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The Work of Diaspora: Engaging Origins, Tradition and Sovereignty Claims of Jamaican
Maroon Communities

By

Mario Nisbett

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

African American Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Percy C. Hintzen, Chair

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Summer 2015

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Abstract

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by

Mario Nisbett

Doctor of Philosophy in African American Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Percy C. Hintzen, Chair

This dissertation examines the concept of the African Diaspora by focusing on four post-colonial Maroon communities of Jamaica, the oldest autonomous Black polities in the Caribbean, which were established by escapees from slave-holding authorities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In exploring the Maroons as a Black community, the work looks at how they employ diaspora in making linkages to other communities of African descent and for what purposes.

Maroons are being positioned in relation to the amorphous concept of diaspora, which is normally used to refer to people who have been dispersed from their place of origins but maintain tradition and connections with kin in other countries. However, I complicate the definition, arguing that diaspora, specifically the African Diaspora, is the condition that produces the collective consciousness of sameness rooted in the idea of common African origins based on a common experience of Black abjection.

This understanding of diaspora opens the way to see that the uses of the concept are varied. This approach to diaspora challenges conventional debates in the humanities and social sciences on whether the concept is either a grouping of peoples, a process, or a method, making it possible to simultaneously engage all three modes along with their conceptual and theoretical contributions to the field of Diaspora Studies.

Most importantly, the study permits us to see how the critical practice of diaspora is articulated in communities of African descent. Here, “critical practice” refers to acts or utterances that critique, challenge, and re-position distorted understandings of particular peoples and communities. The African Diaspora seen as a critical practice ultimately challenges Western understandings of Black people. Another important concept is “articulation,” as in enunciation and making linkages, which highlights the significance, aim, and utility of the critical practice of diaspora for different Black communities. This approach to diaspora as a critical practice that explores articulation is crucial for understanding the varying responses of Black peoples to global inequality and exclusion. It creates a nuanced approach to diaspora and shows how different Black communities may engage it in their own way.

In addition, this study demonstrates how diaspora, not race, as a unit of analysis for understanding the connection of peoples who are considered Black. I view race here to be a social construct that has no biological basis. Thus, in its articulations, diaspora is not a matter of subscribing to an essentialist racial agenda, but incorporates significant differences across diverse Black peoples to fully understand their lived realities and experiences.

Furthermore, this view of diaspora permits an interdisciplinary approach to engage the fields of history, anthropology, literature, and political philosophy in the study. Such a comparative and interdisciplinary approach helps to explore systematically the significance of diaspora to Black peoples in general and at site-specific locations. In this case, it de-centers Americo-centric analysis by focusing on the Caribbean.

Overall, the dissertation, through an innovative approach, explores how Black communities, particularly Jamaican Maroons, engage diaspora. Undeniably, diaspora, as a critical practice, has contributed much from its earliest articulation and will undoubtedly continue to contribute to an enhanced understanding of Black peoples. Arguably, exploration of the critical practice and articulation of diaspora demonstrates the significance of communities of African descent engaging in endeavors for Black autonomy and sovereignty against the discourse of Black inhumanity.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Ernest and Merriss Nisbett.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines how “Black” communities engage diaspora.¹ In particular, the project focuses on four post-colonial Maroon communities of Jamaica, the oldest autonomous polities in the Caribbean, which were established by escapees from slave-holding authorities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here, Maroons, as a Black community, are being positioned next to the amorphous concept of diaspora. The term “diaspora” is normally used to refer to people who have been dispersed from their place of origins but maintain tradition and connections with kin in other countries.² However, I intend to complicate the definition, arguing that diaspora, specifically the “African Diaspora,” is the condition that produces the collective consciousness of sameness rooted in the idea of common African origins based on a common experience of Black abjection. This work explores how the tropes of origins and traditions, which are important to all diasporas, are critically employed in linking Maroons to other communities of African descent and to what ends these networks are used. It may be argued that Black communities articulate, as in enunciating and making connection to, diaspora to carve out independent space for Black autonomy or sovereignty. Thus, the dissertation demonstrates in employing articulation and critical practice of diaspora that Black communities—such as the Maroons—are able to pursue full sovereignty.

Diaspora

Before going any further, it is important to clarify how I am defining and applying the term “diaspora.” The concept of diaspora is being used with increasing sophistication and wider application nowadays. This concept has been appropriated for an ever-growing number of communities, cultures, and populations, for whom it had not been used before, to explain the intricacies of their condition.

Conceptualization

The increasingly popular use of the term “diaspora” has incited a fierce scholarly debate about its definition. Some academics, such as Brent Hayes Edwards, Darlene Clark Hine, and Khachig Tölölyan, have expressed a reasonable concern that diaspora may be “in danger of becoming promiscuously capacious.”³ As a category, it can include adjacent phenomena such as globality, migrancy, postcoloniality, and transnationality.⁴ For this reason, scholars such as Kim Butler and James Clifford have argued that the term has no clear definition.⁵

It is in fact possible to define diaspora precisely, particularly the African Diaspora. In my way of thinking, it is the condition that produces the collective consciousness of sameness rooted in the idea of common origins based on a common experience of Black abjection. We find the three major principles embedded in this definition—sameness, common origins, and common

¹ I view race here to be a social construct that has no biological basis.

² Stuart Hall, “New Cultures for Old,” in *A Place in the World?: Places, Cultures and Globalization*, ed. John Allen and Doreen B. Massey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 206.

³ Khachig Tölölyan, “Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*: Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment,” *Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (1996): 8; Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 19, no. 1 (2001): 1; Darlene Clark Hines, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small, ed., *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

⁴ Tölölyan, “Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*,” 8.

⁵ Kim Butler, “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,” *Diaspora* 10, no. 2 (2001): 193; James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 310.

abjection—implicitly and explicitly expressed in popular and well-established conceptualizations of the African Diaspora.

A diasporic framework was already in use before the specific concept of diaspora gained its present prevalence. Starting in the early nineteenth century, this framework was evident in the challenges to the discursive exclusion of Black peoples from enlightened humanity. Indeed, the historian George Shepperson referred to it as a challenge to influential post-Enlightenment figures such as G. W. R. Hegel, who said in his famous lectures on history in Berlin that Africa (and, in effect, peoples of African descent) had “no historical part of the World ... no movement or development to exhibit” and was “only on the threshold of the World’s History.”⁶ Ever since then, prominent educators and intellectuals, such as Mary McLeod Bethune, Edward Wilmot Blyden, W. E. B. Du Bois, Amy Jacques Garvey, and Melville J. Herskovits, have used a diasporic framework to express ideas that bring greater awareness of Black abjection and to oppose it. A diasporic framing, prior to the use of the word “diaspora,” was therefore used to stress the humanity of Black peoples who have been shut out from the world by a vast “veil.”⁷

Beginning in the 1950s, the term “African Diaspora” has been systematically applied to the Black historical experience. Since then, there have been increasing attempts at conceptual clarity. Notions of a common experience of oppression, common origins, and shared racial identity have all been brought to bear.

Many of the scholarly attempts to define the African Diaspora have fundamental elements in common. The historians Shepperson and Joseph Harris, two of the earliest theorists of the African Diaspora, have had perhaps the most significant impact on the development of the field of diaspora studies and its theorization. Harris, the more influential of the two, sees diaspora as having the following characteristics: “[1] Collective memories and myths about Africa as the homeland or place of origin; [2] a tradition of a physical and psychological return; [3] a common socioeconomic condition; [4] a transnational network; and [5] a sustained resistance to Africans’ presence abroad and an affirmation of their human rights.”⁸ Supporting my argument, these elements can be considered common conditions that connect diverse peoples based on the idea of common origins, a collective consciousness of sameness, and a shared experience of abjection (causing the conditions that lead to the drive for the “affirmation of their human rights”).

More recently, the historian Colin Palmer, following in the tradition of Harris, specifically defines the characteristics of diaspora. He views it as imaginary and symbolic communities and political constructs having the following characteristics:

[1] Regardless of their location, members of a diaspora share an emotional attachment to their ancestral land, [2] are cognizant of their dispersal and, [3] if conditions warrant, of their oppression and alienation in the countries in which they reside. [4] Members of diasporic communities also tend to possess a sense of “racial,” ethnic, or religious identity that transcends geographic boundaries, [5] to

⁶ George Shepperson, “African Diaspora: Concept and Context,” in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, ed. Joseph Harris (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1982), 47.

⁷ William E. B. Du Bois and Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

⁸ Joseph E. Harris, “Expanding the Scope of African Diaspora Studies: The Middle East and India, a Research Agenda,” *Radical History Review* 87, no. 1 (2003): 158.

share broad cultural similarities, and [6] sometimes to articulate a desire to return to their original homeland.⁹

Thus, Palmer, like Harris, defines diaspora as (a) a common experience of oppression and alienation, (b) rooted in a sense of racial identity, and (c) oriented toward a notion of common origins.

It is important to see in all of these attempts at defining diaspora an effort to understand not only what diaspora is but also what it does—not in a literal sense but as a critical practice. The term “diaspora,” as Stuart Hall suggests, can be used in a literal or “closed” way, to describe peoples who have been dispersed from their “countries of origin,” but who attempt to maintain links with the past through endeavors to preserve their traditions, “seeking eventually to return to the homeland—the true ‘home’ of their culture—from which they have been separated.”¹⁰ However, Hall also proposes what could be called a more “open” or critical sense in which diaspora could be seen, one that is much more complex. It is worth quoting:

Diaspora also refers to the scattering and dispersal of peoples who will never literally be able to return to the places from which they came; who have to make some kind of difficult “settlement” with the new often oppressive, cultures with which they were forced into contact; and who have succeeded in remaking themselves and fashioning new kinds of cultural identity by, consciously or unconsciously, drawing on more than one cultural *repertoire*. These are people who, as Salman Rushdie wrote in his essay in *Imaginary Homelands*, “having been borne across the world ... are translated men (and women)” (Rushdie, 1991, p. 17)... They speak from the “in-between” of different cultures, always unsettling the assumptions of one culture from the perspective of another, and thus finding ways of being both the same as and at the same time *different from* the others among whom they live (Bhabha 1994).¹¹

This critical—rather than literal—usage of diaspora opens up many possibilities. Diaspora in its critical sense complicates the literal interpretation. As an alternative to a literary interpretation, Percy Hintzen argues that diaspora, when “transferred as a signification of the Black social reality, served as a powerful metaphor to publicize the even more devastating, brutal, and pervasive violence that constituted the common history of colonialism and slavery.”¹² The point is that when diaspora is shorn of its literal definition, the way becomes open for consideration of the African Diaspora as constituted not by a single people but by a variety of different identities, cultures, and communities; or, as Stuart Hall asserts, by a “necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives in and through, not despite, difference.”¹³ In other words,

⁹ Colin A. Palmer, “Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora,” *Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 1/2 (2000): 29.

¹⁰ Hall, “New Cultures for Old,” 206.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Percy C. Hintzen and Jean Muteba Rahier, “Introduction,” in *Global Circuits of Blackness: Interrogating the African Diaspora*, ed. Jean Muteba Rahier, Percy C. Hintzen, and Felipe Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 2.

¹³ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 235.

it is an expression of the common experience of oppression and alienation, is rooted in a sense of racial identity, and is oriented toward a notion of common origins.

