Oathbound: The Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica in the Revolutionary Atlantic World

Oathbound: The Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica in the Revolutionary Atlantic World

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Abstract

*"*Oathbound: The Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica in the Revolutionary Atlantic World" narrates the formation of Jamaica's Trelawny Maroons and their subsequent migration to Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone in order to reconsider the political history of the Atlantic world. The dissertation is structured around crucial points of contact between the Maroons and the British—treaties, blood oaths, promises, petitions, and gestures of refusal—that illuminate the entanglements of diasporic and imperial epistemologies in the Maroons' exodus through the British Empire. I argue that the Maroons' strategies of diplomacy sutured the ritual politics of diaspora to the legal rituals of empire, allowing the Maroons to recast their collective identity in different colonial contexts. Although studies of Jamaican Maroons tend to characterize them as accommodators to empire who opportunistically invoked deference to monarchy, I eschew the normative categories of British imperial history that have framed their story and instead emphasize the intellectual and legal pluralism of the Atlantic world. This approach, I suggest, offers an alternative genealogy of the black radical imagination oriented away from the pursuit of liberal freedoms and the wielding of state power toward contingent and improvisational forms of kinship and belonging.

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Introduction

An Intimate History of Maroon Warfare

In the midst of war, loyal allies can be in short supply. Perhaps no one in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world knew this better than the captive Africans who seized their freedom, organized themselves as small-scale polities, and took up arms against enslavers. When the Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica mounted an insurgency against the British colonial state in 1795, they scrambled to recruit enslaved people from nearby plantations to fight at their side, attempting to lure them with the promise that "when they had gotten the better of the buckras (white people) they should live very easy and should have their freedom."[1] William, an enslaved man who had spent months on the run from slaveholder Robert Parnassus, found himself a target of the Maroons' recruitment efforts on August 7, 1795. Whether he was unpersuaded by their efforts or merely pretended to be unswayed when captured by the colonial militia, William's testimony offers a rare glimpse into the making of a guerrilla campaign. In an attempt to coerce the fugitive into joining their cause, the Maroon Captain Palmer "gave him three cuts on the wrist and caught the blood in a calabash intending to make him drink it the next moon and swear not to turn to his master but to go about to get people to join them."[2]

The ceremony William described upon his recapture and confession was an example of a common blood oath used amongst Akan-speaking peoples of Africa's Gold Coast and its trans-

[1] An examination taken before the honourable George Murray, custos of the parish of Westmoreland, John Lewis, one of the representatives of the said parish, James Lawrence, Colonel of the said parish, Thomas Barker, Lieutenant Colonel, William Lock, Major, and David Fuilayson (?), one of the magistrates of the said parish, n.d. [July 1795], CO 137/95, The National Archives of the UK (hereafter TNA).

[2] The examination of William, taken up on Friday the 14th August, 1795, at Spring Garden Estate, CO 137/95, TNA.

Atlantic diaspora. The power of the ritual, often referred to as a fetish, lie in its invocation of sacred authority to bind the oath-taker to a sworn agreement. When broken, the oath carried the punishment of a curse—the death of the one who dared betray his covenant. The supernatural bond instated by the blood oath would conscript William into the Maroons' imagined race war, propelling him to further rally potential allies from nearby plantations and slave pens and fight with the Maroons.

William's encounter with Captain Palmer might have inspired any range of emotions in the enslaved man: fear, uncertainty, or even hope. But insofar as this single moment represented, in micro-scale, a much broader set of historical processes that set in motion a chain of events that would ripple across the Atlantic world, it begs questions of broader significance. One way to interpret this moment historically would be to treat it as evidence of cultural resilience and creativity among diasporic Africans who had been uprooted from their homelands, folkways, and familiar institutions of authority. Rather than an experience of deracination, the Middle Passage became a conduit of cultural transmission whereby enslaved people and their descendants came to inhabit and perform different ethnic identities in the Americas, in part through distinctive cultural practices like the oath. This was, as historian Walter Rucker has described it, a process of "social resurrection" borne of collective dislocation.[3] The oath practiced by enslaved Coromantee people from the Gold Coast—along with the entire cosmology in which it was embedded—constituted, as he puts it, a "spiritual, social, and politic means of empowerment" in

[3] Walter Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas: Identity, Culture, and Power* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2015). Rucker's book is just one contribution to a long-standing scholarly discussion about cultural survivals and transformations in the African diaspora. For important touchstones in this conversation, see Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

the context of New World slavery.[4] It was a spiritual, political, and social strategy that undergirded a politics of collective resistance to slavery.[5]

An alternative approach would be to think of this oath not as merely an artifact of cultural transformation, but as part of the arsenal the Maroons wielded in the extension of a diasporic mode of warfare. Vincent Brown has argued that slave revolts, drawing from the often extensive military experience of many captive Africans, expanded the geographic and conceptual scope of wars that were rooted in the African continent and elsewhere in the world.[6] When Maroons and enslaved rebels took up arms, they engaged themselves in just one aspect of what Brown calls a "borderless slave war" that included the continuation of African warfare in a new arena, the war between black and white inhabitants of slave societies instigated by racial stratification, warring notions among black people regarding the basis of collective identity, and global warfare between European empires.[7] The oath that sealed alliances in a Maroon war, then, becomes easily assimilable into a global military history that foregrounds the importance of Africa and Africans to a world embroiled in simultaneous and overlapping struggles for power.

But there is another way. This dissertation takes up the task of understanding the oath, and the people who made use of it, in terms of the establishment and mediation of intimate relationality. It is a history of the Trelawny Maroons as they pursued not just cultural survival, or warfare, but a form of intimate belonging that could adapt to their changing circumstances and

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4 Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas*, 9.

5 Also see Jessica A. Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social (Re)membering: Obeah Idioms, Kromanti Identities and the Trans-Atlantic Politics of Memory, c. 1675-Present," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 4 (2014): 537-558.

6 Vincent Brown, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

7 Brown, *Tacky's Revolt*, 7.

ensure their collective survival. Central to the history of enslaved culture and resistance are the ways that Atlantic slavery ultimately constituted a crisis of belonging. The slave trade was in large part an engine of estrangement accomplished through collective dislocation—not only physical, but also, social, spiritual, and intellectual. This dislocation required that captives from disparate backgrounds reconstitute themselves as members of meaningful communities with shared aspirations and idioms of belonging. The modes of communal affiliation they pursued were certainly concerned with natal kinship, but extended beyond the realm of the family to include membership in corporate, religious, and military bodies, such as maroon societies.[8] Both cultural transformation and militancy relied on the establishment of community. The oath, then, was a means of "*feeling* and *feeling for*," to borrow from Omise'eke Tinsley, in the midst of ongoing crisis constituted by enslavement, imperial expansion, and racial subjugation.[9]

As an affective technology, the ritual consumption of a fetish oath reassembled a set of relations between persons and things to instate bonds of intimacy and allegiance. Amidst the rupture of *filiation* instantiated by the trans-Atlantic slave trade, chattel slavery in the Americas, and colonial regimes of racial terror, *affiliation* through ritual assemblage emerged as a viable strategy for black diasporic politics oriented toward social transformation.[10] This was, moreover, a queer mode of affiliation, not because it necessarily involved sexual minoritarian subjects, but because it was a means of establishing kinship beyond the confines of heterocentric reproduction

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[8] See James H. Sweet, "Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of the African Slave Family in the Atlantic World," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 251-272.

[9] Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2 (2008): 191-215. Emphasis original.

[10] On assemblage as a way of understanding subject formation through affect, see Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

through the "anomalous intimacies" engendered by the trans-Atlantic slave trade.[11] Pierced flesh and the ritual exchange of blood made possible improvised and relational forms of belonging that could provide an alternative to reproduction based on lineage in a context of natal alienation.[12] Whether taken under duress or in more ordinary rituals of incorporation, the oath presented itself to the Maroons as an embodied strategy for constructing networks of association that traversed planes of the supernatural and the material. These diasporic assemblages represented not a stable, static, or homogenous, or even reinvented, ethnic identity, but a contingent, relational, provisional, and fluid mode of belonging that sustained the Maroons' collective aspirations.

"Oathbound: The Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica in the Revolutionary Atlantic World" traces the formation of Jamaica's Trelawny Maroons and their migration through the British Empire in the late eighteenth century to reconsider the political history of the Atlantic world through the lens of a politics of bondedness. Originally founded by a group of formerly enslaved insurgents, Trelawny Town was a Maroon society that waged a decades-long struggle against British officials in Jamaica before being banished from the colony entirely. Proving themselves formidable adversaries, the Maroons entered into a treaty with the colonial state in 1739 that established the terms of their autonomy. Formal recognition promised to insulate them from the threat of re-enslavement, secure their entitlement to landed self-sufficiency, and provide a basis for legitimate political claims made to the colonial assembly. But in 1795, a series of grievances rooted in the perception of increasing encroachment into Maroon affairs led Trelawny Town to

[11] On queer affiliation as a diasporic practice, see Gayatri Gopinath, *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), ch. 4, particularly her reading of Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother* as a queer text. On anomalous intimacies of the Middle Passage, see Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), ch. 4.

[12] On slavery and natal alienation, see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

declare war against the colony. Subdued the following year by Spanish bloodhounds imported from Cuba, the Maroons surrendered with the understanding that they could safely return home. But colonial administrators, fearful of what historian Julius Scott referred to as the "common wind" of revolutionary fervor in the Black Atlantic world, refused to allow the enduring presence of internal enemies to provoke possible insurrection among the enslaved population.[13]

The Trelawny Maroons were rounded up and sent aboard a ship bound for Nova Scotia, where their resettlement in the summer of 1796 became a pet project for the province's governor, John Wentworth. Wentworth's vision of a pious and industrious settlement of black farmers, however, was soon shattered by the Maroons' rejection of the harsh northern climate and expectations of subservience. Refusing to work or adopt the norms of Christian piety, the Maroons collaborated with one of their British attendants, Alexander Ochterlony, to submit petitions to the Duke of Portland insisting on a return to their home. In 1800, the Crown finally honored their request for removal, but rather than repatriating the Maroons to Jamaica, they were sent to Sierra Leone, where they could at least reclaim their proud tradition of military excellence to aid the struggling Company administration in the suppression of ongoing attempts at rebellion from subjects and neighboring locals.

To tell the story of the Trelawny Maroons is to tell a characteristically Atlantic story whereby different groups reconstituted their sense of belonging in the face of flux and dislocation—an impulse common to Africans, indigenous Americans, and Europeans alike from the onset of the Atlantic age of exploration. War, enslavement, mercantilism, and imperial expansion facilitated the meeting of strangers and the making of kin. At the center of these

[13] Julius Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitain Revolution* (London; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018)

Atlantic narratives are shared strivings—often violent, yet always creative—to persist in a world marked by rupture and discontinuity. The Trelawny Maroons' circuit through the British Empire—from Jamaica to Nova Scotia, then later to Sierra Leone, and eventually back to Jamaica in the mid-nineteenth century—traces an insurgent geography of political belonging that revises the enduring image of *marronage* from one of atavism to one of innovation.[14]

By illuminating the political strivings of a Maroon society in exile, focusing on their political negotiations with the British Empire, I argue that these Maroons' strategies of diplomacy from the 1730s, when the major Maroon treaties were signed, until the turn of the nineteenth century, when they agreed to suppress an anti-colonial revolt in Sierra Leone, reflect their ongoing efforts to establish political and intimate belonging in diaspora. The oath emerged as both a strategy of diasporic solidarity *and* a mode of imperial negotiation that allowed the Trelawny Maroons to assert their aims against those of the British Empire. It articulated relations not only among the Maroons, but between the Maroons and colonial authorities. Fiercely protective of their freedom, yet nevertheless bound to principles of reciprocity, obligation, and transgressive intimacy, the Maroons repeatedly invoked the politics of oath-making against colonial regimes invested in dispossession and dependency, racial subjugation, and labor conscription. At the center of the Maroons' pursuit of self-determination was a marked devotion to family; for the Maroons, militarism served as a means of fostering kinship and social

[14] For the interpretation of *marronage* as politically reactionary and restorationist as part of a teleological movement from rebellious action to revolutionary transformation, see Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); and Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1988). On insurgent geographies, see Yuko Miki, "Fleeing into Slavery: The Insurgent Geographies of Brazilian Quilombolas (Maroons), 1880-1881," *Americas: A Quarterly Review of Inter-American Cultural History* 68, no. 4 (April 2012): 495-528. Richard Price has emphasized the creativity of maroon culture (and diasporic cultures more broadly). See *Travels with Tooy: History, Memory, and the African American Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

reproduction.

The Trelawny Maroons were not unique among communities of self-liberated Africans in the Americas. For the 400 years that slavery existed, one thing was always true: individuals and groups took flight and settled in out-of-reach areas, establishing their own freedom communities and sometimes plotting revolts, pursuing their freedom through legal means, or escaping across borders in search of liberty. When enslaved Jamaicans absconded from plantations and slave pens to make common cause with other fugitives, they did more than simply liberate their bodies from captivity; indeed, they carried with them ideals of social order and justice, yearnings for familial connection, and aspirations for the future that ran counter to those determined by the political economy of racial slavery. As slavery expanded to dominate an unruly colonial frontier, these freedom dreams made the mountains and forests of Jamaica's interior home to one of the largest and longest enduring maroon populations in the world.[15]

Maroon societies, ranging from loosely organized bands to militarized confederations of thousands, sprang up virtually everywhere that slavery was introduced in the Americas. Their history sheds light on the antagonisms inherent in the uneven dispersal of power within highly stratified slave societies. Wherever suitably impenetrable habitats—mountains, forests, swamps—surrounded colonial territories, self-extricated slaves would settle in those areas and use whatever resources they could muster, especially their own military experience, to defend their freedom. Encampments of fugitive slaves raided plantations for food, tools, and recruits, posing a drain on the material and human resources of the slave system. Many also played central roles in orchestrating major slave rebellions. Even so, some of these groups aided colonial authorities

[15] On *marronage* as part of the long black radical tradition's emphasis on exodus, see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), esp. 17-19.

by capturing runaways in exchange for the continued autonomy of their maroon enclaves.[16]

The term "maroon" derives from the Spanish word *cimarrón*, which originally referred to escaped cattle, but also came to denote runaway slaves.[17] There are, however, important distinctions between particular types of *marronage*. *Grand marronage*, refers to "the organization of an effective band with an ability to defend, feed, and demographically sustain itself either by new recruits or, ultimately, through natural increase" as opposed to *petit marronage*, or "running away by an individual or for only a short term."[18] Enslaved people absconded everywhere that slavery existed, but major maroon societies were established in fewer places, most notably Suriname, Cuba, Brazil, Colombia, and Brazil. Though far more numerous in Caribbean and Latin American slave societies, evidence of North American maroons exists as well. There, however, the lack of sufficiently inaccessible landscapes and the opportunity to find freedom across borders made *grand marronage* a less common occurrence.[19] Scholars working on the North American context have developed their own distinctions in types of *marronage*: intralimital (those who settled within the geographic boundaries of the slave system) and extralimital (outside of those boundaries) maroons, and borderland (those who hid out in the

[16] General overviews of *grand marronage*, particularly focused on Latin America and the Caribbean, include Gad J. Heuman, ed., *Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance, and Marronage in Africa and the New World* (London: Cass, 1986); Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006). For the North American context, see Sylviane A. Diouf, *Slavery's Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

[17] Price, "Introduction," *Maroon Societies*.

[18] Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009 [1982]), 61. I use the term "Maroon" solely in reference to participants in *grand marronage* after the ratification of a treaty.

[19] Still, despite its infrequency, scholars have been eager to explore the history of North American maroons as a way to probe the very definition of *marronage*. For recent work on North American maroons that adopts a comparative perspective, see Diouf, *Slavery's Exiles*.

borders between rural and urban areas) and hinterland (those who settled at a distance from the borderlands) maroons.[20] Beyond these taxonomies of *marronage*, what matters most are the ways in which maroons negotiated matters of sovereignty and political subjectivity.

The study of Maroon societies has been from the outset a comparative and interdisciplinary project, drawing mainly from anthropological and historical inquiry. Anthropologist Richard Price laid out the central concerns of the field early on: cultural continuities and transformations across the diaspora, orality and folklore, the politics of slave resistance, and the political economic implications of *marronage*. Scholars have continued to take up these themes while also considering more nuanced ways of understanding the enslaved and self-liberated as political actors beyond the resistance/accommodation binary. A more recent survey of maroon historiography, for example, emphasizes questions of political leadership within maroon societies, gender dynamics, and enslavement by maroons.[21] Early work, such as the influential *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* by Eugene Genovese, posited that maroon societies were pre-political and restorationist in nature. Maroons, in other words, sought to recreate ways of life and modes of governance they had experienced in their homelands. Such an interpretation of *marronage* fits within Genovese's broader formulation of a shift over time from pre-capitalist social restorationist rebellion in the earliest stages of Atlantic slavery to abolitionist revolution following the French Revolution.[22] Genovese finds that because the maroons "accepted the

[20] Daniel O. Sayers, *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People: The Archaeology of Maroons, Indigenous Americans, and Enslaved Laborers in the Great Dismal Swamp* (Gainseville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 79-80; Diouf, *Slavery's Exiles*, 5.

[21] Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*.

[22] Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*, The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History, Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge:

moral and judicial pretensions of white slaveholders," they ultimately pursued a path that "inhibited the development of an abolitionist—a revolutionary— ideology."[23] At the same time, though, he notes that the existence of maroon societies sparked revolutionary energy among the enslaved people around them.[24]

More recently historians have sought to describe how enslavement generated a much wider range of political expression not so easily mapped onto a linear trajectory from conservative rebellion to revolution.[25] This project extends those efforts to the history of Jamaica's Maroons. The most authoritative secondary source on Jamaican *marronage*, Mavis C. Campbell's *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal*, offers a comprehensive history through the Maroon War of 1795-96.[26] Campbell, however, echoes the earlier view that Maroon societies were pre-political and restorationist in nature. This dissertation revises and builds upon Campbell's work by situating the Trelawny Maroons in an trans-Atlantic context and emphasizing the significance of intimate belonging.

So far, only one book-length project has placed the Trelawny Maroons in a trans-Atlantic frame. Ruma Chopra's *Almost Home: Maroons Between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* takes up where Campbell's work left off, but largely extends her

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Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

[23] Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, 57.

[24] Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, 57.

[25] See, for example, Yingling, "The Maroons of Santo Domingo." Another such area unrelated to maroons is the study of enslaved loyalism and royalism. See David Sartorius, *Ever Faithful: Race, Loyalty, and the Ends of Empire in Spanish Cuba* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) and Marcela Echeverri, "Popular Royalists, Empire, and Politics in Southwestern New Grenada, 1809-1819," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 91, no. 2 (2011): 237-269.

[26] Another notable work on Jamaican maroons, primarily based on ethnography and oral history, is Kenneth M. Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005).

interpretation of Jamaican Maroon politics and tethers the story of the Trelawny Maroons to the dominant categories of British imperial history.[27] This dissertation instead eschews the normative categories of British imperial history and emphasizes the intellectual and legal pluralism of the Atlantic world.[28] Additionally, in his article "'Blackened Beyond Our Native Hue': Removal, Identity and the Trelawney Maroons on the Margins of the Atlantic World, 1796-1800," historian Jeff Fortin argues that the Maroons recast their ethnic identity against both white and black communities to survive on the edges of empire.[29] In contrast to Fortin's approach, I emphasize that ethnicity was only one dimension of belonging manipulated by the Trelawny Maroons to achieve their goals. I focus on the dynamic relationship between distinct forms of colonial governance in the British Empire and the conjunction of ethnicity, kinship, and reproduction in the maroons' encounters with colonial states.

Additionally, historical geographer Miles Ogborn has applied a British imperial lens to the Jamaican Maroon War of 1795-96, arguing that the war provides evidence of an oral culture of empire in which speech, script, and print worked together in conflicts meaning between Britain and Jamaica.[30] Finally, historian Kathleen Wilson, also a British imperial historian, looks primarily at the period between Jamaica's two maroon wars, adopting a performance studies

[27] Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons Between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

[28] On entanglement and Atlantic history, see Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 764-786). On Atlantic legal pluralism, see Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) and "The Legal Regime of the South Atlantic World, 1400-1750: Jurisdictional Complexity as Institutional Order," *Journal of World History* 11, no. 1 (2000): 27-56.

[29] Jeffrey A. Fortin, "'Blackened Beyond Our Native Hue': Removal, Identity and the Trelawney Maroons on the Margins of the Atlantic World, 1796-1800," *Citizenship Studies* 10, no. 1 (2006): 5-34.

[30] Miles Ogborn, "A War of Words: Speech, Script and Print in the Maroon War of 1795-6," *Journal of Historical Geography* 37 (2011): 203-215.

methodology to show how spectacular and everyday performances of difference enabled maroons to secure certain British rights and liberties.[31] Wilson convincingly shows how these performances, especially those signaling military prowess, guaranteed Jamaican maroons a provisional form of political subjectivity rooted in "a wild and savage freedom."[32] My project explores how the Maroons' travels to Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone enabled them to refashion this "savage" political subjectivity with and against the expectations of colonial authorities. An emphasis on migration, then, is central to the novel contribution of my project. This dissertation also de-centers the grand narrative of the age of revolutions and privileges scripts of intimacy and belonging in the making of political subjects.

While historians of the African diaspora in the revolutionary Atlantic world have integrated the history of Africa and Africans into narratives of Euro-American cycles of revolution and counter-revolution, this scholarship predominantly highlights patterns of violent resistance and suppression with scant attention paid to the politics of intimate belonging.[33] On the other hand, feminist historians of empire and colonialism have shown that the realm of the intimate—inclusive of "sex, sentiment, domestic arrangement, and child rearing," according to Ann Stoler—figured prominently in techniques of imperial rule, yet this influential contribution

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[31] Kathleen Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom: Maroons and the Colonial Order in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica and the Atlantic Sound," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (Jan. 2009): 45-86.

[32] Ibid., 64.

[33] For recent exemplary accounts centered on the indisputable world historical significance of the Haitian Revolution, see David Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina, 2001); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004); Ada Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). The classic account remains C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

has seen far too little engagement with the history of Atlantic slavery and resistance.[34] I weave together these two historiographical strands to reorient the question of politics in Africa's Atlantic diaspora toward the intimate dimensions of collective struggle. In doing so, I shift the analytic of resistance away from an engagement with modern political categories toward highly contingent and creative performances of freedom and belonging, the enactment of transgressive intimacies, and counter-hegemonic acts of world-making.[35] To imagine a vision of the world that could have been but never was reveals how agents of empire attempted to conscript the Maroons into their own vision of political subjecthood in the age of Enlightenment, foreclosing other forms of political belonging.[36]

Until fairly recently, the so-called "age of democratic revolution" referenced a very particular story about what constituted the major political transformation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Women, people of African descent, indigenous people, and the Iberian Atlantic were seldom accorded roles of significance in the era's history. R. R. Palmer's pioneering two-volume study *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-180*0, published between 1959 and 1964, offered what looks to us like a falsely constricted timeline omitting crucial events: the Haitian Revolution, Latin

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[34] 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), 23. Thavolia Glymph's work on enslaved women's insurgency during the Civil War is a move in this direction. See "Rose's War and the Gendered Politics of a Slave Insurgency in the Civil War," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 4 (December 2013): 501-532. Also see Aisha K. Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841-1844* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

[35] The notion of counter-hegemonies comes from James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 116.

[36] On histories of (im)possibility and imagining forms of intimacy rendered illegible by the archive, see Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (June 2008): 1-14, and Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 40-41, 175.

American wars for independence, and indigenous Americans' anticolonial resistance. The rise of Atlantic history as a clearly defined field of study, and particularly the influence of Atlanticists focused on the history of slavery and the slave trade, inaugurated a widening of the field to include not just the Haitian Revolution, but also the role of African Americans in the American Revolution. The (belatedly) widespread embrace of C. L. R. James' classic study of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, in particular generated an outpouring of works dealing with the significance of the Caribbean to the global restructuring of politics.[37] While this scholarship has gradually foregrounded African-descended peoples and other under-examined historical actors in the age of revolutions, it has done less to call into question the very categories and assumptions that suggest this period's coherence.

Too often, the history of the revolutionary era reinforces a triumphalist account of Western democracy and liberalism, leaving us with too limited a sense of contingency and alternative possibilities. Rather than further pluralize the history of the revolutionary era, this dissertation seeks to unsettle its fundamental investments in a progressive narrative of liberal

[37] C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1963). On Palmer and James as originators of the liberal and Marxist traditions of revolutionary historiography, see Sarah Knott, "Narrating the Age of Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (Jan. 2016): 3-36. Other significant works on the Haitian Revolution include Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Robin Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (Oct. 2006): 634-674; Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution*; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*. On African Americans in the American Revolution, see Herbert Aptheker, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1940); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1961); Sylvia R. Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); Gary B. Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*. Sweeping treatments of slavery during the age of revolutions include David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) and Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (London; New York: Verso, 1988).

freedom by exploring alternative possibilities for political belonging. By focusing on the Trelawny Maroons' migration, I reimagine the history of this period from the perspective of a diasporic community in exile. Using displacement and exile as a starting point for thinking about the relationship between belonging and broader political shifts in the Atlantic world challenges the grand narrative of liberal political transformation.

An entire world of small revolutions moved along the edges of those most celebrated for the cataclysmic changes wrought during the Atlantic's revolutionary phase. These impressive shifts are not adequately captured by nation-orientated historiographies, lending themselves instead to the transnational, imperial, oceanic, and global frames that increasingly attract historians' attention. Writing an Atlantic history, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker shed light on a radical oceanic undercommons inhabited by common people united against racial capitalism.[38] Since the publication of their book *The Many-Headed Hydra*, revolutionary historiography has turned toward what Sarah Knott calls "situational" narratives distinguishable in how they emphasize "a heightened sense of place and mobility and a concern for people acting politically and locatedly (that is, from the vista of their own location)."[39] For example, Janet Polasky has focused on the widespread traversal of borders during the age of revolutions by people who shared what she describes as a a common search for liberty. As in my narrative, Polasky's protagonists did not instigate state-oriented revolutions like those that typically animate syntheses of the period; rather, they acted upon "ideals and schemes spun at the crossroads or on the periphery of the Atlantic Revolution."[40] Though these minor revolutions did

[38] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

[39] Knott, "Narrating the Age of Revolution," 5.

[40] Janet L. Polasky, *Revolutions Without Borders: The Call for Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale

not result in the founding of new polities, Polasky insists that they nevertheless evoked a universal ideal of freedom. Where my study departs from Polasky's is this interest in the universalism of political activity during the age of revolutions. Polasky ties the varied political projects of Dutch Patriots, Belgian radicals, and settlers in Freetown, Sierra Leone, among others, to Enlightenment notions of liberty as a way of expanding political history to include a much more diverse comprehensive of characters. I am, on the other hand, interested in how the Trelawny Maroons made claims to particular, rather than universal, rights: land ownership, martial autonomy, and social self-determination.[41] Such an emphasis not only yields a more inclusive political history, but one that troubles the very political categories that inform our narratives of the past.

Given that captive Africans constituted at least three-fourths of migrants to the Americas between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, to ignore their contributions to the world-historical transformations occurring in the Atlantic arena would be a grave oversight. Scholars, however, are still struggling to articulate the sheer scope of how the African diaspora figures in the age of revolutions. Laurent Dubois has urged historians to view the enslaved as Enlightenment intellectuals in their own right. The Haitian Revolution, Dubois observes, "ranks as perhaps the greatest political triumph of the Age of Revolution, and it might even be said that

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University Press, 2015), 12. Other examples of these situational narratives include Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); Jeremy D. Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012); François Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2014); Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror*; and Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2015).

[41] Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom," 63-64. Wilson also makes a tantalizing, albeit fleeting, suggestion that the culmination of the First Maroon War in 1739 was "the first revolution in the age of revolutions" (86).

it best embodies the promises of Enlightenment universalism."[42] Dubois "pluralizes" Enlightenment intellectual history to reshape its narrative into something like the following: "the discovery of the Americas generated a space for new ways of thinking about humanity and natural rights, and out of encounters between Native Americans, Africans and Europeans there emerged new ways of thinking about belonging, governance, subject-hood and, eventually, citizenship."[43] These notions of belonging, governance, subject-hood, and citizenship, however, have all become quite familiar. The ease with which enslaved intellectuals are folded into the emergence of Enlightenment thought obscures the alternative political impulses that might have underwritten their actions.

The limits of Enlightenment universalism, however, have not gone unnoticed by historians. In fact, Africanists have been particularly attentive to its elisions. James Sweet challenges the universality of enlightened political impulses in a study of mobility in the Atlantic world, but for the pre-revolutionary era. He laments that "Africans are almost seamlessly woven in to the narrative of Western democratic triumphalism, their political challenges framed as crucial to our understandings of liberty, equality, and freedom."[44] His microhistorical study of an African diasporic religious community in exile uses the lens of healing as an Africanist epistemology that circulated through the eighteenth-century Atlantic world to demonstrate "the impacts of African institutions and ideas on the making of the Americas."[45] Viewing Atlantic

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[42] Laurent Dubois, "An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic," *Social History* 31, no. 1 (2006), 4.

[43] Ibid., 14.

[44] James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 4-5.

[45] Ibid.

history with a focus on African diasporic healing communities reveals how non-elites confronted imperial expansion on both sides of the ocean. In Sweet's narrative, European and African imperialism, mercantilism, and warfare emerge as coeval forces in the crucible of which ordinary people generated communalist responses to exile, dislocation, and repression. While Sweet's book makes a convincing case that alternative modes of sociality and belonging were prevalent in the pre-revolutionary Atlantic world, I show in my dissertation how these modes remained under contestation into the age of revolutions and helped articulate alternative political subjectivities.[46]

As Lisa Lowe writes, "The contemporary moment is so replete with assumptions that freedom is made universal through liberal political enfranchisement and the globalization of capitalism that it has become difficult to write or imagine alternative knowledges, or to act on behalf of alternative projects or ways of being."[47] Lowe conceives of the past in terms of a "past conditional temporality" that "suggests that there were other conditions of possibility that were vanquished by liberal political reason and its promises of freedom."[48] Her work builds upon that of Dipesh Chakrabarty, whose influential scholarship attempts to dislodge Europe as the subject of all histories. This work of "provincializing Europe" challenges the suppositions about politics and historical change derived from European history and subsequently rendered universal. My project similarly engages in the work of provincializing European ideas of political subjectivity

[46] I also depart from Sweet's distinct concern with tracing Africanist epistemologies across the Atlantic. The Atlantic world was one in which people—African, indigenous American, and European alike—strove to reconstitute their senses of self and community amidst profound flux and dislocation. I am, therefore, more interested in what Vincent Brown refers to as the "politics of practical behavior," whereby people use "cultural practices to fulfill a variety of pressing needs in difficult and dangerous circumstances." See Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 7-8.

[47] Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 175.

[48] Ibid.

by casting freedom in unfamiliar terms.

Thinking about the enslaved and maroons as political actors in this way forces a reconsideration of the conceptual terms typically gathered under the rubric of "resistance."[49] Much of the most recent and influential work on slavery and resistance is indebted to political scientist James C. Scott's theorization of infrapolitics.[50] Historians of slavery—and the enduring black freedom struggle it catalyzed—have adopted Scott's language to consider everyday forms of resistance that were not undertaken in the service of organized rebellion, but nevertheless render unthinkable the notion that enslaved people were passive in the face of their subjugation.[51] Since publishing the work on peasant resistance that left such a mark on African American history, Scott has also produced scholarship on stateless "hill peoples," nomads who have long employed strategies aimed at evading forms of state-based governance. Using the Zomia highlands of Southeast Asia as a point of departure, Scott attempts to draw connections between seemingly unrelated examples of collective state evasion. Scott knits together a global history of purposeful statelessness in which the African diaspora's maroons are but one example of how groups throughout time have fled the expansion of classical, colonial, and independent nation-states. A number of parallels emerge between these nonstate societies, including their reliance on mobility and geographic inaccessibility, improvisational subsistence practices, malleable ethnic identities, adaptive hierarchies, and reliance on the oral transmission of culture. But

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[49] Saba Mahmood has explored how the resistance analytic dangerously reinscribes the normative political subject of liberalism. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[50] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[51] See, for example, Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Scott's most significant contribution is to appreciate how nonstate "zones of refuge" were spaces of political resistance and "cultural refusal."[52] In other words, a sense of mutuality existed between the state and areas of non-incorporation: each depended on the other for its own definition.

By illuminating the Trelawny Maroons' efforts to refuse the demands of the colonial state, my project shifts our gaze from the undifferentiated hill society to understanding *marronage* as a specific critique of slavery's economy of race, empire, and colonization. This renewed focus treats maroon politics in terms of the organization of material life and intimate belonging, both of which remained central to the crafting of political subjectivity within the British Atlantic. Rather than describe *marronage* as a form of traditionalist rebellion, placing it in the context of a rapidly changing political world reveals its truly revolutionary nature. We then begin to understand the maroons' acquiescence to certain forms of state subjection not as collaboration, as his been argued, but as an adaptation of a non-liberal form of subjectivity—in other words, a form of agency not reducible to progressive politics.[53] Theirs was a fugitive subjectivity enacted "in and out of the frame" of normative politics, emanating from the wild landscape of Jamaica's cockpit country.[54] This dissertation treats the age of revolutions not as a period marking the emergence of liberal democracy, but as a time when crises of political

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[52] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 20.

[53] See Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*. For a critique of historians' tendency to conflate agency and liberal universalism in the history of slavery, see Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113-124.

[54] Fred Moten, "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 179. Tavia Nyong'o observes that "wildness has emerged as a motif in a coalescing intellectual project interested in moving beyond humanist and state-centered politics and theories." See "Little Monsters: Race, Sovereignty, and Queer Inhumanism in *Beasts of the Southern Wild*," *GLQ* 29, no. 2-3 (June 2015), 258.

belonging led to widespread struggles to renegotiate the terms of political subjectivity.[55] The story of the Trelawny Maroons pays attention to radical practices of freedom premised not on the pursuit of emancipation or abolition, but on creative modes of survival and intimate belonging.[56] The Maroons' struggles against state assimilation reveal the Atlantic age of revolutions not as a period when liberalism triumphed, but rather one in which new forms of domination and subjection were implemented and contested.

