty-six years they lived together. Grace was his family. The relationship they had highlights the importance of seeking out individual stories, the "individual subjectivities," even those that are limited to fragments in the historical record. Jamaican slave society, despite its outward appearance, was not as cohesive and smoothly hierarchical as the planter elite may have claimed. The binaries between master and slave, white and black, powerful and powerless were frequently blurred, challenged and renegotiated. Narratives of intimacy such as the one discussed in this chapter demonstrate the necessity for scholars to move beyond such binaries and to seek out the many "tense and tender ties" that animated colonial spaces. These ties contributed to, and at times perhaps transgressed, the intricate hierarchies of difference that structured colonial societies, dislocating binaries and forcing us to "more elaborate, cross-cutting ways of thinking."[295] Although these stories may be difficult to access and even unsettling, it is necessary to seek them out if we are to gain a fuller understanding of the nuanced and complex dynamics of race, intimacy and power in colonial settings.

[295] Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 16.

CONCLUSION

Between September and November 1790, John Tailyour wrote to Simon Taylor several times regarding Grace Donne. As was commonly the case, Simon was in another part of Jamaica on business and John made regular visits to his cousin's home at Prospect Pen near Kingston in order to ensure all was in order. In his letter, John informed Simon that "Gracey" was doing well and, most likely in response to Simon's request that she should be looked after, replied that she "shall certainly have any thing she may [want]."[296] Interspersed among these rare personal letters were letters regarding business, the loss of sugar, the drowning of sailors, and the sale of slaves. This mixture of the intimate and business highlights two aspects of Simon Taylor's life that were seemingly at odds—his affection and concern for a mixed-race woman and his active involvement and commitment to the brutal system of slavery. Although historical research on slave society has enabled us to create a fairly rich picture, as we look on from a distance it is easy to lose sight of the intricate details, the nuances and the complexities that helped to structure eighteenth-century Jamaican society. This thesis is an exploration of those details, the nuances that so often prevent us from drawing any definitive conclusions.

In examining the ways Simon Taylor constructed his identity, and the negotiations and anxieties involved in this process, it becomes clear that although his wealth and social status as a white man secured him a place of power within Jamaica, his subject position was not as stable as one might assume. Access to structural power and privilege did not ensure his sense of belonging and home. In the latter quarter of the eighteenth

[296] ICS, XIV A 62-71, John Tailyour to Simon Taylor, 11 September 1790 - 16 November 1790.

century, as the slave trade and Creoles came under attack from abolitionists and antislavery supporters, Taylor attempted to perform British ideals of masculinity and respectability in order to submerge the ways in which his life in Jamaica, and his Creoleness, deviated from British norms. He was very careful not to reveal to metropolitan observers, especially to British women, aspects of life that might associate him with the negative representations of Creoles circulating within British discourses at the time. Taylor saw himself as both Creole and British, depending on the situation, and struggled to negotiate these competing and often conflicting subject positions. This negotiation of identity was a constant source of anxiety for Taylor and left him in a social position that was relatively precarious.

A central source of anxiety and conflict for Simon Taylor was his mixed-race family, especially his thirty-six year relationship with Grace Donne. Their relationship highlights the fractures in colonial structures and narratives of power and dominance. Binary discourses and exclusionary practices devised to keep people in their racial places were regularly crossed and blurred. This was even so for an individual like Simon Taylor, a person well placed to benefit from the policing and maintenance of those boundaries. Taylor may have been invested in the continuance of slavery, a system grounded in a highly structured racial hierarchy, but his affection for Grace posed a challenge to these lines of difference and power.

Exploration of interracial intimacies has larger implications for the study of slave societies. It was likely not Taylor's intention to compromise the system of slavery that he so depended on; on the contrary, as discussed in the previous chapters, he was an avid defender of the system. Mixed-race relationships in themselves may not have posed a

direct challenge to the established order of slave society. As Christer Petley writes, "only the public legitimization" of interracial relationships and "the recognition that non-white children were the natural heirs to European inheritance" could pose a real challenge to the established order of slave society.[297] That Simon Taylor bequeathed most of his property to his white nephew suggests that he recognized the dangers of making his mixed-race children his principal heirs. Such a bequest would threaten the colour hierarchy of slave society, as laws to limit property passage to people of colour demonstrate. However, mixed-race relationships may have posed an indirect challenge to these race-based hierarchies and, ultimately, to slavery. Taylor's bequest to Grace and his mixed-race children provided them with the financial means to elevate their social status in the colony. It was from this class of people—educated, property–owning, free "mulattoes"—that an organized movement developed to challenge the discriminatory laws in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Although the free community of colour did not originally challenge slavery, they were at the forefront of the abolition movement on the island. Thus, although intimate relationships between white men and women of colour, like Simon Taylor and Grace Donne, may not have posed a direct challenge to the system of slavery, they may have hastened its downfall. The desire of many white men to improve the social and economic position of their lovers and children, and the vigorous pursuit of those opportunities by people of colour, contributed to the emergence of a unified free community of colour in Jamaica that had the economic and social power to challenge strict binaries of race and eventually undermine the system of

[297] Christer Petley, "'Legitimacy' and social boundaries," 482 and Heuman, *Between Black and White.*

slavery.[298] In this way, interracial intimacies can be seen as contributing as much to the dismantling of slavery as the actions of those who picked up arms. This point deserves much more attention than I can provide here. What both the narratives of Simon Taylor and Grace Donne suggest is that the study of slave society requires closer attention not only to the structures of power and oppression, but to individual narratives, to the ways in which individuals constructed and performed their identities and the anxieties and insecurities such performances reveal and reflect. We must seek out the "individual subjectivities" if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate workings of race, gender, class and power in slave society.

[298] In addition to sentiment, larger forces, such as shifts in the global sugar economy, slave rebellions, and the growth of humanitarian and abolition movements in Britain and the Caribbean, also contributed to the ending of the slave system. See Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*.

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