Critical Practice

The African Diaspora can be understood by the three central principles in its definition, which contribute to an understanding of the African Diaspora as a critical practice.¹⁴ The critical practice of diaspora refers to acts or utterances that critique Western understanding of Black peoples. I conceive critical practice here as forms of expression out of which diaspora may be articulated or made discernible. These three principles—all conditions of diaspora—are the common experience of Black abjection, organized around notions of common African origins, and constituted by forms of collective Black consciousness.

The presentation and performance of diasporic expressive forms occur in various aspects of the lives of Black peoples. They are lived in Black communities and cultures as manifested in their social structures, languages, literatures, gestures, arts, musics, dances, and religions. Indeed, the arts and literature are two of the most (conscious) expressive forms of diasporic critical practice.

Most significantly, diaspora, as politics and critical practice, argues against the Western notion of the historicized, politicized, and naturalized racial inferiority of Black peoples. Diaspora is the condition out of which is produced vital intervention as challenge to the European notions and normalizations of Black abjection. Diaspora reveals a narrative of the production of the collective consciousness of sameness through notions of common origins in Africa that have roots in Black abjection.

I argue that the African Diaspora is constituted out of three factors, embedded in its various definitions: the common experience of Black abjection, the notion of common African origins, and a collective consciousness of sameness. As critical practice, diaspora is engaged with each of these. It is this engagement that produces the political expressions of a universal Black subjecthood that challenge the Western narrative of Blackness. The critical practice of diaspora is engaged in a quest for dignity, equality, justice, and rights: a struggle for recognition of the humanity of the Black subject. The critical practice is a product of the recognition of sameness. It allows for the production of new possibilities and new forms of consciousness about the Black self. And it has the potential to reveal Black humanity. These possibilities and potentials may be the basis for Black liberation and liberation from the discourses of Black inhumanity.

Articulation

The dissertation focuses, however, on a particular component of critical practice: articulation and its relationship to diaspora. As previously indicated, a crucial aspect of comprehending diaspora as a critical practice is having an understanding of how it is articulated. Articulation, as a critical practice of diaspora, is a process of not only creating but also re-creating enunciations and linkages among diverse Black peoples.¹⁵ It is in full agreement with Hall and Brent Hayes Edwards understanding of the concept.

As Hall affirms, articulation is defined and could be understood in the following way:

¹⁴ In agreement with Brent Hayes Edwards that diaspora is a practice but I would go further and say it is a critical practice.

¹⁵ Jennifer Daryl Slack, "The Theory and Method of Articulation in Cultural Studies," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 114.

In England, the term has a nice double meaning because ‘articulate’ means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an ‘articulated’ lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. An articulation is thus the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances *can* a connection be forged or made? So the so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’. The ‘unity’ which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. Thus, a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects.¹⁶

Articulation is a way of understanding dynamic, complex and fluid relations. I think it is the bringing into meaningful coherence of relations. As John Fiske affirms, Hall’s “double use of the concept of articulation (both speaking [sense 1] and [flexible] linking [sense 2]) is central in his theorizing.”¹⁷ This theory of articulation refuses to allow meaning any fixity, but “is insistent that meanings *are* made, *are* held in place and *are* used in particular if temporary conditions.”¹⁸ Articulation can be understood as a way of characterizing a social relation without becoming reductionist and essentialist.¹⁹ Articulation, methodologically, gives one a way to understand the object of one’s analysis. As Jennifer Slack asserts, articulation works epistemologically as a means of thinking through “the structures of what we know as a play of correspondences, non-correspondences and contradictions, as fragments in the constitution of what we take to be unities.”²⁰

The analytic focus on articulation allows for the understanding of the claims to unity of diverse peoples who are conceptualized as Black. When one is speaking of Black cultures, one cannot speak for long, with any exactness, about a history of one people or experience.²¹ Indeed, cultural identities of Black peoples are not “fixed essences that lie unchanged and that already existed, transcending place, time, history and culture.”²² The histories of Black cultures, as Hall suggests, “have their real, material and symbolic effects” that “continue to speak to us” but they “no longer address us as a simple, factual ‘past,’ since our relation to it, like the child’s relation to

¹⁶ Lawrence Grossberg, “On Postmodernism and Articulation: an Interview with Stuart Hall,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues*, 141–42.

¹⁷ John Fiske, “Open the Hallway: Some Remarks on the Fertility of Stuart Hall’s Contribution to Critical Theory,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues*, 213.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁹ Slack, “Theory and Method,” 112.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 225.

²² *Ibid.*

the mother, is always-already ‘after the break.’ It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth.”²³ The identities of Black peoples come from many different sites, and like everything historical, they constantly undergo change and transformation.²⁴

Indeed, there are vast disparities, differences, and contradictions among peoples who are considered Black. For example, there are differences across class, culture, language, nation, religion, and territory. There are major differences among Black peoples in various places, times, and situations. Indeed, the notion of literal shared African or Black origins is difficult to substantiate because of the sheer diversity of Africans and their descendants. As Jacqueline Nassy Brown suggests, Black people “recognize themselves as being of like kind—as sharing some basis of identity—even if they express distinct, sometimes contrary, histories, and experiences in relation to it.”²⁵ As a result, Black peoples have different identities, cultures, and social formations throughout the globe.

Articulation creates the space for understanding the connections of different Black communities with one other. As Bryan Edwards asserts, “articulation offers the means to account for the diversity of Black ‘takes’ on the very concept of diaspora.”²⁶ Hence, articulation becomes a critical practice of thinking about unity in difference. Articulation recognizes that Black peoples have been and continue to be a set of multiple and constantly shifting cultures and identities that are not easily categorized but can still be uttered and linked. Articulation becomes central in the idea of a Black “sameness” across difference.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is that it enhances our understanding of the uses of diaspora. In particular, the study permits us to see how the critical practice of diaspora is articulated in communities of African descent. Articulation highlights the importance, aim, and utility of the critical practice of diaspora for different Black communities. This approach to diaspora as a critical practice that explores articulation is ideal for understanding the responses of Black peoples to global inequality, marginalization, and exclusion. In other words, the study engages not only aspects of what is diaspora but also how it operates and why it is used, being demonstrably and varyingly lived in a range of Black transnational and marginalized communities.

In addition, the importance of this study is that it challenges race as a unit of analysis for understanding the connection of peoples who are considered Black. I view race here to be a social construct that has no biological basis and, following Omi and Winant, is “at best imprecise and at worst completely arbitrary.”²⁷ It is important to understand that, in its articulations, diaspora is not a matter of subscribing to an essentialist racial agenda, but incorporates significant differences across diverse Black peoples to understand their realities.

Moreover, the usefulness of the study is its ability to employ a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to systematically explore the significance of diaspora to Black peoples in general and at site-specific locations. It de-centers Americo-centric analysis by focusing on the

²³ Ibid., 226.

²⁴ Ibid., 225.

²⁵ J. N. Brown, “Black Europe and the African Diaspora: A Discourse on Location,” in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 202.

²⁶ Edwards, “Uses of Diaspora,” 60.

²⁷ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 55.

Caribbean. In general, the study engages the fields of history, anthropology, literature, and political philosophy.

Interdisciplinarity

The study of Black communities requires not a disciplinary but an interdisciplinary (or transdisciplinary) approach.²⁸ The idea of discipline at times “serves to identify both a body of knowledge and a process of constructing boundaries, of regulating and shaping that body, as well as the training required to participate in producing the knowledge housed within it.”²⁹ In other words, a strict disciplinary approach and a narrowly defined methodology are often insufficient for explaining the complexities of Black peoples.

For Diaspora Studies, in fact, an interdisciplinary approach is most appropriate. As Lewis Gordon suggests, an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach is vital in overcoming disciplinary shortcomings, as it relates to the study of Black peoples:

Relating to black people, and specifically the Africana Studies approach to their realities, we could see immediately a disciplinary reason for the difficulties faced by such study. In the academy: Africana Studies challenges disciplinary decadence by demanding a rigorous *coordination* of methodologies. This is because, at least in the tradition that emerges out of Du Bois and Fanon, the focus is on the *problems* faced by black folk, not on Black folk as the problems. Such problems include how Black folk are studied, which makes every disciplinary approach suspect or subject to criteria that are not wholly situated in that discipline.³⁰

An interdisciplinary approach requires a careful use and coordination of not only methods that may be traditionally housed in a particular discipline but also those that are applicable across a range of disciplines.

I engage an interdisciplinary approach to systematically explore the significance of Black communities, particularly Jamaican Maroon formations. Moreover, this approach is enhanced by the usage of hermeneutics. As Paul Ricoeur suggests, hermeneutics is a way of interpreting

²⁸ A host of critical analyses that include age, class, ethnic, gender, and national and sexual orientation should be considered in understanding the Black experience. Most important, a gender analysis in Diaspora Studies is crucial for fully understanding Black humanity. As Beverly Guy-Sheftall states, in “Shifting Contexts: Lessons from Integrating Black, Gender, and African Diaspora Studies,” African Diaspora Studies has historically been focused on men or insensitive to the inclusion of women in the lives of Black peoples. This clearly misrepresents the Black experience not only by excluding Black women but by offering a myopic view of Black realities that may be partially shared by some (the men) but never all. The implication is a continued misunderstanding of Black peoples. As Patricia Hill Collins suggests, Black women (and men) have unique experiences of their realities and thus a distinctive epistemology (or way of knowing) that are required to comprehend these gendered experiences. It is obvious that at times Black men and women have created independent and different knowledges about their own subordination and challenges to it. Black women thinkers, sometimes differing from Black men, have been engaged in the struggle to re-conceptualize all dimensions of oppression and resistance, which should be further explored.

²⁹ Marilyn J. Boxer, “Unruly Knowledge: Women's Studies and the Problem of Disciplinarity,” *NWSA Journal* 12, no. 2 (2000): 121.

³⁰ Lewis Gordon, “Africana Thought and African Diasporic Studies,” *The Black Scholar* 30, no. 3 (2000): 26.

textual and non-textual materials to attain the meaning and significance of phenomena.³¹ It is an effort to obtain a deeper meaning.

This approach allows for the possibility of centering the subjects (Black communities) in the interpretive process through the examination of a variety of their socio-cultural and political practices as well as their expressive forms such as texts, performance, rituals, and aesthetics. As David Scott states, identifying with Michel Foucault's views, the archives then become not just the written text but "an implicit but *constitutive* part of the epistemic background of statements [and] part of a statement's sources. [They are] the dense network of knowledges (allusions, images, concepts, figures, events, stories) that live just below the surface of statement, animating them, giving them depth, [and] resonance."³² In this approach, the study has to engage a variety of disciplines and sources, including history (written archival materials), literature (performing and visual arts, and oral tradition), anthropology (participant observation, oral interview, and material culture), and political philosophy.

In other words, an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates hermeneutics can be used to examine a variety of forms of expression linked to the critical practice and articulation of diaspora. The critical practice and articulation of Blackness occurs in different and multiple expressive forms that must be engaged with as wide archives of expressions. Indeed, it is important to interrogate the analytics of the articulation of diaspora in "reading" all forms of expressions through a wide range of sources, particularly written documents, creative arts, and material culture.