To write this intimate history of political possibility, I rely on sources from British colonial archives that document an ongoing struggle to manage, through warfare, negotiation, and exile, the threat Maroons posed to colonial societies. Each chapter centers on a particular type of source: oaths, treaties, promises, petitions, and gestures of refusal. As I will show, each of these sources illuminates a particular flashpoint in the struggle between the Trelawny Maroons and colonial officials during their traversal of the British Atlantic world. Rather than amounting to a collective biography of the Maroons, this focus trains an interpretive eye on the negotiation, contestation, and rupture of belonging across difference to provide a historical archaeology of a political tradition.[57]

The first part of this dissertation provides a new perspective on Jamaica's Maroons by situating their history within the context of law and diplomacy. Focusing on the seventeenth-century Gold Coast, the first chapter shows how the English readily adapted to West African

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[55] Polasky's emphasis on "failed" revolutions suggests the improvisational and experimental nature of a period too often conceived in terms of its outcomes. See her *Revolutions Without Borders*.

[56] See Anthony Bogues, "And What About the Human?: Freedom, Human Emancipation, and the Radical Imagination," *boundary 2* 39, no. 3 (2012): 29-46.

[57] For a different approach to the historical archaeology of African diasporic resistance, see Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

legal practices such as the fetish oath long before engaging in diplomacy with Maroons across the Atlantic. Early European accounts of the fetish reveal the inextricability of sacred power, politics, and commerce in the creation of the Atlantic world from the outset. The second chapter builds on this historical background by arguing that the Jamaican Maroon treaties of 1739 were legal fetishes imbued with the power of distant gods and monarchs through which the Maroons staked transformative claims to autonomy, reciprocity, and obligation. This reading of the treaties contests the longstanding notion that the English and Maroon perspectives on their agreements were incommensurate from the start, thereby rendering the eventual violation of the treaty terms inevitable.

The third chapter looks at the post-treaty period, culminating in the Anglo-Maroon War of 1795-96. By the time the Trelawny Maroons went to war with the colonial state, the Haitian Revolution had sparked anxieties across the Americas regarding black resistance and the governability of black subjects. Meanwhile, the ascendance of Enlightenment positivism in western European thought pushed non-Europeans into a separate moral and legal universe, justifying the invalidation of the Maroons' treaty claims following the war. I argue that the making and undoing of a promise to allow the Maroons to remain in Jamaica reflected changing norms in the intellectual foundations of empire, whereby questions of legal obligation shifted to concerns of governability rooted in social difference.

The next section of the dissertation focuses on the Trelawny Maroons in exile and their efforts to refashion their political subjectivity outside the frame of democratic revolutions. In the fourth chapter, I build on histories of popular royalism in the revolutionary era to demonstrate how the Maroons cultivated a distinct imperial subjecthood in Nova Scotia. I examine the

Maroons' petitions for removal from the province as documents that illuminate their strategic performance of loyalty to empire, working counterintuitively against dominant conceptions of kinship and conjugality.

Finally, my fifth chapter finds the Trelawny Maroons taking on the role of mercenaries for hire in the Sierra Leone colony at the turn of the nineteenth century. I interpret the Maroons' refusal to engage in another formal agreement with colonial authorities as a radical gesture meant to evade the increasingly restrictive terms of imperial subjection. Instead of straightforward accommodation to empire, we find in the Maroons' return to warfare an attempt to transgress the limits of liberal subjectivity and reclaim a space for collective belonging conditioned by masculine military prowess.

I end with a conclusion that reflects on how this historical narrative provides new insights into the black radical historiographical tradition. Rather than focus on the seizure of state authority as the limit of radical politics, this dissertation historicizes the refashioning of political subjectivity through the oath to consider how the pursuit of intimate belonging generated its own radical possibilities. The Maroons' revolutionary movement was one less concerned with liberal notions of freedom, tethered to subservience, indebtedness, and racial dispossession, than the forms of critical relation generated by the oath—obligation, reciprocity, and mutuality—and scripts of intimate life not made available by European empire.

Chapter One

Fetish: The Politics of Ritual, Law, and Diplomacy in the Atlantic World

> Let us, then, give pledges to one another by our gods, who are the fittest witnesses and guardians of all covenants.
>
> —Homer, *The Iliad* (c. 762 BCE)

> *Hamlet:* ...Sweare.
> *Ghost [beneath]:* Sweare.
> [*They swear*]
> *Hamlet:* Rest, rest perturbed Spirit! So Gentlemen,
> With all my loue I doe commend me to you,
> God willing, shall not lacke: Let us go in together,
> And still your fingers on your lippes, I pray.
> The time is out of ioynt: Oh cursed spight,
> That ever I was borne to set it right.
> Nay, come, let's goe together. [*Exeunt*]
>
> —William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (c. 1599-1602)

> Obligatory swearing they also call, making of *fetiches*; is any obligation to be confirmed, their phrase is, *let us as a farther confirmation make fetiches*. When they drink the *Oath Draught*, 'tis usually accompanied with an imprecation, that the *fetiche* may kill them if they do not perform the contents of their obligation. Every person entering into any obligation obliged to drink this swearing liquor. When any nation is hired to the assistance of another, all the chief ones are obliged to drink this liquor, with an imprecation, that their *fetiche* may punish them with death, if they do not assist them with utmost vigour to extirpate their enemy.
>
> —Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* (1705)

When Willem Bosman traveled through the Guinea Coast during the seventeenth century, he was struck by a variety of sacred practices performed by inhabitants of the West African regions drawn into the slave trade.[58] An employee of the Dutch West India Company and chief

[58] Epigraphs: Homer, *The Iliad*, Book XXII; William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I, Scene V, quoted in Jacques

Dutch factor at Elmina slave castle, Bosman would go on to publish his observations of local customs in a volume that cam`e to serve as an authoritative text on the region. One particular practice he identified as "drinking fetish," a ritual oath meant to consecrate agreements between different parties by invoking the threat of retribution through divine intervention. The word "fetish," an anglicization of the Portuguese *feitiço* (and the pidgin *fetisso*), derived from the Latin *facticius* (meaning "artificial," or "manufactured"), referred to African witchcraft organized around the magic of material objects, as perceived by European observers.[59] Fetish oaths featured prominently not just in religious worship, but also in politics and commerce throughout the Gold Coast during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. These sacred oaths served to formalize political contracts between elites, authorize military alliances between state and stateless actors alike, and legitimate individual testimony in local justice proceedings. In a region undergoing rapid transformation wrought by mercantilism, state fragmentation and consolidation, imperial expansion, and warfare driven by the gold trade and the traffic in slaves, these ritual oaths sustained existing social norms and manifested new ones.[60]

Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994); Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts* (London: J. Knapton and D. Midwinter, 1705), 149.

[59] On the etymology, see William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish, " *RES: Anthropology and* Aesthetics, no. 13 (1987): 23-45

[60] On the tensions between reactionary and progressive norms on the seventeenth-century Gold Coast and the political and economic shifts that engendered them, see John Thornton, "War, the State, and Religious Norms in 'Coromantee' Thought: The Ideology of an African American Nation," in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 184-193. On the history of the Gold Coast during the era of the slave trade, see Ray A. Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011). Other accounts of fetish oaths on the Gold Coast include Pieter de Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, trans. and eds. Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 103, 108; Thomas Thompson, *An Account of Two Missionary Voyages by the Appointment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: the one to New Jersey in North America, the other from America to the coast of Guiney* (London: J. Oliver for Benj. Dod, 1758), 59-60;

The potion itself, according to Bosman, combined various substances ranging from dirt; human blood, bones, and hair; animal feathers; and "all sorts of excrementitious and filthy trash." A ritual specialist, someone with acknowledged expertise in the divine arts, would administer the drink to the oath taker from a wooden pipe or other vessel, which Bosman identified as an "idol" because it was said to represent a deity.[61] For Bosman, fetishism indexed a process of transfiguration: through the power of speech, the ritual bound supernatural authority to the idol, transforming it into a sacred object imbued the agency to intervene in human affairs. As Bosman described it, "The Negroe who is to take an oath before this idol, is placed directly opposite it, and asks the priest to name this idol (each having a particular one) of which being informed, he calls the *fetiche* by its name, and recites at large the contents of what he designs to bind by an oath."[62] A fetish, then, could be any inanimate object imbued with supernatural agency "whose power," according to William Pietz, "is precisely the power to repeat its originating act of forging an identity of articulated relations between otherwise heterogenous things."[63] The power of naming to invoke divine witness transmitted sacred authority into the very substance of the fetish object. Because the ritual made gods material, the fetish oath was one among many manifestations of blasphemous idolatry for which Bosman and others scrutinized Africans.

Widely circulated narratives declaring the mystery of the fetish, like those authored by Bosman and other travel writers, piqued European readers' curiosity about the particularities of African spiritual life. European intellectuals with an interest in non-Europeans' supposedly naive

[61] Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 150.

[62] Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 150-151.

[63] Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 376; Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," 7-8.

religiosity would often return to these accounts of the fetish in their attempts to theorize human difference. From the eighteenth century onward, the life of the fetish would unfold along two very different paths: one in the minds and writings of thinkers associated with Europe's Enlightenment and the other in the everyday lives of Africans and their descendants in the Atlantic world.[64] Eventually adapted to the syncretic belief systems that emerged in the African diaspora, ritual fetishism would both underwrite conspiracy efforts by those enslaved in the colonial Americas and inspire centuries of developments in Western social thought.[65] This chapter returns to the origins of the fetish in Atlantic Africa to illuminate the entanglements of these disparate genealogies and geographies of the fetish. While the discourse of fetishism would eventually demarcate the boundary between primitive and sophisticated societies, I argue that early European accounts of the fetish reveal the inextricability of sacred power, politics, and commerce in the creation of the Atlantic world from the outset. Supernatural authority underwrote forms of political power wielded by Europeans and Africans alike throughout the regions knit together by trans-oceanic exchange.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade was always a space suffused with the supernatural. Ritual oath-taking was just one dimension of experience that exemplified the sacred underpinnings of

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[64] On the intellectual history of the fetish from the Enlightenment forward, see William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 9 (1985): 5-17; Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish, " *RES: Anthropology and* Aesthetics, no. 13 (1987): 23-45; and Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa: Bosman's Guinea and the Enlightenment Theory of Fetishism," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 16 (1988): 105-124. Also see J. Lorand Matory, *The Fetish Revisited: Marx, Freud, and the Gods Black People Make* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

[65] My goal here is to rethink the terms of Enlightenment intellectual history from the standpoint of the African diaspora, a project that began with scholars studying the French Atlantic. I propose bringing into conversation the roles of fetishism in the history of African diasporic militancy and in Western social thought as an attempt to answer Laurent Dubois' call to rethink intellectual history from the vantage of Atlantic slavery. "An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic," *Social History* 31, no. 1 (2006): 1-14. Also see, Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000): 821-865; Sibylle Fishcher, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

social and political authority within Atlantic Africa and throughout its diaspora.[66] Upon first encountering the white crew of a slave ship after being kidnapped, Olaudah Equiano feared that he "had gotten into a world of bad spirits."[67] Explaining his plight in terms of spiritual malady, Equiano worried that slave traders possessed an otherworldly hunger for human flesh. He recalled asking his fellow captives "if [they] were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair."[68] John Matthews, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, confirmed that the captive African "imagines the white man buys him either to offer him as sacrifice to his God, or to devour him as food."[69] The not uncommon belief that the slave trade delivered Africans into the hands of cannibals recast political chaos and captivity through the prism of spiritual turmoil.[70] Falling prey to the death by cannibalism that reportedly took place aboard slave ships, according to Stephanie Smallwood, was utterly terrifying because it foreclosed the possibility of spiritual resolution in the afterlife. Without access to the possibilities for social integration that were embedded in indigenous forms of bondage, captives bound for the slave ships were "consigned to an interminable purgatory."[71]

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[66] For an example of Atlantic history as a "materialist history of the supernatural" that focuses on the politics of death and slavery, see Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), quotation on p. 5.

[67] Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African: an authoritative text written by himself*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Norton, 2001), 38.

[68] Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 39.

[69] John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra-Leone, on the Coast of Africa; containing an account of the trade and productions of the country, and of the civil and religious customs and manners of the people; in a series of letters to a friend in England* (London: B. White and son and J. Sewell, 1788), 152.

[70] On the pervasiveness of this trope, see Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Rosalind Shaw, "The Production of Witchcraft/Witchcraft as Production: Memory, Modernity, and the Slave Trade in Sierra Leone," *American Ethnologist* 24, no. 4 (1997): 856-876; and John K. Thornton, "Cannibals, Witches, and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2003): 273-294.

[71] Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge,

Whether or not European merchants believed that their dealings along the African coast amounted to spiritual malevolence, they were more than willing to channel sacred authority in the pursuit of their commercial interests. One English slave trader, Captain Shirley of the Royal African Company, "us'd to make his negroes aboard take the *Fatish* [*sic*], that they would not swim ashore and run away, and then would let them out of irons."[72] Shirley claimed that his potion of "a cup of English beer, with a little aloes in it to imbitter [*sic*] it" worked just as well "as if it had been made by the best *Fatishes* in *Guiney*."[73] Despite any skepticism he might have habored about African idolatry, Shirley, like other European merchants, could not deny the efficacy of local customs and cosmologies. By appropriating the fetish as a tool of social control, Shirley ensured that the political power manifested by sacred ritual would only continue to shape encounters between Europeans and Africans throughout the Atlantic world.[74]

Though Shirley's colleague in the Company, the slave trader Thomas Phillips, remarked that he "put more dependence upon [his] shackles than any *Fatish* [he] could give" the Africans he trafficked, he was nevertheless unable to narrate the upheavals that connected the Gold Coast to the wider Atlantic system without reference to the fetish.[75] Even if European merchants scoffed at Africans' belief in providential punishment, the political power of oaths would have

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Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 61. John Thornton notes that the conflation of slaving and cannibalism was also an indictment of European greed and avarice. See "Cannibals, Witches, and Slave Traders," 281. Vincent Brown argues as well that Africans viewed the accumulation of wealth as an outcome of sorcery. See *The Reaper's Garden*, 40-41.

[72] Thomas Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693, 1694, from England, to Cape Monseradoe, in Africa; and thence along the Coast of Guiney to Whidaw, the Island of St. Thomas, and so forward to Barbadoes*, in John Churchill and Awnsham Churchill, eds., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. 6 (London: John Walthoe, 1732), 224.

[73] Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage*, 224.

[74] My analysis here is indebted to Vincent Brown's discussion of spiritual terror in colonial Jamaica. See *The Reaper's Garden*, ch. 4.

[75] Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage*, 224.

been evident all around them. English traders on the Gold Coast regularly engaged in diplomatic rituals that included giving fetish oaths from the late seventeenth century, when they solidified alliances that would allow them to remain competitive with the Dutch in the gold trade. Phillips recorded in May 1694 an instance of the fetish used as a tool of mercantile diplomacy at Cape Coast castle. He described an alliance between the Akani, Asebu, and the Royal African Company formed in order to overthrow the king of Fetu, who controlled an important trade route. The Fetu king, in collusion with Dutch merchants, decided to force the Akani to buy Dutch goods from them instead of allowing them to make passage to trade at Cape Coast with the English.[76] When the Akani traders refused, the Fetu attacked them and plundered their gold. To enact revenge on Fetu, the Akani merchants employed the Asebu king in their defense and together raised an army of Akani, Asebu, and Cape Coast forces. Together they overcame the Fetu king, who subsequently fled to the protection of the Dutch at Elmina. The chief Akani merchant then instated his brother as the new Fetu king. Phillips wrote that after "having oblig'd all the great cappasheirs [caboceers] in *Futto* [Fetu] to take the *Fatish* [*sic*] to be true to their new king, they brought him along with them to *Cape Corce* [Cape Coast] castle, there to take the *Fatish* to be a true friend to the *English*, and promote their interest in all kinds."[77] The new confederation drafted "articles ingraved [*sic*] on parchment with the name of the royal *African* company of *England*, *Nimpha* [the chief Akani merchant], and the king of *Sabo* [Asebu], the king of *Futto* [Fetu] signed by making his mark, and captain *Shurley*, myself, and divers of our

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[76] According to Rebecca Shumway, the Akani were the multiethnic and politically decentralized trading group that served as powerful intermediaries in the region's gold trade during the seventeenth century. See *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 37-38.

[77] Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage*, 225.

factors and the castle cappasheirs [caboccers] witnessed them."[78]

European merchants' participation in trans-Atlantic commerce forced ongoing confrontation with the political and military power of Gold Coast polities and trading networks. The English had developed a reasonably nuanced understanding of the fetish and its role in Gold Coast polities not just out of ethnographic curiosity, but because effective commerce demanded an engagement with ritual politics. Wilhelm Müller, who published an account of his time in Fetu territory in the employ of the Danish African Company during the mid-seventeenth century, wrote that "Christians trading in the Fetu country must likewise swear an oath, by drinking a *fitiso*-drink, if they want to make an agreement with the natives of the country."[79] Even as they scoffed at its underlying logic, resorting to stereotypes of African superstition to project naivete onto those who practiced it, the English knew that their success within the tumultuous political landscape of the Gold Coast necessitated an adherence to customary law, of which the fetish was a central feature.[80]

Placing these European accounts of the fetish in a diplomatic rather than religious context illuminates the pluralism and hybridity that characterized Atlantic legal cultures.[81] It was this pluralism, this entanglement, that would ultimately enable Britain's imperial ascent. As Eliga

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[78] Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage*, 225.

[79] "Willhelm Johann Müller's Description of the Fetu Country, 1662-9," in Adam Jones, ed., *German Sources for West African History, 1599-1669* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1983), 176.

[80] On customary law, diplomacy, and trade, see Robin Law, "Peace and Palaver: International Relations in Pre-Colonial West Africa," *The Journal of African History* 14, no. 4 (1973): 599-621.

[81] On colonial legal pluralism, see Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a study of the uses of oaths in criminal proceedings as an example of colonial legal pluralism, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Judges, Masters, Diviners: Slaves' Experience of Criminal Justice in Colonial Suriname," *Law and History Review* 29, no. 4 (2011): 925-984.

Gould argues of the eighteenth century, "Britain's ability to manipulate indigenous polities and customs was a vital component of its growing dominance over the entire basin, not to mention the ability to act with impunity against both Europeans and non-Europeans."[82] The cultural condescension that pervades European descriptions of fetishism belied the reality that their participation in trans-Atlantic commerce forced ongoing confrontation with West African sovereignties, but it was their ability to adeptly navigate Gold Coast customary law that paved the way for more aggressive incursions into Atlantic commerce. Any understanding of Atlantic encounters and the conflicts they engendered must take into account the backdrop of the shifting legal geographies against which they unfolded.[83]

The magic of the oath functioned through its structured performance of diplomacy and military alliance. We know from Pierre Bourdieu that the law, as a set of social practices, always unfolds in the realm of symbolic struggle. Drawing on the work of J. L. Austin, Bourdieu explains that certain forms of legal speech constitute performative utterances—"magical acts" that "succeed in creating a situation in which no one can refuse or ignore the point of view, the vision, which they impose."[84] Law, according to Bourdieu, "ïs the quintessential form of the symbolic power of naming that creates the things named, and creates social groups in particular."[85] For Giorgio Agamben, the oath in particular is a performative utterance, or "a verbal act that accomplishes a testimony—or a guarantee—independently by the very fact that it

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[82] Eliga H. Gould, "Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (2003), 496.

[83] On British Atlantic legal geographies, see Gould, "Zones of Law."

[84] Bourdieu, "The Force of Law," 838. On performative utterances, see J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975 [1955]).

[85] Bourdieu, "The Force of Law," 838.

has taken place."[86] To swear an oath does not merely affirm an existing reality or guard against the potential of perjury; instead, it invokes "the very signifying power of language" to instate a relationship between persons or things. By means of ritual, an oath or another legal utterance becomes attached to a particular object, like a treaty or a sacred vessel, thereby turning that object into a fetish. The fetishized object inheres significant bonds of obligation, attachment, and reciprocity conditioned by some greater authority, whether that of the gods, the sovereign power of a monarch, or the law. Fetishes, then, were not the exclusive property of Africans; as Captain Shirley's improvised fetishism suggests, they might be called forth by anyone willing to speak them into existence. But understanding the performative dimensions of law and diplomacy more generally shows how fetishes were created throughout the Atlantic world through the everyday sorcery of Africans and Europeans alike.

This geography of performative politics spread from the Gold Coast to encompass the British American colonies as well. It is the centrality of sacred ritual to colonial politics in particular that I wish to take up as a way to revise our understanding of the Anglo-Maroon treaties. Discussions of the treaties, the origins of which I describe in the next chapter, tend to stress the differences in how the Maroons and the British understood them. Anthropologists Barbara Kopytoff and Kenneth Bilby emphasize the incommensurability of Maroon and British political ideologies, calling attention to what they see in the treaty-making process as an encounter between divergent epistemologies,.[87] According to Kopytoff, the British understood

[86] Agamben, *The Sacrament of Language*, 33.

[87] Barbara K. Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty as Sacred Charter of the Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 1 (1979): 45-64; Kenneth M. Bilby, "Swearing by the Past, Swearing to the Future: Sacred Oaths, Alliances, and Treaties Among the Guianese and Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 4 (1997): 655-689. Jessica Krug has written a history of Jamaican Maroon oaths as a diasporic intellectual strategy that underwrote the creation of viable political community, though she focuses on their role in mediating relations among Maroons rather than between the Maroons and the colonial state. See Jessica A. Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social (Re)membering: Obeah Idioms, Kromanti Identities and the Trans-Atlantic Politics of Memory, c. 1675-

the treaties as documents that assigned the Maroons a special status as subjects of the Crown, while for the Maroons they were "sacred charters" that "cannot have been grounded in common English conceptions of the subject-Sovereign relationship, nor can it have included the legal complexities of that bond in English law."[88] Bilby further attempts to recover the Maroon perspective of the treaties by focusing on the Coromantee blood oath through which they were consecrated. These "blood treaties," he suggests, established an inviolable bond between the Maroons and the British monarchy that was incompatible with British legal formalism.[89]

By the time Governor Edward Trelawny concluded treaties with the Jamaican Maroons in 1739 and 1740, however, neither sworn oaths, which were significant to the political history of early modern England and governance in colonial Jamaica, nor the specific Akan custom of drinking fetish would have been new to the British.[90] Following Colin Dayan, I take an interest in the ritual dimensions of sacred and legal technologies—and, indeed, the overlap between the two—though I am less concerned with the unmaking of personhood through legal ritual than the constitution of political belonging and the structuring of colonial governmentality.[91] This chapter

Present," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 4 (2014): 537-558. For an anthropological interpretation of the Anglo-Maroon treaties that views them through the lens of fragmented and overlapping sovereignties, see Rivke Jaffe, "From Maroons to Dons: Sovereignty, Violence and Law in Jamaica," *Critique of Anthropology* 35, no. 1 (2015): 47-63.

88 Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty as Sacred Charter," 48.

89 Bilby, "Swearing by the Past."

90 On oaths in colonial governance, see Miles Ogborn, "The Power of Speech: Orality, Oaths and Evidence in the British Atlantic World, 1650-1800," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36, no. 1 (2011): 109-125.

91 Colin Dayan, *The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). See also Pierre Bourdieu, "The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field," *Hastings Law Journal* 38, no. 5 (1987): 814-853. I name the sacred and the legal separately here not to suggest that they would have constituted disparate domains of historical experience, but rather to draw attention to how I bring together questions that have informed separate lines of inquiry in cultural and legal histories. On the historical interrelations between the sacred and the legal in the Greco-Roman context, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Sacrament of Language* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010). On histories of the state repression of spiritual practice in the African diaspora, see Diana Paton, "Obeah Acts," and Kate Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and*

dwells on the concept of legal fetishism as an analytic for interrogating how ritualized diplomacy between Jamaica's Leeward Maroons and its colonial state made and remade political subjectivities while enacting long-lasting social and political transformation.[92] Forged through an entanglement between Coromantee and British epistemologies of justice, obligation, and alliance, I suggest that the Anglo-Maroon Treaty of 1739 was a legal fetish that mediated relations of power between distinct political entities over the course of a century. This more capacious notion of the fetish foregrounds the myriad ways that sacred authority came to be tethered to the material world in order to better understand the ongoing political negotiations between the Maroons and the British Empire.

The performances of diplomacy around which the narrative arc of this dissertation takes shape—treaties, blood oaths, war resolutions, petitions, secret agreements, and practices of refusal—refer to the legal fetishes that were created, invoked, and contested by the Maroons and colonial authorities in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone to pursue various political ends. At stake for the Maroons was their ability to preserve and expand their political and cultural autonomy as they increasingly became targets of colonial reform. For the British, on the other hand, these rituals served as opportunities to develop their project of colonial governmentality,

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Power in Haiti (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[92] My deployment of legal fetishism here departs from its two main usages in modern legal theory. The first, which emerges from French critiques of legal formalism, is as a pejorative meant to indict personal attachments to the law as a form of "magical thinking." The second is a Marxist legal critique concerned with the obfuscation of class struggle in the production of law as ideology. On the origins of these particular usages, see Julieta Lamaitre, "Legal Fetishism at Home and Abroad," *Unbound: Harvard Journal of the Legal Left* 3, no. 6 (2007): 6-18. Rather than invoking fetishism as an anti-formalist or Marxist critique of a particular disposition toward the law, I treat legal fetishism as a discernible historical process. My approach here aligns with William Pietz's conceptualization of forensic objects. See "Material Considerations: On the Historical Forensics of Contract," *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 5-6 (2002), 35-50. Following David Graeber, I take seriously the centuries-long intellectual history of the fetish as a means of better understanding how the encounter between seemingly incommensurate systems of value and order produced new historical realities. David Graeber, "Fetishism as Social Creativity: or, Fetishes are Gods in the Process of Construction," *Anthropological Theory* 5, no. 4 (2005): 407-438.

premised on the maintenance of racial hierarchy and the management of unruly populations. Through the rituals of colonial politics, manifested in the material world as agreements put to paper and performances enacted in secret or in front of an audience, the Maroons and the British transformed the objects of law into fetishes that "take on human qualities which are, ultimately, really derived from the actors themselves."[93] These would have been, as David Graeber argues, "revolutionary objects" insofar as they generated meaningful change in social conditions and political institutions.[94] To put it differently, these legal fetishes mimicked the function of gods—to instate new social realities, to legitimate or indict human impulses, and to adjudicate conflicting visions of the political order.

Though they were not eaten alive by cannibals, survivors of the Middle Passage always lingered in intimate proximity with death as they were delivered to brutal labor regimes in the Americas. Moreover, beliefs regarding the interpenetration between the spirit world and that of the living fundamentally shaped everyday life in colonial slave societies. In Jamaica, both the enslaved and their masters regularly invoked the power of the dead in their struggles over social authority. The disfigurement of dead bodies and the denial of proper burial, for example, were central to slaveholders' tactics of spiritual warfare. Afro-Jamaicans, on the other hand, enlisted specialized ritual knowledge to marshal spiritual protection in the face of colonial necromancy.[95]

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[93] Graeber, "Fetishism as Social Creativity," 425. It bears noting that Graeber's elaboration of Marxian fetishism also returns to its intellectual origins in the early modern Atlantic world, specifically the Gold Coast. Graeber offers a corrective to Pietz's overemphasis on questions of economic exchange within a system of apparently incommensurate values. He writes, "Questions of production, creation, let alone the production or creation of social relations, were simply of little interest to Pietz's sources. As a result, what is to me, at least, the most fascinating aspect of the whole complex of ideas drops away: that is, the notion of 'making fetish' – that by a form of collective investment one can, in effect create a new god on the spot – even though this seems to be what really startled European newcomers to Africa, and ultimately caused them to launch into peculiar fantasies about people who worship the first thing they see in the morning." Graeber, "Fetishism as Social Creativity," 426.

[94] Graeber, "Fetishism as Social Creativity," 427.

[95] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, ch. 4.

Obeah represented the arsenal of sacred power wielded by people of African descent in colonial Jamaica and elsewhere in the West Indies. The term refers to the repertoire of spiritual beliefs and practices developed out of diasporic cultural transformation that began on the Gold Coast and Bight of Biafra and were adapted to the particular circumstances of colonial life. Bryan Edwards defined obeah as "a term of African origin, signifying sorcery or witchcraft, the prevalence of which, among many of their countrymen, all the Negroes most firmly and implicitly believe."[96] Obeah encompassed sacred techniques of divination, healing, protection, and assault.[97] One report to the House of Commons referred to obeah "oracles" that could be consulted "whether for the cure of Disorders, the obtaining of Revenge for Injuries or Insults, the conciliating of Favour, the Discovery and Punishment of the Thief or the Adulterer, and the Prediction of Future events."[98]

Jamaica's Maroons were especially known for the ritual specialists among them. Obeah practitioners wielded substantial influence among the Maroons, serving as important consultants on political matters.[99] One observer noted among the Leeward Maroons the presence of "a person whom they called Obea Man whom they greatly revered, his words carried the force of

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[96] Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (Dublin, 1793), 2:82.

[97] Diana Paton, "Witchcraft, Poison, Law, and Atlantic Slavery," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2012): 235-264; Kenneth Bilby and Jerome Handler, "Obeah: Healing and Protection in West Indian Slave Life," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 38, no 2 (2004): 153-183; Handler and Bilby, "On the Early Use and Origin of the Term 'Obeah' in Barbados and the Anglophone Caribbean," *Slavery and Abolition* 22, no. 2 (2001): 87-100; Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 145-150.

[98] *House of Commons Sessional Papers*, vol. 69, 217, quoted in Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 2:84, as well as Vincent Brown, "Spiritual Terror and Sacred Authority in Jamaican Slave Society," *Slavery & Abolition* 24, no. 1 (2003), 35-36.

[99] According to Robert C. Dallas, the intervention of an obeah woman delayed the Windward Maroons' surrender during the Maroon War of 1728-1739. See *The History of the Maroons*, f*rom Their Origin to the Establishment of their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone* (London: T.N. Longman and O. Rees, 1803), 1:73-74.

oracle with them, being consulted on every occasion."[100] Bryan Edwards elaborated on the importance of obeah in the Maroon hierarchy, writing that "the authority which such of their old men as had the reputation of wizards, or obeah-men, possessed over them, was sometimes very successfully employed in keeping them in subordination to their chiefs."[101] Maroon obeah specialists were reported to wield their influence, and perhaps tactics of intimidation, over the enslaved as well.[102]

From their origins on the Gold Coast, ritual objects, or fetishes, were adapted to obeah practices in the Caribbean. They, too, figured in the realm of symbolic and material struggle that conditioned life in the slave colony. One obeah practitioner in nineteenth-century Jamaica was caught carrying "pieces of chalk, broken bits of various woods of a certain length, roots of grass, pieces of eel skin, two wings of a bat, two or three pieces of old leather, &c.," items thought to be dead giveaways for obeah ritualism.[103] Bryan Edwards also acknowledged that the fetish oath was practiced in Jamaica: "Among their other superstitions also, must not be omitted their mode of administering an oath of secrecy or purgation. Human blood, and earth taken from the grave of some near relation, are mixed with water, and given to the party to be sworn, who is compelled to drink the mixture, with a horrid imprecation, that it may cause the belly to burst,

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[100] Edward Long Papers, British Library, Add. MS 12431, f. 99, quoted in Barbara Kopytoff, "The Maroons of Jamaica: An Ethnohistorical Study of Incomplete Polities, 1655-1905," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1973), 83.

[101] Bryan Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica, in regard to the Maroon Negroes* (London: John Stockdale, 1796), xxix.

[102] Dallas wrote that the Maroons "exercised a dominion by the influence of Obeah" over the enslaved "and made them subservient to their designs." Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:34.

[103] Henry T. De La Beche, *Notes on the Present Condition of the Negroes in Jamaica by H.T. De La Beche* (London, 1825), 30.

and the bones to rot, if the truth be not spoken."[104] Moreover, Charles Leslie mentioned that when anything would go missing on a Jamaican plantations, the obeah "priest takes a little of the earth, and puts into every one of their mouths; they tell, that if any has been guilty, their belly swells and occasions their death."[105] Drinking fetish additionally served to forge inviolable bonds between the enslaved. As one Anglican minister described the gravity of these sacred pacts, "an oath in a court of justice will avail nothing against a compact entered into over the graves of their shipmates and relations, and solemnised with grave-dirt and blood."[106]

Beyond its role in everyday contests of social authority, obeah figured prominently in anti-colonial militancy.[107] Recounting Jamaica's 1760 uprising by Coromantee slaves orchestrated by Tacky, Edward Long acknowledged the inextricability of tactical and spiritual expertise. He described "an old Coromantin, who, with others of his profession, had been a chief in counseling and instigating the credulous herd, to whom these priests administered a powder, which, being rubbed on their bodies, was to make them invulnerable."[108] Following this devastating slave revolt, the Jamaican Assembly passed legislation criminalizing the practice of

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[104] Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (Dublin, 1793), 2:67.

[105] Charles Leslie, *A New and Exact Account of Jamaica: Wherein the antient [sic] and present state of that colony, its importance to Great Britain, laws, trade, manners and religion, together with the most remarkable and curious animals, plants, trees, &c. are described: with a particular account of the sacrifices, libations, &c. at this day in use among the Negroes* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming for A. Kincaid, 1739), 324. Walter Rucker notes that the addition of grave dirt was a specifically American adaptation of the ritual. See Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas*, 185.

[106] Anglican reverend Bridges, quoted in William James Gardner, *A History of Jamaica from its Discovery by Christopher Columbus to the present time; including an account of its trade and agriculture; sketches of the manners, habits, and customs of all classes of its inhabitants; and a narrative of the progress of religion and education in the island* (London: E. Stock, 1873).