Written Sources

First, the examination of written sources or archives is important in the interrogation of diaspora. In this case, documents of any sort—newspapers, treaties, and histories—are read primarily for evidence of the writer's cognitive frame of reference. In seeking the deeper meaning of the text, this allows us to interpret what they tell us to inform our analysis of diaspora.³³ The point here is not to focus on the authenticity and facticity of the historical accounts but the role they play in diaspora, in particular the workings of articulation. Indeed, in the archives, the articulation of diaspora is retrievable and can be analyzed in relation to the meaning and significance of the accounts.

In the study of the Jamaican Maroons (and diaspora), a variety of written sources is useful. The primary written sources are substantial for all four of the Maroon communities: Accompong Town, Charles Town, Moore Town, and Scott's Hall, although this project focuses on Accompong Town. For the colonial period, a rich body of sources was procured from the following repositories: the British Library, the British National Archives, the National Archives of Jamaica, and the National Library of Jamaica. The primary sources on Jamaican Maroons that were collected and will be mainly used include governmental records (Colonial Office, 1732–1875, including the Maroon Treaties of 1739 and the Jamaica House of Assembly reports); personal papers (Edward Long and Knight Papers, 1774); contemporary reports and histories (Bryan Edwards' *Observations on the Disposition, Character, Manners, and Habits of Life, of*

³¹ Karl Simms, *Paul Ricoeur* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31; Paul Ricoeur and George H. Taylor, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 234.

³² David Scott, "Archaeology of Black Memory," *Small Axe* 3, no. 1 (March 1999): 82; Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 7.

³³ Willie Thompson, *Postmodernism and History* (Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 38, 124.

the Maroon Negroes of the Island of Jamaica, 1801; and Robert Dallas's *History of the Maroons*, 1803); and church records (*Church Missionary Society Papers*, 1827–45). In relation to the post-colonial Jamaican written records, a few works (with some in Maroons' possession) prove the most useful for the dissertation, including periodicals (mainly *Jamaica Gleaner*, 1962–2015, featuring dozens of editorial pieces written by Maroon leaders); Censuses (*Population Census* 1970, 1982, 1991, and 2001); Colonel Harris Cawley's *The Sound of the Abeng*, 1984; Jamaica Information Service's publications (*The Maroons of Jamaica: A Glance at their History*, 1992); Accompong Community Health Group's *Maroon Traditional Medicine*, 1994; Colonel C. L. G. Harris, *Teacha*, 2004; Jamaica Electoral Commission (mainly *Maroon Voting List*, 2009, which includes statistics on name, age, island-wide residential location, occupation, and marital status); Accompong Museum's Log Book, 2010–15; Jamaica Social Development Commission publications (mainly *Accompong Profile* and *Charles Town Profile*); Deputy Colonel Norma Edwards-Rowe's *My Father Said*, 2011; and Accompong Visitor Center Office's Log Book, 2012.

Arts (Literary, Performing, and Visual)

Second, the interpretation of the arts (literary, performing, and visual) helps to illustrate the critical practice and articulation of diaspora. The creative arts are a means of relying less on “official sources” (as in the archives) to include more of other sources such as songs, dance, and stories. As Ann Stoler asserts, “hidden scripts” are waiting to be decoded, whether folklore, rituals, gossip, or song.³⁴ Further, the expressions of dance, accent, and gesture can be mined and deciphered to understand how diaspora is articulated.

The analysis of wider ranges of materials of the arts gives voice to the manifestations of the articulation of diaspora. Saidiya Hartman, attempting to reach Black experiences, states that the interpretation of Black singing reveals more about the horrors of the institution of slavery than volumes of philosophy ever did.³⁵ Indeed, as the anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff mention, consciousness “is not confined to one expressive mode, [so] that it may be created and conveyed, with great subtlety and no less truth, in a variety of genres.”³⁶ The point is that interpretation of these creative arts reveals enunciations and linkages of diasporic consciousness.

Most noteworthy, oral tradition, associated with the creative arts, is important in comprehending how diaspora is articulated. Oral tradition is verbally transmitted testimony from one generation to the next. The means of conveying this information can take many different forms, such as folktales, sayings, ballads, songs, chants, and myths. Oral tradition transmits, consciously and unconsciously, testimony of the ideas, values, structures, behavior, and worldview of particular peoples and societies.³⁷ As Amadou Hampate Ba suggests, “Oral tradition is the great school of life; it deals with religion, with the natural sciences in such fields as mineralogy, medicine and the pharmacopoeia, with apprenticeship in skills, with history, with games and pastimes, with love and death.”³⁸ It presents what a people chose to remember, forget,

³⁴ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 169.

³⁵ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 35.

³⁶ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 35.

³⁷ Jan Vansina, “Oral Tradition and its Methodology,” in *Methodology and African Prehistory*, ed. Jacqueline Ki-Zerbo (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981), 54–55.

³⁸ Amadou Hampatel Ba, “The Living Tradition,” in *Methodology and African Prehistory*, 62.

or create. Oral tradition, as a form of collective historical memory, tells the story of where a group of people comes from and how they should act in the present.

The Jamaican Maroon articulation of diaspora is recoverable from copious sources in the creative arts. The most useful sources from my personal collection are ethnographic notes from participant observation and dozens of oral interviews (exploring the arts and oral tradition) through spending months at a time between June 2010 and January 2013 mostly in Accompong Town, but also in Charles Town, Moore Town, and Scott's Hall. The most meaningful of the oral interviews were with four different Maroon political leaders and cultural performers, who conveyed information about traditions, customs, and practices. I was able to attend and partially record each communities' annual celebration (mainly the Kojo Day Celebration in Accompong), various religious ceremonies (Sunday service at the Zion Church), community events (screening of films about Maroon history and culture such as Roy Anderson's *Akwantu* and Werner Zip's *Accompong*), and tours of the communities' important historic landmarks and sites. The visual arts images that I give most attention to are publicly displayed murals in Accompong and Charles Town, Kojo Shrine, Ashanti and Congo Burial Grounds, and Nanny's Grave site.

Along with other resources from these Maroon communities, I obtained about a dozen recordings of the Maroons from the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica, including audiotapes of *Maroon UNESCO*, *Thomas Rowe's Story-Telling*, and *Interview of Mann O. Rowe* (former Secretary of State in Accompong Town, during the 1940s–1990s); and videotapes of *Maroon National Day 2005* and *2007*. From the National Library of Jamaica and University of the West Indies (UWI), the main sources used are printed works, chiefly the Maroon-authored oral histories of *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 1977; *On My Honour*, 1988; and *The Chieftainess*, 2009. I also look at a few maps, mainly the *Muretown* [sic] map of 1782 from the National Archives of Jamaica, and the Accompong map of 1894 from the National Library of Jamaica. In relation to commercial Maroon musical recordings at the Smithsonian Institute, I collected Kenneth Bilby's *Drums of Defiance*, which has recordings of the most popular songs of each of the four Maroon communities.

Material Culture

Third, the interpretation of the significance of material objects in Maroon culture reveals much about the articulation of diaspora and its workings. "Material culture" refers to the objects produced by human beings, such as structures, tools, and art. The study of artifacts and the circumstances of their making, distribution, and use may lead to a better understanding of the distinctiveness and commonality of Black experiences and how Blacks articulate diaspora.³⁹ However, it must be made clear that the significant issue is not the objects of material culture themselves, but what they signify (their semiotics). What is being sought after is the study of how these types of materials are interpreted and how such interpretations contribute to enunciations and linkages of diaspora. The job of the analyst is to interpret their meaning.

There are a few but well-placed sources of the material culture of Jamaican Maroons that can tell us much about the articulation of diaspora. There are also artifacts that are still in everyday use in the Maroon communities, such as the Abeng (Maroon horn), *Gumbay* or *Gumbe* drum, and cooking utensils. In the three of the four Maroons, there are museums with a number of artifacts such as the Ashanti stool, drums, and Adinkra symbols. Finally, there are Emmanuel Agorsah's archeological artifacts of Nanny Town and Old Accompong housed at UWI and at the

³⁹ Katherine C. Grier, "Culture Made Material," *American Literary History* 8, no. 3 (1996): 552.

Jamaica National Heritage Trust. All of these objects can tell us how they are used by Maroons to articulate diaspora.

Overview of the Main Chapters

The dissertation explores how the critical practice of diaspora is articulated. In particular, the project argues that articulation of diaspora serve many purposes, although the project concentrates on the relevance of articulation to sovereignty. Thus, an interdisciplinary approach is used to understand how Maroons enunciate and make linkages to other Black peoples globally and their connections to claims to sovereignty.

The second chapter presents a chronological summary of the history of the Jamaican Maroon communities, focusing on political and cultural situation. It presents a brief summary of “on the ground” information about the Maroons’ condition from multiple perspectives spanning over three hundred years of the communities’ existence. It sets the foreground for how Maroons engage the idea of the African Diaspora studied in subsequent chapters.

The third chapter looks at originary claims of Maroons as they relate to the critical practice and articulation of diaspora. It explores Maroon voices in detail on how they position originary claims. The essay illustrates that originary claims are not only uttered but used to assemble actual linkages, internally among the Maroons themselves and externally with other communities of African descent.

The fourth chapter explores traditional African claims linked to articulation of diaspora in Maroon communities. It singles out and methodically examines what Maroons have deemed to be African traditions in the material and non-material culture of their communities. It demonstrates how Maroons concretely use claimed African traditional practices as a means of connecting with other African-descended peoples. Hence, the chapter argues that Maroons use claimed African traditions in articulating and critically practicing diaspora.

The fifth chapter examines the connection of articulation of diaspora to claims of sovereignty in Maroon communities. It demonstrates through a kind of diasporic linkage how the communities are able to make certain socio-political claims on territorial place and space. The chapter argues that articulating and critically practicing diaspora, through African originary and traditional claims, has been used to support the view of Maroons of their sovereignty.

The sixth and final chapter briefly summarizes the critical practice of diaspora, as it is articulated, links to sovereignty. It concludes how diaspora, as a critical practice, when it is articulated deals with the struggle over sovereignty. Overall, it highlights the significance of the case study of diaspora and its articulated critical practice in Jamaican Maroon communities.

Conclusion

In sum, the dissertation explores how Black communities, particularly Jamaican Maroons, engage diaspora. In examining the Maroon communities, the work scrutinizes how the tropes of origins and traditions are used in linking Maroons to other communities of African descent and to what ends this connecting is used. Undeniably, diaspora, from its earliest articulation, has contributed much and will undoubtedly continue to contribute to an enhanced understanding of Black peoples. Arguably, for communities of African descent, critical practice and articulation of diaspora are engaged in a quest for Black autonomy and sovereignty against the discourse of Black inhumanity.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY, POLITICS AND CULTURE

The Sankofa bird is significant of what the Maroons have been, are today, and our intention, too, as well. The eggs represent the future. Now the bird takes oil from the tail feather so that it can maintain the rest of the body to preserve the future. So what we say is that we take things from a long time ago from our fore-parents' time and keep [them] today for the generation to come.

Marcia Douglass, Charles Town Maroon Council Member⁴⁰

Introduction

This chapter presents a concise chronological summary of multiple perspectives on the history of the Jamaican Maroons, spanning over three hundred and fifty years. Substantial scholarly literature, archival accounts, and other sources of data have to be considered in exploring this subject matter.⁴¹ From Maroon and non-Maroon alike, the information is found not only in books, newspapers, and dissertations but on the Internet—including sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.⁴² Drawing from the multidisciplinary subfield of Maroon Studies, some of the information is conflicting and contradictory. In any case, this descriptive and chronologically arranged synopsis provides the needed foreground for the discussion in subsequent chapters about the links among Maroons, diaspora, and sovereignty. In other words, this chapter is a highly descriptive and chronologically arranged summary and a review of mainly the oral and written literature that present context of the Maroons' past to present to ensure that there is clear background to fully understand the analysis in the remainder of the dissertation.