[107] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 144-152.

[108] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or, general survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 2:451.

obeah, affirming its function as a legitimate challenge to colonial power, though its influence persisted among the more autonomous Maroon communities.[109]

My understanding of the political salience of these feitsh oaths finds useful grounding in, but ultimately departs from, the preoccupation with African continuities that has marked much of the scholarship on Coromantee ritual oaths to date. Historians of the African diaspora have largely discussed organized rebellion in the colonial Americas, of which blood oaths were a key feature, as proof of cultural resilience within enslaved and maroon African communities.[110] For these scholars, the appearance of blood oaths in accounts of anti-colonial conspiracy that match the descriptions of those observed on the Gold Coast furnishes evidence of acculturation among

[109] Diana Paton, "Obeah Acts: Producing and Policing the Boundaries of Religion in the Caribbean," *Small Axe* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1-18; Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 149-150.

[110] This scholarship highlights African cultural vitality and continuity in the Americas as a means of refuting characterizations of the Middle Passage and enslavement as a form of deracination and social death, most often traced back to the work of E. Franklin Frazier and Orlando Patterson. See Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1949); Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). Melville J. Herskovits' work on the persistence of cultural "Africanisms" in the diaspora has served as a foundational influence for this approach. See Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York; London: Harper & Bros., 1941). Notable historical works highlighting African cultural influences in the Americas include Monica Schuler, "Ethnic Slave Rebellions in the Caribbean and the Guianas," *Journal of Social History* 3 (1970): 374-385; John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Douglas Chambers, "Ethnicity in the Diaspora: The Slave-Trade and the Creation of African 'Nations' in the Americas," *Slavery and Abolition* 22 (2001): 25-39; Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). For an attempt to reorient the terms of this debate toward a focus on a more capacious notion of enslaved politics, see Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (2009): 1231-1249. Another critique of the emphasis on African cultural survivals focused on the ritual practices of Jamaica's Maroons can be found in Jessica A. Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social (Re)membering: Obeah Idioms, Kromanti Identities and the Trans-Atlantic Politics of Memory, c. 1675–Present," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 4 (2014): 537-558. Additionally, Herman Bennett develops a useful critique of the elision of African politics, sovereignty, and the state in Herskovitsian cultural histories. See *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), ch. 1. Finally, James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra offer a critique of Atlantic cultural history more generally that integrates histories of Africans, Europeans, and indigenous Americans to focus on the inherent malleability of identity in "Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2011): 181-208.

diasporic Africans and their collective grounding in shared epistemologies of social action. Michael Mullin's work on this topic highlights the ubiquity of Coromantee blood oaths in colonial America, which he says reflected the cooperation between the living and the dead in sustaining communal belonging.[111] In the context of organized militancy, evidence of these blood oaths substantiates the transferral of martial traditions from the Gold Coast.[112] Similarly, John Thornton sees oath-taking among the Coromantee in America as an extension of Akan political ideology that took shape against the backdrop of social and political upheaval along the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Gold Coast. Blood oaths in the African context, Thornton suggests, offered a means of managing the widespread insecurity and opportunism generated by ongoing commercial rivalries and political conflict. He emphasizes that in America, Coromantee rituals like ennobling ceremonies represented the extension of change-oriented norms grounded in Akan political philosophy.[113] More recently, Kwasi Konadu has built upon our knowledge of Akan culture and its transmission to the Americas in a comprehensive study that suggests Akan

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[111] Michael Mullin, *African in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 67-68. Besides those discussed here, other works that note the role of oaths in anti-colonial rebellion in the British Atlantic include Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009 [1982]); David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Leslie Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1868* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006). For an analysis of blood oaths in the Haitian revolutionary context, see Robin Law, "On the African Background to the Slave Insurrection in Saint-Domingue (Haiti) in 1791: The Bois Caiman Ceremony and the Dahomian 'Blood Pact,'" paper presented at the Harriet Tubman Seminar, York University, Ontario, November 8, 1991, https://codeless88.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/law-on-the-african-background-to-the-slave-insurrection-in-saint-domingue.pdf, accessed January 17, 2019; Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 260-263; David Geggus, "The Bois-Caïman Ceremony," *Journal of Caribbean History* 25, no. 1 (1991): 41-57. On the use of oaths in Christian practices in Jamaica, see Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 65-66, 131-132.

[112] Mullin, *African in America*, 41-42.

[113] Thornton, "War, the State, and Religious Norms," 189-194.

spiritual practices contributed to a "composite" Akan cultural identity forged through a diasporic "internal dialogue."[114] Walter Rucker has further considered the role of blood oaths and other diasporic rituals in the development of a "commoner consciousness" among the Coromantee in the Americas.[115] For Rucker, the appropriation of blood oaths by non-elites constituted one of a range of ritual technologies that supplied Coromantee revolutionaries in diaspora with "weapons of the weak" that could engender new social and political communities.[116] Vincent Brown, on the other hand, regards the salience of oaths not just as confirmation of ethnic cohesion, but as indicative of the very fragility of coalitional politics in diaspora. Political alliances, for Brown, were not a guaranteed feature of cultural affinity, but rather emerged from deliberate strategy in response to ongoing struggle.[117]

Ritual technologies were fundamental to Africans' efforts to reconstitute a sense of belonging in diaspora and resist political subordination, but they were not merely cultural or even ideological artifacts. Rather, these rituals were deeply embedded in customary law and the structures of commerce and governance that Africans used to manage dealings with Europeans and other Africans in the slave trade. The oath, as a ritual of diplomacy and alliance, was always grounded in specific institutions, whether those of Gold Coast mercantilism and statecraft,

[114] Kwasi Konadu, *The Akan Diaspora in the Americas* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. 131-136.

[115] Walter C. Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas: Identity, Culture, and Power* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015), 8.

[116] Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas*, ch. 5. Rucker is particularly concerned with distinguishing between elite and non-elite oath rituals as a means of imbuing Coromantees in America with a sort of peasant consciousness. On "weapons of the weak" and infrapolitics, see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Regardless of its suitability for Rucker's purposes, the elite/non-elite distinction he deploys in his attempt to engage Scott does not map easily onto the ritual practices I take up in this dissertation.

[117] Vincent Brown, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020), ch. 3.

British American colonialism, or diasporic military insurgency. Ritual technologies, therefore, mediated encounters with and transformed the institutions and practices of commerce and governance on both sides of the Atlantic. When these rituals re-emerged in diaspora, they did so through efforts to re-attach political practice to viable communities, structures, and institutions. Attempting to discern this institutional context is key: as Herman Bennett reminds us, even in the earliest moments of European and African encounter during the fifteenth century we find "hybrid forms composed of novel terminology, pidgin languages, currencies, sacred knowledge, and rituals that have long invited scholarly attention but largely as cultural affects rather than as instruments of power."[118] It was as instruments of power that these rituals animated political transformation and shaped the contours of colonial society.

Revisiting the archive of the British Atlantic world in order to, as Elizabeth Dillon puts it, "read for enchantment," takes seriously Maroon epistemologies and their capacities for social transformation.[119] As Dillon argues, colonial conflicts over obeah centered on how the practice troubled "the dividing line between subjects and objects—a division that is central to European Enlightenment knowledge in which the human subject is sovereign with respect to the instrumentalized objects the he or she wields in pursuit of his or her own ends—objects whose inanimacy assists in the generation and staging of human agency."[120] Focusing on the "enchanted" objects of Atlantic diplomatic history refracts questions of agency through the prism of sacred authority made material, thereby revealing how historical actors deliberately invoked

[118] Herman L. Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 35.

[119] Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, "Öbi, Assemblage, Enchantment," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1, no. 1 (2013), 176.

[120] Dillon, "Obi, Assemblage, Enchantment," 174.

both divine and monarchical forms of sovereign power to propel change.[121] Katharine Gerbner has argued persuasively that to fully grasp "the breadth, ubiquity, and significance" of obeah, "scholars must view Christian practice and European natural history as being part of the Afro-Caribbean category of obeah."[122] To this compelling reversal of categories, I add that we might view law and diplomacy as constituent practices of obeah as well. By scrambling the categories of European imperial history and viewing the British Atlantic world through the lens of an obeah epistemology, we might move beyond the accommodationist view of post-treaty Maroon politics to capture a sense of the Maroons' dynamic intellectual and political strategy.[123]

British rituals of law were no less magical than Coromantee rituals of blood. The "pen and ink witchcraft" of treaties made possible the negotiation and erosion of sovereignties, the appropriation and apportionment of land, as well as the management of commerce and conflict throughout the British Empire.[124] In North America and the Caribbean, as in West Africa, treaties and military alliances constituted part of the legal apparatus of British imperialism that mediated relations between the British and the indigenous peoples they encountered. These

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[121] Dillon, "Obi, Assemblage, Enchantment'"; Toni Wall Jaudon, "Obeah's Sensations: Rethinking Religion at the Transnational Turn," *American Literature* 84, no. 4 (2012): 715-741;

[122] Katharine Gerbner, "They call me Obea: German Moravian Missionaries and Afro-Caribbean Religion in Jamaica, 1754-1760," *Atlantic Studies* 12, no. 2 (2015), 162.

[123] The view of Jamaica's Maroons as accommodators to empire in the post-treaty era has remained dominant for at least the past 30 years in histories from Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica,1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1988) to Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons Between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). Notably, Chopra, in the only full-length study of the Trelawny Maroons, interprets their story through the frames of late eighteenth-century British abolitionism and loyalty to empire. Doing so casts the Maroons primarily as targets of humanitarian reform who opportunistically invoked deference to monarchy. On reframing African diaspora history in terms of intellectual and political strategy rather than the movement of bodies, see Jessica A. Krug, *Fugitive Modernities: Kisama and the Politics of Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

[124] Colin G. Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft: Treaties and Treaty Making in American Indian History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

treaties constituted a rhetorical effort to naturalize the inherent violence of colonialism through an imagined language of consent and reciprocity. But treaty making was just as likely to signal the formidability of those whom Europeans sought to dominate as it was to presage slaughter and dispossession. Treaties disclosed a sense of the moral and juridical validity of imperialism while also providing the grounds for ongoing claims by indigenous people amidst the gradual whittling away of their sovereignty.[125]

Whether European empires could enter into agreements with non-Christian sovereigns was a contested matter in the early modern period. Though treating with non-Christians faced widespread opposition in Protestant Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such agreements had shed their stigma by the end of the seventeenth.[126] In England, Sir Edward Coke's judgment on Calvin's Case (1607), concerning the status of aliens under common law, affirmed that all nonbelievers counted as *perpetui inimici* (perpetual enemies).[127] This remained the prevailing view until the Dutch began to shift international norms in their efforts against the Portuguese empire. Ever at the vanguard of early modern imperial practice, the Dutch began to form alliances with sovereign powers in southeast Asia and America starting at the turn of the seventeenth century.[128] They also used agreements with infidels to promote their commercial interests in west Africa. In the 1670s and 1680s, the Dutch West Indies Company signed treaties

[125] For a comparative treatment of colonial treaties in European empires, see Saliha Belmessous, ed., *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2015.

[126] Arthur Weststeijn, "'Love Alone is Not Enough': Treaties in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Colonial Expansion," in *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900*, ed. Saliha Belmessous (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 19-44; Richard Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels in the European Imperial Expansion," in *Empire and Modern Political Thought*, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Camrbidge University Press, 2012), 61-83.

[127] Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels," 70.

[128] Weststeijn, "Love Alone is Not Enough," 19-20.

with the king of Eguafo in an effort to create a monopoly on the gold trade from Komenda and Elmina.[129] In their departure from the accepted practice across Protestant Europe, the Dutch looked to the writings of Hugo Grotius for justification according to both natural and divine law. In *De Jure Praedae* and *Rights of War and Peace*, Grotius laid out a defense of treaty-making as a fundamental norm in an emergent international legal order rooted in consent and mutual obligation that refuted the notion of non-Christians as *perpetui inimici*.[130] Not to be left behind in the imperial race, the rest of Europe soon followed suit and adopted a more flexible stance on international alliances by the late seventeenth century. Satisfied with selective legal interpretation to suit their initial needs, imperial powers would only later invoke notions of cultural inferiority to disregard their solemn agreements with non-Europeans.[131]

Moreover, the notion of the oath in particular as a serious and even sacred pact would not have been alien to the British. As elsewhere, oaths in England had long been understood as a means of manifesting divine authority by invoking God as a witness. Throughout the early modern period, they were central to establishing political and religious loyalty. Oaths defined the extent of political obligation and the limits of civic belonging: they were used throughout England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a means of binding civil servants to the duties of their office, swearing judicial witnesses to the truth, and testing the loyalty of subjects.[132]

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[129] Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 45.

[130] Weststeijn, "Love Alone is Not Enough," 25-29; Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels," 75-77.

[131] Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels," 81-82.

[132] Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism, and the Political Nation, 1553-1682* (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005), 19. Oaths of office and testimony were also employed in colonial Jamaican and Barbados. See Miles Ogborn, "The Power of Speech: Orality, Oaths and Evidence in the British Atlantic World, 1650-1800," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36, no. 1 (2011), 113-114.

Medieval and early modern English theology consistently emphasized the gravity of providential punishment as a consequence of perjury.[133] Because of the difficulties inherent to adjudicating perjury in the courts, it remained the domain of canon law prior to the passage of "An Act for the Punishment of Such Persons as Shall Procure or Commit any Willfull Perjury" in 1563. The Perjury Statute of 1563 established the common law foundations for prosecuting witnesses for perjury as opposed to just jurors.[134] The modern definition of perjury as the willful assertion of a statement known by the witness to be false under oath, as opposed to any lie told under oath, did not emerge until the turn of the seventeenth century when perjury became more disentangled from ecclesiastical law. The ruling in Slade's Case (1596-1602), concerning the pursuit of fraudulent claims in court, made the prosecution of a breach of promise central to contract law, thereby narrowing the judicial understanding of perjury.[135]

But the sacred underpinnings of swearing an oath persisted through at least the sixteenth century, when loyalty oaths became an even more central feature of English politics. In its rejection of religious idolatry (and Catholicism), sixteenth-century Protestant reform stressed the importance of establishing direct channels to God and, by extension, oaths as a form of worship. Protestant theology emphasized the notion that blasphemous oaths mutilated the body of Christ.[136] Henrician reform, however, harnessed the divine authority of oaths as an instrument of

[133] Andrew Hadfield, *Lying in Early Modern English Culture: From the Oath of Supremacy to the Oath of Allegiance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 39; Jonathan Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 42-44.

[134] Michael D. Gordon, "The Perjury Statute of 1563: A Case History of Confusion," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 124, no. 6 (1980): 438-454; Gordon, "The Invention of a Common Law Crime: Perjury and the Elizabethan Courts," *The American Journal of Legal History* 24, no. 2 (1980): 145-170.

[135] Hadfield, *Lying in Early Modern English Culture*, 40; David Ibbetson, "Sixteenth-Century Contract Law: *Slade's Case* in Context," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 4, no. 3 (1984): 295-317.

[136] Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 31-34.

political coercion in new ways. This proliferation of oath-taking left an ambiguous legacy; John Gray argues that the Henrician regime's abundant use of loyalty oaths prompted the proliferation of oath-taking both to reinforce and subvert monarchical authority.[137] Historians have argued whether oaths lost their sacred significance in England by the seventeenth century, or if their political instrumentalization left in tact their sacred authority.[138] One historian has gone so far as to suggest that oaths were in fact never considered all that sacred by the majority of English society.[139] But even if this incitement to swearing diminished the divine power of the oath, Gray insists that it nevertheless reinforced the efficacy of swearing as a tool of social protest.[140] This unprecedented politicization of oaths democratized access to divine authority, exerting new forms of social pressure throughout English society.[141] Even if God's witness was called into question, that of other persons was indisputable. In the eighteenth century, oaths did not disappear but rather assimilated to the discourse of social contract as "state oaths … came to constitute, as John Locke intimated, a performative enactment of consent to lawful rule."[142]

Long before Karl Marx would call attention to the "religion of everyday life" in his

[137] Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 205.

[138] For the declining religious significance of oaths, see Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971); C. John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). For the view that oaths retained their sacred efficacy, see Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant* (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005); David Martin Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance in Seventeenth Century England: The Political Significance of Oaths and Engagements* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1999).

[139] John Spurr, "A Profane History of Early Modern Oaths," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (2001): 37-63.

[140] On incitements to discourse in response to repression, see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1.

[141] Gray, *Oaths and the English Reformation*, 206-208.

[142] Jones, *Conscience and Allegiance*, 259.

nineteenth-century critique of capitalist political economy, a different kind of quotidian embrace of the spiritual would underwrite the political efforts of African diasporic communities throughout the Atlantic world, including those of the Trelawny Maroons.[143] Paying attention to the varieties of fetishism practiced in the Atlantic world requires dispensing with unhelpful divisions between histories of religion and medicine, in which we usually locate the fetish, and those of the commerce and diplomacy, which only rarely consider the role of ritual, in order to foreground an African diasporic intellectual history during the age of Enlightenment.[144] Fetishism would go on to occupy a prominent position in Enlightenment political theory, anthropology, modernist art criticism, and psychoanalysis, but only in ways that fundamentally misunderstood or erased the Atlantic African political history from which the concept first

[143] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 3, ed. Frederick Engels (Chicago: C.H. Kerr & Company, 1906), 967.

[144] The literature on African diaspora religious history is vast, but some works that discuss fetishism or ritual objects include Sweet, *Recreating Africa*; Walter C. Rucker, "Conjure, Magic, and Power: The Influence of Afro-Atlantic Religious Practices on Slave Resistance and Rebellion," *Journal of Black Studies* 32 (2001): 85-104; Yvonne P. Chireau, *Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Dianne M. Stewart, *Three Eyes for the Journey: African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jason R. Young, *Rituals of Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), ch. 3; Ras Michael Brown, *African-Atlantic Cultures and the South Carolina Lowcountry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Akinwumi Ogundind and Paula Sanders, eds., *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic* (Indiana University Press, 2014). On fetishism and the history of medicine, see Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Health, Healing, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Karol K. Weaver, *Medical Revolutionaries: The Enslaved Healers of Eighteenth-Century Saint Domingue* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Jonathan Roberts, "Medical Exchange on the Gold Coast during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 45, no. 3 (2011): 480-523; Pablo F. Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Londa Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2017). On fetishism and the history of Atlantic commerce, see Smith, "Peace and Palaver"; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800*, 87-88; Matthew D. Mitchell, "The Fetish and Intercultural Commerce in Seventeenth-Century West Africa," *Itinerario* 36, no. 1 (2012): 7-21; Michael Ralph, *Forensics of Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), esp. 18-19. For an example of an intellectual history of diasporic spiritual practice that integrates several discourses, see Paul C. Johnson, "An Atlantic Genealogy of 'Spirit Possession,'" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 2 (2011): 393-425.

emerged.[145] Redeploying the idea of the fetish in ways that more broadly encompass rituals of warfare, diplomacy, and governance highlights the various entanglements of Atlantic legal geographies and makes clearer the contours of power that shaped political struggle. Additionally, this gesture foregrounds an African diasporic intellectual project that has been submerged by the elisions of Enlightenment thought.

Engaging legal fetishism as an analytic for the study of black politics in the Atlantic world marks an important departure from recent historical scholarship on the diaspora foregrounding statelessness, as well as black studies' more general tendency as of late to view the relationships between black subjectivities, the state, and the law primarily in terms of dispossession and death.[146] Jessica Krug's recent work on the Kisama "meme" in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century African diaspora writes the history of statelessness as a particularly generative locus of black radical politics through the frame of fugitive modernities.[147] Krug's attention to anti-state politics develops an important genealogy of early modern African diasporic political and intellectual history, but pays less attention to the imperial modernities around and against which fugitive modernities were enacted. As Herman Bennett's recent work demonstrates, the history of early modern African institutional politics remains an area in need of

[145] Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I."

[146] Jennifer C. Nash refers to the current moment in black studies as one in which "law is treated as the paradigmatic site of antiblack violence." *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 130. This is in large part due to the current dominance of an intellectual genealogy within black studies oriented toward questions of ontology and social (as well as literal) death, marked by renewed and ongoing engagement with Orlando Patterson's work (as well as that of Hortense Spillers, Sylvia Wynter, Saidiya Hartman, etc.) under the rubric of afropessimism. See Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, as well as Brown, "Social Death and Political Life" for a discussion and critique of the social death analytic in the context of Atlantic history.

[147] Jessica A. Krug, *Fugitive Modernities: Kisama and the Politics of Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018). Krug's work builds on James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

further study.[148] Following Bennett, legal fetishism marks a return to law, state, and empire as crucial sites for understanding the history of black politics beyond the frame of liberalism.

Finally, this approach reintroduces black feminist legal criticism as a central project for black studies. Jennifer Nash asks, through a reading of Patricia Williams' *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, a foundational text in black feminist legal criticism, "How can black feminists reimagine law as a site for staging productive intimacies and enacting radical vulnerabilities?"[149] Reading Jamaican Maroon history through the lens of legal fetishism reinterprets diplomacy as a means to forge bonds of radical reciprocity, obligation, and vulnerability. We see how the Trelawny Maroons strained against the very limits of colonial law to imagine new possibilities for political belonging. Moving beyond the interpretation of Jamaican Maroon politics as accommodation to empire allows us to imagine uses of the law beyond its stated purposes, to sustain different logics of social relations and different enactments of autonomy than those envisioned by the writers and enforcers of the law.[150]

The following chapters trace the movement of the Trelawny Maroons through three British colonies, focusing on how moments of political negotiation with colonial administrators

[148] Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves*.

[149] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, 122. Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991). In extending Nash's vision of black feminist inquiry that returns to a serious engagement with the law, I seek to unsettle some of the preoccupations of afropessimist black studies.

[150] The view of Jamaica's Maroons as accommodators to empire in the post-treaty era has remained dominant for at least the past 30 years in histories from Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica,1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1988) to Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons Between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). Notably, Chopra, in the only full-length study of the Trelawny Maroons, interprets their story through the frames of late eighteenth-century British abolitionism and loyalty to empire. Doing so casts the Maroons primarily as targets of humanitarian reform who opportunistically invoked deference to monarchy, which produces a different view of Maroon politics compared to the categories of performance and entanglement that I attempt to sketch in this chapter. Rather than write a narrative of the Trelawny Maroons using the dominant terms of British imperial history, I tell this story through the frames of legal pluralism and enchantment, which situates the Maroons more firmly in Atlantic and African diasporic history and, I would argue, more fully captures a sense of their intellectual and political strategy.

served as opportunities to negotiate the limits of their collective belonging. These moments of diplomatic friction were not just a simple tug of war between the Maroons and British colonial states in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone; rather, they reflected ritualized political performances that summoned higher authorities onto the material plane. By producing fetish objects imbued with the power of gods and monarchs, the Maroons staked transformative claims to autonomy, reciprocity, and obligation. In this whirlwind journey through the British Empire, we remember that magic has a history, one that is fundamentally revolutionary and coextensive with that of the wider Atlantic world.

Chapter Two

Treaty: *Marronage*, Diplomacy, and the Jamaican Colonial State, 1655-1739

Seized from the Spanish in 1655, British colonial Jamaica was a war zone. Between 1660 and 1713, the ongoing Anglo-French Wars saw two empires turn to raiding and pillaging to secure an economic foothold in the Caribbean.[151] Long after its indigenous Taíno population had been decimated as a result of Spanish conquest in the late fifteenth century, the island witnessed perpetual conflict between a number of parties: the English and their imperial rivals from Europe, planters and privateers, the free and the enslaved. The English conquest of Jamaica, according to Carla Pestana, incited perpetual war both in Europe and in the West Indies as it interrupted the period of Spanish dominance in the region.[152] At the same time, English settlers struggled against a demographic nightmare: tropical illnesses devastated the colonial population while an increasing numerical imbalance between the free and enslaved ensured that the white inhabitants remained in constant fear of insurrection. By the middle of the eighteenth century, chattel slavery would enable Jamaican planters to enjoy numerous spoils of victory as the colony became the British Empire's most profitable outpost; yet, the costs of warfare continued to accrue. Sugar plantations consumed the bodies of enslaved people who were forced into gruesome labor as planters attempted to satisfy the growing appetites of English people whose palates became increasingly accustomed to the taste of sweetness. This sugar economy produced

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[151] Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 22-23.

[152] Carla G. Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica: Oliver Cromwell's Bid for Empire* (Cambridge: Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 184-185.

a bitter reality for the enslaved, whose daily routines were punctuated by the painstaking rhythm of sugar cultivation and grotesque displays of torture meant to naturalize their subordination.[153] The enslaved toiled away, all the while dreaming of freedom. Though thousands died as chattel, many would rise up in organized revolt or escape under the cover of night to find their way to the island's concealed enclaves where the Maroons dwelled. In the Windward and Leeward Maroon settlements, children would be born never having known a life of enslavement. As Jamaica's most capable and feared warriors, the Maroons waged a protracted struggle against the English militia for nearly a century and a half, leaving a lasting mark on the trajectory of the colony in the process.

But the development of Jamaica into a slave colony rattled by self-liberated insurgents was neither immediate nor inevitable. European, rather than African, plunder defined the course of Caribbean history in the early seventeenth century. Though officials in early colonial Jamaica would remain preoccupied with the ransacking of British settlements by the Maroons, the English themselves were Jamaica's original bandits. The island was identified as part of Oliver Cromwell's Western Design as a promising potential base for English buccaneers. Though General Robert Venables and Admiral William Penn first set their sights on capturing the island of Hispaniola, a crushing defeat there led them to attempt a takeover of Jamaica instead on May 10, 1655. A band of English buccaneers led by Henry Morgan sought to extend their campaign of terror outward from Jamaica to ransack the entirety of the Spanish West Indies.[154] Upon their arrival, the English outnumbered Spaniards on the island four-to-one; still, Christobal de Ysassi

[153] Vincent Brown, "Eating the Dead: Consumption and Regeneration in the History of Sugar," *Food and Foodways* 16, no. 2 (2008): 117-126; Brown, "Spiritual Terror and Sacred Authority in Jamaican Slave Society," *Slavery and Abolition* 24, no. 1 (2003): 24-53.

[154] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 149-150

commanded a group of Spanish guerrilla fighters who mounted a defense from Jamaica's mountainous interior. With the assistance of the "Spanish negroes" who seized this moment of conflict to form Maroon refuges called *palenques*, the English managed to expel Ysassi and the remaining Spaniards from the island by 1659.[155]

The English buccaneers who took control of Jamaica gathered in the raucous taverns of Port Royal, where they would hatch their plans to gain a foothold in Spanish commerce, all the while facing mounting political resistance, both locally and in England, from an emerging class of large-scale planters. By the 1670s, this tension between farming and privateering would force a decisive shift in the development of the colony. Frustrated by the loss of indentured servants who were lured by the buccaneers and insufficient trading options resulting from the island's political instability, the large planters, much aided by the Glorious Revolution, waged a campaign to stifle the influence of the buccaneers. Monoculture supplanted marauding as the economic scheme that appeared most attractive to the colonists.[156]

But the road to riches was a perilous one. The Maroon population would insist on fiercely defending their liberty at the direct expense of English planters. Robert C. Dallas placed Jamaica's Maroons at the center of this story in *The History of the Maroons, from their Origin to the Establishment of their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone*. His history, first published in 1803, remains one of the most authoritative primary accounts of the Maroons. Still, as a chronicle of largely guerrilla warfare, its subject matter by its very nature defies straightforward narration. Written as a corrective to what he thought was an overly propagandistic account by Bryan

[155] Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 70-71. On guerrilla warfare by the Spanish, see Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica*, 195-197; and Irene A. Wright, "The Spanish Resistance to the English Occupation of Jamaica, 1655-1660," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (1930): 117-147.

[156] Dunn, *Sugar and* Slaves, 149-150

Edwards, Dallas' epistolary *History of the Maroons* first provides a brief sketch of England's initial acquisition of Jamaica and describes the island's geography, flora, and fauna. Dallas spared no drama in rehearsing the island's early history under a century and a half of Spanish rule, taking care to note how the skulls of Jamaica's indigenous inhabitants were scattered throughout the caves in the northern part of the island. Upon the arrival of the English militia, however, the Spanish quickly became fugitives, fleeing to Cuba or taking refuge in the same bone-littered caves that had once projected the violent force of their occupation. Those who stayed behind attempted to wage a guerrilla campaign against the English, setting fire to their rivals' settlements and greeting with a swift death those who wandered unaccompanied into their shrinking territories.[157]

When his attention finally turns to the Maroons, Dallas unabashedly presents himself as a most reliable narrator: "If any passage implies information that could be gained only from the Maroons themselves, let it be remembered, that for more than two years the commissary who went with them to Halifax in Nova Scotia, had frequent opportunities of conversing with them, of observing their character, and of judging the truth of their assertions."[158] Like any historian, however, Dallas' interpretation of events was shaped by his own historical moment. Of chief concern throughout his text were the effects of the French Revolution and the "horrors" it spread to the West Indies, as well as the Haitian Revolution—especially regarding the influx of refugees to Jamaica and other British colonies. A mood of fear and suspicion, therefore, underwrote Dallas' characterization of the Maroons and their place in colonial Jamaica's historiy. He notes

[157] Robert C. Dallas, *The History of the Maroons, from Their Origin to the Establishment of their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone*, vol. 1 (London: T.N. Longman and O. Rees, 1803).

[158] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:vii-viii.

two particular effects of the Haitian Revolution on Jamaica: "In the first place, it drained the island of the troops that were to protect the inhabitants; and it gave birth to the French proclamation abolishing all manner of slavery."[159] The influence of the Haitian Revolution on the history of hemispheric American slavery is well documented; certainly, news of the monumental victory on Saint-Domingue emboldened enslaved people throughout the Americas to renew their zeal for liberty.[160] Nevertheless, an overemphasis on anti-colonial rebellion as purely derivative underestimates the political imagination of Jamaica's rebel forces who pursued an altogether different type of freedom.

It would be a mistake to project backward the revolutionary fervor emanating from Saint-Domingue onto the Maroons, whose struggle against colonial authorities predated the Haitian Revolution by over a century.[161] Though Jamaica's Maroon towns transformed over time in response to ongoing conflict with English settlers, their early history laid a foundation for the developments that were to come. In particular, the signing of the Anglo-Maroon treaties in 1738/9 supplied the terms through which ongoing antagonisms between the Maroons and colonists would be mediated. More than a story of guerrilla warfare, the history of the Maroons illuminates the centrality of diplomacy and negotiation to the development of colonial Jamaica. Building on the background of Atlantic diplomacy supplied in the previous chapter, this chapter places the history of the Anglo-Maroon treaties within the frame of Atlantic legal pluralism,

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[159] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:19-20.

[160] Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (London, Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018).

[161] Toussaint L'Ouverture, the iconic Haitian Revolutionary general, was apparently inspired by the Jamaican Maroons. See Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 223.

arguing that they were legal fetishes imbued with the power of distant gods and monarchs.[162] Viewing the treaties in this light contests the longstanding notion that the Maroon and English understandings of their agreement were incommensurate from the start, thereby rendering the eventual violation of the terms inevitable.[163] What emerges instead is a dynamic image of African diasporic political strategy that underwrote the Maroons' distinct mode of belonging within a context of fragmented sovereignty, a political model that was ultimately threatened by specific historical developments, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

The first groups of maroons consisted of those persons formerly enslaved by the Spanish, who had transported Africans to the colony beginning in 1517 to replace the dwindling indigenous population as a source of exploitable labor. These so-called "Spanish negroes" took advantage of the chaos engendered by England's conquest of Jamaica to secure their freedom. As the English chipped away at the Spanish presence on the island, the slaves of the Spanish colonists seized their opportunity to take refuge in the mountains in the north and east of the island. Primarily from the northern regions of West Africa and Angola, these bandits initially organized into small leaderless groups that would continue to face relentless pursuit by the militia in the early decades of English colonization. Three main groups emerged during this period: one at Lluidas Vale led by Juan de Bolas; another called Los Vermejales (Varmahalies),

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[162] For an earlier sociological history of this period concerned with the causes of slave rebellion, see Orlando Patterson, "Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the First Maroon War in Jamaica, 1655-1740," *Social and Economic Studies* 19, no. 3 (1970): 289-325.

[163] Barbara K. Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty as Sacred Charter of the Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 1 (1979): 45-64; Kenneth M. Bilby, "Swearing by the Past, Swearing to the Future: Sacred Oaths, Alliances, and Treaties Among the Guianese and Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 4 (1997): 655-689. For the argument that the treaties diminished the Maroons' political power, see Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 65. Lauren Benton also argues that the differences between early modern European (specifically Iberian) and African legal institutions have been exaggerated in "The Legal Regime of the South Atlantic World, 1400-1750: Jurisdictional Complexity as Institutional Order," *Journal of World History* 11, no. 1 (2000), 39. Also see the discussion of legal pluralism in the preceding chapter of this dissertation.

led by Juan de Serras; and a third group situated in the Blue Mountains. The groups led by de Bolas and de Serras in particular were able to benefit from their crafty navigation of the terrain and their skill at guerrilla warfare in ways that foreshadowed the Anglo-Maroon conflicts that would persist over the course of the eighteenth century.[164]

The emergence of these fugitive communities should be looked upon as typical in the course of world history. Wherever states emerged and sought to expand their reach, individuals would scramble to evade the power of the state and its extraction of fiscal and human capital, often choosing to inhabit "zones of refuge" from which they would fiercely defend their ungovernability.[165] The early modern colonial state was no different in this regard. The fragile nature of a colonial power yet to be consolidated generated the conditions for purposeful evasion of authority; in turn, the politics of *marronage* would shape the development of colonial governance.[166] As the Maroons' attempts to flee control by the colonial state grew more spirited, so too would the colonial government evolve in its attempts to wield its power more robustly. A strained interdependence between the state and the stateless would influence the trajectory of Jamaican social life and politics throughout the colonial period. The Maroons would inhabit "a political location—outside state but adjacent to it" that would "represent a permanent example of

[164] Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the West Indies: With a Continuation to the Present Time*, 5th ed. (London: Whittaker, 1819), 522-525; Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey), 16; Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica*, 200-208.

[165] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 7.

[166] Kathleen Wilson notes the fragile and performative authority in the colonial state. Kathleen Wilson, "Rethinking the Colonial Sate: Family, Gender, and Governmentality in Eighteenth-Century British Frontiers," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1294-1322.

defiance of central authority."[167] Though the the precise contours of this political location remains in many ways as elusive as the English found the maroons who occupied it, paying close attention to the maroons' strategic use of space offers some insight into what constituted a painstakingly achieved alternative to complete subjection by the colonial state. As the development of plantation society accelerated, white acquisitiveness gave rise to black pilferage. Rather than a merely reactive state of existence, *marronage* represented a distinct vision of anti-colonial politics premised on repurposing the various forms of capital—human and otherwise—that underwrote the increasing largesse of white plantation society.

Central to the maroons' tactics of state evasion was their military prowess. The group led by Juan de Bolas, based in the Clarendon Mountains, proved especially formidable, eventually becoming the first Maroon recipients of formal recognition by the colonial government. In addition to their tactical aptitude, this group was adept at playing both sides of the struggle, claiming to be allies of both the Spanish and English depending on the changing tides of the conflict.[168] The maroons' formal collaboration with the English hastened the retreat of the last Spanish colonists on the island when in 1659 de Bolas struck a deal with Colonel Edward Tyson. After Tyson discovered the location of de Bolas' *palenque* and led his men in an ambush that resulted in the deaths of several Maroons, de Bolas agreed to lead him to the remaining Spanish encampment near Ocho Rios. Narrowly escaping with his life after falling into the hands of the English, Ysassi attempted to bargain for Spaniards' safe passage to Cuba. These negotiations failed because of Ysassi's previous refusal to punish Juan de Serras for murdering an English hostage—a refusal that betrayed his lack of authority over the palenques. Ysassi and the others

[167] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 125.

[168] Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, 21.

scrambled to make their way to Cuba, arriving in disgrace in April 1660.[169]

With the Spanish nuisance resolved, pressure from the metropole to bolster settlement shifted the direction of the nascent colony, Nevertheless, the maroon presence on the island, coupled with the colony's pronounced militarization and high mortality rates for settlers, frustrated early efforts to stabilize the population, prompting King Charles II to appoint Edward D'Oyley as governor in 1661. This appointment was accompanied by a royal decree on December 14, 1661, that dissolved the army and promised 30 acres of land to each settler, along with an additional 30 acres for each dependent. Though D'Oyley was chosen "[t]o pave the way for the island's transition from undermanned military outpost to royal colony," warfare with the maroons continued to stifle English enthusiasm for emigration.[170]

The stark reality of the maroons' meaningful challenge to the project of settlement quickly made its way into colonial policy. In recognition of de Bolas' role in finally driving the Spanish from Jamaica, a charter established on February 1, 1662, became the first treaty between the colonial government and a group of Maroons.[171] This charter officially granted the Maroons their freedom, allotted 30 acres of land to each male over the age of eighteen, and made the Maroons magistrates of the colony. Thereafter, the de Bolas Maroons were charged with tracking down runaways and providing service to the colonial militia. Additionally, in an early effort at cultural imperialism, the charter also mandated that all Maroon children learn English.[172]

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[169] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 71-72. Also see David Buisseret and S. A. G. Taylor, "Juan de Bolas and his Pelinco," *Caribbean Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 2008): 95-102, 149,

[170] Brooke N. Newman, *A Dark Inheritance: Blood, Race, and Sex in Colonial Jamaica* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 37.

[171] The capitalized "Maroons" indicates a group formally recognized by treaty.

[172] Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica,* 23.

Efforts to suppress the rebellious potential of the Maroons would go on to influence the distribution of rights throughout the colonial population more broadly. As Brooke Newman writes, "The presence of autonomous African communities in Jamaica hastened the establishment of an institutional and legal structure designed to clarify who could exercise full rights of an English subject and who could not."[173] Indeed, even in its earliest stages, the Anglo-Maroon conflict threw into sharp relief the problem of managing a colony whose elite was a small and shrinking proportion of the total population. As Kathleen Wilson writes of the Jamaican colonial state, "Population, its categorization, increase, and management, was from the start a critical social and political issue, in tandem and sometimes in tension with the concomitant need to substantiate and protect social hierarchies of entitlement and abjection."[174]

The deputization of the Maroons to apprehend runaway slaves marked a transformation in the colonial state's efforts at population management, but it would not be enough. Rather than set the stage for diplomacy with the other Maroon bands that formed during the transition period, this first Anglo-Maroon treaty paved a path to further war. The other major group of maroons, under the command of Juan de Serras, were emboldened in their refusal of a formal agreement with the colonial government following the charter established with de Bolas.[175] As the colonial state stretched to accommodate the presence of the Maroons, de Serras perhaps suspected that the most effective way to preserve autonomy was to defer conscription into the dominant order. The Varmahalies, another Maroon group that in 1670 murdered five hunters and six small settlers, faced aggressive persecution by a colonial government that placed a bounty on their

[173] Newman, *A Dark Inheritance*, 53.

[174] Wilson, "Rethinking the Colonial State," 1313.

[175] Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, 24.

heads. Eventually, however, the Varmahalies failed to enjoy the same longevity as the de Bolas Maroons, as the members of the group died out, followed the Spanish to Cuba, or defected to other Maroon communities.[176]

An influx of slaves—particularly adult men, many with prior military experience—to support the colony's turn toward monoculture beginning in the 1670s provided ample recruits for the newly formed Maroon communities of the late seventeenth century. This, too, would further embroil Jamaica in war. Colonial legislators would enact efforts to shore up security to little effect as coordinated military action by the enslaved sent shockwaves through the colonial frontier. Colonial legislators sought to stem the tide of Maroon population growth by establishing strict laws forbidding any enslaved person to travel without a pass, penalizing slaveholders who neglected to issue passes, and allowing any white person to detain runways, but a series of Coromantee-led slave revolts between 1673 and 1690 exposed the fragile nature of colonial security.[177] Like other slave colonies in the Americas, Jamaica became a site of trans-Atlantic warfare rooted in the slave trade and its diaspora.[178]

African rebellion was perhaps an inevitable consequence of the demographic catastrophe that beset Anglo-Jamaican settlers. High mortality due to disease and French invasion, narrowing options for economic sustenance outside of large-scale agriculture, and the disproportionate number of white male settlers compared to their female counterparts all combined to depress the growth of the white settler population. In the absence of a stable settler society, the colonial frontier was bound to remain treacherous. White women were loathe to

[176] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 74.

[177] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 75.

[178] Brown, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020)..

integrate themselves into such a hardscrabble frontier society. Few who did emigrate lived long enough to bear children. Coupled with high mortality rates, the low frequency of marriage and reproduction among the Anglo-Jamaican population ensured the emergence of an African majority as planters imported slaves to fulfill their labor needs. Jamaica was to become a site of social extremes: racist tyranny, patriarchal authority, and the excesses of the planter class threw a gothic cast over the maintenance of the social and political order. The burden of this extreme stratification was to fall most heavily on women of African descent. It was from black women that white men routinely extracted the economic, domestic, and sexual labor that they could not demand from an available population of white women.[179]

Thus slavery's sexual economy came to pervade colonial Jamaican society.[180] This was an economy premised on both the imagined and material dimensions of enslavement in colonial America. Images of black women who gave birth without pain and nursed children with their breasts slung over their shoulders while working the fields circulated in early modern travel narratives, helping to justify the enslavement of Africans by naturalizing their cultural inferiority and suitability for labor. As the inheritable nature of slavery was codified in the Americas, black women's reproductive labor cemented the racialized divide between the free and the enslaved. Moreover, bondwomen's reproductive potential, whether actualized or not, meant that their bodies represented not only their own value as laborers, but that of their possible offspring. A rhetoric of increase circumscribed enslaved black women's treatment as property that could be passed on to a slaveholders' children to augment their net worth over time. Charged with

[179] Trevor Burnard, "A Failed Settler Society: Marriage and Demographic Failure in Early Jamaica," *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 1 (1994): 63-82.

[180] The phrase "sexual economy of slavery" comes from Adrienne Davis, "'Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle': The Sexual Economy of American Slavery," in *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 457-478.

reproducing laborers rather than citizens, enslaved women came to represent the perpetual marginality assigned to people of African descent in the Americas.[181]

The Maroon population, too, was deeply imbricated in this colonial economy of sexual power. The meanings of kinship and reproduction, however, shifted radically when glimpsed from the Maroon enclave. Maroon bands in the early period—much like the enslaved population—consisted primarily of able-bodied adult men, the same warriors who struck fear into the hearts of English settlers.[182] For these men, removal from their natal conceptions of lineage and political authority instantiated its own form of gendered dispossession. *Marronage*, however, provided an alternative model of belonging and structured authority under largely homosocial conditions. If slavery and warfare were inextricable in the colonial context, taking prisoners during raids would have been an extension of the diasporic conflicts that made the Atlantic world.[183] But more than just a means of survival among the upheaval of colonial life, these groups cohered as alternative forms of social collectivity through which individuals could reconstitute themselves as social beings.[184] In the absence of natal kinship networks, Maroons improvised their own means of social connectedness through warfare and banditry. And the

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[181] Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). On the reproductive valuation of enslaved women on Jamaica specifically, see Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childbearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

[182] The Maroons' attempts at sustained reproduction were unsuccessful until after about 1750. For a detailed study of Maroon demographics in colonial Jamaica, see Richard Sheridan, "The Maroons of Jamaica, 1730-1830: Livelihood, Demography and Health," *Slavery & Abolition* 6, no. 3 (1985): 152-172. The following chapter of this dissertation also takes up questions of demography following the end of the Anglo-Maroon War of 1729-1739 at greater length.

[183] See Brown, *Tacky's Revolt*.

[184] James Sweet counts *marronage* among one of the many ways Africans in the Atlantic world adapted notions of kinship to suit their varied circumstances. See "Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World," *William & Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (April 2013), 260.

intimacies that undoubtedly emerged took many forms; as James Sweet speculates about enslaved men in Brazil, it is likely that Maroon men would have "recast their sexual identities as they reached out to their male peers for a combination of sexual and emotional sustenance."[185]

Marronage also gave way to the reassertion of patriarchal authority. As mentioned, maroons augmented their numbers through both persuasion and coercion. Maroon raids did not just re-appropriate the planters' food, tools, and weapons; they also spirited away their chattel—particularly in the form of female captives. As one account stated, "[i]n all plunderings [the Maroons] were industrious in procuring Negro women, girls, and female children."[186] On the one hand, kidnapping women and girls satisfied Maroon mens' desire for companionship and enabled procreation, bringing within reach what would have been in these formative years a distant prospect of collective longevity. On the other hand, raiding constituted a way for Maroon men to exercise a form of gendered power that stood in direct opposition to the white masculine authority and permissiveness that circumscribed enslavement. In the white imagination, black women's sexuality was understood through a transactional language of scarcity and abundance; Edwards, for example, decried sexual practices among Africans. He described Africans' practice of polygamy as a "partial appropriation" of the women that resulted in "a shocking licentiousness and profligacy of manners in most of their women."[187] Of the Maroons specifically, Edwards

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[185] James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 50. On imagining queer/non-hetereosexual intimacies within the context of Atlantic slavery, see Omise'eke Tinsley, "Black Atlantic/Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008): 191-215. Also see Stephanie Smallwood on the "anomalous intimacies" of the slave trade. Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), ch. 4.

[186] "History of the Revolted Negroes in Jamaica," Edward Long Papers, Add. Manuscripts, 12431, British Library.

[187] Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies: in two volumes* (London: Printed for John Stockdale, Piccadilly, 1794), 2:148.

worried that they, "like all other savage nations, regarded their wives as so many beasts of burden and felt no more concern at the loss of one of them than a white planter would have at the loss of a bullock."[188] These anxieties about sexual control were tied to broader concerns of population and capital management; the solidification of state power depended on the sexual control of the enslaved population.[189] Understanding the palpable unease regarding sexual control on slave plantations makes it easy to imagine Maroon raids as a reassertion of masculine authority by black insurgents. The Maroons' apparent valuation of black women according to their capacity for reproduction aligned with that of whites, but the Maroons sought to seize reproduction from the domain of enslavement. This was yet another dimension of *marronage* as a continuation of diasporic warfare.

Eventually, the Clarendon slave rebellion of 1690 produced a major group of self-liberated rebels "who found a secure retreat in the interior of the country, where they occasionally recruited their numbers from among the plantation negroes with whom they kept up a communication, and from whose grounds they were often supplied with provisions."[190] A result of a growing demographic imbalance favoring Africans, hundreds of enslaved people from Sutton's estate in Clarendon rose up on July 31, more than two hundred of whom were not eventually apprehended.[191] Edward Long, the planter historian, described how "between three and four hundred slaves belonging to Mr. Sutton's plantation in Clarendon, forced their way into the dwelling-house, killed the white man entrusted with the care of it, and seized upon a large

[188] Quoted in Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:112.

[189] Wilson, "Rethinking the Colonial State."

[190] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:26-27.

[191] Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 76-77

store of fire-arms, powder and ball, and four small field-pieces, with some provisions."[192] After ransacking Sutton's estate, these Coromantee rebels moved on to a nearby plantation, killed the overseer there, and attempted to enlist the enslaved residents into their cause. They were, however, unsuccessful; the enslaved people instead "betook themselves to the woods," likely seeking refuge with the Maroons.[193] The colonial militia soon assembled to pursue the rebels, who "were so briskly pursued, that many were killed, and two hundred of them threw down their arms, and begged for mercy."[194]

Dallas noted the increasing alarm with which the Maroons were greeted by English colonists as they engaged in acts such as "plundering their houses, destroying their cattle, and carrying of their slaves by force," deterring settlement in the interior of the island.[195] The Maroons' activities point to the militarization of everyday life in colonial Jamaica, as white colonists came "to live in a continual state of alarm and preparation for defence."[196] The ongoing security crisis instantiated by an increasingly lively Maroon presence permeated the built environment, as Dallas noted that structures were built with "flankers and loopholes, for the purpose of firing upon the assailants when they approached so near."[197] According to Edwards, "The Assembly […] ordered several defensible houses, or barracks, fortified with bastions, to be

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[192] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or, general survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants, climate, products, commerce, laws, and government* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), vol. 2, 446.

[193] Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:446.

[194] Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:446.

[195] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:27.

[196] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:27.

[197] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:26.

erected in different parts, as near as possible to the enemy's most favorable haunts."[198] Furthermore, Long had mentioned how the area around Clarendon's property had been "furnished […] with implements of defense to withstand the assaults of the *Marons* [sic], who frequently sallied on in the night to attack them."[199]

Meanwhile, as the bandits to the north and east faced mounting pressure from the colonial militia, one of these groups eventually found a chief in Cudjoe, son of one of the leaders in the Clarendon uprising, whom Dallas described as "a bold, skillful, and enterprising man," and "a short man, uncommonly stout, with very strong African features, and a peculiar wildness in his manners," who appointed his brothers as captains.[200] A contingent of enslaved people identified as "Madagascars" in St. Elizabeth's parish absconded soon after their purchase and joined Cudjoe's band. The other party of Maroons settled in the east likewise had their numbers augmented by a group of self-liberated Coromantee insurgents, known as "the most restless, daring, and blood-thirsty of all the negroes brought to the West Indies."[201] Long, the planter-historian, would later describe these "Coromantin Negroes" as "distinguished from their brethren in their aversion to husbandry, and the martial ferocity of their disposition."[202] "War and contention," Long asserted, "are their favorite amusements."[203] Likewise, Bryan Edwards

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198 Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 5th ed., 1:528.

199 Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:446.

200 Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:28, 53.

201 John Stewart, *An Account of Jamaica, and its Inhabitants* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1808), 198.

202 Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:446. For the sources of and influences on Long's conceptions of the Coromantee, see Devin Leigh, "The Origins of a Source: Edward Long, Coromantee Slave Revolts and *The History of Jamaica*," *Slavery & Abolition* (2018), Web, https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2018.1533670.

203 Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2: 473.

remarked on their particular qualities, noting their "firmness both of body and mind; a ferociousness of disposition; but withal, activity, courage, and a stubbornness."[204] Beyond a indication of geographical origins, the Coromantee label came to signify a particular ethnic character, one that Walter Rucker refers to as a "sociocultural invention" in which even those identified as Coromantee participated.[205]

In this early phase of Maroon activity, though perpetual warfare beset the colony, the Maroons' tactics were primarily oriented towards plunder. They were bandits in the sense described by Eric Hobsbawm: brigands who expressed popular discontent through theft and violence.[206] Edwards described how the Maroons avoided direct confrontation due to their numbers and instead "skulked about the skirts of remote plantations, surprising stragglers, and murdering the whites by two or three at a time."[207] After sunset, he added, "they seized the favourable opportunity that darkness gave them, of stealing into settlements, where they set fire to cane-fields and out-houses, killed all the cattle they could find, and carried the slaves into captivity."[208] It was not until around 1730, according to Dallas, that the Maroons acquired a taste for revenge in the face of relentless assault: "Murder attended all their successes: not only men but women and children were sacrificed to their fury, and even people of their own colour, if unconnected with them."[209] Maroons carried out coordinated campaigns to seize firearms and

[204] Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial* (1793), 2:59.

[205] Walter C. Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas: Identity, Culture, and Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 6.

[206] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: New Press, distributed by W.W. Norton, 2000 [1969]).

[207] Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 5th ed., 1:527.

[208] Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 5th ed., 1:527.

[209] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:34.

rations from the colonists. By 1733, Cudjoe made known his political savvy and tactical prowess by forming an alliance with the Windward Maroons. Soon after, the government established outposts in the center and east of the island in order to surveil and protect against attacks. Knowing that it faced a personnel crisis in the militia, the colonial government opted to establish independent companies for defense, augmented by "a number of confidential negroes, called Black-shot, Mulattoes, and Indians."[210]

Thus commenced what John Stewart referred to as "a perpetual state of savage warfare."[211] The Maroons' guerrilla warfare tactics quickly began to exhaust the capabilities of the colonial defense. Of the colonists' defense, Stewart reflected, "Parties were sent in pursuit of them [the Maroons], and engagements often took place between these and this banditti with various success, but generally in favour of the Maroons, they being more accustomed to traverse the mountainous woods, and better acquainted with the fastnesses and retreats they afforded."[212] Dallas described Cudjoe's methods in greater detail: "The grand object of a Maroon chief in war was to take a station in some glen, or, as it is called in the West Indies, Cockpit, enclosed by rocks and mountains nearly perpendicular, and to which the only practicable entrance is by a very narrow defile."[213] The Maroons used the natural environment to their distinct advantage, weaponizing their intimate knowledge of the island's topography to create a "rival geography" meant for war.[214] The Maroons laid claim to the very cracks and fissures of the colonial

[210] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:38.

[211] Stewart, *An Account of Jamaica*, 197.

[212] Stewart, *An Account of Jamaica*, 197.

[213] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:39.

[214] Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

landscape to enact insurgent practices of freedom and survival. These impenetrable Maroon enclaves, however, were not conceptually distinct from the space of the slave pen or the plantation, but rather inextricably linked in the colony's spatial political economy. Whereas the plantation was built around a geography of containment, represented materially in the form of shackles, restraints, and carefully managed routines of manual labor, the Maroon enclave was a counterweight to slavery's spatial and political logic of confinement. The Cockpit Country, so skillfully traversed by the Maroons over decades of conflict, enabled a distinct form of insurgent politics to prolong the Maroons' survival in the wilderness.

The Maroons' ability to manipulate their natural environment to secure a strategic advantage against the British was shrewd, amounting to a weaponization of the natural landscape. There was only one way into or out of their hideaway in the rocky Cockpit Country. "Such are," wrote Dallas, "the natural fortifications in which the Maroons secured themselves in times of danger, and from which it has been ever found so difficult to dislodge them."[215] The result was that they were relatively easy to trace; one had only to find the well-worn path to their den. But the Maroons were not easily taken by surprise. The passage, "which looks like great fissure made through a rock by some extraordinary convulsion of Nature," was so narrow that only one person could traverse it at a time.[216] The Maroons relied on the natural camouflage created by the landscape to set a trap that would ensnare their pursuers. Alerted by the intelligence provided by lookouts who scouted the area, the Maroons would lay in wait for any trespasser, "covered by the underwood, and behind the rocks and roots of trees."[217] British

[215] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:40.

[216] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:41.

[217] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:41.

soldiers frequently walked right into their trap, crafted from "many windings […] designedly made for the purpose of exposing the assailants to the attacks of the different parties in the ambush."[218] If a group of British soldiers opened fire on the Maroons, they would find themselves under attack from invisible enemies on all sides before the Maroons would "vanish almost unseen before their enemies have reloaded."[219] "Such was the nature of the Maroon-war," mused Dallas.[220]

The Maroons' bait-and-switch rendered them practically impervious to conventional assault. Not merely evidence of their resourcefulness and strategy, the Maroons' tactical use of the environment provides insight into their particular worldview. Rocks, trees, and brush were more than features of the landscape; they were tools of concealment and artifacts of survival for a community under constant pursuit. This was, however, not a collective solely committed to bare survival; the Maroons, under Cudjoe's leadership, sought to instate their own political order in colonial Jamaica—one that ran in parallel to, but always in tension with, the colonial order. This was the shadowy underside of British colonialism, a densely plotted and painstakingly coordinated network of hideouts, lookouts, and alliances. They would not seek to overthrow colonialism, but rather to carve out their own space of authority in the very cracks and fissures of the environment. The Maroons dueled on multiple planes: at stake in their struggle, too, was an entire cosmology. Dallas observed that even among the enslaved who were loyal to the Maroons but nevertheless remained on the plantations, the Maroons "exercised a dominion by the

[218] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:41-42.

[219] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:42.

[220] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:42.

influence of Obeah, and made them subservient to their designs."[221] The tyranny of the slaveholding class co-existed on plantations with the spiritual authority that resided in African diasporic religion and could not be so readily seized by the English.[222]

Dallas was clearly in awe at Cudjoe's acumen as a leader as he noted the evolution of the Maroons' strategy over time: "Plunder had been the original spring of their enterprizes, but when they found themselves pursued, and attacked in the very woods, every consideration became absorbed in the passion of revenge."[223] Though Dallas saw the Maroons' aggression as a sign of blood-thirst, their banditry served greater ends: establishing a sense of order and justice in unfamiliar territory. These were efforts pursued by people of African descent throughout the Atlantic world.[224] That plunder might accurately describe African *marronage* and not English colonialism likely reflected the prejudice through which Dallas viewed the Maroons' political project. It lacked the authority of a crown, though it relied on violence and coercion just the same.

Following the colonial government's construction of barracks, Cudjoe reorganized and deserted the Blue Mountains, choosing a new location for the Maroons' main camp. His preferred site was Trelawny, strategically located "near the entrance of the great cockpits to the North-West, the first of which, called Petty River Bottom, now well known, was accessible by a

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[221] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:34.

[222] See Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[223] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:34.

[224] On Africans' notions of justice related to the slave trade, see John Thornton, "African Political Ethics and the Slave Trade," in *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa and the Atlantic*, ed. D. R. Peterson (Oxford, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 58-93.

very narrow defile."[225] Regrouping at Trelawny placed the Maroons in prime position to conduct raids throughout nearby St. James's, Hanover, and Westmoreland, and St. Elizabeth's parishes. In addition, Cudjoe discharged a group under Accompong based just north of St. Elizabeth's parish. To further evade the advances of the colonial militia, the Maroons would send out parties in all directions and even stationed decoy groups at their old grounds. They continued their banditry all the while concealing the fact of their relocation. Cudjoe also created a second auxiliary group of Maroons, which he placed under the leadership of his "brother" Accompong.[226] "In this situation," wrote Dallas, "did these people maintain themselves in a state of savage freedom for several years, living in indolence while their provisions lasted, and ravaging the country when excited by their wants."[227]

Though Dallas purported to offer a more balanced account of the Maroons than Long, he nevertheless relied on evocative and exaggerated language to describe their activities during this period: "In their inroads they exercised the most horrid barbarities. The weak and defenceless, whenever surprised by them, fell victims to their thirst of blood; and, though some were more humane than others, all paid implicit obedience to the command of a leader, when that was given to imbrue their hands in blood."[228] Dallas remained silent on the matter of blood shed by white hands on plantations throughout the colonies, preferring instead to to dwell on how the Maroons existed for several years in their so-called "state of savage freedom."[229] The savagery of Maroon

[225] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:43-44.

[226] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:44-45. It is not clear whether Cudjoe and Accompong were biologically related.

[227] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:45.

[228] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:45.

[229] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:45.

freedom likely derived from the fact that their exercise of violence was not sanctioned by the colonial state rather than the mere fact of coercion.

It was the threat of this so-called "savage freedom" that prompted Governor Trelawny to instruct Colonel Guthrie and Captain Sadler to seek an audience with Cudjoe in 1738 to negotiate an end to the Maroon challenge. Though there were multiple distinct bodies of Maroons, Governor Trelawny thought them all to be allied under Cudjoe's leadership.[230] Dallas noted that "the appellation of Maroons had been given indiscriminately to all the tribes of them," confirming that this coalition was in all likelihood more imagined than real.[231] Moreover, Dallas' remark suggests that the very idea of the "Maroon" was itself a colonial construct, an elusive cypher that reveals more about how colonial officials looked upon the Maroons than the Maroons' own self-conception. The "Maroons" imagined by Trelawny were an amalgamation of colonial resentment, racialized fear, and reactionary panic. Nevertheless, Trelawny's reaction to the imagined "Maroon" would have material consequences for the colony over the next several decades.

Facing pressure from white settlers who demanded a way of life unburdened by Maroon hostilities, Governor Trelawny pursued a quick resolution to the Maroon crisis. Thus, on March 1, 1738, Cudjoe, Guthrie, and Sadler settled on the agreement that would comprise the "Articles of Pacification with the Maroons of Trelawney [sic] Town." The occasion was met with distrust from both sides. On that day, Guthrie and Sadler cautiously marched their troops to the designated meeting spot that had been agreed upon with the Maroons, a large cotton tree

[230] Lauren Benton notes that European accounts often attributed a greater degree of political centralization to maroon organizations than actually existed. See Benton, "The Legal Regime," 51.

[231] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:46.

standing at the entrance of the defile leading to Petit River. There, Cudjoe had assembled his men atop the rocks that surrounded the narrow passage to the defile. Prepared to strike at any sign of danger, the Maroon soldiers watched silently as the troops processed through the passageway. While the Maroon women and children gathered inside of the cockpit, shielded from any sudden outbreak of violence, groups of Maroon guards took up posts at designated points up to two miles away from the site. Once Guthrie announced himself as a representative of the governor approaching to make peace with Cudjoe, one of the Maroons responded, requesting that Guthrie keep his troops at a distance. Dr. Russell, the appointed ambassador for the governor, approached to request Cudjoe. In typical Maroon fashion, Cudjoe materialized on the rocks above Russell seemingly from nowhere, his horn and knife at his sides. Bare-chested and covered in dust from the cockpits, Cudjoe began to interrogate Russell before getting any closer. Once he was satisfied that Russsell did not intend to double cross him, Cudjoe agreed to enter negotiations with Colonel Guthrie.[232]

As Dallas described it, the chilling suspense of the final meeting between Guthrie and Cudjoe owed in large part to the peace process taking place in a natural environment reimagined through the prism of war. For the English militia processing toward the meeting location, "on a spot the most favourable to action in [Cudjoe's] mode of war," threats to their security were built into a landscape that had been mastered by the Maroons.[233] The Maroon warriors stood "on the ledges of rocks that rose almost perpendicularly to a great height, on a ground which, compared to those precipices, might be called a plain," prepared to initiate an attack on the English at the

[232] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:48-55.

[233] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1: 49.

sign of any challenge to the peaceful nature of the proceedings.[234] The narrow passage traversed by Guthrie and his men forced them to make their way single file, rendering them vulnerable to the Maroons "rolling down large rocks at both ends [of the passage] and afterwards to have crushed them to death by the same means."[235] Rather than reinforcing a romanticized notion of an affinity with the environment, the Maroons' mastery of the natural landscape lended legitimacy to their demands for autonomy. Put another way, the Maroons' weaponization of the landscape became a political resource used in their negotiations with colonial authorities. While in the mid-seventeenth century, one English general commented that due to their "having no moral sense" and their failure at "understanding the laws and customs of civil nations, we know not how to capitulate or treat with any of them," by 1738, they had merited the privilege of diplomatic negotiations.[236] Through the carefully staged choreography of warfare, the Maroons were able to undergo a process of political refashioning in what Kathleen Wilson describes as "the first revolution in the age of revolutions."[237]

Whether or not the various Maroon bands throughout Jamaica were actually united under his leadership, Trelawny's singling out of Cudjoe as a spokesman set the groundwork for the Maroons' ability to enter into negotiations with the British as equals. The process of treatymaking with Cudjoe, in other words, codified "the Maroons" as a political category in colonial Jamaica, as similar treaties had done for Maroons throughout the Latin America and the

[234] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1: 49.

[235] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1: 49.

[236] Quoted in Bryan Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, i-ii.

[237] Kathleen Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom: Maroons and the Colonial Order in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica and the Atlantic Sound," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2009), 86. This claim is belied by Steve Pincus' study of England's Revolution of 1688-89 as the first modern revolution. See Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

Caribbean. Just as the 1670 treaty of Madrid transformed the English from lawless pirates to legitimate settlers in the eyes of the Spanish empire, so too did the Maroon treaties of 1738/9 recast the Maroons as legitimate participants in England's empire.[238] Dallas believed Cudjoe's group to have been diminishing in its strength and willingness to continue war with the colonial government, asserting that Cudjoe "had for some time been in a state of want and despondency."[239] If true, then, the treaty ensured the survival of what nevertheless remained Jamaica's most formidable Maroon community even as it provided a precedent for their governability.

The treaty spelled out that the Maroons "shall be for ever hereafter in a perfect state of freedom and liberty," but the freedom outlined by this agreement was revealed to be far from perfect.[240] The Maroons' particular freedom, in fact, required precise delineation in the treaty with all of the appropriate caveats and conditions. This was not a natural freedom, but a highly contingent one. In practical terms, the treaty laid out the Maroons' rights to territory, commerce, and limited autonomy in the distribution of justice. It formalized the Maroons' freedom from re-enslavement, with the exception of those enslaved persons who had been added to their numbers in the previous two years, whom the Maroons were to repatriate. Moreover, the treaty conscripted the Maroons into the protection of the colony, stipulating that they would work to suppress any internal rebellions and defend against foreign invasion. Finally, the Maroons would host two white superintendents to monitor their activities.[241]

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[238] On the Treaty of Madrid, see Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica*, ch. 8.

[239] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1: 57.

[240] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:59.

[241] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:58.

The end of the conflict marked at the same time an exercise in colonial statecraft and an assertion of African diasporic political ideologies in colonial America. Oral histories of the peacemaking process recall a fetish oath of which the documentary record bears only hazy allusion. Anthropologists have focused on the incommensurability of Maroon and British conceptions of the treaty, noting the disparate epistemologies that converged to halt warfare. Colonel Guthrie "[m]ade peace by sticking his arm and the arm of the Maroon office, caught the blood into a silver cup which was made into punch with wine and drunken by both party."[242] While the written treaty fits within British practices of lawmaking, the blood oath that was said to have cemented the agreement between Cudjoe and Guthrie held its own political and sacred meanings for the Maroons.[243] At other times, a blood oath was used to incorporate new Maroons into the community as a demonstration of loyalty and extension of political belonging.[244] Likewise, the oath that ended the Anglo-Maroon War that began in 1729 sutured the Maroon community to the colonial state in something akin to a patron-client relationship.[245] Rather than

[242] Colonel H. A. Rowe, July 13, 1937, in Gerard L. McLaughlin, *Jesuitana Jamaica: Historical Profiles, 18837-1996* (Kingston: Arawak Publications). Quoted in Kenneth M. Bilby, *True-Born Maroons*, 275. Other accounts state that the blood was mixed with rum rather than wine. See Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), 277.

[243] Bilby, "Swearing by the Past"; and Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty as Sacred Charter."

[244] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*. Oaths also played a role in Tacky's revolt (1760). See Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:465. In a more generic mention of oaths associated with Coromantee conspiracies, Long writes, "When assembled for the purposes of conspiracy, the obeiah-man [sic], after various ceremonies, draws a little blood from every one present; this is mixed in a bowl with gunpowder and grave dirt; the fetishe or oath is administered, by which they solemnly pledge themselves to inviolable secrecy, fidelity to their chiefs, and to wage perpetual war against their enemies; as a ratification of their sincerity, each person takes a sup of the mixture, and this finishes the solemn rite. Few or none of them have ever been known to violate this oath, or to desist from the full execution of it, even although several years may intervene." Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:473. According to Bryan Edwards, oaths were also taken by women as a test of infidelity: "This test is frequently administered to their wives, on the suspicion of infidelity, and the resemblance which it bears to the trial of jealousy by the bitter water described in the book of Numbers (chap. v.) is a curious and striking circumstance." Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 2:67.