⁴⁰ Marcia Douglas, interview by the author, Charles Town, Portland, Jamaica, January 6, 2012.

⁴¹ There are only a few comprehensive works that examine the history and overall development of Maroon communities in Jamaica and throughout the world. In 1973, Richard Price edited the seminal work *Maroon Societies* which shows that marronage was much more frequent and widespread than previously assumed and elaborates on the characteristics of the Maroon communities. In 1984, a most significant work on the general British Caribbean, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*, by Michael Craton, focused on various forms of resistance, especially marronage, mainly in Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Dominica. In 1986, *Out of the House of Bondage* edited by Gad Heuman, presented articles that examine runaway slaves and Maroon communities in Africa (specifically Angola) and Colonial North America, Barbados, Saint Domingue, Jamaica, and Suriname. In 1994, *Maroon Heritage: Archaeological, Ethnographic, and Historical Perspectives* edited by E. Kofi Agorsah with Jamaican Maroon contributors, examined cultural innovation among Maroons mainly in Jamaica, Mexico, and Suriname. Finally, in 2006, Alvin Thompson, in *Flight to Freedom*, tried to reassess the views and the interpretations of runaways' attempts to gain freedom and their efforts to maintain such freedoms throughout the Americas.

⁴² In the last few decades, a few works have been published by Maroons about their own history and culture, including Milton C. McFarlane's *Cudjoe of Jamaica: Pioneer for Black Freedom in the New World* (1977); C. L. G. Harris and Charles Aarons' *On My Honour* (1988); Beverly Carey's *The Maroon Story: The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History of Jamaica, 1490-1880* (1997); C. L. G. Harris's *Teacha* (2004); and Norma Rowe-Edwards' *My Father Said* (2011). In addition, two Maroon descendants produced films on Maroon history and culture: Ashley McFarlane's *Re-membering* (2011) and Roy Anderson's *Akwantu: The Journey* (2012). There are thousands of website pages about Maroons but only two are run by Maroons: the websites of Accompong Town at <http://stateofaccompong.com/> and Charles Town at <http://www.maroons-jamaica.com/q/>.

Maroons and the Colonial Era

Most of the information—especially in the academic literature—about the Jamaican Maroon communities covers the colonial period, which lasted about three hundred years. At the most fundamental level, Maroons are considered to be runaway slaves and their descendents who established their own autonomous communities in the mountains of Jamaica (how they are defined will be elaborated on at the end of the chapter). Chronologically arranged, this summary will focus on the emergence as well as the formation of the culture and identity of the Jamaican Maroons and the history of their political struggle of resistance.

Spanish Colonial Period

The history of the Maroons begins in colonial Spanish Jamaica. The Spanish first settled in Jamaica in 1509. Soon afterwards, in 1517, the first enslaved Africans were brought to Jamaica by the Spanish colonizers. They were transported to the island to replace indigenous Caribs and Arawaks, who were forced to work on the ranches, in the fields, and in the mines of the colonizers and whose numbers were decimated by disease and suicide. A number of these enslaved Africans resisted enslavement and formed some of the earliest Maroon communities in the interior of Jamaica.⁴³

Early British Colonial Period

In 1655, the British invaded Spanish Jamaica, causing an increase in and reconfiguration of the Maroon populations. At this time, many enslaved Africans seized the opportunity to establish communities in the mountains of Jamaica. Subsequently, the largely English and Scottish population began sugar cultivation, which demanded a significant increase in labor, hence the increase in the number of enslaved Africans. They were brought primarily from West and West Central Africa, with a few from East Africa. A number of the newly enslaved Africans ran away to join or form their own camps and communities in the hills and mountains. At times, these different groups of Maroons would harass the British and raid the plantations. In the latter half of the seventeenth century into the early eighteenth, there was a low-intensity but continuous war between the various Maroon groups and the British, collectively referred to as the First Maroon War. In the 1730s, the British intensified their war efforts against the various groups of Maroons. In strategic response to the warfare, the many different bands of Maroons coalesced into two major groups: the Windward and Leeward Maroons.

The Windward Maroons, established primarily in the eastern mountains of Jamaica, had semi-permanent and permanent settlements called Nanny Town, New Nanny Town, Molly Town, and Crawford Town.⁴⁴ Their nucleus is believed to have been the group referred to as the “Spanish Maroons” who had established a community before the full British takeover of Jamaica from the Spanish colonizers. They were loosely organized in relatively autonomous towns, with

⁴³ 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): 69; Barbara Kopytoff, “The Development of Jamaican Ethnicity,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 22, no. 2/3 (1976): 37.

⁴⁴ Barbara Klamon Kopytoff, “The Maroons of Jamaica: An Ethnohistorical Study of Incomplete Polities, 1655-1905” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1973), 37.

Nanny and Quaco as two of their most influential leaders.⁴⁵ The community's population is estimated to have been about 500 people in 1739 when they agreed to a treaty with the British.⁴⁶

The groups that formed the Leeward Maroons came from a number of settlements in the west central interior of Jamaica, including the established communities of Cudjoe Town (later called Trelawny Town) and Accompong Town. The choice for the location of this cluster stemmed from the protection afforded by its location around a limestone formation called the Cockpit Country, which is characterized by sinkholes, steep hills, jagged rocks, and dense vegetation.⁴⁷ Although the Leeward Maroons trace their origins back to the period of Spanish colonization, scholars indicate that the groups out of which they were formed were the descendents of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century slave rebellions against British rule. Many of their members were African-born and most were considered to be Akan.⁴⁸ Some of the leaders of this group, such as Kojo (Cudjoe) and Accompong, have come to occupy a central place in Jamaican historical narratives. The Leeward Maroons established a highly centralized form of political organization with a population that, in 1739, numbered around 500.⁴⁹

After many decades of warfare, the British government and the Maroons began to seek ways to bring the warfare to an end. Although both sides had suffered great losses, the British, having suffered considerably more defeats and feared further unrest in the island, initiated peace talks. In the end, the British and the two Maroon groups made two separate peace treaties in 1739. The ability of groups of the formerly enslaved to force the British into an agreement to recognize their autonomy is considered a milestone in African Diaspora history.

These treaties are incredibly significant for understanding Jamaican Maroon communities, particularly in relation to matters of sovereignty. First, it will be demonstrated later that the treaties are the basis of claims to sovereignty over territory that makes them a separate nation. Second, they are also the basis for postcolonial relations between the state and the Maroons. In later chapters, these critical issues will be discussed further.

Before going further, it should be noted that there are conflicting views on what the peace treaties were. This issue of differing perspectives on the treaties has recently come to light in Maroon studies. It has been traditionally thought that the peace treaties should be understood essentially through the written treaties. If we are to consider both Maroon and British perspectives, however, we have to recognize that the peace treaties were achieved through both blood and written agreements. From the Maroon viewpoint, the blood treaties were sanctioned by oath-taking agreements through a blood ritual. From the British perspective, the written treaties that were signed with the symbol of an "X" by the two Maroon groups authorized the agreements with no acknowledgement of blood treaties. It will be shown later that these two different methods of agreement-making have had a fundamental impact on the views of the peace agreements that eventually influenced the reconfiguration of the Maroon communities.

In other words, there are differing understandings of the peace treaty and how it was constituted. British understanding is an insistence on the legitimacy of the signed documentation and their terms and specifications. The Maroons, on the other hand, reference agreements made in oath-takings organized in blood rituals. Each has different implications for the status of the

⁴⁵ The following works explore the significance of Nanny of the Maroons: Alan Tuelon's "Nanny—Maroon Chieftainess," C. L. G. Harris's *The Chieftainess*, Marguerite Curtain's *Nanny, Queen of the Maroons*, Karla Gottlieb's *The Mother of Us All*, and Karl Phillipotts and Marjorie Gammon's *Nanny*.

⁴⁶ Kopytoff, "The Early Political Development of Jamaican Maroon Societies," 290, 298, 301.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 289, 292, 293.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 301.

Maroon communities. The British version references the document signed by the two parties. The Maroon version and interpretation is conveyed through oral history.

The blood treaties presented in the form of oral history make an intervention on our interpretation of the peace agreements, challenging the written treaties. The blood treaties raise issues about conflicting claims made about autonomy, sovereignty, and self-governance. They are at the root of the challenge to the issues of legality, constitutionality, and authority of the colonial and postcolonial state. The blood treaties, to be explored in greater detail in a later chapter, are related to African claims to legitimacy versus European claims rooted in written documentation. This will be central in exploring Maroons' articulation of diaspora and pursuit of sovereignty.

Here we will focus on the written treaties, which have been privileged in official versions in an effort to understand the role of the peace agreements in claims to Maroon sovereignty. The written treaties are a form of documentary practice that serves to silence oral histories. In so doing, the written treaties have notably shaped popular understanding of Maroon history, politics, and culture, and they significantly affect the relations between the Maroons and the state. This is their "instrument effect." They form the basis, almost exclusively, of jurisdictional and authorial claims being made by the colonial and postcolonial state.

The following reproduces the entire text of the two written treaties. They make no reference to the blood treaties but detail what the British deemed their agreements with the Maroons entailed. The first is the treaty signed between the British colonists and the Leeward Maroons.

At the camp near Trelawny Town
March the 1st, 1738-9.

In the name of God, Amen. Whereas captain Cudjoe, captain Accompong, captain Johnny, captain Cuffee, captain Quaco, and several other negroes, their dependants and adherents, have been in a state of war and hostility for several years past against our sovereign lord the king, and the inhabitants of this island; and whereas peace and friendship amongst mankind, and the preventing of effusion of blood, is agreeable to God, constant to reason, and desired by every good man; and whereas his majesty George the second, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and of Jamaica lord, defender of faith, etc. has by letters patent, dated February the twenty-fourth, one thousand seven hundred and thirty eight, in the twelfth year of his reign, granted full power and authority to John Guthrie and Francis Sadler, esquires, to negotiate and finally conclude a treaty of peace and friendship with the aforesaid Cudjoe, the rest of his captains, adherents, and others his men; they, mutually, sincerely, and amicably have agreed to the following articles:

First, That all hostilities shall cease on both sides for ever.

Second, That the said captain Cudjoe, the rest of his captains, adherents and men, shall be for ever hereafter in a perfect state of freedom and liberty, expecting those who have been taken by them, or fled to them within the two years last past, if such are willing to return to their said masters and owners, with full pardon and

indemnity, from their said masters and owners for what is past; provided always, that if they are not willing to return, they shall remain in subjection to captain Cudjoe, and his friendship with us, according to the form and tenor of this treaty.

Third. That they shall enjoy and possess for themselves and posterity for ever, all the lands situate and lying between Trelawny Town and the Cockpits, to the amount of fifteen hundred acres, bearing north-west from the said Trelawny Town.

Fourth. That they shall have liberty to plant the said lands with coffee, cocoa, ginger, tobacco, and cotton, and to breed cattle, hogs, goats, or any other stock, and dispose of the produce or increase of the said commodities to the inhabitants of this island; provided always, that they bring the said commodities to market, they shall apply first to the customs, or any other magistrate of the respective parishes where they expose their goods for sale, for license to vend the same.