[245] Barbara Kopytoff notes that this was a "patron-client relationship with flexible parameters for there was no clear precedent or model for either side to follow." Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty as Sacred Charter," 50. Refer also to

disparate and irreconcilable modes of negotiation, the treaty process was an example of a *legal fetish* that revealed the encounter between colonial authority and the Maroons as an exchange, an entanglement that intensified state power even as it generated new possibilities for the Maroons to navigate within, around, and beyond that power. This encounter reimagined both the colonial state's techniques of governmentality and the Maroons as political subjects. As Lauren Benton has argued, agreements between Maroons and colonial states reflected "plural political and legal orders" that "reproduced familiar African political arrangements whereby communities in diaspora controlled their own internal affairs while referring specific types of offenses to resident rulers."[246]

This legal fetish, rather than constituting a simple concession, formalized the Maroons' status as an intermediary between the free white and enslaved black populations of colonial Jamaica and, consequently, reflected back the fragile nature of colonial rule.[247] The Maroons came to occupy a privileged political position that served to police the boundary between the free and the enslaved, literally and figuratively. At the same time, this codification of their role in the colony granted the Maroons an opportunity to achieve a sense of rootedness; it made possible a more stable political community that would facilitate social reproduction largely on their own terms. The stipulations of the treaty, moreover, did not merely call forth a world in which the

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Walter Rucker's argument that blood oaths initiated "by enslaved commoners throughout the Gold Coast diaspora exemplify new sociopolitical formations and visions." Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas,* 184. In contrast to Rucker, I am less interested in blood oaths as "weapons of the weak" than as performatives that acted upon both Maroon political subjectivities and the colonial state. For a perspective on Jamaican Maroon blood oaths that emphasizes their role in the reconstitution of political community in diaspora, see Jessica A. Krug, "Social Dismemberment, Social (Re)membering: *Obeah* Idioms, Kromanti Identities and the Trans-Atlantic Politics of Memory, c. 1675-Present," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 4 (2014): 537-558.

[246] Benton, "The Legal Regime of the South Atlantic World," 51-52.

[247] Kenneth Bilby observes the Maroon oral histories maintain that the Maroons actually emerged victorious from the war upon the conclusion of the treaties. See Bilby, *True-Born Maroons*, 263.

shaky ground of colonial authority magically settled into a place of stillness. Binding the colonial state to the Maroon body politic through diplomatic negotiation and sacred ritual entailed a particular set of affects—trust, conciliation, deference, and loyalty. The fetishism of the law enacted a promise, what Sara Ahmed refers to as "an assurance, a positive declaration intended to give confidence and trust that an expectation will be met."[248] Within that promise was embedded a notion of a future in which the Maroons would exercise their independence and autonomy.

The affective weight of this legal fetish emerges even in British accounts of the peacemaking process. Though the colonial archive bears no trace of the blood pact, it nevertheless insists on a different performance of reconciliation. According to Dallas, upon meeting Colonel Guthrie, Cudjoe "threw himself on the ground, embracing Guthrie's legs, kissing his feet, and asking his pardon.."[249] In this moment, the famed Maroon chief "seemed to have lost all his ferocity, and to have become humble, penitent, and abject."[250] This account, at odds with both subsequent retellings by the Maroons and other written accounts by the British that foregrounded Cudjoe's formidable nature, imagined a display of deference that would have been befitting of what the British saw as an extension of the gift of freedom. Unfortunately, this is the version of the story that has shaped subsequent retellings of the origins of the Jamaican

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[248] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 29. My reading of the oath and treaty as promises emerging from distinct political traditions draws on Emily Owens' work on racialized sexual commerce in the antebellum US slave market, in which she describes promises of freedom as affective objects that were traded on the market. Emily A. Owens, "Fantasies of Consent: Black Women's Sexual Labor in 19th Century New Orleans," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2015). If Owens is concerned in her work with object formation, I am taking up questions of the role of affect in subject formation. While the oath and treaty were not objects to be bought and sold, they did enact certain possibilities for the Maroons as political subjects through a set of agreements that could be fulfilled or broken.

[249] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:56.

[250] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:56.

Maroons. In this account, the treaty was for the British an extension of benevolence towards the battle-weary Maroons. It would only make sense, then, that Dallas' imaging of the treaty would include a deferential Cudjoe. In this scene, Cudjoe was the grateful recipient of "the gift of freedom," enacted through the treaty as "a cluster of promises" that would "[produce] events, new effective forms of action, practice, organization, and so forth, far beyond what the gift of freedom claims to do."[251]

Governor Trelawny's attempt to constitute the Maroons as a political category consisting of allies rather than adversaries exposed the fiction of racial mastery and the ironies of an imperial enterprise founded on plunder. Rather than viewing the treaty as a resolution, we might instead situate it as one crucial turning point amidst the ongoing crises of colonialism, warfare, and slavery that produced Jamaica the Atlantic world arenas of social and political upheaval. Doing so serves to interrupt notions of resistance, accommodation, loyalty, and betrayal that have framed histories of the Maroons and instead bring into focus how their complex political subjectivity in the context of a pluralistic legal environment reveals the painstaking labor that went into naturalizing racial subjugation and imperial sovereignty in a colony a majority black and overwhelmingly militant population.

Ultimately, the colonial governmentality enacted by the treaty generated the terms of its own subversion, as the granting of quasi-sovereignty for the Maroons set the stage for an even more cataclysmic upheaveal that would in 1795 throw the colonial state into crisis.[252] Though it purported to induct the Maroons into a perfect state of freedom, the legal fetish bound the

[251] Mimi Thi Nguyen, *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 12.

[252] My understanding of how the entanglements of insurgent and entrenched forms of citizenship produce new forms of violence and exclusion follows James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

colonial state to the Maroons in a gesture of mutualism and reciprocity in ways that would reproduce the very crises of security they promised to manage. Peace became a prelude to war.

Chapter Three

Promises: Fear, Distrust, and War in Jamaica, 1739-1796

George Walpole was worried. Though he considered himself a man of his word, the British Army major-general faced a terrible dilemma at the conclusion of Jamaica's Maroon War of 1795-96—one that threatened to undermine his fiercely guarded integrity and trustworthiness. The Trelawny Maroons had finally surrendered in their battle over the 1739 treaty, but the colonial assembly wanted them gone for good. There was just one problem: Walpole had already assured the Maroons that they would be able to return to Trelawny Town once they surrendered. He confessed in a letter to Jamaica's lieutenant governor at the end of December 1795, "I was obliged to accede, on my oath: I promised a secret article, that they should not be sent off the island."[253] Broken promises, then, bookended the saga that marked the end of the Trelawny Maroons' residence in the colony; a war that began with the alleged breach of one agreement would conclude with the disregard of another.

But what allowed for the violation of such solemn oaths? How did the desacralization of a sanctified object occur by the end of eighteenth century, enabling the removal of the Trelawny Maroons from Jamaica altogether? The colonial government had remained steadfast in their adherence to the terms of the treaty agreed upon with the Leeward Maroons in 1739; until 1795, when Trelawny Town went to war against the colonists, the Maroons generally enjoyed a profitable and peaceful alliance with Jamaica's wealthy planter class. For over fifty years, planters and Maroons existed in relative harmony, allied in their attempts to regulate the

[253] Letter from Walpole, 25 December, 1795, CO 137/96, TNA.

enslaved population and quell their attempts at insurrection.[254]

But by the time that war broke out between the Trelawny Maroons and the colonial state, fears of revolution had swept the slaveholding colonies of the West Indies. The bloody uprising in the French colony of Saint-Domingue forced slaveholders throughout the Americas to confront the possibilities of black revolutionary violence, but nowhere did this fear surface more acutely than colonies like Jamaica in which the majority of the population was enslaved. Inter-imperial conflicts with France, too, shook planters' sense of security. While Jamaica's Maroons believed themselves to be protected from incursions on their freedoms due to their treaty rights, the specter of racial violence proved too formidable a threat to black self-determination in an age that seemed to democratize the promise of liberation.

Besides the influence of the Haitian Revolution in heightening colonial tensions, an altogether different set of historical shifts enabled the invalidation of the Trelawny Maroons' claims to rights based on the treaty. By the end of the eighteenth century, Enlightenment conceptions of human difference supplied a set of ideological justifications for disregarding political claims made by those relegated to the realm of the primitive. The Trelawny Maroons' perceived lack of civility undercut their hard-won claims to autonomy, effectively nullifying the solemn agreement that had sealed their fetish oath. In its place, a set of resolutions recast the Trelawny Maroons as internal enemies of the colony whose continued presence would only undermine peace and stability.[255] The very act of narrating the war in its immediate aftermath reflected changing norms in the legal and intellectual foundations of British imperialism. If the

[254] For an overview of planter-Maroon relations during the interwar period, see Helen McKee, "From Violence to Alliance: Maroons and White Settlers in Jamaica, 1739-1795," *Slavery & Abolition*, 39, no. 1 (2018): 27-52.

[255] On the Trelawny Maroons as internal enemies, see Balcarres to Walpole, March 16, 1796, CO 137/96; and Balcarres to Portland, April 20, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

Trelawny Maroons were truly savage, as indicated by their supposed failures to enact appropriate stewardship of their land and treat the women among them with acceptable levels of dignity, then they could be cast into a distinct moral and legal universe that rendered them unable to access the rights originally afforded to them by the treaty.[256] The resolutions attesting to the Trelawny Maroons' inherent unsuitability for self-governance therefore took on qualities of the fetish, becoming "an abstraction made real, a highly animated abstraction to which is attributed the mythic, numinous capacity to configure the world in its own image."[257] These resolutions, parliamentary debates about the war, and its earliest published narratives performed the representational work necessary to qualify the Maroons for removal to Nova Scotia.

This chapter thus considers the diplomatic tensions that animated the Anglo-Maroon War of 1795-96 to illuminate how performances of threat and reliability converged in ways that catapulted the Trelawny Maroons into an odyssey through the British Atlantic world. Rather than attempt to discern the "true" causes of the war, I seek to understand how fears of revolutionary conspiracy and ideologies of difference conditioned political and military strategy for both the Maroons and the British. Variously interpreted as a war catalyzed by intergenerational conflict among the Maroons, disagreements with the colonial state over the legitimate succession of political authority, and disputes with planters over territory and corporal punishment, the war ultimately centered on ideas about allegiance and political incorporation.[258]

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[256] On universalism and international law, see Arthur Weststeijn, "'Love Alone is Not Enough': Treaties in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Colonial Expansion," in *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900*, ed. Saliha Belmessous (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 19-44; Richard Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels in the European Imperial Expansion," in Empire and Modern Political Thought, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Camrbidge University Press, 2012), 61-83.

[257] Christopher Tomlins and John Comaroff, "'Law as...': Theory and Practice in Legal History," *UC Irvine Law Review* 1, no. 3 (2011), 1066.

[258] Historical accounts of Jamaica's Maroon War of 1795-96 (often referred to as the Second Maroon War) include:

By de-centering questions of causality to focus the war's outcomes, this chapter sheds light on the political anxieties and fantasies that animated encounters between the Maroons and the British colonial state. The events that occurred in Jamaica during the 1790s evidenced a profound historical shift that constituted not a European revolution, but an African diasporic one that drew on longstanding political idioms that were adapted to changing political circumstances. If the formation of the Trelawny Maroons as a distinct political body was mediated by the creation of a legal fetish, then their exile from Jamaica reflected a shift to imperialist rationalism that privileged different sorts of diplomatic and militaristic rituals and objects. Caught in a political struggle with the British mediated by secret promises and treaties, the Trelawny Maroons looked backward to a long tradition of oath-making as a source of political authority even as they looked forward toward an unlikely horizon of possibility generated by the conditions of their exile.[259]

Thick with fog and surrounded by mountains and rocky precipices, Trelawny Town

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Alan E. Furness, "The Maroon War of 1795," *Jamaican Historical Review* 5, no. 2 (1965): 30-49; Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); A. D. Dridzo, "The Origin of the Second Maroon War 1795-1796: A Planter's Conspiracy?," *Jamaica Journal* 6, no. 1 (1977): 21-25; David Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s: New Light on the Causes of Slave Rebellions," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1987): 274-299; Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009 [1982]), ch. 17; Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1988), ch. 7; Jeffrey A. Fortin, "'Blackened Beyond Our Native Hue': Removal, Identity and the Trelawney Maroons on the Margins of the Atlantic World, 1796-1800," *Citizenship Studies* 10, no. 1 (2006): 5-34; Kathleen Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom: Maroons and the Colonial Order in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica and the Atlantic Sound," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (Jan. 2009): 45-86; Sara E. Johnson, "'You Should Give Them Blacks to Eat': Waging Inter-American Wars of Torture and Terror," *American Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2009): 65-92; Miles Ogborn, "A War of Words: Speech, Script, and Print in the Maroon War of 1795-6," *Journal of Historical Geography* 37, no. 2 (2011): 203-215; Paul Youngquist, "The Cujo Effect," in Joan B. Landes, Paula Young Lee, and Paul Youngquist, eds., *Gorgeous Beasts: Animal Bodies in Historical Perspective* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 57-72; Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons Between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), ch. 1-2.

[259] For a different take on the centrality of oaths in the conflict concerned with how colonial administrators invoked them as part of a broader British imperial "oral culture," see Ogborn, "A War of Words."

consisted of 1500 acres of land approximately twenty miles south of Montego Bay. There were two ways to get there, neither of which presented easy passage: either from the northeast through St. James's parish, or through Trelawny parish from the northwest. To reach the town from St. James's parish, you would ride a mule or horse from Montego Bay through John's Hall, passing through mountains, cane fields, and wooded areas before reaching Vaughansfield. From there, the route veered south, up the steep hill for half a mile, requiring the careful traversal of the rocky ledge that followed until you reached the town. Otherwise, you could make your way fourteen miles south of Falmouth to Spring-Vale, then through two rough grazing pens, Chatsworth and Schaw Castle, until hitting the steep rise that would lead, again, to a stony ridge that opened up to Trelawny Town.[260] Once there, you could see the thatched cottages forming a network throughout the town, connected by well-worn foot paths. Attached to the houses were the provision grounds in which the Maroons grew cocoa, cassava, coffee, and other crops. The larger houses with shingle roofs and flooring belonged to the Maroon chiefs, captains, and their families. Cattle, plantain trees, fern and foxtail grass were scattered all around. The air carried the scent of "jirked," or smoked, hog and pigeon. Listen and you could hear the sound of the *abeng*, the horns used by the Maroons to send messages across long distances.[261]

It was here that the Maroons settled into the rhythms of daily life: subsistence agriculture, trading with planters, and tracking down runaway slaves. In the post-treaty era, the Trelawny Maroons were able to make a home in the rocky cockpits, managing to reproduce themselves biologically and socially. The collective distinctiveness of the Maroons, viewed as both phenotypically and temperamentally different from the enslaved population, was often remarked

[260] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:79-81, 84.

[261] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:88-91.

upon by contemporary observers. Their cultural and sexual autonomy stood at the center of how the British perceived their social and political character. John Stewart considered the maroons to be "more comely in their features than most of the other blacks" at the same time that he noted "there is a something in their looks which indicates wildness and ferocity."[262] For him, it was the Maroons' "wild and wandering life" and their habit of "not mixing so much with general society as the other negroes" that resulted in their particular appearance.[263] According to Dallas, they were "blacker, taller, and in every respect handsomer" than enslaved black people, who had "intermixed with Eboe negroes and others."[264]

While concerns of population management lay at the heart of British attitudes toward Maroon cultural difference, sexual reproduction undoubtedly also reinforced the Maroons' internal sense of belonging and shaped their engagement with colonial society. Beginning as a tale of guerrilla insurgency, the narrative of the Maroons was just as much one of social reproduction through family formation, consistent with the varied displays of cultural adaptability found throughout the African-Atlantic diaspora.[265] The emphasis on militarism—and by extension, androcentrism—within the documentary record of Jamaica's Maroons reflects little more than the cycle of security crises generated by the conjuncture of slavery and colonialism, obscuring the everyday processes of social reproduction that only began with Maroon warfare but truly flourished within the Cockpit Country, beyond the sights of colonial

[262] Stewart, *View of the Past and Present State*, 207.

[263] Stewart, *View of the Past and Present State*, 207.

[264] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:88.

[265] On the inherent cultural malleability of social groups throughout the Atlantic world, see James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2011): 181-208.

bureaucrats. While much of the gender history of *marronage* focuses on exceptional female Maroon military leaders, women contributed to the economy of Maroon society in a wide range of ways, including their agricultural, reproductive, and non-reproductive sexual labors.[266]

Extant sources include no first-hand accounts of individual Maroons' own thoughts about sex or family, but the demographic evidence of their increase bears out the notion that kinship surely shaped their social history. Though the number of Maroons dropped in the decade following the treaty—from just short of 1,000 in 1739 to 664 in 1749 by one tally—their population eventually began to re-stabilize and increase naturally over the ensuing decades. By 1773, a census showed that the maroons counted 928 men, women, and children among their number, including 289 "breeding women" (women of childbearing age).[267] By one count, the population of Trelawny Town grew from 276 in 1749 to 660, "exclusive of their numerous children by female slaves, residing on the […] plantations."[268]

Family formation, reflective of crucial social distinctions of gender and generation, served as a vehicle for radical world-making. Reproductivity was necessary for the Maroons to fully enjoy the promises of liberty extended by the Anglo-Maroon treaties. It invested greater meaning to the land allotted to the Maroons, which provided a material structure to their household-centered economic life and could be passed down through successive generations.

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[266] For a general overview summarizing the themes of the gender history of *marronage*, see Alvin O. Thompson, "Gender and *Marronage* in the Caribbean," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 39, no. 2 (2005): 262-289.

[267] Richard B. Sheridan, "The Maroons of Jamaica: 1730-1830: Livelihood, Demography and Health," 157-158. By Dallas' count, there were less than 600 Maroons in 1739, 885 by 1770, 1028 in 1773, and 1400 in 1788. See Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:120. Michael Sivapragasam reports data aligning with Dallas' account, showing just over 600 Maroons after the signing of the treaties an an increase to almost 1300 in the 1790s. "After the Treaties: A Social, Economic and Demographic History of Maroon Society in Jamaica, 1739-1842," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Southampton, 2018), 56.

[268] Letter to Balcarres, Head Quarters Montego Bay, 25th Sep. 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

Moreover, intergenerational propagation always and everywhere entails a sense of futurity, containing a community's abiding sense of hope, aspiration, and uncertainty.

Indeed, the family seemed to be the primary unit of social organization among the Maroons, as Dallas observed when commenting on their political structure that Trelawny Town "consisted of a certain number of families collected together under a chief."[269] Steeped in the practice of polygyny, Maroon men were able to marry as many women as they support, though it was suspected that none had more than two wives.[270] The men split their time equally among their wives and children so as not to incite jealousy and as a means to ensure an equitable balance within their internal economy.[271]

The Maroons' families, though, were not confined to their town, as "many of them formed temporary connexions with the female slaves on the different plantations in the country."[272] In defiance of the treaty's restriction of Maroon settlement to their designated towns, some families even settled on their outskirts of plantations. Although Dallas found the Maroon men's tendency to father children who would be born enslaved consistent with "the character and disposition of negroes," he admitted that intimate ties with the Maroons might have enabled families to flee from slavery without fear of recapture.[273]

[269] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:94.

[270] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:111. Bryan Edwards, however, believed that the most powerful men in the community, likely chiefs, had up to six wives. See Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xxx.

[271] According to Dallas, "Each wife lived in turn with her husband two days, during which time the others cultivated their grounds, or carried their provisions to market: the property of each was distinct from that of the others, but the husband shared with all." Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:111.

[272] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:99. Dallas added in the second volume of his history that the Maroons "had children on some of the planters [sic] estates in a state of slavery." Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:125.

[273] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons, 1:*125-126.

These perceptions of the Maroons' reproductive autonomy, rooted as they were in the social fictions that informed eighteenth-century British notions of difference, underpinned ideas about the extent of their governability.[274] It was because of their successful propagation that the Trelawny Maroons could by the outbreak of the war be described as "a people enjoying the most uncontrollable state of freedom, possessing every comfort in life."[275] Bryan Edwards believed that the Maroons should not have been allotted their own territory by the treaties of 1739; instead, he argued, they "should have been encouraged by all possible means to frequent the towns and to intermix with the Negroes at large."[276] Intermixture would have, in this case, served as a mechanism for assimilation and the emergence of a more subdued and compliant population. Dallas, on the other hand, considered the Maroons' ethnogenesis in the post-treaty period central to the colonial state's ability to regulate the enslaved population. Without state-sanctioned Maroon self-determination as a means of enforcing social difference, he argued, enslaved people would have formed their own Maroon societies, which would have been better positioned to form alliances with the enslaved population.[277]

The Maroons' sexual economy extended beyond the household unit to include the exchange of sex for money and goods. Dallas observed that Maroon women, "as among other negroes, [...] had no scruples in offering themselves to white men in order to procure dress and

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[274] On the way that skin color and other aspects of phenotype interacted with other notions of cultural difference in eighteenth-century British thought, see Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race:Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); and Sharon Block, *Colonial Complexions: Race and Bodies in Eighteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

[275] Letter to Balcarres, Head Quarters Montego Bay 25th Sep. 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[276] Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xxiv.

[277] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:100-101.

finery, although they were naturally attached to lovers of their own complexion"[278] Dallas' comparison of the Maroons to "other negroes" referenced the general lasciviousness attributed to women of African descent. Slavery, particularly in the colonial West Indies, came under scrutiny for corrupting the morals of white men, as observed by Janet Schaw, who found it scandalous that "young black wenches lay themselves out for white lovers, in which they are but too successful."[279] Historians have debated whether enslaved women deliberately pursued sexual encounters with white men for their material benefit.[280] Whether or not the intimation that Maroon women did the same amounts to evidence of anti-colonial resistance, however, risks slipping into a "seductive narrative" of agency attained through sexuality.[281] These narratives of sexual resistance, Marisa Fuentes argues, occlude the pervasive, everyday violence that shaped the experiences of black women in colonial slaveholding societies.[282] Certainly, gendered vulnerability seemed to have shaped the quotidian experiences of Maroon women as it influenced the social structures governing intimacy. Dallas hinted at the violence Maroon women faced when he commented on the men's display of "brutality to their wives or children"

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[278] Dallas, *The Histoyr of the Maroons*, 1:118.

[279] Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal*

[280] Marietta Morrisey, for instance, writes that enslaved women in the West Indies sometimes "aggressively sought" sexual relationships with white men for economic gain. See Morrisey, *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 147. Barbara Bush, on the other hand, disagrees, speculating that only a small number of enslaved women would have disregarded their identification with the enslaved community to embrace such tactics. See Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 117.

[281] Marisa J. Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive," *Gender & History* 22, no. 3 (2010), 565.

[282] Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring," 568.

under the influence of alcohol.[283]

Transactional sex was just one way that the slave trade, colonialism, and *marronage* converged within "the changing political economy and geography of intimacy" to result in the adaptation of sexual practices and expressions of masculinity to shifting structures of power.[284] Transactional sexual contact with outsiders in particular may have constituted part of a diasporic political economy of intimacy. Bryan Edwards, for example, noted that the Maroons' extension of hospitality to visitors included "the offering their own daughters, by the first men among them, [...] and bringing the poor girls forward, with or without their consent, for the purpose of prostitution."[285] Distinct from prostitution, Edwards' description of Maroon women appointed to have sex with visitors aligns with the role occupied by the "public women" encountered by European travelers to the Gold Coast during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[286] An adaptation to the unequal access to women produced by the confluence of gerontocracy and patriarchy, "public women were meant to alleviate tensions in domestic, intergenerational politics" and also "became pawns in Euro-African trading relations."[287] The establishment of Maroon towns in Jamaica reproduced gendered inequalities within a context of material inequality and cross-cultural contact; as a result, Maroon men redeployed their sexual control

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[283] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:112.

[284] Mark Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 6.

[285] Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xxxi-xxxii.

[286] Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast c. 1650-1950," *Past & Present*, no. 156 (1997): 144-173.

[287] Akyeampong, "Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan," 151.

over women as a means of mediating their contact with powerful white men.[288] Brokering sexual intimacy with Maroon women as a ritual of hospitality served to unite men of different backgrounds and structural positions within the colony through a shared practice of sexual permissiveness.

But the Maroons' primary role in the colony was to apprehend runaway slaves. In this endeavor they were arguably quite successful, though their reputation could shift at the whims of the planters who came into contact with them. In one example of fidelity to their role as slave catchers, they brought to the attention of authorities the formation of a "Congo Settlement" comprised of fugitives from local estates.[289] Edwards found further evidence of the Maroons' barbarity in their pursuit of runaways, which he believed led them to "manifest a blood-thirstiness of disposition."[290] But their capture of runaways was also one of the main ways that the Maroons generated income.

The Maroons further proved their allegiance to the colony when in 1760 they helped to suppress the most devastating slave revolt Jamaica would witness in the eighteenth century. Edward Long and Bryan Edwards chronicled a coordinated series of uprisings by Coromantee slaves led by Tacky who hatched a plan to overthrow the planter class and seize control of the

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[288] For other examples of African women mediating mercantile relations through intimate relationships with European men, see Pernille Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Ty M. Reese, "Wives, Brokers, and Laborers: Women at Cape Coast, 1750-1800," in *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800*, ed. Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbell (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[289] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:101.

[290] Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xxxiv.

island, beginning with Beckford's plantation and Trinity estate in St. Mary's parish.[291] Believing their objective to be "the partition of the island into small principalities in the African mode; to be distributed among their leaders and men," Long described how the insurgents stole guns from Port Maria and made their way throughout the parish, recruiting enslaved people from plantations and slaughtering the white people they encountered along the way.[292] The rebels' numbers swelled to 400 before the colonial militia initiated their first attack. Eventually, the revolt spread to Westmoreland parish. The Scott's Hall Maroons mobilized in defense of the colony, eventually defeating the main group of rebels led by Tacky, who was killed by one of the Maroons. The demise of Tacky and Jamaica, one of the other rebel leaders, sufficiently weakened the revolt, causing many of the insurgents who remained to flee or commit suicide. Tacky's head was delivered to Spanish Town, where it was mounted on a pole before being claimed by his allies.[293]

It was not until 1795 that significant tensions would emerge between Maroons and colonists. Even then, only the maroons of Trelawny Town dared to challenge the dominant political order within the colony. But when the Trelawny Maroons declared war against Jamaica's colonial establishment, they did not do so in order to lay claim to any notion of universal liberty. Their struggle included no proclamation of their natural rights, no assertion of the lofty ideals of the Enlightenment, no circulation of political tracts attesting to the evils of

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[291] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:447; Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1801), 2:75. See also Craton, *Testing the Chains*, ch. 11; and Vincent Brown, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

[292] Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:447-448. See also Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 2:77-78.

[293] Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 2:457-458. They also supposedly ate Tacky. See Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial*, 1:545.

enslavement and its necessary abolishment. They drafted no declaration of independence, introduced no plan for a new structure of independent governance, offered no vision for taking control of Jamaica's system of agricultural production. There was no "Black Spartacus" who emerged from the Cockpit Country to rally the enslaved and deliver them from their bondage. The documentary archive of this conflict largely conveys unfounded tales of a French conspiracy spun by anxious colonial administrators who found their grasp on the Jamaican social order under constant threat. But the Anglo-Maroon War of 1795-96 was waged largely over the Trelawny Maroons' insistence that the colonial state uphold its solemn and sacred declaration to preserve their autonomy in governance and the administration of justice. And so this "revolution in a minor key" has been remembered as local a movement to restore a prior sense of the social order, a blip in an otherwise calm decade for the colony amid widespread slave revolt elsewhere, a victory for the planter class, and a site of imperial debates over just warfare.[294] The outcome of this war, however, would cause reverberations throughout the British Atlantic world, reaching to Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, as the Trelawny Maroons undertook measures of diplomacy to refigure the conditions of their political subjectivity.

The decade of the 1790s in Jamaica was marked simultaneously by growth in the plantation economy and marked social and political instability, conditions that, as one historian has observed, tended to correlate with rebelliousness among enslaved populations.[295] Increased sugar production corresponded with the greater importation of African laborers, placing a strain the colony's supplies of food. By this point, the export of sugar and coffee had distinguished

[294] The phrase "revolution in a minor key" appears in Saidiya Hartman, "The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 117, no. 3 (July 2018), 467.

[295] Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica."

Jamaica as Britain's most lucrative colony. The Maroon treaties contributed to the rapid escalation of profitability in Jamaica's trade in tropical commodities by opening up previously contested frontier territories for agricultural development. Securing these lands for the planter, but the expansion of agricultural also prompted territorial conflicts with the Maroon towns. More than the other Maroon towns involved in such disputes, Trelawny Town often failed to have these disagreements resolved in their favor.[296]

Unrest in Saint-Domingue, moreover, threatened to infect the enslaved population with a zeal for liberty, but refugees from the French colony proved more likely to spread disease than expose the colony to revolutionary fervor.[297] The reality of the matter, however, did little to abate the ongoing revolution's influence on Jamaican politics. When the Earl of Balcarres, Jamaica's Lieutenant Governor, wrote to the Duke of Portland on July 18, 1795, to inform him of an insurrection among the Trelawny Maroons, he attributed the cause of unrest to disputes with their new superintendent, but also worried that "if the minds of these mountaineers have been poisoned by emissaries, it may prove very fatal to this country."[298] Once Balcarres took over the governorship on April 30, 1795, he inherited a refugee crisis caused by the uprising in Saint-Domingue. By the end of May, there were 229 French families residing in Jamaica, 107 of which were receiving financial support from the colonial government.[299] At that time, Balcarres was certain that despite attempts "to introduce French principles into this island," the French

[296] On land disputes during the interwar period and the argument that, with the exception of Trelawny Town, the Maroons tended to prevail in these disputes, see Michael Sivapragasam, "After the Treaties: A Social, Economic and Demographic History of Maroon Society in Jamaica, 1739-1842," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Southampton, 2018), 77-85.

[297] Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica," 275.

[298] Balcarres to the Duke of Portland, July 18, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[299] Balcarres to the Duke of Portland, May 30, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

exiles had "made no impression at all."[300]

The more salient factor behind the Maroons' agitation seemed to be their disdain for Mr. Craskell, who had replaced Major John James as their superintendent. A crucial aspect of colonial oversight of the Maroons, the superintendency reflected the hybrid form of governance that shaped the Maroon towns. The superintendents lived in the Maroon towns, acted as liaisons between the Maroons and the colonial assembly, and enforced any colonial laws concerning the Maroons. They were tasked with announcing any new laws affecting the Maroon towns and, following the deaths of the original Maroon chiefs, enjoyed unprecedented influence over the various Maroon polities.[301] James had served as the much revered superintendent of Trelawny Town from 1763 until 1791, when his stellar record secured him an appointment as Superintendent-General over all the Maroon towns.[302] He set himself apart from other white men in the eyes of the Maroons based on his dexterity and feats of endurance. "Barefoot," Dallas wrote of James, "he equalled the speed of the hardiest Maroons over rocks and precipices, darting on with agility particular to himself."[303] James impressed his charges with displays of physical dominance directed at suppressing mischievous Maroons.[304] But despite the credibility he earned among the Maroons, James' record of absenteeism caused the House of Assembly to

[300] Balcarres to the Duke of Portland, May 30, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[301] On the increasing influence of the superintendents after Tacky's Revolt, see Sivapragasam, "After the Treaties," 70-74.

[302] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:134-135. James' father also commanded great respect among the Maroons. He was said to have possessed "an obeah-protecting power against bullets." Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:128.

[303] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:133.

[304] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:133-134.

dismiss him and appoint Craskell in his stead.[305]

With James ousted from his position, the Maroon captains gradually lost control over the town and Trelawny Town fell into disarray.[306] Widespread discontent arising from Craskell's superintendency compounded other tensions among the Maroons, further exacerbating the already tense state of affairs. One issue was the allegedly unjust punishment of two Maroons. In early July 1795, two men, identified as Maroons from Trelawny Town, were accused of killing hogs owned by a white planter. They were summarily punished by the whip following the accusation. To add insult to injury, the flogging was carried out by an enslaved man who had a score to settle owing to the fact that he had tried to run away but was returned to his owner by Maroons.[307] The two disgraced Maroons were then "laughed at, hissed, and hooted by the slaves" as they made their way back to Trelawny Town.[308]

The Trelawny Maroons maintained that this was a violation of the treaty, which preserved for their own governing bodies the adjudication of all offenses not subject to capital punishment. In the instance of any felony, such as theft, the justice of peace was to call a public trial before a jury ten days after the filing of a complaint.[309] It was also an affront to the community's honor, as their collective sense of dignity derived from being insulated from the abiding sense of corporal vulnerability experienced by the enslaved population. Public displays of violence were

[305] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:138.

[306] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:141.

[307] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:144-145.

[308] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:145.

[309] Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xv.

fundamental to the ways that social hierarchies were reinforced throughout colonial Jamaica.[310] When individual slaveholders inflicted punishment upon the enslaved, they did so with the authorization of the state.[311] The enactment of criminal punishment amounted to an everyday practice of producing differences of race and status. While the treaty of 1739 effectively assigned the Maroons to a social category distinct from both the enslaved and free whites, conscripting Maroons into the spectacle of punishment disturbed their sense of authority over the enslaved. Moreover, the act briefly vested an enslaved man with the power of the state, upsetting what Maroons would have perceived as their special relationship with the colonial government.

Over time, Balcaress became more convinced that the Trelawny Maroons had been mobilized as part of a French plot to destabilize British holdings in the West Indies.[312] Worried that the Maroons would enlist the assistance of enslaved people as well, he had a mind to assemble a corps of "all the strong idle Negroes" to mobilize them in defense of the colony.[313] In a letter dated July 23, he attributed his haste to suppress the Maroons to "intelligence that emissaries from the French had been in that country of the Maroons" upon being released from prison ships.[314] By October, the House of Assembly issued a proclamation to remove all French

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[310] Kathleen Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom: Maroons and the Colonial Order in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica and the Atlantic Sound," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2009): 45-86.

[311] Diana Paton, "Punishment, Crime, and the Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 4 (2001), 927.

[312] Balcarres to the Duke of Portland, July 21, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[313] Balcarres to the Duke of Portland, July 21, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[314] Balcarres to Portland, July 23, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

people from the island.[315]

In the end, however, the Maroons stood alone in their challenge to the colonial state. The Accompong Maroons refused to aid the Trelawny rebels, due in part to a longstanding conflict over which town should possess the physical copy of the 1739 treaty with the Leeward (Trelawny and Accompong) Maroons.[316] They instead took advantage of the outbreak of violence to reaffirm their intent to adhere fully to the treaty. The Accompong Maroons further demonstrated their loyalty to the empire by combining their renewal of the treaty with the baptism of their children.[317] The enslaved population likewise expected no loyalty from the Trelawny Maroons, who had long profited from foiling their attempts at securing freedom. The Trelawny Maroons were able to compel fewer than 100 enslaved people to their side, nearly all from plantations adjacent to their town and most under duress.[318] The runaways who did join them were bound to the Maroons by oath, as conveyed by one such man who testified after being captured that a Trelawny captain "gave him three cuts on the wrist and caught the blood in a calabash intending to make him drink it […] and swear not to turn to his master but to go about to get people to join them."[319]

The specter of French conspiracy was not the only aspect of the war's origins fueled by

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[315] Proclamation, King's House, October 8, 1795, CO 137/96, TNA.

[316] As Michael Sivapragasam notes, the colonial assembly did not officially recognize that the Leeward Maroons included two separate groups, one under the leadership of Cudjoe and the other led by Accompong, until 1756. Sivapragasm, "After the Treaties," 82.

[317] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:146, 156, 177-178.

[318] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:218. One man offered testimony that the Trelawny Maroons expected to eventually be joined by thousands of enslaved people. See The Examination of John Graham a mulatto man working as a carpenter in the Trelawny Maroon Town, August 29, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[319] The examination of William taken up on Friday the 14th August, 1795, at Spring Garden Estate, CO 137/95, TNA.

speculation and hyperbole. One observer insisted that "tho' the flogging [of] two of their people is made the ostensible reason of their taking up arms, it is certain that [the Trelawny Maroons] had exhibited great turbulence and dropped menaces a week previous that that punishment being inflicted on the two delinquents."[320] Moreover, the two Maroons who were humiliated in front of the crowd of enslaved people may or may not have rightfully belonged to Trelawny Town. Dallas reported that the Trelawny Maroons "afterwards declared that they wished for permission to hang both of them, having long considered them as run-aways and thieves."[321] Besides their grievances with Craskell and the treaty issue, the Maroons' declaration of war also cited insufficient land as a cause of their displeasure with the colonial government.[322] A greater allotment of land would have stimulated their economic productivity while also providing more space for their growing population, but there was no particular justification for their entitlement to increased territory, especially since the Maroons had supposedly begun encroaching on nearby plantations anyway. Moreover, disputes over land holdings had been going on for decades due to the inconsistency of official land surveys.[323]

The shift from the airing of political grievances to prolonged armed conflict by the end of 1795 was due in large measure to the fractured nature of the Trelawny polity, split along generational lines. A younger generation of Maroons was eager for battle and may have adopted an aggressive stance without the approval of their more pacific elders.[324] In emphasizing the

[320] Letter from Issac Laselles Winn Esquire to Lewis Cuthbert Esquire, Adelphi 26th July 1795, CO 138/95, TNA.

[321] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:162.

[322] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:141, 151.

[323] McKee, "From Violence to Alliance," 32-33. On land disputes, also see Sivapragasam, "After the Treaties," 77-85.

[324] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:176.

reckless behavior of the younger Maroons, however, extant sources overlook the severity of the colonial state's unsettling of the Maroons' particular notion of political authority. By removing James from the superintendency, the Assembly did not merely offend the fickle sensibilities of a group of Maroons who displayed favoritism towards a chosen leader, as the sources suggest; rather, they disregarded the Maroons' adherence to a specific model of authority rooted in a sacred lineage. John James's father had also served as superintendent over Trelawny Town and was renowned among the Maroons for his mastery of obeah. The elder James, who had fought against Cudjoe during the Maroon War of 1729-1739, was remembered and respected for his ability to deploy the sacred arts to deflect bullets.[325] To fulfill the role of superintendent, the Maroons were said to "require and love a man of undaunted courage, and one that will make them sensible of it when occasion requires."[326] While James had been "their idol," Craskell's inability to inspire the same sort of admiration among the Maroons made him "a very unfit person for that office."[327]

As Dallas explained, "The high opinion [the Maroons] entertained of the father's bravery and activity descended to the son, in whom they beheld all they so much respected and admired in their old enemy, and friendly Superintendent."[328] Here, Dallas perhaps unwittingly shed light on the significance of the Maroons' adherence to a lineage-based model of political authority, rather than a meritocratic one. Conflicts between hereditary and meritocratic authority had

[325] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:131.

[326] Letter from the custos of Trelawny Town to the Right Honourable Earl Balcarres, Negril by South 25th July 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[327] Letter from the custos of Trelawny Town to the Right Honourable Earl Balcarres, Negril by South 25th July 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[328] Dallas, *The History of the Marrons*, 1:133.

generated tensions among Akan state along the Gold Coast since the middle of the seventeenth century, owing to the spread of mercantilism and warfare as the slave export market intensified.[329] The rules governing political succession had long been a point of contention between the Maroon towns and the colonial state, but those conflicts primarily concerned the offices of colonel and captain.[330] The superintendency had always represented an intrusion of the state, but the reputation of the Jameses suggests that the Maroons adapted this position to their own internal sense of political legitimacy, which favored lineal succession premised on sacred authority.

The younger James's dismissal, then, marked a significant rupture in the Maroons' internal politics, perhaps allowing the other generational conflicts to which Dallas alluded to rise to fore. The event set off a crisis of political legitimacy that snowballed into an overarching breach of trust between the colonial state and the younger Maroons. After Balcarres detained six Trelawny captains at St. Ann's Bay in early August, the young Maroons "urged the breach of faith in the detention of the six captains as a reason to believe that none would be observed to themselves, and to dread the Governor's intention towards them."[331] An official statement delivered to the magistrates of Montego Bay declared on behalf of Trelawny Town that they "wish nothing else from the country but battle," though Dallas apparently had reason to believe this declaration of war was dictated to a white man by a group of inebriated Maroons.[332] Still,

[329] John Thornton, "War, the State, and Religious Norms in "Coromantee" Thought: The Ideology of an African American Nation," in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 184.

[330] Barbara Kopytoff, "Jamaican Maroon Political Organization: The Effects of the Treaties," *Social and Economic Studies* 25, no. 2 (1976), 94-96.

[331] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:176.

[332] Copy of the answer of the Maroons in reply to the letter sent them from the magistrates of Montego Bay, July 10,

the young Maroons prepared for war by sending the women and children into the woods and making threats on two nearby plantations.[333] The Jamaican Council of War readied themselves for the same, unanimously voting to declare martial law on August 3.[334] Balcarres would later pledge "to watch over the embers of this rebellion, until I am satisfied of it being thoroughly extinguished."[335]

The beginning of the war hearkened back to the 1720s as the colonial militia attempted to fend off an invisible enemy. The Trelawny Maroons sent their women and children into hiding, deserted Trelawny Town, set fire to nearby plantations, and ambushed convoys of British soldiers.[336] The death count on the British side continued to rise as the Maroons maneuvered around their opponents unseen and untouched.[337] Captain Chambers of the Accompong Maroons sought an audience with the Trelawny captains to encourage their surrender, but the Trelawny Maroons suspected him of setting up an ambush. Captain Palmer of Trelawny Town shot Chambers on the spot and the Maroons cut off his head.[338] In response to the Maroons' escalation of the conflict, Balcarres offered a bounty for their capture. He issued a proclamation on August 8 to "offer a reward of twenty pounds current money of this island for every such

1795, CO 137/95, TNA. Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:147.

[333] Copy of a letter from the magistrates of the Parish of St. James, July 18, 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[334] Balcarres to Portland, n.d., CO 137/95, TNA.

[335] Balcarres to Portland, January 30, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

[336] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:250.

[337] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:195.

[338] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons,* 1:205.

Maroon Negro of Trelawny Town, capable of bearing arms, who shall be taken prisoner."[339] Meanwhile, Walpole reevaluated his strategy and made plans to surround the Maroons' hideout, cutting off their supply of food and water.[340] When this failed to bring the Maroons to their knees, Colonel William Dawes Quarrell decided to import Spanish bloodhounds from Cuba to scare the rebels into submission.[341]

Quarrell's strategy proved successful as the threat of ravenous dogs shattered the Maroons' resolve and drove many of them to surrender.[342] Walpole made a treaty with the Maroons on December 28 that set out a timetable for the end of the war.[343] The Maroons were to surrender on January 1, 1796, return to Trelawny Town, and hand over runaway slaves who had fought on their behalf. Only Captains Smith, Dunbar, and Williams surrendered with their families by that date, the rest remaining distrustful that the agreement would be honored. A few days later, the dogs were sent out with their handlers to push the Maroons out of the mountains.[344] By the end of January, Balcarres wrote to Portland that the "Maroons, to the numbers of five hundred surrendered themselves, & were conducted within our posts. Including those whom I had formerly secured, I have in my possession near six hundred thirty Maroon men, & one hundred women & children still remain out."[345] In February, there were still an

[339] Proclamation, Montego Bay, 8th August 1795, CO 137/95, TNA.

[340] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:245.

[341] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 2:5-8.

[342] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 2:56-59.

[343] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 2:146.

[344] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 2:149.

[345] Balcarres to Portland, 30 January 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

estimated 87 Maroons refusing to surrender.[346] The balance of the Maroons who had not appeared in January would gradually deliver themselves to the authorities until Balcarres would declare an end to the war on March 26.[347]

Upon the conclusion of the war, the fate of the Trelawny Maroons was left to a secret committee consisting of twelve member of the Jamaica Council and House of Assembly.[348] The Assembly ultimately passed a new set of resolutions that, like those enumerated in December, called for the conviction of runaway slaves and free people who aligned themselves with the Maroons and the granting of clemency for the Maroons who surrendered before January 1. But this time, the Assembly was determined to rid the colony of its Maroon problem for good, mandating the expulsion of the rebellious Maroons from the island altogether.[349] The Assembly could no longer countenance the notion that the Maroons might remain a nuisance to the colony. As in the earlier Maroon War, the colonial defense, with the significant exception of the imported bloodhounds, proved to be a poor match for the Maroons' guerrilla tactics. Besides military overstretch, the Assembly worried about the proliferation of new maroon settlements: "They will increase by runaways, and if you destroy them to five, those five will be a rallying point for more runaways to resort to; and thus the war be perpetuated for years."[350]

But General Walpole's previous oath to the Maroons that they would not be expelled

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[346] Balcarres to Portland, 15 February, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

[347] Balcarres to Portland, 26 March, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

[348] Balcarres to Portland, April 17, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

[349] Resolutions agreed to, and passed, by the Council, and the Assembly, at a session of Lieutenant Governor, Council, and Assembly, held at the Town of Saint Jago de la Vega, which began on the twenty seventh day of November 1795, and ended on the first day of May 1796, CO 137/97, TNA.

[350] Letter from Walpole, Old Maroon Town, 24 December 1795, CO 137/96, TNA.

from the island presented a wrinkle in the committee's plans. Despite Walpole's promise to the Maroons that they would not be removed from the island, the Assembly determined that the treaty had been rendered unenforceable when the Maroons failed to surrender and hand over the runaway slaves on January 1.[351] As Balcarres wrote, "I hold the treaty signed by Major General Walpole on the one part, Col. Montague James, the chief of the Maroons on the other part & ratified by me absolutely as nothing."[352] From the perspective of the colonists, the Trelawny Maroons had voided their claim to sovereignty, while the Maroons saw Walpole's broken promise as in indictment of the legitimacy of the colonial state. Distrust and suspicion ensured that neither party would enjoy a simple resolution to the apparent fracturing of authority even after each side put down their weapons. At stake for the British was "the honor and good faith of the Crown, no less than the principles of sound policy."[353] In the end, the Maroons found the British lacking in all regards.

Whether or not the colony was obliged to honor the treaty formed with the Trelawny Maroons to bring the war to an end was a source of tension between Balcarres and Walpole. On March 11, 1796, Walpole sent a private letter to the lieutenant governor expressing his worries regarding the fate of the Maroons. "My Lord, to be plain with you," he wrote, "it was thus by my means alone that the Maroons were induced to surrender from a reliance they had in my word; from a conviction impressed upon them by me that the white people would never break their faith."[354] Balcarres, in his reply, reframed the issue from one of honor to one of security:

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[351] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 2:177-178.

[352] Balcarres to Portland, n.d., CO 137/96, 111, TNA.

[353] Portland to Balcarres, March 3, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

[354] Walpole to Balcarres, private, March 11, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

"But in a political consideration of this subject the country will not be guided either by your politics or mine. […] Legislature has a right to exercise its judgment, it is internal rebellion."[355]

The parliamentary debate over how to handle the Trelawny Maroons revealed a crisis of political legitimacy that implicated both the Maroons and the colonial state. Walpole stood before the House of Commons to argue that the deportation of the Maroons represented a miscarriage of justice and a breach of the colonial state's agreement according to the treaty of 1739. He called the aftermath of the war "one of the most flagrant violations of public faith this age had to blush for."[356] The decision to resettle the Maroons, he insisted, had violated a most solemn pledge made in the name of the King to honor the sovereignty of Trelawny Town. No longer agents of a hemispheric conspiracy to undermine the British empire, the Trelawny Maroons re-entered political discourse as "the victims of the offended pride and timid jealousy of the island of Jamaica."[357] For Walpole, honoring the treaty and the Maroons' act of surrender was the most just and practical measure for the continued security of the colony; any future Maroon community would view the Assembly's lack of integrity as a reason to refuse any sort of negotiation. However, the House determined that it was the Maroons who had first violated the treaty by mobilizing against the colony and arming runaway slaves in the process.[358]

This crisis of political legitimacy was overshadowed by an emphasis on the Maroons' disobedience and their social difference in the earliest published accounts of the Anglo-Maroon

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[355] Balcarres to Walpole, March 16, 1796, CO 137/96. See also Balcarres to Portland, April 20, 1796, CO 137/96, TNA. Emphasis original.

[356] *The Parliamentary Register; or, history of the proceedings and debates of the House of Commons* (London: J. Debrett, 1797-1802), 6:84.

[357] *The Parliamentary Register*, 6:85.

[358] *The Parliamentary Register*, 6:93.

War of 1795-96. Edwards and Dallas, the two primary Enlightenment historians of the conflict, focused on the Trelawny Maroons' stewardship of their land as the crux of their territorial claims and the durability of their treaty rights. The two writers took conflicting perspectives on what the Maroons' labor practices revealed about their capacity for self-governance. Edwards expressed particular concern about the fact that Maroon women performed the majority of their agricultural labor while the men hunted wild boar and tracked down runaway slaves. For him, this was a sign of their barbarity and incapacity for sovereignty.[359] Dallas, however, wrote in defense of the Maroons' gendered division of labor, insisting that women's work not be seen as a mark of their incivility. He asked, "In what country on the globe is it, that in the class of mankind doomed to labour, we shall not find tribes, the women of which participate in the toils of men?"[360] Closely related to which Maroons performed agricultural work was the question of how well that work was performed. Although Edwards lamented that "the ground was always in a shocking state of neglect and ruin," Dallas insisted that he must have observed the Maroon grounds shortly after harvest.[361] The Maroon grounds, Dallas retorted, "produced a stock not only sufficient for their own use, but so superabundant as to enable them to supply the neighbouring settlements."[362]

This dissonance between the two accounts reflected shifting norms in the legal and

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[359] Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xxx.

[360] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:109. This dispute is an example of how differences in gender and sexual norms observed in moments of cross-cultural contact in colonial America formed what Kathleen Brown has termed a "gender frontier" that served to reinforce European cultural dominance. See Kathleen Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women's and Gender History," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1993):311-328; and *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[361] Edwards, *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica*, xxx; Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:107-108.

[362] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 1:106.

intellectual underpinnings of British imperialism by the late eighteenth century. While Protestant European nations became willing to engage in treaties with non-Christian infidels in the late seventeenth century in order to remain competitive against Iberian expansion, this legal pluralism eventually gave way to more aggressive expropriation as Britain experienced its own imperial ascendancy.[363] Cultural differences came to stand as a measure of legal and political obligation between Europeans and non-Europeans, allowing for the invalidation of treaties such as the one established with the Maroons.[364] An Enlightenment discourse of natural rights offered a justification for a more violent imperialism that could freely disregard treaty-based obligations.[365] Gender norms and nomadism, as opposed to agriculture, were especially understood to index claims to non-European sovereignty.[366] When Edwards called attention to the Maroons' laboring women and uncultivated land, he did so to naturalize the Maroons' dispossession following the war and extend the visual narrative of British imperial benevolence.

In the Maroon War of 1795-96, notions of fidelity, trustworthiness, and governability supplied a political language through which the Maroons' subjecthood could be contested by colonial authorities. The political bond between cemented between the Maroons and the colonial state in the 1730s continued to test the durability of imperial authority. To name Maroon sovereignty as a pertinent issue of imperial governance was to generate conditions of possibility

[363] Richard Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels in the European Imperial Expansion," in Empire and Modern Political Thought, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Camrbidge University Press, 2012), 61-83.

[364] Jennifer Pitts, "Empire and Legal Universalisms in the Eighteenth Century," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (2012), 119.

[365] Tuck, "Alliances with Infidels," 82-83.

[366] Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 30-31. This shift also paralleled changing attitudes toward treaties with indigenous peoples in North America. See Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

for the Maroons to intervene in contests of legitimacy and authority.Treaties, oaths, and declarations, rather than discourses of revolution or emancipation, generated the terms through which the conflict would be interpreted.

Moreover, the end of the war again brought into focus the centrality of families to the history of Jamaica's Maroons. The men who surrendered in January 1796 did so with their wives and children in tow, as repeatedly documented in colonial correspondence. Between January 1 and January 15, the number of the surrendered Maroons included 91 men, 111 women, and 124 children.[367] One man, in fact, may have been prompted to surrender precisely because of the stress that it placed on his household. Walpole reported that "Fowler, whose wife is so big with child as not to be able to reach the post this day, has intreated me to let him accompany me in the morning, to endeavor to save her."[368] It was as warriors that the Maroons faced down the colonial militia, but as families that they would be forced from the island aboard the ships *Ann*, *Mary*, and *Dover*.

[367] Letter from Walpole, O.M. [Old Maroon] Town, 15 January, 1796, CO 137/96.

[368] Letter from Walpole, past 3 o'clock, 13 January 1796, CO 137/96, TNA. Balcarres wrote to Walpole on January 17, 1796, "Jarret wishes to see his wife & youngest child – they may be sent to him. The wives & families of Rickets, Dunbar & others now at Falmouth should be sent down at the same time." CO 137/96, TNA.

Chapter Four

Petitions: Loyalty and Secrecy in Nova Scotia, 1796-1800

When 568 Maroon women, men, and children reached Halifax, Nova Scotia, between 21 and 23 July 1796, their ultimate fate was still uncertain. Jamaica's Lieutenant Governor Balcarres had appointed William Dawes Quarrell as Commissary General to the Trelawny Maroons, "authorized, empowered, and required to provide and procure for the said Maroons suitable clothing, and all such articles of victualing may be necessary," and Alexander Ochterlony as his deputy.[369] Continuing the practice of assigning to the Maroons a white superintendency that had begun with the signing of the Anglo-Maroon treaties, Balcarres instructed Quarrell and Ochterlony to "provide, by purchase, such quantity or quantities of land as may be adequate for [the Maroons'] habitations, and to afford them, by its cultivation, the means of supporting themselves and their families" at the expense of the Jamaican Assembly.[370]

Though it was the subject of much correspondence back and forth between colony and metropole, Jamaica's House of Assembly had trouble determining where the Maroons would ultimately settle after their stopover at Nova Scotia. Sierra Leone, already the site of an ongoing experiment in black resettlement, was floated as an option, but the Sierra Leone Company would only agree to host the Maroons under the conditions that "they were sent in different periods, from time to time, in small numbers, or a few families at a time, but not all at once."[371] The Bahamas, where the Maroons could labor in cotton agriculture, also presented a possibility, but

[369] Balcarres to Quarrell, CO 137/97, f. 52, TNA; Balcarres to Ochterlony, CO 137/97, f. 53, TNA.

[370] Balcarres to Quarrell, ibid.

[371] Robert Sewell to the Committee of Correspondence, 6 July, 1796, Out Letter Book of Agents in Jamaica

the assembly was reluctant to impose the Maroons on another plantation colony. Introducing the rebel Maroons into a colony that relied on enslaved labor might reawaken the fears of mass uprising that had prompted their deportation from Jamaica. Meanwhile, dwindling supplies posed an immediate practical restraint on prolonged debate as the resettlement effort remained at a standstill.[372] It seemed that Governor Balcarres simply hoped that the Maroons would be able to remain in Nova Scotia once they arrived.

As a crossroads of the Black Atlantic world, Nova Scotia already had a history of resettlement. It was where the Black Loyalists fled during the American Revolution, though by the time the Trelawny Maroons disembarked, they had departed the province for Sierra Leone.[373] While Nova Scotia initially represented the possibilities of freedom for the Black Loyalists, it was first and foremost a site of banishment for the Maroons. Both groups of black migrants, however, found that racist expectations of subservience and drudgery tragically circumscribed their experiences in the province.[374] But the fact that the Maroons arrived in Nova Scotia as

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[372] Scott to Portland, 8 September 1796, CO 217/67, TNA; Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire*, 121.

[373] A third wave of black migration would occur during and after the War of 1812. See John N. Grant, "Black Immigrants in Nova Scotia, 1776-1815," *The Journal of Negro History* 58, no. 3 (1973): 253-270; and Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border: The Black Refugees in British North America, 1815-1860* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

[374] On the Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, see Mary Beth Norton, "The Fate of Some Black Loyalists of the American Revolution," *The Journal of Negro History* 58, no. 4 (1973): 402-426; James Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); John W. Pulis, ed., *Moving On: Black Loyalists in the Afro-Atlantic World* (New York: Garland Pub., 1999); Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); and Janet Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). Nova Scotia had also been a site of forced removal when the Acadians were deported in 1755. See Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); and Christopher Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Alexander X. Byrd has written persuasively about the parallels between free and unfree black migrations during the eighteenth century. See Byrd, *Captives and*

outcasts cannot be overstated for the ways that it shaped their responses to deportation. In an age of willful border crossings and emergent liberal democratic revolutions, the Maroons seized on their "abject cosmopolitanism," to use a term coined by political scientist Peter Nyers, as they staked claims to imperial belonging from a position of dispossession and dislocation.[375]

The Maroons' preference, as stated in a petition to the Duke of Portland, was "to serve His Majesty as soldiers in any of his Governments" as long as their "old Men and Women, our Wives and Children who are numerous may receive such protection and support from Government as may enable them to live comfortably."[376] Balcarres, deciding it would be better to beg forgiveness than ask permission, wrote to Nova Scotia's lieutenant governor, Sir John Wentworth, on 3 June to announcing the Maroons' imminent arrival.[377] Despite some resentment about the Maroons' sudden appearance, Wentworth saw a place for them after the departure of the majority of the Black Loyalists for Sierra Leone in 1792. Though he was instructed by the Duke of Portlant to leave the administration of Maroon affairs to Quarrell and Ochterlony, Wentworth quickly devised a plan to cultivate the Maroons as a docile laboring population adherent to the values of "Christian piety, morality, and loyalty."[378] The Black Loyalists had

Voyagers: Black Migrants Across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

[375] Peter Nyers, "Abject Cosmopolitanism: The Politics of Protection in the Anti-Deportation Movement," *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 6 (2003): 1069-1093. Nyers' term deliberately throws into dynamic tension two categories ordinarily considered to be mutually exclusive: "As the embodiment of exclusion, the abject are prime candidates for 'hidden, frightful, or menacing' subjectivities to define their condition. Understood politically, they stand in contrast to the purity of citizenship, ie the authoritative, articulate, visible and political subjectivity. Instead, the abject suffer from a form of purity that demands them to be speechless victims, invisible and apolitical. […] Here, abject cosmopolitanism describes not a *problematic cosmopolitanism for the abject*, but rather a *problematising cosmopolitanism of the abject*." Nyers, "Abject Cosmopolitanism," 1074-1075.

[376] Second Maroon Petition, 10 May 1796, CO 137/96, TNA.

[377] Balcarres to Wentworth, 3 June 1796, CO 217/67, TNA.

[378] Wentworth to Portland, 13 August 1796, CO 217/67, TNA.

been a reliable source of cheap labor sorely missed by Nova Scotian landowners and the sum of £25,000 allotted to the Maroons' first year of resettlement could provide a much-needed stimulus to the provincial economy.[379] Wentworth's vision of an industrious, pious, and monogamous Maroon community, however, was soon shattered; though he initially refused to admit so to Portland, the governor was embarrassed to find the Maroons obstinate, prone to drinking and cockfighting, and unwilling to abandon polygamy. When the Jamaican Assembly realized that Wentworth's hopes for a reformed Maroon population would amount to no more than an ill-fated and expensive experiment, Portland reminded them that "the maroons were sent to Halifax by the legislature of the island of Jamaica, not only without any sanction on the part of his majesty's government, but even without any option having been left to his majesty respecting the place of their destination."[380]

Wentworth was slow to admit the reality of the situation. He initially hid the failures of his resettlement scheme from Portland, all the while blaming Ochterlony for drawing the Maroons into a secret plot to undermine his credibility. The resulting correspondence generated an archive of secrets that structured colonial politics and allowed the Maroons to successfully petition for resettlement to Sierra Leone. Following historian Greg Childs' example of constructing histories of secrecy and slave conspiracy, I seek to understand "secrecy as fundamental to the working of colonial society and colonial relations" in the context of Maroon resettlement.[381] This chapter re-evaluates the Trelawny Maroons' petitions for removal from Nova Scotia in light of their secret agreement with their deputy superintendent Ochterlony, two

[379] Portland to Robert Sewell, 25th July, 1796, Journals of Assembly, JCB; Cuthbert, *The Royalist Governor*, 80.

[380] Duke of Portland to Robert Sewell, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[381] Greg L. Childs, "Secret and Spectral: Torture and Secrecy in the Archives of Slave Conspiracies," *Social Text* 33, no. 4 (2015), 38.

events that converged in ways that should reshape our understanding of Maroon politics. In doing so, I identify how the Maroons inhabited a distinct form of loyal subjectivity premised not on acquiescence to colonial rule, but on disruptive practices and anti-normative claims to political belonging.[382] Historians have understood these petitions as documents that stirred abolitionist sympathies to sway public opinion, emphasizing the Maroons' immiseration in Nova Scotia as victims of manipulation by the authorities of two different colonies, but the appeals were more than just an extension of British antislavery politics.[383] Reconsidered through the prism of colonial secrecy, the petitions emerge anew as subversive performances of imperial subjecthood already conditioned by the Maroons' abjected status as deportees and a clandestine plot formalized in the diasporic tradition. Though the precise details of that alliance cannot be recovered from the extant sources, historical recovery need not be the historian's primary objective when considering black radical politics, as Childs suggests; instead, we might, as Childs does, examine the ways that secrets were productive and disruptive of colonial power, and how they shaped narratives of covert black politics.[384]

While we cannot come any closer to determining the precise details of the agreement

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[382] On historicizing loyal subjectivities as a method, see David Sartorius, *Ever Faithful: Race, Loyalty, and the Ends of Empire in Spanish Cuba* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

[383] Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons Between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 125-135. Other historical accounts of the Trelwany Maroons' residence in Nova Scotia include Anya Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), ch. 4; John N. Grant, *The Maroons in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, N.S.: Formac, 2002); Allister Hinds, "'Deportees in Nova Scotia': The Jamaican Maroons, 1796-1800," in Verene A. Shepherd, ed., *Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom: Perspectives from the Caribbean, Africa and the African Diaspora* (Kingston; Oxford: Ian Randle; James Currey, 2002), 206-222; James D. Lockett, "The Deportation of the Maroons of Trelawny Town to Nova Scotia, then Back to Africa," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, no. 1 (1999): 5-14; Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 78-95; Brian C. Cuthbertson, *The Loyalist Governor: Biography of Sir John Wentworth* (Halifax, NS: Petheric Press, 1983), 77-86.

[384] Childs refers to this as the "multiplication of secrecy." See Childs, "Secret and Spectral," 37.

between Ochterlony and the Maroons than Wentworth could, or extract from historical sources the concealed political aspirations on either side, we can consider how the secret agreement established continuity with the Maroons' decades-long political negotiations with British colonial administrators. Like the treaties ratified in Jamaica, the concurrence of the secret agreement and petition writing demonstrates the broader entanglement of diasporic and imperial modes of diplomacy. Yet, by the time the Maroons arrived in Nova Scotia, the disavowed status of the the treaty reoriented the foundations of their political claims. Focusing on the petitions as part of a network of Maroon ritual diplomacy shaped by the politics of colonial secrecy reveals something new about their invocation of royalism in the service of mobility. While Robert C. Dallas noted that "it was not only in Nova Scotia that they manifested their reverence for the very name of the King; he had ever been a favourite with them in the mountains of Trelawney [sic]," the Maroons' respect for monarchical authority was not just about deference, but served to reinstate relations of reciprocity and obligation from a position of marginality.[385]

While they were forced to leave Jamaica behind, the Trelawny Maroons carried with them a sense of unfulfilled duty on the part of the British Empire. The Maroons' assertions of imperial subjecthood through the petitions, then, did not constitute an uncritical and transparent embrace of loyalism, but rather represented a more complicated and ultimately irrecoverable set of political machinations intended to restore a sense of imperial obligation that had been gradually eroded by their opponents. Here, the evidence of secrecy does not merely constitute another archival silence, but speaks quite clearly to how a critical sense of belonging shaped the written petitions' enactments of imperial loyalty.[386] The historical force of this secrecy was to

[385] Dallas, *History of the Maroons*, v. 2, 209.

[386] On historical silences, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

intensify factionalism among the Nova Scotian political elite, allowing the Maroons to contest the terms of their subjection on the basis of their degragded position within colonial society. Already sensitive to betrayal based on his previous experience as governor of New Hampshire, Wentworth learned to approach politics with a particular degree of circumspection.[387] As governor of Nova Scotia, he struggled to keep the secret of the Trelawny Maroons' dissatisfaction with their circumstances from the Duke of Portland as he continued to drain the Jamaican government's coffers and, when their grievances came to light, deflected attention onto their alleged secret agreement with Ochterlony. The unknowability of the secret agreement successfully destabilized the political order to the Maroons' advantage. Their association with subversive collaboration with an imperial agent, moreover, rendered the Maroons ungovernable according to the dictates of colonial society, hastening their evacuation to Sierra Leone.

The agreement between the Maroons and Ochterlony was not the only secret that exacerbated Governor Wentworth's Maroon problem. It was also rumored that various colonial officials had taken Maroon women (and, in the case of the governor's wife, at least two Maroon men) as sexual partners. A sense of sexual danger, related to a broader perception of cultural difference between the Maroons and white Nova Scotians, lingered over the Trelawny exiles throughout their tumultuous residence in Nova Scotia. Benjamin Gray, who was tasked with the religious reform and moral cultivation of Nova Scotia's newest black settlers, observed early on that Maroon Hall, where Quarrell and Ochterlony set up their headquarters of Maroon operations, "was the very fountain of wantonness" where the Maroons' white allies "commiserated their welfare by promoting the prostitution of their females, and encouraging

(Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); on critical cosmopolitanism, see Nyers, "Abject Cosmopolitanism."

[387] Cuthbertson, *The Loyalist Governor*, 59.

their vicious inclinations to inhuman sports and riot."[388] Debauchery and disorder enabled by the permissiveness displayed by Ochterlony and his Nova Scotian accomplices, Gray maintained, unsettled his efforts on Wentworth's behalf to reform the Maroons' religious and social habits.

Anxieties regarding the Maroons' sexual practices occupied a central role in discussions regarding their resettlement. Their resistance to adopting British norms of kinship and domesticity continually threatened to expose the futility of Wentworth's colonial experiment. Gray lamented that despite his best efforts to convert the Maroons to Christianity and promote monogamous marriage, the Maroons continued to "allow polygamy, and they part interest in their wives upon compensation being made."[389] Though he refuted Gray's claim that sexual labor haunted Maroon marriage, even Ochterlony admitted that the Maroons were loathe to accept colonial efforts to reorganize their conjugal arrangements. As he testified before the Jamaican Assembly, "How far it was in my power to prevent marriage among the maroons I cannot conceive. There were few among them that had not two or three, and some four wives."[390]

Industriousness and Christian virtue were both ways of disciplining the unruly body and conscripting the Maroons into the service of colonial productivity. That the regulation of gender and sexuality served as instruments of colonial governance is well documented by feminist historians of empire. Ann Stoler, for example, has called attention to the "tense and tender ties" that mediated colonial power, showing how intimate spaces such as the bedroom, the kitchen, and the nursery were the realms in which colonization took shape through discourses and practices that elaborated differences of gender and sexuality.[391] As Stoler has argued elsewhere,

[388] Benjamin Gray to John Wentworth, 18 June, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[389] Benjamin Gray to John Wentworth, 18 June, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[390] Examination of Alexander Ochterlony, December 18, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[391] Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post)

"Colonial discourses of sexuality were productive of class and racial power, not mere reflections of them. The management of European sexuality in the colonies was a class and gender-specific project that animated a range of longings as much as it was a consequence of them."[392] But in this case, the management of colonial sexualities took on a public valence that relied on personal attack.

Accusations of sexual transgression with the Maroons were volleyed back and forth as rhetorical weapons in the political battle between Ochterlony and his antagonists. Theophilus Chamberlain, a Congregational minister whom Wentworth dispatched alongside Gray to convert the Maroons, attempted to discredit Ochterlony by accusing him of licentiousness with Maroon women. Chamberlain claimed that Ochterlony "often kept five or six, and often more, of the finest maroon girls, constantly in his house, and several of them in his bed-chamber; and that this *seraglio* was kept, not merely for himself, but for the convenience of his decent and religious friends."[393] Ochterlony's replacement as superintendent, Alexander Howe, echoed these accusations when explaining to Wentworth, "My disposition never led me to keep so much company as my predecessor, or entertain eight or ten maroon girls, as he did, for his own and his friends [sic] entertainment, at constant (extra) expense to the establishment."[394] Ochterlony's rebuttal, in addition to denying the accusations, turned attention back onto Wentworth's

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Colonial Studies," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (Dec., 2001): 829-865.