Fifth. That captain Cudjoe, and all the captain's adherents, and people not in subjection to him, shall all live together within the bounds of Trelawny Town; and that they have liberty to hunt where they shall think fit, except within three miles of any settlement, crawl or pen; provided always, that in case of hunters of captain Cudjoe, and those of other settlements meet, then the hogs to be equally divided between both parties.

Sixth. That the said captain Cudjoe, and his successors, do use their best endeavors to take, kill, suppress or destroy, either by themselves or jointly, with any other number of men commanded on that service by his excellency the governor or commander in chief for the time being, all rebels wheresoever they be throughout this island, unless they submit to the same terms of accommodation granted to captain Cudjoe, and his successors.

Seventh. That in case this island be invaded by any foreign enemy, the said captain Cudjoe, and his successors herein after named, or to be appointed, shall then, upon notice given, immediately repair to any place the governor for the time being shall appoint, in order to repel the said invaders with his or their utmost force; and to submit to the orders of the commander in chief on that occasion.

Eighth. That if any white man shall do any manner of injury to captain Cudjoe, his successors, or any of his or their people, they shall apply to any commanding officer or magistrate in the neighborhood for justice; and in case of captain Cudjoe, or any of his people, shall do any injury to any white person, he shall submit himself or deliver up such offenders to justice.

Ninth. That if any negroes shall hereafter run away from their masters or owners, and fall into captain Cudjoe's hands, they shall immediately sent back to the chief magistrate of the next parish where they are taken; and those that bring them are to be satisfied for their trouble, as the legislature shall appoint.

Tenth, That all negroes taken since the raising of this party by captain Cudjoe's people, shall immediately be returned.

Eleventh, That captain Cudjoe, and his successors, shall wait on his Excellency, or commander in chief for the time being, every year, if thereunto required.

Twelfth, That captain Cudjoe, during his life, and the captains succeeding him, shall have full power to inflict any punishments they think proper for crimes committed by their men among themselves, death only excepted; in which case, if the captain thinks they deserve death, he shall be obliged to bring them before any justice of the peace, who shall order proceedings on their trial equal to those of other free negroes.

Thirteenth, That Captain Cudjoe with his people shall cut, clear and keep open, large, and convenient roads from Trelawny Town to Westmoreland and St. James's, and if possible to St. Elizabeth's.

Fourteenth, That two white men to be nominated by his excellency, or the commander in chief for the time being, shall constantly live and reside with captain Cudjoe and his successors, in order to maintain a friendly correspondence with the inhabitants of this island.

Fifteenth, That captain Cudjoe shall, during his life, be chief commander in Trelawny Town, after his decease the command to devolve on his brother captain Accompong; and in case of his decease, on his next brother captain Johnny; and, failing him, captain Cuffee shall succeed, who is to be succeeded by captain Quaco, and after all their demises, the governor or commander in chief for that time being, shall appoint from time to time whom he thinks fit for that command.

In testimony of the above presents, we have hereunto set out hands and seal the day and date above written.

John Guthrie (L.S.)
Francis Sadler (L.S.)

The mark X of captain Cudjoe⁵⁰

The following is the text of the second written treaty with the Windward Maroons.

Whereas his Excellency Edward Trelawny, esquire; governor and chief in command of the island aforesaid, hath given power and authority to colonel Robert Bennett to treat with the rebellious negroes, this day, being the twenty-third day of June, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-nine, captain Quao, and several other under his command, surrendered under the following terms, viz.

⁵⁰ Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 366–71.

First, That all hostilities on both sides shall cease for ever, Amen.

Second, That captain Quao and his people shall have a certain quantity of land given to them, in order to raise provisions, hogs, fowls, goats, or whatsoever stock they may think proper, sugar-canes except, saving for their hogs, and to have liberty to sell the same.

Third, That four white men shall constantly live and reside with them in their town, in order to keep a good correspondence with the inhabitants of this island.

Fourth, That captain Quao and his people shall be ready on all commands the governor or the commander in chief for the time being shall send him, to suppress and destroy all other party and parties of rebellious negroes, that now are or shall from time to time gather together or settle in any part of the island, and shall bring in such other negroes as shall from time to time run away from their respective owners, from the date of these articles.

Fifth, That the said captain Quao and his people shall also be ready to assist his excellency the governor for the time being, in case of any invasion, and shall put himself, with all his people that are able to bear arms, under the command of the general or commander of such forces, appointed by his excellency to defend the island from the said invasion.

Sixth, That the said captain Quao and his people shall be in subjection to his excellency the governor for the time being, and the said captain Quao shall once every year, or oftener, appear before the governor, if thereunto required.

Seventh, That in case any of the hunters belonging to the inhabitants of this island, and the hunters belonging to captain Quao, should meet, in order to hinder all disputes, captain Quao will order his people to let the inhabitants hunters have the hog.

Eighth, That in case captain Quao and his people shall take up any runaway negroes that shall abscond from their respective owners, he or they shall carry them to their respective masters or owners, and shall be paid for so doing, as the legislature shall appoint.

Ninth, That in case captain Quao and his people should be disturbed by a greater number of rebels than he is able to fight, that then he shall be assisted by as many white people as the governor for the time being shall think proper.

Tenth, That in case any of the negroes belonging to captain Quao shall be guilty of any crime or crimes that may deserve death, he shall deliver him up to the next magistrate, in order to be tried as other negroes are; but small crimes he may punish himself.

Eleventh, That in case any white man, or other inhabitants of this islands, shall disturb or annoy any of the people, hogs, stock or whatsoever goods may belong to the said captain Quao, or any of his people, when they come down to the settlements to vend the same, upon due complaint made to a magistrate he or they shall have justice done them.

Twelfth, That neither captain Quao, nor any of his people shall bring any hogs, fowls, or any other kind of stock or provisions to sell to the inhabitants, without a ticket from under the hand of one or more of the white men residing within their town.

Thirteenth, That captain Quao nor any of his people, shall hunt within three miles of any settlement.

Fourteenth, That in case captain Quao should die, that then the command of his people shall descend to captain Thomboy, and at his death to descend to captain Apong, and at his death to captain Blackwell shall succeed, and at his death captain Clash shall succeed; and when he dies, the governor or commander in chief for the time being shall appoint whom he thinks proper.

In Witness to these articles, the above-named colonel Robert Bennett and captain Quao have set their hands and seals the day and year above written.

Robert Bennett. (L.S.)
The Mark of X captain Quao⁵¹

The two written treaties are not identical but have considerable similarities. The Leeward Maroon treaty is often considered to have granted slightly greater rights to autonomy compared with the Windward Maroon treaty. The anthropologist Barbara Kopytoff summarizes the similarities and differences between the two written treaties in the following manner:

The main points of Cudjoe's [the Leeward Maroons] treaty were: that the Maroons were recognized as free and were given a grant of land on which they were all to live; that they were to aid in the defense of the island, to hunt down other Maroons who did not agree to the same terms, and to return runaways who might in the future fall into their hands; that the Maroon headmen who were to have life tenure, were allowed to administer any punishment but death for crimes whose definition was itself left to the Maroons; that they might sell their produce in the island markets; that white men were to live in the Maroon settlement to facilitate relations with' the colonial government [JHA 10, Vol. 3 p. 458]. The treaty signed with Quao [the Windward Maroons] was essentially the same in all these respects. There were, however, several additional clauses that the Governor

⁵¹ Ibid., 378–81.

insisted on before ratification, and one of these organized the Maroon men into companies headed by whites for the purpose of tracking runaway slaves.⁵²

The British and the Maroons have different interpretations of these written treaties. From the British viewpoint, the treaties were a means of containing rebels, who agreed to become a special class of subjects in the colony of Jamaica.⁵³ On the other hand, the Maroons see the written treaties as an altered written version of the blood treaty agreements. Hence, for the Maroons, the written treaties were essentially agreements between the two groups, who recognized each other's sovereignty.

Over the last two centuries, scholars interpreting and debating the language of the written treaties have concluded that the treaties circumscribed Maroons' rights to full sovereignty and autonomous freedom.⁵⁴ In *The Iron Thorn*, Carey Robinson argues because of their lack of experience and literary skills, the Maroons negotiated peace treaties that resulted in agreements that were to their disadvantage.⁵⁵ The anthropologist Barbara Kopytoff deemed that the treaty weakened Maroons' autonomy leading to and legitimizing what she refers to as "incomplete polities." In *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655–1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal*, Mavis Campbell asserts that the Maroons agreed to a one-side treaty in the British favor.⁵⁶

The British made a number of stipulations in the written treaties that have caused many scholars to come to the conclusion that the Maroon lost their sovereignty. For instance, the treaties oblige the leader of the Maroons "to wait" on the governor once a year to be informed of duties required of the Maroon communities. It also gave the British the right, upon the death of the present chiefs, to appoint their new leaders. Furthermore, it reserved the right to the use of capital punishment exclusively for the British colonial government.

However, the question has recently been raised about the appropriateness of the documentary practice of using the British legal document as the valid interpretation of the treaty and as a basis for determining the legitimacy of Maroon claims to sovereignty. It is doubtful that the Maroon leaders' native language was English and that they were literate. In addition, it is highly unlikely that Maroon leaders had much understanding of British law and use of legal authority. Moreover, the British added extra clauses to the written treaties after the negotiations

⁵² Barbara Klamon Kopytoff, "Jamaican Maroon Political Organization: The Effects of the Treaties," *Social and Economic Studies* 25, no. 2 (1976): 90.

⁵³ Barbara Klamon Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty as Sacred Charter of the Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 1 (1979): 46.

⁵⁴ The following are a few texts that explore the written treaties in great detail: Edward Long's *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* (1774); Bryan Edwards and William Young's *An Historical Survey of the Island of Saint Domingo Together with an Account of the Maroon Negroes in the Island of Jamaica, and a History of the War in the West Indies, in 1793, and 1794* (1801); Robert Charles Dallas's *The History of the Maroons* (1803); Barbara Kopytoff's "Jamaican Maroon Political Organization: The Effects of the Treaties" (1976) and "Colonial Treaty: As Sacred Charter of the Jamaican Maroons" (1979); Milton McFarlane's *Cudjoe of Jamaica: Pioneer for Black Freedom in the New World* (1977); Kenneth Bilby's "Swearing by the Past, Swearing to the Future: Sacred Oaths, Alliances, and Treaties Among the Guianese and Jamaican Maroons" (1997); and Beverly Carey's *The Maroon Story: The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History of Jamaica, 1490–1880* (1997).

⁵⁵ Carey Robinson, *The Iron Thorn: The Defeat of the British by the Jamaican Maroons* (Kingston, Jamaica: Kingston Publishers, 1993), 120–21.

⁵⁶ Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655–1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1988), 129.

with Maroons.⁵⁷ All these raise issue of the legitimacy and validity of the documents themselves.

The Maroons have a different interpretation of the peace agreements. The Maroons reject the stipulations of the written documents, substituting instead their visions and understandings of the treaty based on the oral history of oath-taking in the blood rituals.