[392] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 176.

[393] T. Chamberlain, June 20, 1798, sent in enclosure to the Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on June 23, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB. Earlier historians have taken these claims at face value. See Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 83. The term "seraglio" is an Anglicization of an Italicization ("serraglio," meaning "enclosure") derived from the Turkish *seray* (palace) and the Latin *serraculum* (to lock or bolt), referring to the inner domestic space of the Ottoman imperial household.

[394] Alexander Howe to John Wentworth, June 8, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

household and the presence of Maroon domestic labor there: "As to a *seraglio*, I can only observe that from the difficulty of procuring white servants, I was under the necessity of taking into the house a number of maroons: (I was not singular in this, for sir J[ohn] W[entworth] had two girls, and lady W[entworth] two men."[395] Wentworth, as it became known later, fathered a child born in 1804 to a Maroon woman named Sarah Colley.[396] Ochterlony, moreover, found it "extraordinary" that "Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Gray, who very often dined with [him], should never have mentioned these improprieties."[397]

The rhetorical force of sexual scandal premised on the dangerous desirability of Maroon women made real the power of racial and sexual difference to destabilize colonial hierarchies and fuel political conflict. "The power of black women," Anne McClintock has asserted, "is a colonial secret."[398] Writing about the disavowed centrality of black women's labors in producing an idealized notion of white colonial domesticity, McClintock recognizes how racial and sexual intimacies suffused the colonial household through the care black women provided to white women and children and the sexual labors that white men coerced from them. The allegations of sexual impropriety with Maroon women flung back and forth between public officers revealed the acute ambivalences of colonial domesticity as Maroon women in Nova Scotia marked a boundary between respectable household economy and lurid intimacies.

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[395] Examination of Alexander Ochterlony, December 18, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[396] Sylvia Hamilton, "Naming Names, Naming Ourselves: A Survey of Early Black Women in Nova Scotia," in *We're Rooted Here and they Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History*, ed. Peggy Bristow (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 30.

[397] Examination of Alexander Ochterlony, December 18, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[398] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 271.

Though the debate over the proper governance of the Maroons most immediately reflected concerns over moral cultivation in the service of labor and productivity, the language of the sexual accusations meant to discredit colonial officers invoked a much broader set of concerns about imperial domesticity. In particular, references to the Ottoman *seraglio* invited Orientalist assumptions about the seductive pleasures that could corrupt a suitably respectable relationship between household relations and political stability.[399] In the eighteenth-century British imperial imagination, the harem stood most vividly as a symbol for Oriental despotism. Early modern narratives, usually written by French and English writers who acquired no first-hand experience of the harem during their travels through the Ottoman Empire, described the harem as a space of sensual excess.[400] In one of the earliest English accounts of the harem, Paul Rycaut recalled his 1660 trip to Istanbul by describing what he identified as the exotic and debasing sexual ritual of the *seraglio*: "When the Grand Signior resolves to choose himself a Bed-fellow, … he throws his handkerchief to her, … she comes running and kneels before him, and sometimes enters in at the feet of the Bed, according to the ancient ceremony."[401] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, one of the few English women to tour the Ottoman Empire, was eager during a 1717 trip to seize an "opportunity of learning all that [she] possibly could of the *seraglio.*" Montagu set the record straight by relaying a conversation in which the Sultana Hafise "assured [her] that the story of the Sultan's throwing a handkerchief is altogether fabulous" and clarified that the gesture was meant "to signify to the lady the honour he attends

[399] On Orientalism, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994 [1978]).

[400] Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Royal French Women in the Ottoman Sultans' Harem: The Political Uses of Fabricated Accounts from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of World History* 17, no. 2 (Jun., 2006), 178-184.

[401] Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Arno Press, 1971 [1668]), 38-39, quoted in Isom-Verhaaren, "Royal French Women," 180.

her."[402]

When Ochterlony's opponents described Maroon Hall as a *seraglio*, they perhaps unwittingly relied on a trope very much structured by secrecy. As a space that was historically inaccessible to men (besides the sultan and eunuch attendants), the popular image in western Europe of the *seraglio* explicitly relied on a notion of domestic enclosure and obscurity. The opacity of this domestic sphere, however, generated specific ideas about the realm of elite politics. Despite being rooted in Orientalist fantasy and fabulation, early modern European harem fictions nevertheless served as political theory for readers in the Anglophone and Francophone worlds. As Christine Isom-Verhaaren points out, "With the change in the balance of power between the Middle East and western Europe, which culminated in the imperial occupation of much of the Middle East by France and England, harems and veils became symbols of a contested ideological battleground."[403] The sudden extension of this ideological battleground to British Nova Scotia during the Maroon resettlement crisis exemplified what Lisa Lowe calls "the intimacies of four continents," or the ways that global currents of imperial expansion and dispossession thrust Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas into intimate relation even across vast distances.[404] The space of the colonial household in Nova Scotia became the site through which the Maroons' imagined sexual alterity threatened to dissolve the colonial government into a despotic nightmare, one that was closely linked in the British imperial imagination to late eighteenth-century Ottoman imperial decline.

These Orientalist allusions to the Ottoman *seraglio* highlighted the problematic status of

[402] Lady Mary Wortly Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Malcolm Jack (London: Virago, 1994), 113-118, quoted in Isom-Verhaaren, "Royal French Women," 180.

[403] Isom Verhaaren, "Royal French Women," 183.

[404] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

Maroon women's labor, so central to discrediting the Maroons' territorial claims in Jamaica prior to their evacuation, by collapsing the distinction between enslaved concubinage and domestic work performed under conditions of legal freedom.[405] If Maroon women were unsuited for agricultural labor, their consignment to domestic work in the homes of white Nova Scotians appeared no more appropriate. The colonial secret of Maroon women's sexual labors marked the entire community's uneasy assimilation into a racialized labor regime. Though the Maroons had maintained a claim to freedom following their surrender in Jamaica, the specter of enslavement continued to lurk around the edges of political discourse concerning the troubled resettlement efforts under way in Nova Scotia. The *seraglio*, as an imagined site of sexualized bondage, emerged in stark contrast to Wentworth's vision of the Maroons as a docile and devout community of black peasant farmers organized into nuclear households. The ease with which Maroon women's domestic work rhetorically accommodated associations with sexual labor evidences to the persistent threat that social difference would destabilize colonial hierarchies.[406]

This documentary record of political factionalism, therefore, yields not a social history of Maroon women in Nova Scotia and their domestic labors, but instead produces an image of the Maroon prostitute as a border figure, marking the distinction between civilized colonialism and the corrupting potential of cross-cultural (sexual) encounter.[407] These imagined Maroon women and their imagined labors stood in for the generally abjected status of the exiled Maroons, cast

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[405] On the problematic status of black women's labor across the long arc of African American history, see Saidiya Hartman, "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 18, no. 1 (2016): 166-173.

[406] We might consider this a type of pornotroping, or the ways that racialization occurs through the sexual objectification of black women in particular. See Hortense Spillers, "Interstices: A Small Drama of Words," in *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[407] On black women as border figures in the colonial context, see McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 270-273.

out of Jamaica, “expelled and obliged to inhabit the impossible edge of modernity,” as McClintock would put it.[408] Refusing to assimilate into a colonial regime of agricultural labor, the Maroons could only achieve political legibility in the abject zone of the *seraglio*. As an abjected population—literally cast out—the Maroons' appearance in the archive clusters around negative affects tied to their purportedly rowdy and uncivilized nature, as well as the allure of social difference. The Maroons figured most prominently in colonial political discourse as irreverent, indolent, and, for white male authorities, irresistible.[409]

It was, after all, Ochterlony's desire to enjoy intimate liaisons with Maroon women that allegedly compelled him to enter into a covert pact with the Trelawny captains. Multiple claims that he swore an oath to the Maroons declaring his commitment to help them subvert Wentworth's plans made their way to the Jamaican Assembly following that first difficult winter. Gray reported to the lieutenant governor in June 1798 that Ochterlony had participated in **“**a dreadful religious ceremony” with the Trelawny captains “wherein the parties mutually bound themselves to encourage and support alone the schemes of a removal from” Nova Scotia.[410] Chamberlain corroborated this account, asserting that Ochterlony “began, at length, to hold meetings of their captains and principal men,” and that at one of these meetings “a bible was called for.” As Chamberlain relayed, a carpenter named Cox claimed to have been there when

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[408] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 72.

[409] In addition to McClintock's *Imperial Leather*, my use of abjection here is informed by Peter Nyers, “Abject Cosmopolitanism”; Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygiel, “Abject Spaces: Frontiers, Zones, Camps,” in *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror: Living, Dying, Surviving*, ed. Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 181-203; Nerissa S. Balce, *Body Parts of Empire: Visual Abjection, Filipino Images, and the American Archive* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), ch. 1; and Leticia Alvarado, *Abject Performances: Aesthetic Strategies in Latino Cultural Production* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

[410] Benjamin Gray to John Wentworth June 18, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, v. 10, JCB.

the Maroons "entered into solemn engagements to adhere to and be guided by Mr. Ochterlony" toward their departure from the colony.[411]

Ochterlony subsequently insisted that the claim that he "called for a bible, is equally absurd as false" and maintained that he only ever suggested that the Maroons might depart from Nova Scotia "as the only means of relieving [Jamaica] of a continual expence."[412] But given the consistency of this claim with other accounts of Maroon political negotiation, including the ratification of the Jamaican treaties, it makes sense to suspend skepticism and take seriously the secret agreement with Ochterlony as another example of the ways that the Maroons blended imperial and diasporic forms of diplomacy in their struggles against colonial regimes. Rather than an outmoded form of bargaining, the ritual agreement with Ochterlony reveals a history of covert politics that proved elastic and adaptable across different contexts. This secret history of Maroon diplomacy troubles the divide between premodern and modern politics, illuminating how traditional modes of belonging and affiliation could produce radically new forms of political subjectivity.[413]

Whether or not the Maroons acted under the orders of Ochterlony, the unraveling of Wentworth's Maroon experiment ultimately hinged on the Maroons' deliberate subversion of his efforts to conscript them into what he hoped would be a profitable scheme of agricultural labor. When the Maroons suddenly encountered the expectation of performing agricultural labor for

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411 T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

412 Examination of Alexander Ochterlony, December 18, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

413 For another case study that focuses on the ways that the entanglement of diasporic African ideologies of communalism and healing with European colonialism disrupts the binaries of premodern/modern, precolonial/colonial, etc., see James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

meager wages in an unfamiliar and harsh climate, their response was simply to refuse. As Theophilus Chamberlain reported to the Duke of Portland, "And sure enough, within a very few days, they all, as one man, laid down their axes, and refused to strike a blow more: They said, indeed, not that it was so cold they could not work, but they had a pain in the stomach."[414] While feigning illness has been described as a "weapon of the weak" in the arsenal of individuated subaltern resistance, here the Maroons voiced complaints of illness to cover a full-on strike, an apparently coordinated act of collective refusal.[415]

Benjamin Gray observed that while the Maroons "abstained from work," they also "attended neither to public worship, nor private exhortations, and were ever ready with the tale of their oppression and suffering," indicating a wholesale rejection of Wentworth's project of moral cultivation along with an embrace of an abject social position.[416] In addition, the strike also likely indicated a refusal of what the Maroons would have perceived as a feminized regime of agriculture labor for the men as opposed to the suitably masculine role of military service.[417] They would not return to work though they had "been reasoned with, been persuaded, urged, and bribed."[418] Unconvinced that the Maroons would have concocted such a plan on their own,

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[414] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

[415] On weapons of the weak, see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). For the use of the concept in histories of slavery, see Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). For its application to twentieth-century African American history, see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York, Free Press, 1994).

[416] Benjamin Gray to John Wentworth June 18, 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*m vol. 10, JCB.

[417] See the discussion of gender and labor in chapter 2 of this dissertation as well as Kathleen Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women's and Gender History," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1993): 311-328.

[418] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

Chamberlain named Ochterlony as the mastermind behind the strike. Ochterlony "bound them to it," Chamberlain wrote, again referencing the secret agreement, "and bound himself to procure their removal if they would stand to it, and not work; and he punished them for working."[419]

The Wentworth government expected the Maroons to assimilate into Nova Scotian society as a laboring underclass akin to the Black Loyalists; however, their strike constituted a refusal of the yeoman farmer subjectivity that had been thrust upon them. "Thus," wrote Chamberlain, "the seeds of absolute rebellion have been sown in the minds of those unhappy people, and they have been artfully led into an obstinate refusal to work."[420] But this rebellion was quite different from the one that spread fear of widespread insurrection through Jamaican society. Rather than a violent insurrection, the Maroons in Nova Scotia disrupted the colonial order through their inaction. What had in Jamaica been characterized as a savage freedom that incited violence was recast as indolence. According to Chamberlain, the Maroons "kept constantly in their houses, and many of them lay much of their time in bed."[421] Under Ochterlony's supervision, they were "put to no kind of work, but were well fed, indulged sometimes with dances, and, living in idleness, began to game and be dissipated."[422] Outside of the context of the slave society where they had negotiated a space for themselves alongside the plantation system, the Maroons were denigrated in Nova Scotia for their lack of industriousness

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[419] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

[420] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

[421] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

[422] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

rather than their unchecked freedom.

In order to secure a passage from Nova Scotia, it was not enough for the Maroons to simply stop working. They also participated in a formal process of petitioning imperial authorities. A series of petitions submitted on behalf of the Maroons to plead for their removal from Nova Scotia presented them as duty-bound subjects of the British Empire who had been thrust against their will into unjust circumstances. The petitions enumerated a number of grievances to back up the persuasive appeal of the Maroons' request for resettlement, including the violated terms of the treaty that ended the war in Jamaica, their inability to acclimate to the harsh Nova Scotian climate and provide for their families through subsistence agriculture, the continuing costs accrued by the Jamaican Assembly on their behalf, and the untrustworthiness and incompetence of the Wentworth government.[423] Chamberlain made clear his skepticism regarding the petitions' provenance, alleging that they were fabricated and signed with fictitious names, "surely modes of address suited only for the assassins of France, who thrive by nothing but fraud and iniquity."[424] The petitions, however, were consistent with the Maroons' tradition of claims making stretching back to the original treaty. Though the rhetorical strategies deployed to convince the Duke of Portland to approve the Maroons' resettlement back to Jamaica or some other warmer climate shifted subtly over time, the petitions were always grounded in an insistence that the Maroons were loyal subjects whose ultimate desire to serve the King was undermined by colonial authorities.

In this way, the Maroons appeared no different from the African diasporic peoples

[423] For an interpretation of the Maroons' efforts to leave Nova Scotia that argues through the lens of environmental history for the primacy of climate in shaping resettlement, see Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire*, ch. 4.

[424] T. Chamberlain, 20 June, 1798, sent in enclosure to Duke of Portland from John Wentworth on 23 June, 1798, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, vol. 10, JCB.

throughout the British and Spanish Empires, including the Black Loyalists whose presence in Nova Scotia had preceded theirs, who professed loyalty to monarchy in times of ongoing political upheaval. Historians have devoted significant attention to royalism during the age of revolutions, more recently turning to instances of popular royalism rather than focusing primarily on elites resistant to change; yet, the image of royalists as "bad guys embodying the social and ideological obstacles in the universal history of revolution and modernity" has persisted until quite recently[425] As historian Marcela Echeverri has noted, "Both in Europe and the Americas, this popular mobilization has largely been explained as a product either of manipulation or as reflecting the extremely reactionary essence of the popular classes."[426] Rather than reproducing the image of these instances of popular royalism as paradoxical or as forms of false consciousness, however, historians have lately expanded the geographical, chronological, and analytical terms of popular politics during the revolutionary era to cast new light on these groups and their collective strivings.[427]

In examining the Maroons' petitions in Nova Scotia, we should heed historian Hannah Weiss Muller's call to avoid viewing the British imperial subject as a primitive ancestor of the citizens. As she argues, "Subjects persistently laid claim to economic, political, and legal concessions, and they powerfully expressed both deference and demands."[428] Likewise, it is

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[425] Marcela Echeverri, "Monarchy, Empire, and Popular Politics in the Atlantic Age of Revolutions," *Varia Historia, Belo Horizonte*, 35, no. 67 (2019), 15.

[426] Echeverri, "Monarchy, Empire, and Popular Politics," 17.

[427] Echeverri, "Monary, Empire, and Popular Politics." See work such as Marcela Echeverri, *Indian Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution: Reform, Revolution, and Royalism in the Northern Andes, 1780-1825* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Sartorius, *Ever Faithful*; Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[428] Hannah Weiss Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign: Bonds of Belonging in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4.

important to view loyal subjects as "more than understudies in the performance of liberal politics," as David Sartorius puts it.[429] The petitioning process, then, offered the Maroons a means to articulate a particular conception of the legal rights and protections that should have been afforded to them by virtue of their subject—and, increasingly, their abject—status. In terms of genre conventions, the petition was a distinct form of political writing that enabled subjects "to approach and express grievances to a distant monarch" specifically through "a language of deference, humility, and supplication."[430] It was a particularly important form of political appeal for those who had no claim to elected representation and who were illiterate.[431] The contested nature of petitions, moreover, allowed subjects to present them in ways that could produce "radical, alternative definitions of subjecthood."[432]

The Maroons' petitions attempted to reclaim the special status that had been granted to them through the 1739 treaty ratified in Jamaica. Though Wentworth ignored the Maroons' sense of collective belonging as a warrior band in favor of his desire to remake them into a class of black peasant farmers, the Maroons nevertheless sought to assert their belonging within the Empire through royalist terms that emphasized their capacity for military service. Aware of the threat posed by French encroachment onto British Nova Scotian territory, the Maroons promised that "by heaven cold as the weather may be, we will warm them every step of the road they take towards Halifax."[433] The Maroons' appeals to monarchy, then, served as a means to refashion

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[429] Sartorius, *Ever Faithful*, 11.

[430] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 125.

[431] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 125.

[432] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, 126.

[433] Captain Andrew Smith to Brother Charles Samuels, Maroon Hall near Halifax, Nova Scotia, 3 June 1797, CO 217/69, TNA. On military service as a means of asserting imperial belonging in the British context, see Linda

their collective identity in a new context. In this sense, royalism, considered in the context of the Maroons' strike, might be read as a radical rejection of the roles ascribed to them by the Wentworth government buttressed by the injustice of their displacement.

The most consistent claim made in the petitions was about the unsuitability of the cold northern climate for the Maroons' livelihood. As one petition insisted, "[T]he soil of Nova Scotia will never answer to transplant Maroons in, nor will they ever thrive where the Pine Apple does not," a typical sentiment about the Maroons' essential inability to adapt to their new climate.[434] "Such a phenomenon," the petition continued, "is nowhere to be found in nature, such incongruities and such antipathies do not exist in the moral or physical world, as a West Indian to be reconciled to Nova Scotia."[435] Another petition communicated the Maroons' concerns about the dire consequences of the "severe cold" of Nova Scotia's winters, noting that "for being always habituated to warm weather, the very severe cold season which prevails here, affects us to such a degree that it actually has deprived some of us of existence."[436] These complaints aligned with prevailing climatic theories of human difference, which maintained that people of African descent were more naturally suited to tropical environments.[437] Yet, just as Wentworth's claims of the Maroons' adaptability reflected the instrumentalization of racial thinking, so too did

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Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, 1707-1837 (New Haven; London: Yale, 2005).

[434] Maroon Petition to the House of Commons of Great Britain, n.d., CO 217/70, TNA.

[435] Maroon Petition to the House of Commons of Great Britain, n.d., CO 217/70, TNA.

[436] Maroon Petition to Portland, Halifax, Nov Scotia, 4 November 1797, CO 217/69, TNA. George Walpole also framed the injustice of resettlement in terms of climatic theories. See *Eighteenth Parliament of Great Britain: First Session* (Sep. 27, 1796–July 20, 1797), Apr. 6–May 1, 1797, Vol. 52; *The Parliamentary Register; or Debates and Proceedings of the House of Commons* (London, 1798), 407.

[437] Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire*, 128-130. Zilberstein's argument about climate and race focuses on Wentworth's use of counterintuitive claims (in the context of prevailing theories) to defend his resettlement scheme. Here, I am more focused on how the Maroons' petitions mobilized climatic theories of race for their own purposes.

the petitioners' invocation of climatic determinism undergird a utilitarian articulation of racial difference. Emphasizing the Maroons' unsuitability for the harsh northern climate compounded their abject position within Nova Scotian society. The climatic determinism articulated in the petitions allowed them to dramatize a failed instance of political incorporation that represented the Maroons' resettlement as an unnatural boundary crossing. The Maroons, in other words, carved out an abjected political location as royalist petitioners, one that was rooted in geographic determinism mobilized to critique their conscription into a settler colonial project.[438] They strategically deployed contemporary racialist ideologies—along with the performance of racialized indolence and excess, taking pleasures in leisure and consumption, as well as their refusal of productivity through a labor strike—to create a space for political protest.[439]

As had been the case in Jamaica, notions of kinship also underlied the Maroons' strategies of political negotiation with the British Empire. In their first petition the Maroons requested "to be removed to some warmer climate, where we may be enabled by our industry, to maintain our wives and children, and relieve them from those sufferings to which in this country we see no end."[440] A later petition, attributed to Maroon Captain Andrew Smith, took a more personal tone in stressing the Maroons' expansive kinship networks as an underlying factor in their political longings: "I can have no very flattering prospect in view for any happiness with such a large

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[438] On racialized border crossings as a form of abject incorporation, see Alvarado, *Abject Performances*. We might also read the Maroons' deployment of climate theory as a surprising example of what Brit Rusert has called "fugitive science," referring to nineteenth-century African Americans' interventions in natural science in her study of literary and cultural production. See Rusert, *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

[439] My approach to historicizing the performance of racial fictions in ways that transgress racial ideology is indebted to the work of Jennifer C. Nash, including her *The Black Body in Ecstasy: Reading Race, Reading Pornography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), and "Black Anality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 20, no. 4 (2014): 439-460.

[440] The humble petition of the unfortunate Maroons, CO 217/69, TNA.

family as ours to maintain, you know I have 4 wives and 8 small children besides our father Old Joe Williams and our mother, sisters we have plenty."[441] Smith also added a postscript mentioning that "[w]hen the Maroons were condemned to be shipt off there were several exceptions" made to removal, but he declined to remain in Jamaica because he would be "deprived of the greatest part of [his] family." He wanted to know if Balcarres would be willing to honor the earlier offer and, if so, whether his "wives and children [could be] included great and small in this permission."[442] Smith's rejection of the earlier offer because it did not include his entire family, and his later attempt to renegotiate the conditions of his return to include his extended kin should dispel any notion that the petitions' invocation of family as a primary concern for the Maroons was simply done to appeal to British moral sensibilities. Rather, the open acknowledgement of polygamy in the petitions reflected an indifference toward British customs while nevertheless invoking a royalist appeal to help them preserve their kinship structures. This foregrounding of transgressive sexuality as part of the Maroons' popular royalism signaled their counterintuitive embrace of a socially abjected position from which they could stake political clams.[443]

It was quite possible—even likely—that Wentworth's claims of conspiracy between Ochterlony and the Maroons were not entirely fabricated. By the time the Maroons submitted a petition to the Duke of Portland in early November 1797, the language their appeals had shifted

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[441] Captain Andrew Smith to Brother Charles Samuels, Maroon Hall near Halifax, Nova Scotia, 3 June 1797, CO 217/69, TNA.

[442] Captain Andrew Smith to Brother Charles Samuels, Maroon Hall near Halifax, Nova Scotia, 3 June 1797, CO 217/69, TNA.

[443] On the notion of representations of transgressive or non-normative black sexualities as a means to articulate political aspiration, see Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman, *Against the Closet: Black Political Longing and the Erotics of Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

to suggest an alliance with Ochterlony. In addition to identifying the inhospitable northern climate as a primary catalyst of the Maroons' turmoil, the petition also named Ochterlony as their "late kind protector" whom they hoped would "be permitted and preside over" them wherever they would ultimately resettle.[444] The petition continued: "[A]nd we beg leave to assure your Grace, that whatever information that has been received either from Sir [John] Wentworth, or any other person, stating our satisfaction with residing in this province, is so far void of truth, that the very idea of it makes us shudder."[445] The petition therefore reflected a clear awareness of the pro-Wentworth faction's attempts to discredit Ochterlony's efforts on behalf of the Maroons and a desire to clear Ochterlony's name to allow him to continue advocating on their behalf. A petition submitted to King George a year later lamented that when "the consolation of [The Maroons' afflictions] was ere long interrupted by the removal of [Quarrell and Ochterlony] through the influence of some persons residing here and a stranger was appointed to succeed them, their grief was almost insupportable at this change."[446] This attempt to recuperate Ochterlony's image perhaps meant that the Maroons had adopted him as a legitimate superintendent after ongoing disappointment with the Jamaican Assembly's appointments stretching back to the outbreak of warfare in 1795. In addition to making clams based on imperial subjecthood, then, the petitions also sought to formally re-legitimize white authority in the Maroon community. A fetish oath taken by the Maroon captains and Ochterlony would have been a way to formally sanction his authority as a colonial superintendent.

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[444] Maroon petition to Portland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 4 November 1797, CO 217/69, TNA.

[445] Maroon petition to Portland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 4 November 1797, CO 217/69, TNA.

[446] Maroon Petition: To His Most Gracious Majesty George the third, etc, etc, etc, the petition of the unfortunate Maroons residing at Nova Scotia, August 1798, CO 217/70, TNA.

The next petition, dated April 4, 1798, issued a more direct indictment of the Wentworth regime by explicitly calling out his "Maroon Establishment, consisting of himself, Captain Howe, his Deputy, a Chaplain, Doctor, Clerk, Schoolmaster, Accountant Storekeeper, Overseer, 2 Boat Men and at present 16 White People More."[447] It detailed more precisely than the prior petitions the specific failings of said establishment, including lackluster efforts at religious instruction, financial mismanagement, ineffective distribution of property among the Maroons, and insufficient supplies of land, cattle, and food. The specific grievances that were listed offered direct responses to the complaints that had been circulated about Ochterlony, suggesting that he had a significant hand in drafting the petition to deflect accusations from the pro-Wentworth faction. "Captain Howe," the petition concluded, "lives in all the comforts of the country in a fine large house, elegantly fitted up for the Maroon service from whence he never stirs out."[448]

As enactments of royalist politics, the petitions were not merely part of an effort to obtain the privileges of imperial subjecthood, but also served as a means by which the Maroons could contest the terms of their belonging within the Empire and reassert their self-determination through a critique of colonial injustice and ineptitude. Just as essential to the petitions' rhetoric as arguments rooted in climate and human difference was the claim that Wentworth was a liar who would not come clean about his inability to effectively manage Maroon resettlement. Moreover, the petitions praised Ochterlony's leadership in order to reinstate a sense of legitimate political authority following the appointment of Captain Howe as superintendent to the Maroons,

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[447] Maroon Petition to Wentworth, 4 April 1798, CO 217/69, TNA.

[448] Maroon Petition to Wentworth, 4 April 1798, CO 217/69, TNA. The next petition rehearsed the usual argument for removal to a more hospitable climate, its urgency "now only increased by the removal of our much loved friend, Capt. Ochterlony." Maroon Petition to His Majesty's Ministers, 12 August 1797, CO 217/69, TNA.

continuing the struggle over white authority in the Maroon community that had spurred warfare in Jamaica. Finally, these petitions signaled a rejection of Wentworth's attempts to make them into a community of migrant workers, instead recasting the Maroons as warriors eager "for an opportunity of shewing [King George] that we are and ever will be a brave and loyal people and will die in defence of him, our King, or his good family."[449] Based on the terms of the treaty, which the Maroons still believed should have been in effect, they came to "expect a removal back to Jamaica, or to be put in some military array, and, with captain Ochterlony at their head, allowed to possess themselves some part of the island of Hispaniola, Guadaloupe, Cape of Good Hope, or Sierra Leone."[450] In this sense, the Maroons' strategies of claims making in Nova Scotia must be read as both anti-colonial *and* pro-monarchy. Their petitions radically recast their image of collective belonging against the aspirations of the Wentworth government.

On 10 June 1799, the Duke of Portland informed Wentworth that the Maroons' efforts had prevailed. They would be allowed to board the *Asia* in October of that year to resettle in Sierra Leone, though Portland instructed Wentworth to keep the plan a secret from the Maroons until the vessel was ready for departure.[451] Secrecy thus remained a consistent political tactic throughout the Maroons' residence in Nova Scotia. Due to Wentworth's inability to follow through on all of Portland's commands, however, almost a year would pass before the 550 Maroons living in Nova Scotia could finally depart from the province.[452] Though they did not mobilize in pursuit of the liberal freedoms with which the British abolitionist movement was

[449] Captain Andrew Smith to Brother Charles Samuels, Maroon Hall near Halifax, Nova Scotia, 3 June 1797, CO 217/69, TNA.

[450] Alexander Howe to John Wentworth, 8 June 1798, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, vol. 10, JCB.

[451] Wentworth to Portland, 10 June 1799, CO 270/4.
[452] Wentworth to Portland, 7 July 1800, CO 217/75.

concerned, the Maroons nevertheless fought for the freedom of movement, a radical act that did not require a break from monarchical rule.[453]

While the Maroons likely did enter into a secret agreement with Ochterlony, consecrated by a fetish oath, Wentworth wanted to keep secret the Maroons' underlying dissatisfaction with the conditions they confronted in Nova Scotia, where he attempted to refashion them into a subservient group of peasant farmers. The *pas de deux* of imperial loyalty and colonial secrecy made possible the Maroons' continued innovation of diplomatic negotiations, in this case culminating in the performance of an abjected loyal subjectivity. It is worth noting that the back and forth about Nova Scotia's Maroon resettlement crisis in the Jamaican Assembly and British Parliament totally effaced Maroon agency; yet, tracing the discourses of secrecy that shaped their residence in Nova Scotia permits the identification of a covert set of radical politics. The Maroons emerged in the documentary record as avatars of colonial fantasy, either subject to the whims of Ochterlony or subsumed in a discourse of sexual alterity and indolence. Their petitions, however, extended and innovated upon the "treaty talk" through which the Maroons attempted to formalize the notions of reciprocity and obligation that had underwritten their status in Jamaica prior to the outbreak of war.[454] Finding no use in the universalist claims to liberty animating political transformation elsewhere in the Atlantic world, the Maroons strategically positioned themselves as degraded outcasts by foregrounding their social difference in terms of race and sexuality to underwrite a radical project of imperial claims-making.

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[453] On the freedom of movement as an "elementary" freedom, see Nathalie Peutz and Nicholas de Genova, "Introduction," in Peutz and de Genova, eds., *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-29.

[454] On "treaty talk," see Miranda Johnson, "The Case of the Million-Dollar Duck: A Hunter, His Treaty, and the Bending of the Settler Contract," *The American Historical Review* 124, no. 1 (2019): 56-86; and the discussion in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Additionally, through enacting royalist politics from an abjected position, the Maroons did not naively grasp at the power of monarchy, as earlier histories have assumed of popular royalists; instead, they continued to call into question the outcome of Jamaica's last Anglo-Maroon War while laying a foundation for reconstituting their political subjectivity on their own terms. That the war was still being litigated after the Maroons' removal suggests a need to rethink its typically accepted chronology and geography. It was clear that by the time the Maroons began the petitioning process in Nova Scotia, they were still contesting the official narrative of the war. The petitions also require us to rethink the aims of that war, to see it as a struggle over intimate belonging in the colonial contest for power, focused on keeping families together and making a way of life beyond the confines of slavery. The Maroons' eventually successful efforts resettle in Sierra Leone suggests that, contrary to accepted wisdom, they actually prevailed in their war against the British in terms of what was most important to them. They were finally able to embrace their identities as a collective of warriors fighting to support their families against a backdrop of ongoing political transformation.

Chapter Five

Refusal: Militarism and Belonging in Sierra Leone, 1800-1805

By refusing to till the frigid land in Nova Scotia, the Trelawny Maroons executed a strategy of collective protest that resonates with familiar themes in proletarian resistance and subaltern politics. It was an event easily assimilable into accounts of black radicalism and the emergence of a class consciousness conditioned by the predicament of racialized chattel slavery, colonial expropriation, and imperial plunder.[455] The Maroons' strike announced a rejection of subservience and dependency in a way that extended the broader politics of *marronage* as constituting a repudiation of violent labor conscription. Combined with their mobilization of petitions, this act of refusal successfully guaranteed their evacuation from Nova Scotia, a place the Maroons had argued was fundamentally inimical to their collective flourishing.