Whatever the interpretation of the peace treaties, there is no doubt that they greatly impacted the subsequent organization of the Maroon communities. In the Maroon view, the treaties recognized and legitimized their claim of sovereignty and autonomy over their territorial lands. As Kopytoff argues, the Maroons perceive the treaties as a part of a sacred charter for the continuing existence of their corporate society.⁵⁸ Any attempt to disavow their treaties was and is seen as a direct threat to the Maroons' collective existence.⁵⁹ As Kenneth Bilby maintains, the treaties are seen by the Maroons as "hallowed covenants that underpin and assure their very existence as separate peoples within the larger society of Jamaica."⁶⁰ Bilby argues that the treaties gave legal recognition to de facto ethnic groups with lands in Jamaica.⁶¹

Middle British Colonial Period

During most of the eighteenth century significant changes in the Maroon communities resulted in their reconfigurations. This applied, particularly, to claims to territory.⁶² For both the Leeward and Windward Maroon groups, there were unclear and conflicting interpretations about the locations and size of their territories. Initially, the Leeward Maroons who lived in Trelawny town in St. James Parish and Accompong Town in St. Elizabeth made territorial claims to a sizeable portion of Western Jamaica. The territorial claims of the Windward Maroons were to their settlements in Crawford Town in St. George parish and New Nanny Town in Portland parish. Over time, new and different claims to territory were made by both groups as their members began to develop new settlements elsewhere.⁶³

⁵⁷ Ibid., 141.

⁵⁸ Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty," 70.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 46.

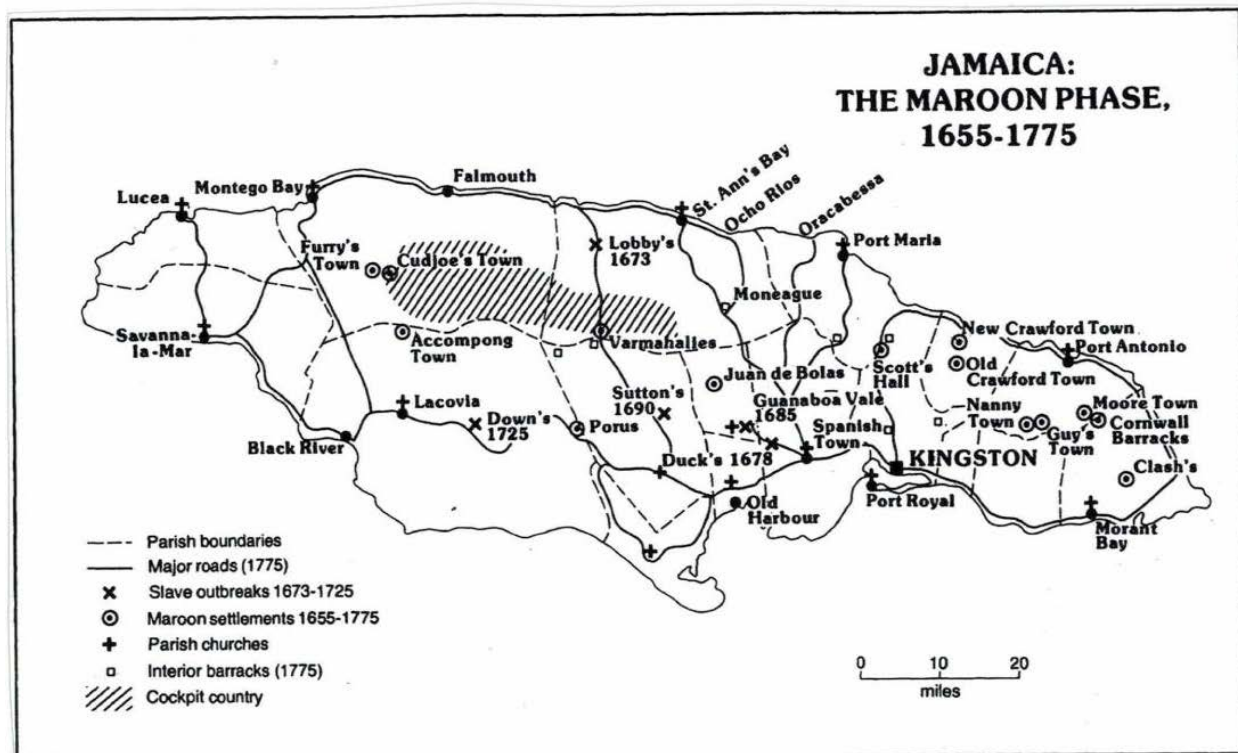
⁶⁰ Kenneth Bilby, "Swearing by the Past, Swearing to the Future: Sacred Oaths, Alliances, and Treaties Among the Guianese and Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory: the Bulletin of the Ohio Valley Historic Indian Conference* 44, no. 4 (1997): 656.

⁶¹ Kenneth M. Bilby, "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2002), 2–3.

⁶² In the latter half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth, a few scholars, albeit in one-sided accounts, wrote about the early Maroon experience, providing more details of their early history. In 1774, Edward Long's *The History of Jamaica* was the first major publication that briefly addressed the origins and early development of the Maroons. Long states that a large number of enslaved African in different groups fled to the mountains of Jamaica after the transition from Spanish to British rule. They fought against the British in the following decades while their population was being augmented by groups of runaway slaves. He wrote about the signing of the treaties and its implication for the early history of Jamaica. In 1801, Bryan Edwards and William Young's *An Historical Survey of the Island of Saint Domingo Together with an Account of the Maroon Negroes in the Island of Jamaica, and a History of the War in the West Indies, in 1793, and 1794*, presents the history of a few Caribbean islands including Jamaica. This manuscript, essentially a compilation of the Edwards' earlier works by Young, provides information on the Maroons' origins, their early development, and the Second Maroon War and its aftermath. In 1803, Robert Dallas's *The History of the Maroons, from Their Origins to the Establishment of Their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leona* which followed along the lines of Long and Edwards/Young, was the first major publication to focus on the Jamaican Maroons. Dallas presents the origins of the Maroons during the Spanish conquests and the eventual increase of the Maroon numbers from the local plantations during various rebellions. He also examines the treaties and the Second Maroon War. These manuscripts all provide firsthand account of Maroon history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁶³ Beverley Hall-Alleyne, "Asante Kotoko: The Maroons of Jamaica," *Newsletter: African-Caribbean Institute*

Map of Jamaican Maroon Communities



Source: Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, [N.Y.]: Cornell University Press, 1982), 73.

Subsequently, the two different Maroon groups started to expand and build new settlements. Around 1749, a group from Crawford Town left and established Scott's Hall in St. Mary parish, which was acknowledged by the colonial authorities two years later.⁶⁴ In 1754, after an internal conflict led to the destruction of Crawford Town, it was deserted and its members formed Charles Town several miles away in Portland. Also in the mid-1750s, a group of Maroons in Trelawny Town separated into a different settlement called Furry's Town.⁶⁵ The colonial authorities ordered the group to move back into the boundary of Trelawny Town, but instead it set up a new town close to Trelawny Town without integrating into the older settlement. In the early 1760s, Clash, a leader from New Nanny Town, attempted to establish a splinter group of Maroons in Bath, but the colonial authorities never recognized the settlement.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the British authorities were somewhat flexible in their recognition of the emerging communities and their claims to territory.

From the literature, it seems that the relevance of these acts relate to the final author of the British colonial authority to define the territorial boundaries of the Maroon communities and its ability to do so with the use of force. British action to enforce their authority, however, did

of Jamaica no. 7 (1982): 13.

⁶⁴ Kopytoff, "Jamaican Maroon Political Organization," 92.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

not come without resistance and challenge in Maroons' assertions of their autonomy and sovereignty.

Before the end of the eighteenth century, one of the Maroon communities was destroyed by the British in what is referred to as the Second Maroon War.⁶⁷ Essentially, in 1795, the Maroons of Trelawny Town (along with Furry's group) chose to fight the colonial authorities because they believed the British was infringing on what in effect was their autonomy and sovereignty.⁶⁸ It is not clear why the Accompong Maroons disagreed with the Trelawny Town Maroons going to war, but they as a group sided with the British. On the other hand, the Windward Maroons, whom the treaty stipulated were to help suppress any rebellion, did not get involved. The Governor, Alexander Lindsay, expected a few minor skirmishes at Trelawny Town, but ended up in long-drawn-out war that lasted months.⁶⁹ After the war, the victorious British deported the Trelawny Town Maroons to Nova Scotia and later Sierra Leone.⁷⁰ Based on the literature, it seems this also suggest that the British had the ability to assert their authority through force to place limitations on Maroon sovereignty and autonomy. It is evident, in this case, in the clause stipulating the imperative of suppression of rebellion which was adhered to by some groups and rejected by others.

The contemporary organization, including the political and social configuration of Maroon communities began to take shape. At the turn of the nineteenth century, in defiance of the terms of the written treaty the Maroons continued to select their leaders, who were called chief or "colonel." Their political organization was formulated around a cabinet of captains and majors who served as a council or committee to govern the community.⁷¹ For the most part, the colonel and his council had executive, legislative, and judicial rights over their communities. Each of the communities operated autonomously and dealt with the British separately.

Over time the Maroons came to be organized into four distinct and recognized communities: Accompong Town, Charles Town, Moore Town (formerly called New Nanny Town), and Scott's Hall.⁷² Later, Moore Town would expand to encompass a number of affiliated districts that included Cornwall Barracks, Cornwall Pen, Nottingham Pen, Ginger

⁶⁷ A handful of works examine the Second Maroon War in greater detail: Douglas Brymner's *The Jamaica Maroons: How They Came to Nova Scotia: How They Left It* (1980); Mavis Campbell's *Nova Scotia and the Fighting Maroons: A Documentary History* (1990); Lennox O'Riley Picart's *The Trelawny Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain their Culture, 1796–1800* (1993); Mavis Campbell and George Ross's *Back to Africa: George Ross and the Maroons: from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone* (1993); Allister Hinds' *Deportees in Nova Scotia: the Jamaican Maroons 1796–1800* (1997); J. D. Lockett's "The Deportation of the Maroons of Trelawny Town to Nova Scotia, Then Back to Africa" (1999); and J. A. Fortin, "'Blackened Beyond Our Native Hue': Removal, Identity and the Trelawney Maroons on the Margins of the Atlantic World, 1796–1801" (2006).

⁶⁸ Kenneth M. Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 378.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁷⁰ Bilby, *True-Born Maroons*, 38081; Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom," 72.

⁷¹ Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 126; Hall-Alleyne, "Asante Kotoko," 13.

⁷² The first major lengthy and probably the most authoritative piece by a historian on Maroon history is Mavis Campbell's *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655–1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal*. Campbell presents great detail on the history of the Maroons, focusing on the period 1655 to 1796. The book explores what Campbell considers to be the complicated connections among resistance, collaboration, and betrayal. She explores Maroons' resistance to slavery in the period between 1655 and 1738. She then examines Maroons' involvement in hunting runaways and suppressing slave uprisings in the post-treaty era. She also briefly engages Maroons' post-emancipation involvement in the suppression of rebellions. Campbell used a wide range of sources but relied heavily on British sources (especially the *Journal of the Assembly of Jamaica* and Colonial Office records). One of her central and controversial arguments is that the Maroons were not reformist or revolutionaries but only fought for their own freedom.

House, Comfort Castle, Hayfield, Seaman's Valley, Brownsfield, and Kent.⁷³ The colonial authorities' recognition of Maroon territorial lands varied, ranging from as low as about 200 acres to over 2,500 acres.⁷⁴ This may suggest that the authorities adhered to and accepted Maroons' claims to sovereignty. In most of the settlements, the Maroons were able to increase their acknowledged holdings over the decades. However, this entailed Maroons challenging the colonial state over land in just about every decade from the 1740s to the 1960s (the end of the colonial period).⁷⁵ Overall, the point here is that claims to territory was a negotiated process involving the use of force by the British, resistance and rejection by the Maroons, and accommodation by both sides, including British acquiescence to Maroon claims.

Over the centuries, the main economic activity of the communities was farming.⁷⁶ Maroons grew a variety of agricultural goods such as coffee, pimento, arrowroot, ginger, and tobacco.⁷⁷ The Maroons also engaged in selling livestock (such as hogs and chickens) and manufactured goods.⁷⁸ The Maroons also earned income by providing services to the colonial government and the settlers.⁷⁹ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Maroons participated in military service to the colonial state, including hunting runaway slaves and assisting in suppressing insurrections.⁸⁰ The Maroons also provided service to the colonial government in cutting and repairing roads.⁸¹

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Maroons had a continual struggle over sovereignty. Claims of the disorderliness of Maroons served as a technology of control and to legitimize interventions in their communities. British authorities passed a number of laws (unilaterally) to constrain Maroons' economic activities, mobility, relations with the enslaved, and internal judicial systems. In many instances, the Maroons ignored or challenged these infringements on their autonomy. Most scholars argue that this tension led to the Second Maroon War in the late eighteenth century.

Late British Colonial Period

In the immediate post-emancipation period, the British increasingly attempted to curtail Maroon autonomy and sovereignty. With the ending of slavery in 1834, the colonial authorities felt that they no longer needed Maroons as a tracking force and sought to assimilate the group into the wider Jamaican population. In 1842, legislation was passed to abrogate the treaties through the Maroon Lands Allotment Act. The law sought to divide up the communally owned Maroon lands into individual parcel for their members. But the Maroons completely rejected and ignored what they saw as an unlawful unilateral act of the colonial government.⁸² The British authorities did

⁷³ Hall-Alleyne, "Asante Kotoko," 13.

⁷⁴ Kopytoff, "The Maroons of Jamaica," 137, 142, 144, 335.

⁷⁵ "Governor Offers the Maroons of Accompong Grant of More Lands," *Jamaica Standard* (Kingston), June 19, 1939; Daniel Lee Schafer, "The Maroons of Jamaica: African Slave Rebels in the Caribbean" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1974), 174; Carey, *Maroon Story*, 559; Hilary F. Smith, "Stakeholder Involvement in the Decision-Making for the Sustainable Development of the Cockpit Country, Jamaica" (master's thesis, State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, 2009), 57; Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty," 57, 58; Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 139, 145.

⁷⁶ Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 161.

⁷⁷ Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 164; Kopytoff, "Colonial Treaty," 45.

⁷⁸ Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 164.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸⁰ Kopytoff, "Jamaican Maroon Political Organization," 96; Bilby, "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica," 2.

⁸¹ Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica," 161, 170.

⁸² Bilby, "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica," 3.

not force the issue of immediate Maroon assimilation. Nevertheless, they relied on the Maroons as a military force for a few post-emancipation rebellions. Most noteworthy, the Maroon supported the colonial authorities' suppression of the Maroon Bay Rebellion of 1865 led by Paul Bogle.⁸³

From the turn of the twentieth century until Jamaican independence (1962), the Maroon communities faced increasing challenges in their efforts to maintain their autonomy and sovereignty over their territory for which they sought to preserve and expand in both de jure and de facto terms. The colonial government, on the other hand, sought to change the terms of the treaty by converting the sovereign status of the Maroons to one of "special status" even while continuing to acknowledge some limited form of Maroon political authority by receiving its delegations and participating in ceremonial activities. The result of British efforts was a steady weakening of Maroon political institutions and judicial autonomy. For instance, many judicial court cases began to be tried outside of Maroon communities.⁸⁴

The literature indicates that Maroons were in a constant struggle to enforce or maintain their sovereignty against the colonial state. They were engaged in a "war of position" with the colonial state that resulted in considerable de facto shifts in sovereignty and autonomy. Over the two hundred twenty-three years of the British treaty agreement and colonial rule of Jamaica, at times, the Maroons were integrally absorbed into the colonial state; at other times, they were de facto independent communities.

Maroons and Post-Colonial Era

In post-colonial Jamaica today, there are still four Maroon communities. At times, the Maroons' relationship with the post-colonial is cooperative and other times tense. In particular, the relationship is contested and fraught in relation to Maroon sovereignty. In many ways, the ambiguity, tenuousness, and ambivalence that characterized the relationship with the colonial state have continued in the latter's relationship with the postcolonial state.

Political

The system of political authority in the Jamaican Maroon communities has not changed significantly. In theory, the colonel continues to hold a position of authority in the administrative, legislative, and judicial matters of his or her community.⁸⁵ The colonels choose their council and organize a set of officials and committees. The designations of these officials and committees and the function that they perform differ from one Maroon community to another.⁸⁶

The governing system of Accompong Town, is described by a former Colonel, Harris Cawley, in the following way:

During his term of office the colonel acts as judge, councillor and leader of the people. In his capacity as judicator the colonel settles land disputes and truces, [as

⁸³ Bilby, "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica," 4; two works look at the Maroon involvement in the Morant Bay Rebellion: Gad Heuman's *The Killing Time: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* and Joy Lumsden's "'A Brave and Loyal People': the Role of the Maroons in the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865."

⁸⁴ Bilby, "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica," 4.

⁸⁵ Werner Zips, "Laws in Competition," *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 28, no. 37-38 (1996): 291.

⁸⁶ Melville Currie, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, December 23, 2011; Wilson, "Performance of Freedom," 72.

well as] court cases among his people. As councillor he attends public meetings, special functions and private sessions with his council. As leader he represents the people both at home and elsewhere in Jamaica. It is the colonel's responsibility along with his councillors to see that law and order is maintained, that the people are given fair trial, and that plans are made for the development of the community. The colonel is at the head and acts as the leader in all government business.⁸⁷

In principle, the functions and duties of the colonels seem to have remained relatively consistent from the time of Jamaican independence. In 1964, Colonel Robertson of Accompong stated:

The duties of the colonel are to see that things are in order, mediate in disputes, and preside over meetings of the select councillor or elders in the village. He also judges and passes sentence in maroon trials, assisted in the more difficult cases by a kind of jury consisting of four or eight men....there were no stealing or wounding offences, but he had to settle a good number of disputes over land boundaries or right of occupancy. Punishment consists most of fines, as there are no jails in the village.⁸⁸

Since the independence of Jamaica, the colonel of Accompong Town has been elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage.⁸⁹ There is an election about every five years, with the use of the ballot box. From the 1950s to 2009, the Accompong Maroons had special arrangements with the Electoral Office of the Government of Jamaica. The Electoral Office provided electoral services on enumeration and assisting with conduct of the elections.⁹⁰ During most of this time period, Maroons who were unable to cast ballots in Accompong Town could do so in Kingston, two locations in the parish of St. James (in the city of Montego Bay and community of Garlands), and five in the parish of St. Elizabeth (communities of Aberdeen, Cedar Spring, Elderslie, Whitehall, and Windsor).⁹¹

In the early centuries, colonels for the most part were elected for life, and on the death of the colonel the current administration would select the next colonel.⁹² The Maroon Writer Milton McFarlane indicates that in the early formation of the communities, there was “no specified term of office for a maroon leader: he may serve for life, or until he himself chooses to surrender his position, although at any time the people may call for an election to choose a new leader.”⁹³ Around the late nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, as still done in the other

⁸⁷ Harris N. Cawley, *The Sound of the Abeng: A Short Synopsis on the Accompong Maroons* (Accompong Town, Jamaica: Speedy Prints, 1986), 11–12.

⁸⁸ “Maroons at Accompong,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 21, 1964.

⁸⁹ “Maroon Col. Thomas James Cawley Dies,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), May 24, 1971; “Ex-Colonel of Maroons dies at 100,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 5, 1971.

⁹⁰ “Walker, “Rowe at Odds over Maroon Polls,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), November 19, 1998.

⁹¹ “Maroons Identify Voting Sites,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), November 22, 1998; Ferron Williams, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, January 7, 2012.

⁹² Colonel Martin-Luther Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” in *Maroon Heritage Archaeological, Ethnographic, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. E. Kofi Agorsah (Barbados: Canoe Press, 1994), 68.

⁹³ Milton C. McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica: Pioneer for Black Freedom in the New World* (Short Hills, NJ: R. Enslow, 1977), 26–27.

three Maroon communities, the colonels for the most part were elected for life but with a larger percentage of the population participating.⁹⁴

Hence, the main representative body of all Maroons is the Maroon Council. In post-colonial Jamaica, the highly secretive shape of and number of members in the governing council varies from one colonel's tenure in office to another.⁹⁵ It has been argued by Maroons that the Council evolved from an Akan-style chieftaincy system. However, in many ways, it currently resembles a European parliamentary governing system. The officials tend to number between a dozen and about thirty members, with different governmental divisions, committees, and sub-committees.⁹⁶ Just about every Maroon administration has had a deputy colonel who is second in command and acts in the colonel's absence.⁹⁷ The gender ratio of the officials tends to lean in favor of males, but increasingly women are playing direct leadership roles. Currently, Norma Rowe-Edwards, as the main deputy colonel, is considered to run the day-to-day affairs of the community.

In Accompong Town, the current Colonel Ferron Williams has his Executive Council and works with four other interrelated political bodies. Colonel Williams confirms that he has an Executive Council of fourteen officials, of whom six or seven are women (43% or 50%).⁹⁸ The titles and the positions seem fluid. Around 2013, the colonel had a secretary (Ann-Marie Hutchinson) and two deputy colonels: Norma Rowe-Edwards (the first woman to hold that post) and a former Colonel, Meredie Rowe (1993–98).⁹⁹ The committees or ministries, headed by different council members, are Ministry of Education (Garfield Rowe), Ministry of Tourism (Elizabeth Rowe), Ministry of Culture/Cultural Office (Mrs. McKenzie-Rowe), Ministry of Development (Mr. Hutchinson), Ministry of Lands/Land Commissioner (Kenroy Cawley), and Ministry of Finance (Melata Rowe).¹⁰⁰

There are a few other governing bodies that the colonel works with. Colonel Williams states that the Board of Elders (or Senior Council) has thirteen members who advise the Colonel and his Executive Council. The Junior Council, which has about eleven members, mostly females, is a group that assists the colonel on matters related to the youth of the community.¹⁰¹ The Full Maroon Council, which has thirteen members, is a semi-independent new body that serves as a check and balance to the Colonel's Executive Council in relation to its decision-making abilities.¹⁰²

In Accompong, the colonels hold possession of land on behalf of the community. The community has autonomy over their lands and its members and businesses do not pay land and property taxes to the Jamaican government.¹⁰³ The size of Accompong land is still disputed. The issue of territory continues to be a contentious one in the current post-colonial period. The often

⁹⁴ Wright, "Accompong Maroons of Jamaica," 68; Norma Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said: A Story about the Accompong Maroons 1655–1738* (Riviera Beach, FL: Emerge Publishing Group, 2011), 124.

⁹⁵ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 12.