Once the Trelawny Maroons found themselves traversing the Atlantic ocean for a second time, their reputation as rebels again shaped their uneasy reception by British officials. Governor Thomas Ludlam only cautiously welcomed 551 Maroons to Freetown, Sierra Leone, when they arrived aboard the ship *Asia* on the morning of 30 September 1800. On the one hand, the Maroons' arrival made real the possibility that the Sierra Leone Company might decrease its dependence on alliances with neighboring indigenous forces for their protection, but Ludlam and other Company administrators also worried that the Maroons might eventually challenge their tenuous hold on commerce in the region by siding with their adversaries in the region. But when they reached Freetown that fall, the Maroons encountered a prime opportunity to fulfill their

[455] Here I am suggesting an analogy to W. E. B. Du Bois' account of the general strike in Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 (New York: The Free Press, 1992 [1935]), ch. 4, as a paradigmatic example of black radicalism.

promise of loyalty to the Crown by committing themselves to the military service of the Sierra Leone Company, which was by then experiencing its own internal revolt by disenchanted black subjects. Fortunately for Ludlam the Company directors, the Maroons held true to their guarantee of loyalty to King George III, quickly mobilizing to suppress an armed uprising underway by the transplanted Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia who had colluded with the nearby Temne people to assert their independence.[456]

The Black Loyalists' rebellion only exacerbated the instability that had plagued the colony from the start. When philanthropists from London operating through the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor first established their Province of Freedom on the upper coast of west Africa in 1787, they hoped to relieve the plight of London's free black population; but the short-lived settlement soon succumbed to starvation and attacks from neighboring indigenous polities. Undaunted by the failure of previous efforts to settle the upper Guinea coast, brothers Thomas and John Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Henry Thornton, and William Wilberforce organized the Sierra Leone Company in 1791. The Company, led by Reverend John Clarkson in the search for a new home for roughly 1,200 black loyalist refugees, returned in 1792 to establish Freetown as the capitol of a new settlement. They Company leadership imagined the colony as an abolitionist utopia that could prove the viability of free agricultural labor and the exchange of goods not entangled in the slave trade. In 1794, however, the fledgling settlement suffered devastating attacks from French sailors as well as Temne soldiers. When the Black Nova Scotian refugees, who had been employed by the Company as agricultural workers, decided that they instead wanted a fair share of the Company's commerce and became embroiled in land

[456] Robert C. Dallas recounts the Trelawny Maroons' arrival at Freetown in *The History of the Maroons, from their Origins to the Establishment of their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone* (London: 1803). For a primary source account of the 1800 rebellion, see "A Narrative of the Rebellion which broke out in this Colony on the 25th of Sept. 1800," CO 270/5, TNA.

disputes, they joined forces with Temne leaders to carry out an anti-colonial revolt. It was this diasporic African alliance that the Maroons would ultimately subdue. Even after banishing the rebels, the Company continued to endure financial strain, leading to its re-founding as a Crown Colony in 1808. The Crown's assent to taking over the colony coincided with Britain's abolition of the slave trade in 1807, allowing Sierra Leone to also become the site where slave trade recaptives would be settled.[457]

The commonly accepted parameters of the Sierra Leone colony's history, as a philanthropic endeavor, abolitionist project, resettlement experiment, and military garrison, gesture toward the difficulties faced by an empire in transition, revealing the underlying tensions between noble aims and the arrogance that often attends them.[458] The Maroons, too, were forced to reckon with their own moment of profound rupture, one in which they were forced to decide what exactly they were willing compromise in order to strike yet another agreement with

[457] On the colonial history of Sierra Leone, see Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); John Peterson, *Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra Leone, 1787-1870* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969); Steven J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786-1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994); Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Alexander X. Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants Across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008); Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Paul E. Lovejoy and Suzanne Schwarz, eds., *Slavery, Abolition and the Transition to Colonialism in Sierra Leone* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2015); Padraic X. Scanlan, *Freedom's Debtors: British Antislavery in Sierra Leone in the Age of Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017); Philip Misevich, *Abolition and the Transformation of Atlantic Commerce in Southern Sierra Leone, 1790s to 1860s* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2019). On the history of the recaptives, see Suzanne Schwarz, "Reconstructing the Life Histories of Liberated Africans: Sierra Leone in the Early Nineteenth Century," *History in Africa* 39 (2012): 175-207. For an interesting reinterpretation of the 1800 rebellion as a food riot, see Rachel B. Hermann, "Rebellion or Riot?: Black Loyalist Food Laws in Sierra Leone," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 4 (2016): 680-703.

[458] Isaac Land and Andrew M. Shocket, "New Approaches to the Founding of the Sierra Leone Colony, 1786-1808," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 9, no. 3 (2008).

colonial administrators. Finally able to reassert their collective investment in militaristic belonging, but dissatisfied with the asymmetrical bargaining of colonial politics, the Maroons' encounters with empire in Sierra Leone generated a different practice of refusal than the one they had pursued in Nova Scotia, allowing them to end a pattern of serial dislocations. But the result was a politics of seeming ambivalence rather than one committed to upending the structures of empire.

Once they proved their worth to the colony, the Maroons settled quietly in Granville Town, just two miles west of Freetown, where by 1811, they increased their numbers to 807.[459] A letter sent in 1805 from the Trelawny Captains Andrew Smith and Charles Shaw to their former Nova Scotian superintendent expressed a sense of relief derived from their newfound partnership with the struggling colony. As the Captains put it, "[I]f we had been sent out here [to Sierra Leone] at first rather than to Nova Scotia we might have done a great deal better and perhaps been instrumental in preventing the Natives from making war on this place or ever thinking of such a thing."[460] Smith and Shaw went on to celebrate the fact that the "Government at home & here have shown us a great deal of attention & favour in supporting us."[461] Just five years into resettlement, the captains were eager to express their sense of satisfaction on behalf of the entire Maroon community, writing in the same letter, "[W]e are now able to support ourselves comfortably, the most of the young [...] have plenty of work, there are schools for the children & every thing we could wish, and the climate agrees very well with us now."[462]

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[459] Chopra, *Almost Home*, 181.

[460] Copy of letter from Captain Andrew Smith and Captain Charles Shaw, February 24, 1805, WO 1/352, TNA.

[461] Ibid.

[462] Ibid.

The Maroons' role as an auxiliary to the Sierra Leone colony's weak defenses allowed them to inhabit a role with which they were comfortable and familiar, marking a final reclamation of their collective identity as a warrior band. Their military service offered an alternative to the drudgery and debasement of agricultural labor, one that permitted the Maroons to enjoy a sense of pride and honor consistent with their values. Perhaps most importantly, it enabled them to preserve a sense of community and establish a sense of futurity as they expanded their kinship structure in Granville Town. Militarism, in other words, served the ends of social and biological reproduction that had undergirded the Maroons' efforts all along.

Of course, directing their combat skills toward enemies of the British allowed the Maroons to escape lingering British-imposed stereotypes of being an inherently warmongering and bloodthirsty people. At the same time, however, their collaboration with the Sierra Leone Company paved the way for other forms of moral condescension. When Robert Dallas reached this pivotal moment in his 1803 chronicle of the Maroons' journey, he offered no generosity in his judgment of their circumstances: "Had the Maroons been the disciples of revolutionary emissaries, or the abettors of anarchy and equality, they would in all probability have joined the people of their own complexion to extirpate the white tyrant."[463] What Dallas failed to consider when condemning their supposed disregard for the principle of equality was that the Maroons had long set themselves apart from other groups in order to mark the exceptionalism of their relationship with the British monarchy. The ascription of overlapping interests on the basis of race alone was more imperial fiction than reality when it came to the ways that the Maroons had long negotiated an intermediary position within the British Empire. The Maroons only invoked racialist discourse when it suited their aims, as they had in Nova Scotia, not as a straightforward

[463] Dallas, *The History of the Maroons*, 2:285.

promise of political affinity with other African-descended peoples.

The fact that this British-sanctioned return to their tradition of martial excellence came at the expense of the Nova Scotian refugees, who were plotting a struggle for their own independence, has not escaped the attention of historians. Indeed, the prevailing interpretations of the Trelawny Maroons' arrival at Sierra Leone have relegated them to the historical role of anti-revolutionaries and imperial collaborators. As one historian of late eighteenth-century Atlantic revolutions has put it, the confrontation between the Trelawny Maroons and the Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia "was one of the more ironic twists in the increasingly interconnected and contentious revolutionary world."[464] It was the Black Loyalists' struggle, rather than the one undertaken by the Maroons, that "drew on cross-cutting revolutionary traditions from three continents," according to Janet Polasky.[465] Isaac Land and Andrew Shocket likewise view the Nova Scotian loyalists' movement as an extension of the American Revolution insofar as "it entailed a substantial re-ordering of society on the periphery of the British Empire that can be described as nothing short of revolutionary by almost any definition."[466] Unlike the Maroons, the Loyalist refugees were committed to identifiably revolutionary principles such as free labor, political egalitarianism, and property redistribution.[467] Similar to Dallas' assessment shortly after their incorporation into Sierra Leone's defense, the Trelawny Maroons appear in the

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[464] Janet L. Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 109.

[465] Ibid.

[466] Land and Schocket, "New Aprroaches to the Founding of the Sierra Leone Colony," para. 20.

[467] As Land and Schocket claim, the Black Loyalists "wanted to abolish the forced labor so central to the Atlantic economy; they wanted to establish an egalitarian polity in a time of gross racial inequity; they wanted to provide for a broad distribution of property in an age of accumulation; and they wanted to establish a society in which greed and lust were tempered by religious faith." Ibid.

historiography as the thwarters of an African diasporic revolutionary project and as the vanguard British of imperial authority.[468]

Though historians have regarded the Sierra Leone period of Trelawny Maroon history as the ultimate fulfillment of their accommodationist and anti-revolutionary politics, represented most significantly by their decisive role in suppressing an anti-colonial revolt, the political impulses guiding their engagement with the Sierra Leone colony merit more than a one-to-one comparison with those of the Black Loyalists.[469] The categories of accommodation and assimilation fail to sufficiently account for the ways that the Maroons' political engagement with the British Empire emerged from the very particular and perpetually contested circumstances surrounding their position within the empire stretching back to the Jamaican period. To simply conclude that the Maroons found themselves on the wrong side of history leaves in tact an overly schematic and reductive notion of the forms of political imagination engendered by the imperial crises of the late eighteenth century. Addressing the continuities and ruptures in their efforts at political refashioning within a trans-Atlantic frame offers an alternative account of their history. As historian Frederick Cooper has insisted, those who have been subjected to colonial regimes over the course of world history inevitably reshaped the dominant categories established by those regimes through their various responses to the exercise of colonial rule. Cooper explains, "Collaborators and allies of colonial regimes—or people simply trying to make their way within empire—also pushed rulers of empire to change the way they acted. Subtle and dramatic

[468] Also see the emphasis on the Trelawny Maroons as imperial collaborators in Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, and Chopra, *Almost Home*.

[469] For a critique of oppositional accounts of black trans-Atlantic migrations within the eighteenth-century British Empire, see Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers*.

changes at critical conjunctures are both part of the story."[470]

Rather than attempting to recover a hidden history of good intentions, this chapter endeavors to reframe the ways that historians consider what Cooper might refer to as the subtler dimensions of politics during the revolutionary era. Less concerned with determining whether the Maroons fell on the right side of history when they chose to play an active role in the assertion of British imperial power, the chapter focuses on the ways that their enactment of refusal instantiated a radical response to a period of colonial crisis as they grasped the possibilities made available to them through imperial collaboration. By viewing their history of political mobilization through the lens of refusal, we begin to see how the Maroons' tactics operated not just in direct opposition to the aims of Nova Scotian loyalists and the Company's Temne adversaries, but within the broader context of imperial upheaval. Even as they faced each other in armed conflict, the Maroons and the Black Loyalists were in the midst of navigating parallel situations shaped in many ways by the same overarching set of historical forces. Their different histories, however, led them to enact different strategies of confronting imperial power in Sierra Leone.

The notion of refusal mobilized here emerges from black feminist scholarship that has developed the analytic as an alternative to notions of resistance and its implied opposite, accommodation. Tina Campt explains that practices of refusal mark the rejection of a social order meant to tether black life to the demands of an inherently constrained form of subjecthood that is fundamentally precarious, expendable, and unintelligible. Rather than maintaining a focus on acts of resistance, as conventionally understood, refusal instead points to the generative

[470] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 25.

capacity of negation to render conceivable fugitive possibilities beyond the dominant gestures of political action, to capture the motion of stillness and the articulateness of quiet.[471] Considered in the context of the revolutionary black Atlantic world at the turn of the nineteenth century, refusal becomes a way to destabilize the category of imperial accommodation, insofar as that category narrows African diasporic modes of belonging and struggle to the political lexicon of Britain's empire. As Sarah Haley has shown, the history of refusal re-narrates what appear to be ordinary or politically unintelligible events as radical moments of epistemological and ideological critique.[472] She demonstrates how these practices of refusal may represent "[t]he rupture and negation of Western epistemologies of law and order, racial hierarchy, and gendered racial difference and docility" even as they fail to register in the documentary archive as cataclysmic historical shifts.[473]

When the Maroons reached Freetown, they engaged in an act of refusal that marked a clear shift from their previous approach to diplomacy with the British and a rejection of the terms of imperial negotiation. The satisfaction with their improved circumstances expressed by the Maroon chiefs in 1805 did not result from an immediate and absolute restoration of the Maroons' faith in government, but a dissociation from colonial politics as usual. The minutes of the Sierra Leone Council noted upon the Maroons' arrival in 1800 that Smith, Shaw, and other Maroon

[471] It is worth quoting Tina M. Campt here, who defines refusal as "a rejection of the status quo as livable and the creation of possibility in the face of negation i.e. a refusal to recognize a system that renders you fundamentally illegible and unintelligible; the decision to reject the terms of diminished subjecthood with which one is presented, using negation as a generative and creative source of disorderly power to embrace the possibility of living otherwise." Tina M. Campt, "Black Visuality and the Practice of Refusal," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 29, no. 1 (2019), 83. Also see Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); and Campt, "The Visual Frequency of Black Life: Love, Labor, and the Practice of Refusal," *Social Text* 37, no. 3 (2019): 25-46.

[472] Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), ch. 5.

[473] Haley, *No Mercy Here*, 200.

leaders "declined […] to sign the paper of conditions" that outlined the terms of their service to the Company, "grounding their refusal on the injury they had sustained in Jamaica by the breach of a treaty, which they had been persuaded to sign in that country. This, they said, had determined them never to put their hands to any public paper in future, though they regarded their verbal assent as equally binding with their signature."[474] The Maroons' skepticism towards written agreements with the British based on the prior invalidation of their treaty constituted a refusal of the logic that had justified their exile, the ever receding horizons of possibility generated through imperial loyalty, and the persistent depreciation of speech acts. By withholding their formal agreement, the Maroons rejected the authority of the written word to reinforce racial status and social hierarchy, instead clinging to the sense of possibility for an alternative futurity enabled by their refusal.[475] They also implicitly communicated their distrust of colonial officials who seemed unwilling to honor the principles of obligation and reciprocity that the Maroons found so indispensable to their politics.

Moreover, even as the Maroons aided the Sierra Leone Company in stamping out the Black Loyalists' movement to assert their independence, their decision to decline another written agreement with colonial administrators signaled a refusal to collaborate in the production of an archive of assent, instead rendering their relationship to the Company only discernible through a transcript of negation.[476] Though this was not an act of anti-imperial collective action, it does bear implications for how we might write a history of this moment. Power inflects the way that

[474] Appendix to the Minutes for the year 1800, CO 270/5, TNA.

[475] Speech, too, served to reinforce social hierarchy during this period. See Miles Ogborn, *The Freedom of Speech: Talk and Slavery in the Anglo-Carbbean World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).

[476] On the use of "transcript" to describe subaltern politics, see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

we understand the past at every step of historical production, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has shown, including the creation of sources, the assembling of archives, the process of narration, and the assignment of meaning.[477] Trouillot calls attention to the role of silences in shaping historical narratives, but the Maroons' practice of refusal points as well to the role of negation in the asymmetrical production of history. The concept of historical negation helps to extend Trouillot's critique of positivism, or the idea that "the role of the historian is to reveal the past, to discover or, at least, approximate the truth," by illuminating another way that power—the domination, dispossession, and dislocation of some groups of people by others—guide our understanding of the past.[478]

Historians' ability to fold Sierra Leone's rebel uprising of 1800 into a revolutionary narrative rests in particular on the first-hand accounts of former slaves like Boston King and David George, whose testimonies show how their notions of freedom derived from the immediacy of their experience with the American Revolution.[479] The Black Loyalist archive of autobiographies, petitions, and demands makes theirs a discernible record of attempted political revolution. Yet, the Maroons left no statement of their ideological stance nor any record of their grievances with the Sierra Leone Company besides this gesture of refusal, making it difficult to trace their precise motivations and possible internal conflicts. But through their refusal, it becomes possible to tell a different story of their relationship to imperial power. This archive of negation, in other words, reflects a refusal to acquiesce to the dominant modes of seeking leverage within or against an imperial political order even as the Maroons did the bidding of

[477] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26.

[478] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 5.

[479] Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders*, 82-86.

empire. If the petitions the Maroons sent out from Nova Scotia reflected an attempt to rewrite the history of Jamaican's late eighteenth-century Anglo-Maroon War, their practice of refusal in Sierra Leone marked a disavowal of politics rooted in the historicity of their ongoing struggle with the British Empire.

Understanding the Maroons' reluctance to sign an agreement with the British through the lens of refusal also throws into sharp relief the difference—and coextensiveness—between militarism as a strategy of global imperialism and militarism as a mode of diasporic belonging in the face of colonial dispossession. The Maroons' arrival at Sierra Leone paved the way for what historian Padraic Scanlan refers to as "the militarization of antislavery," or the ability of the Company directors to seize on the presence of the Maroons to justify their reliance on militarism to make viable the abolitionist aims of the colony. The arrival of the Maroons as an auxiliary military body, Scanlan observes, made Sierra Leone a more attractive investment compared to nearby slave trading forts because the Company was able to draw greater numbers of British armed forces and the lucrative government contracts that came along with their presence. This helped to ease some of the settlement's financial woes and made more persuasive the Company directors' attempts to convince Parliament to ensure its long-survival by officially making Sierra Leone a Crown colony.[480] For the Maroons, however, militarism was a strategy of communal survival in the face of precarity and imperiled freedom. Like other communities in diaspora, they made use of the means available to them, including their martial prowess, to attain the stability that would allow them to maintain a meaningful sense of collective belonging. Their militaristic pursuits emerged about as a result of racial dispossession, a survival tactic

[480] Scanlan, *Freedom's Debtors*, 55-60. Phillip Misevich also notes that British colonialism in Sierra Leone actually had the opposite effect of increasing slavery on the frontier of Freetwon. See Misevich, *Abolition and the Transformation of Atlantic Commerce*, 13.

engendered by trans-Atlantic slave trade, rather than global ambitions for imperial domination.

If abolition for the British imperialists who attempted to build a "Province of Freedom" along the Guinea Coast was a top-down project that stood on the bedrock of agricultural, and then militaristic, utopianism, acquisitiveness, and gradualism, as Scanlan has suggested, might the Maroons have clung to their own distinctively diasporic notion of abolition? To put it differently, perhaps the Maroon put refusal into practice in the pursuit of abolition, otherwise—not abolition as the suppression of the slave and the cessation of chattel slavery, but abolition as the creation of social life not circumscribed by the logic of European enslavement, empire, and expansion.[481] Theirs was surely an alternative epistemology of freedom not derivative of an imperial campaign aimed at reworking black enslavement into a debased form of black agricultural industriousness, but one rooted in a politics of diasporic belonging guided by the imperative towards social reconstitution in the midst of collective rupture. Not merely opportunistic and amoral, the Maroons clearly maintained some notion of justice rooted in their experience of displacement, especially considering they argued against the exile of the rebel Nova Scotians, citing that they "did not with any people should be drove away from their places."[482]

Whatever ideas the Maroons may have had in mind to reshape Granville Town into their

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[481] Here, I am extending the notion of a "positive, world-making" abolition, or abolition as constructive, generative, and always concerned with enacting the impossible, derived from critical abolition studies, which argues that the enduring influence of nineteenth-century slavery abolitionism has left twenty-first century abolition struggles with too narrow an understanding of the concept. See Abigail Boggs, Eli Meyerhoff, Nick Mitchell, and Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, "Abolitionist University Studies: An Invitation," *Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics* (August 2019), https://abolition.university/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Abolitionist-University-Studies_-An-Invitation-Release-1-version.pdf. On the reaching for "otherwise" possibilities as a modality of black life, see Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

[482] Journals of George Ross, 22 October 1800, in Mavis C. Campbell, ed., *Back to Africa: George Ross & the Maroons from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1993), 26.

own territory of freedom, the material conditions of life in Sierra Leone proved troublesome from the outset. Within weeks of their arrival at the settlement, members of the Maroon population—especially the very young and elderly—began to succumb to malaria and fevers. By December, 132 Maroons appeared on the Sierra Leone's Council's list of sick settlers.[483] The surgeon stationed there, Dr. Chadwick, reported to the Council that many of the Maroons had arrived malnourished due to the quality of provisions on the voyage from Nova Scotia, their physical condition made all the worse by being "frequently exposed to heavy rains, night air, and the intense heat of the sun in the day time" once they arrived at Sierra Leone.[484] Despite the mortality precipitated by their adjustment to a new climate, the Maroons found occasion in the mourning to seek comfort in togetherness. George Ross, the British attendant who had accompanied the Maroons during the voyage from Nova Scotia to Sierra Lone, took part in the burial of the Maroon General William Barnet, and recorded a note about their funerary songs in his journal: "Some of the Maroon songs sung this evening were being interpreted – 'We are sorry for what has happened but we can't help it – let us drink and be merry – and be friends too, and support one another."[485] Even in times of turmoil, the Maroons found solace in the intimacy of communal belonging.

Though the perpetuation of kinship ties had long been central to the Maroons' strategy of survival, colonial administrators sought once again to regulate their family structures in Sierra Leone. On January 10, 1800, the Sierra Leone Council passed a resolution "that every marriage

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[483] J. Gray, December 12, 1800, Council Minutes, CO 270/5.

[484] Dr. Chadwick, December 12, 1800, CO 270/6, TNA. Dr. Chadwick resigned from his position as surgeon and apothecary to the Maroons shortly thereafter. See Lt. Smith, January 7, 1801, Council Minutes, CO 270/5.

[485] Journal of George Ross, Thursday 23 October, 1800, in Mavis C. Campbell, ed., *Back to Africa: George Ross & the Maroons from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1993), 28.

henceforth to be contracted among the Maroons be solemnised by the Governor," or some surrogate in the case of his absence, for the purpose of "drawing a marked line of distinction between concubinage & matrimony, and imparting to the latter the requisite solemnity and dignity."[486] Religious and moral cultivation again appeared central to the colonial administration's policy of managing the Maroons, but the law did not seem to be heavily enforced, indicating a policy of cultural permissiveness in place given the supportive role the Maroons played for the Company. But over time, younger Maroons became more amenable to British customs. Captain William Day, Sierra Leone's governor from early 1803, remarked that "[w]ithout any direct influence being used by their superiors to induce them to follow European cultures several of the younger Maroons married and baptized their children."[487] But even those Maroons who did convert and enter into Christian marriages opted to do so in their own church, which they called Maroon Chapel.[488] Family continued to hold a central place in the Maroons' sense of collective aspiration even beyond the limits of the Sierra Leone colony. When William Day reassumed the governorship in 1805, the Maroons began to ask him about "those Maroon men, women, and children who are at Jamaica," requesting that they be allowed to rejoin their families in Freetown.[489]

As Sierra Leone came under the rule of the British Crown, these Maroon families ultimately settled into their new lives, taking on new roles in the colony, including civil service and entrepreneurship, even as they continued to spurn agricultural labor. The influx of slave

[486] Minutes of the Sierra Leone Council, 10 January 1800, CO 270/5, TNA.

[487] T. Thompson to London, 1808, CO 267/24, TNA.

[488] Chopra, *Almost Home*, 179.

[489] Copy of letter from Captain Andrew Smith and Captain Charles Shaw, February 24, 1805, WO 1/352, TNA.

trade recaptives into the colony also provided another population for the Maroons to play an active role in policing.[490] But some of the Maroons still maintained a strong connection to Jamaica. As early as 1802, the directors of the Sierra Leone Company noted that they "universally harbor a desire of going back [to Jamaica] at some period of their lives."[491] It would not be until allmost forty years later when, on September 30, 1841, at least fifteen Trelawny Maroons would return to Jamaica.[492]

By the end of their journey, it was clear that the Maroons did not merely accommodate themselves to British imperialism in West Africa, but played a fundamental role in its transformation. Their presence in the colony offered a persuasive justification for the Crown to take over the Sierra Leone Company's increasingly strained vision of a province of freedom, while at the same time they both expanded and strained against what it could mean to be a black subject within the British Empire. Their insistence on refusal ensured that their subjecthood would never occur completely on the terms of British colonial administrators. They instead rejected the very terms of that subjecthood, disavowing their history of formal agreements with the British, while still leaving in tact their radical pursuit of diasporic belonging. With the suppression of the slave trade, Britain's empire experienced moment of profound transition on both sides of the Atlantic. The administrators of the Sierra Leone colony attempt to pursue a narrow vision of abolition that was both dependent upon, but insufficient to completely encompass, the Maroons' revolutionary traversal of the Atlantic world. Though the archive bears no trace of another compact with a colonial authority, we are nevertheless left, again, with the

[490] Chopra, *Almost Home*, 178-181.

[491] Report of the Sierra Leone Company, Committee on the Petition of the Court of Directors, May 25, 1802, WO 1/352, TNA.

[492] Letter from John Ewart, September 30, 1841, CO 140/33, TNA. Chopra, *Almost Home*, 183-184.

Maroons' mourning song, attesting to their ability to seek refuge in kinship, in possibility, an ethic of care, and "in the commons created by fugitives and rebels."[493] *Let us drink and be merry – and be friends, too, and support one another*.

[493] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 234.

Conclusion

The Black Radical Tradition and the Subject of History

The Trelawny Maroons' odyssey through the British Empire enabled them to recast their political subjectivity across three different colonial spaces—Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone—in the pursuit of their own vision of intimate belonging. While it was the Maroons' martial prowess that attracted the attention and stoked the anxieties of British slaveholders and colonial administrators, ensuring that their existence would be registered in documentary archives, it was ultimately the Maroons' efforts to reconstitute themselves as communally bonded in the wake of slavery, colonialism, and warfare that most forcefully shaped the political imagination that underwrote their encounters with empire. Through their oaths, treaties, and promises, they endeavored to rework ruptured kinship into political demands, a set of affective commitments, a horizon of possibility, and a livable future.

The history of the Trelawny Maroons as told here brings to light a political tradition rooted in the entanglement of diasporic and imperial modes of negotiation—the oath, the treaty, the petition—and, ultimately, their refusal, mobilized to stake radical claims to collective obligation and reciprocity in the face of racial dispossession. At the center of this struggle was the Maroons' attempts to pursue modes of intimate belonging beyond the reach of empire, the improvisational impulse to cement social ties again and again, the radical renegotiation of political subjecthood with and against judgments of cultural inferiority and sexual alterity. Throughout this dissertation, I have named this tradition a *radical* one, insisting on the ways that the Trelawny Maroons invoked higher forms of authority—sacred and monarchical—in order to

instate meaningful social change. In one sense, framing this story as a revolutionary one marks an effort to render the Maroons' actions legible according to the prevailing themes of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century historiography. But it is also an invitation to rethink the very categories that frame our understandings of collective political struggle altogether. Here, revolution is less the cataclysmic usurping of state authority thant the refashioning of collective belonging and political obligation in the face of dislocation and attempts of political estrangement.

As a project engaged with the central questions animating black studies, this dissertation takes up the challenge many scholars in the field have undertaken in order to understand how black subjects created life under conditions of social death during slavery and in the midst of its afterlives.[494] Scholars of African diasporic history and culture have shown us how black subjects created meaning and mobilized changed through the lower-case-p "politics" of the enslaved, the pleasures of resistance, the loophole of retreat, the enslaved community's ethic of care and cooperative awareness, blues aesthetics, respectability politics, wake work, waywardness, the erotic, the fantastic, quiet, stillness, and modes of living otherwise.[495] Though

[494] On slavery as social death, see Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). See chapter one for my discussion of social death as an organizing paradigm in black studies. On the afterlives of slavery, see Saidiya Harman, Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

[495] On the politics of the enslaved, see Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (2009): 1231-1249. On the pleasure of resistance, see Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004). On the loophole of retreat, see Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). On the enslaved community's ethic of care and cooperative awareness, see Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). On the blues, see Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998); Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016). On respectability politics, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

grounded in different methodologies and reading practices, these concepts all share in common the desire to better understand how people of African descent have responded to the various conditions structuring their lives, rendering them fungible, disposable, and precarious. Likewise, this dissertation offers the politics of intimate belonging and the oath as ways to understand diasporic practice in the pursuit of radical transformation oriented around social and political obligation. It presents an account of *bondedness*—to empire, and to each other—as a strategy of social and political creativity, not to demonstrate cultural resilience, but to historicize a mode of critical relation.

My preoccupation with black revolutionary politics stems from a desire to write a history of the Black Atlantic in the vein of what Cedric Robinson termed the black radical tradition. In his book *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, originally published in 1983, Robinson traced what he called a "historical archaeology of the radical black tradition" that synthesized existing scholarship on *marronage*, slave insurrection, and the Haitian Revolution over the course of four centuries in order to demonstrate the existence of "an African tradition that grounded collective resistance by Blacks to slavery and colonial imperialism."[496] Robinson's inquiry into the nature of revolutionary change through the lens of black radicalism

University Press, 1993). On wake work, see Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). On waywardness, see Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2019). On the erotic, see Jafari Allen, *¡Venceremos?: The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); LaMonda Horton Stallings, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015). On the fantastic, see Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). On quiet, see Kevin Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012). On stillness, see Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017). On black life otherwise, see Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

[496] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000 [1983]), 169.

issued a forceful challenge to the Eurocentricism of Marxist historical materialism, but left in tact its narrative of temporal progress, *from rebellion to revolution*.[497]

Feminist scholars have offered important revisions to the black radical tradition's efforts to reimagine global historical change from the perspective of the enslaved. If the black radical tradition substituted "the worker" for "the slave" as the central figure in its chronicle of change over time, black feminists have suggested that we instead look at the past from the social category of "black woman," shedding light on how considering questions of reproduction, the material relations of sexuality, affective labor, and the gendered body might disrupt the ways that we think about labor, power, and the political.[498] Doing so demonstrates how the realms of the intimate, the everyday, the domestic, and the family were also sites of radical historical change and social creativity.

At the center of both the black radical and the black radical feminist critique of history is the question of what counts as radical politics, and for whom. This dissertation has, of course, endeavored to disrupt the progressive teleology of revolution underlying the Robinsonian notion of black radicalism. But how does the history of the Trelawny Maroons suggest an alternative genealogy of the black radical tradition? What might it mean to take the historical conditions of their struggle, shaped as it was by the absence of an abolitionist politics, an indifference to

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[497] Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

[498] On black radical history, see C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963 [1938]); W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Free Press, 1998 [1935]). For the feminist critique, see Saidiya Hartman, "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, 18, no. 1 (2016): 166-173; Alys Weinbaum, "Gendering the General Strike: W. E. B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* and Black Feminism's 'Propaganda of History'," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 3 (2013): 437-463.

universalist claims to freedom, and an adherence to a position of imperial loyalty, as a starting point to reconsider the political possibilities inherent in black liberation struggles? And in what ways might a black feminist perspective, concerned with questions of intimate belonging, social and biological reproduction, and affect, shift our understanding of black radical histories and futures?

This dissertation has tried to imagine a history of black radicalism not concerned with tracing the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness, but one that is instead committed to historicizing radical modes of intimate belonging, solidarity, and affiliation. In doing so, it has sought not to locate a new subject of history in the Maroon, but in the enactment of belonging and relationality—what Omise'ele Tinsley has referred to as "*feeling* and *feeling for*."[499] It is a history of political refashioning through promises kept and promises broken, wherein the Maroons appear not only historical actors, but also as sites of critique—of slavery, empire, kinship, and freedom.[500] It is, moreover, an extension of queer of color critiques of diaspora, insofar as it centers on modes of belonging that remain illegible through British imperial epistemes, preoccupied with the sexual alterity of cultural outsiders, as well as the "biological, reproductive, oedipal logic" that underwrites approaches to diasporic cultural genealogies.[501] This project foregoes the search for radical historical subjects and instead retrains the historical gaze onto radical, though ultimately evanescent, enactments of obligation, reciprocity, and

[499] Omise'eke Natasha Tinsely, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008), 192. Emphasis original.

[500] For a different perspective on *marronage* as a critique of notions of freedom in political theory, see Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

[501] Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 6. Following Gopinath and other queer studies scholars, my approach to queer diaspora is concerned with queer reading, citational, and interpretive practices rather than the recover of sexual minoritarian subjects.

entanglement. As Gayatri Gopinath explains, a "queer excavation of the past does not seek to identify or mourn lost origins," but instead attunes us "to submerged and forgotten modes of longing, desire, affiliation, and embodiment that may in fact allow us to envision an alternative present and future."[502] In that sense, this is a history that refuses linearity, landing not so much on the question of the Trelawny Maroons' ultimate fate and the tidy resolution of a collective biography, but lingering with the possibilities of an oathbound politics, even as it disappears from the historical record. Additionally, it considers how the conditions of exile shape notions of a homeland, rather than the inverse, as belonging takes on altogether new meaning under the historical predicament of dislocation.[503]

If we are now accustomed to understanding the Haitian Revolution as a forward-looking movement, the fulfillment of a radical and unprecedented promise of equality, scholars have also been insistent upon seeing the Jamaican Maroons' movement as one preoccupied with finding their way back home. But, as they surely must have known, home was not a place to which they could simply return; rather, it was a promise, an obligation, a collective commitment to a set of principles that could govern their sense of belonging and relationship to power.[504] In an era such as our own where the political horizon of diasporic belonging has been eclipsed by the genetic testing industry's efforts to innovate a new apparatus of racial surveillance; the emergence of a partisan politics of black nativism mobilized under the guise of economic uplift; and a new culture war premised on a zero-sum game of identitarian representation; we might look to the

[502] Gayatri Gopinath, *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 8.

[503] On the ways that an exilic relationship to the nation offers a standpoint from which to rethink notions of diaspora, belonging, and inclusion, see Gopinath, *Impossible Desires*, 166-168.

[504] On the impossibility of return and redress, see Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*.

oath as a way to refocus our historical imagination on the radical possibilities of political community. We can write new histories of slavery, resistance, and *marronage* to imagine how the conditions of dislocation and dispossession also generate forms of commitment that expand our ability to sustain bonds across difference.

As our world continues to be shaped by the afterlives of slavery and emergent forces of collective estrangement—displacement fueled by climate crises, deportation regimes, and carceral governmentality—the history of the Trelawny Maroons offers a way to grasp how the impossibility of return or redress might shape altogether new potentialities produced when strangers become kin.

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