⁹⁶ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 12; Wright, "Accompong Maroons of Jamaica," 68.

⁹⁷ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 10.

⁹⁸ Garfield Rowe, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, January 10, 2013; Ann-Marie Hutchinson, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, December 28, 2011.

⁹⁹ Williams, interview.

¹⁰⁰ Garfield Rowe, interview; Hutchinson, interview.

¹⁰¹ Hutchinson, interview.

¹⁰² Currie, interview.

¹⁰³ The following works explore Maroon autonomy and political status: Barbara Klamon Kopytoff's "The Early Political Development of Jamaican Maroon Societies"; Werner Zips' "Laws in Competition: Traditional Maroon Authorities within Legal Pluralism in Jamaica," and Kenneth Bilby's "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica."

quoted recognized territorial land of Accompong in popular publications is about 1500 acres. However, different figures may be stated by the different agencies of the Jamaican government. For instance, according to Social Development Commission's (SDC), an agency of the Jamaican government, Accompong Maroons were "given 3,000 acres of land."¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, the Accompong Maroons claim they did not only won the 1,500 or 3,000 acres of land and it was not given but it also includes sizable portion of the western side of the island of Jamaica (this will be elaborated on in another chapter).

Overall, the point is that political authority, however circumscribed, continues to reside in leaders elected by the community, and this persisted throughout the centuries up to the present day. Over time, there were modifications in the terms and conditions of leadership, including the length of service and who participated in elections. While political organization is referenced back to Akan origin, the political structure was quite similar to its British counterpart. Indeed, this is very consistent with the argument for diaspora in terms of its claim to African origin.

Infrastructural development varies from community to community, even though consistently poor. The roads to all of the communities are not well-paved. Maroon communities continue to depend on the central government for infrastructure, and this compromises their de facto and de jure sovereignty. Indeed, the issue is very important for the dilemma posed for claims of sovereignty.

In Accompong Town, in particular, there are a number of public facilities and services. These facilities and services are sometimes financed by the Maroons but most by the Jamaican government or nongovernmental organizations. These include health clinic, two schools (pre-elementary and elementary and junior high school), post office/agency, community center, cemeteries, a recreational site, playing fields, a museum, historic sites and landmarks, libraries, and a computer lab.¹⁰⁵

Fundamentally, the struggle over sovereignty continues in the post-colonial period. The struggle is over jurisdiction. The claims to sovereignty by the Maroons relate to absolute and total control over its people and territory while the Jamaican postcolonial state considers the territory to be an autonomous settlement with claims established over the past 250 years.¹⁰⁶ At times, the post-colonial state figuratively (but in actuality) acknowledges Maroon autonomy. In fact, past and current Prime Ministers Michael Manley, P. J. Patterson, and Portia Simpson-Miller have given audience and visited Maroon communities as well as give verbal support to Maroons' aspirations.¹⁰⁷ Often, the Jamaican government publicly broadcasts Maroon autonomy in speeches and various publications.

However, in practice, the Maroons are not always effective in preventing the Jamaican state from making attempt to curtail their sovereignty. The central issue is that the state continues to accede to symbolic claims to autonomy while retaining the right to exercise de facto power, against Maroon resistance. At the time of Jamaican independence, the issue of Maroon autonomy was merely raised by one representative in the British parliament in London, but there was no serious discussion of their legal or political status in the post-colonial state.¹⁰⁸ In the post-colonial period, the Jamaican government sought to integrate the Maroons into the wider

¹⁰⁴ Social Development Commission (SDC), *Community Profile: Accompong* (Kingston, Jamaica: SDC Research Department, 2011), 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Bilby, "Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica," 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

population by demanding that they pay taxes on the individual plot of land they occupied, which Accompong refused to do. At times, the Jamaican police and army have entered Maroon communities in spite of Maroons' attempts to resist, often for the alleged reason of destroying marijuana plants and searching homes for drugs.¹⁰⁹ Hence, at best, the post-colonial Jamaican state in practice sees the Maroons as semi-autonomous communities in the country. As Bilby indicates, "By and large, the abstract notion of Maroon autonomy seems to have been tolerated by the Jamaican state, so long as its practical consequences have remained insignificant."¹¹⁰

The ability of the Maroon to preserve and maintain semi-autonomous control relates to the symbolic role that the Maroons play in nationalist discourse and its post-colonial narratives. The narrative of Jamaican nationhood is closely linked to marronage and the history of Black resistance. The Maroons are represented as the first freedom fighters of the nation, and the originators of anti-colonial resistance that culminated and eventually led to Jamaican independence in 1962. This will be elaborated on in other chapters.

The Maroons have been unable to be completely self-sufficient. The small polities are landlocked and significantly depend economically and politically on the wider Jamaican state. The communities thus have limited options in maintaining a completely independent existence. Nevertheless, Maroons, locally and internationally, have sought to be recognized as sovereign communities.

Even with all of these obstacles, Maroons' claim to sovereignty is more than "symbolic." However, in many respects, Maroons constitute "symbolic communities" where Jamaican nationalism and its relationship to Jamaican blackness are asserted and become substantiated. This may well be one of their roles. It is also highly relevant to the issue of diaspora (with its claims to African origins) and nationalism's challenge to European authority. Nevertheless, we should understand that Maroons do take their claim to sovereignty literally. Maroon communities are more than just emplaced performatives. Maroon sovereignty will be explored further in the fifth chapter.

Economy

Currently, the main economic activity of all four settlements continues to be agriculture, although there have been attempts to develop other industries. In relation to participation in the formal economy, all of the communities have high unemployment rates, but the rate varies from settlement to settlement. To different degrees, they have sought and implemented alternatives to agriculture.

In Accompong Town, people are employed in different industries in the small economic sectors.¹¹¹ The most significant economic activity centers on agriculture and commerce (mainly shop keeping). According to the SDC, Agriculture is one of the major sources of income, with most of the workers (85%) farming ground provisions such as yam and dasheen.¹¹² Most people in Accompong Town are self-employed: 70% of the labor force, compared with the Jamaican national average of about 26%.¹¹³ The employed are mainly farmers, and the few other workers are domestic workers, construction workers, casual laborers, dressmakers, drivers, vendors,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Social Development Commission, *Community Profile*, 52.

¹¹² Ibid., 4–5.

¹¹³ Ibid., 4–5, 48.

educators, shopkeepers, and clerks.¹¹⁴ Accompong Town has a working population (15–64 years) of 59.7%, which is 19% more than the national Jamaican average.¹¹⁵

The Accompong Maroons are interested in other means of developing their community, as outlets for selling agricultural products decrease.¹¹⁶ In seeking economic viability and development, in the last couple of decades, Maroons have worked with over a dozen national and international organizations, such as the Tourism Product Development Company (Jamaican government), USAID, UNESCO, and the European Union.¹¹⁷ Many community leaders, such as former Colonel Sidney Peddie, former Deputy Colonel Melville Currie, and Abeng Blower Hansley Reid, are interested in developing factories.¹¹⁸ But many of these developmental efforts have focused on the heritage tourism industry. The developmental goal is to bring tourists “to the experience of local food, folklore, craft and music, bird watching, caving and swimming activities.”¹¹⁹ The point is to employ community members in a variety of areas, including serving as tour guides, administrators, and maintenance personnel.¹²⁰

Social/Cultural

It is highly debated whether Jamaican Maroons are culturally the same or a distinctive group in Jamaica.¹²¹ In the literature, there is a difference of opinion about the culture of the Maroons. For instance, the historian Mavis Campbell considered the Maroons to be culturally no different from other Jamaicans. On the other hand, Kenneth Bilby contends that the Maroons are ethnic groups

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 4–5.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁶ Melvin Harris, “Maroon Foundation set for Accompong,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 6, 2005, accessed December 2, 2012, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20050106/western/western4.html>; “The Maroon Challenge—Peddie to Tackle Roads, Water and Unemployment,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 10, 2004, accessed December 3, 2012, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20040610/cornwall/cornwall4.html>; Roy Sanford, “Traditional Rules!,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 13, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Yvonne Chin, “The Herb Women of Accompong,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), November 4, 2002; “Accompong Maroons Cry Foul,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 29, 2000; Garfield Rowe, interview.

¹¹⁸ “The Maroon Challenge,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 10, 2010; Currie, interview.

¹¹⁹ “Accompong Maroons Creating Tourism Product,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 10, 2008.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ In the literature, there are significant works on the general culture and traditions of the Maroon communities. In 2005, Kenneth Bilby published the greatly anticipated work *True-Born Maroons*, which explores the history and focus on the culture of the Maroons. Bilby is the most renowned expert on Jamaican Maroon communities and has worked in their communities since the late 1970s. He uses the Maroons’ narrative to both verify and challenge colonial archives. The book significantly uses Maroon voices in relaying views on how they were able to defeat the British. The work is an “ethnography of identity,” going into great details on how the Maroons culturally distinguish themselves from other Jamaicans. The work also gives significant attention to narratives about Nanny, Jamaica’s only female national hero. He also explores Maroons’ connections to Africa. The work finally looks at Maroon position in present day post-colonial Jamaica. In many ways, the work is a history of the present.

A few dissertations explore Maroon identity and culture as well. Grace Jennings’ “Retained Cultural Traditions: A Way of Reforming the Curriculum of the Jamaican Maroons” (1999) explores the meaning of education and the aims of schooling for the Jamaican Maroon children in the political, economic, and cultural context of their communities. Mildred Chang’s “The Jamaican Accompong Maroons Continuities and Transformations” (2007) explores contemporary Accompong Maroons’ engagement with development and social change. She argues that there is strong support for surviving Maroon tradition in spite of the strong influences coming from outsiders. Baldwin-Jones’s “The Jamaican Marronage, a Social Pseudomorph: the Case of the Accompong Maroons” (2011) argues outside of ideology and symbolism that the Accompong Maroons have assimilated into the state; see her examination of the Accompong’s political, economic, social, religious, and kinship institutions, foodways, and land history.

that differed culturally despite significant areas of overlap from the rest of Jamaica.¹²² He argues this point because Maroons possess their own “religious beliefs, pharmacopoeia, oral traditions, music, dance, languages, and other distinctive forms of expressive culture.”¹²³ More in line with Bilby’s view, I support the stance that Maroons are a distinct variant of the overall Jamaican culture.

To further explain the cultural situation of the Maroons, it is important to gain a sense of their numbers. The Maroon population is comprised of many thousands of people, mainly of African descent, living in the four specific settlements and beyond. The total number of Jamaican Maroons is hard to estimate. In the 1980s, according to former Accompong Maroon Colonel Meredith Rowe, there were about 100,000 Maroons living in Jamaica.¹²⁴ In the mid-1990s, the Maroon leader and author Beverly Carey estimated that there were about 500,000 Jamaican Maroons worldwide.¹²⁵ What is to be Maroon will be further elaborated on in this chapter.

In particular, the population of the Accompong Town settlement, which is considered the largest and most vocal on the matter of sovereignty, is about 1,000 people. In 2012, the community members and leaders presented figures ranging from 800 to 1,800 people living in the settlement.¹²⁶ In 2009, according to a survey conducted by the Government of Jamaica through SDC, the community’s population, which frequently fluctuates, was 808 persons in 209 households.¹²⁷ At that time, the population had slightly more females than males.¹²⁸ The percentages of people under the age of 30 were about 45% of the population (more youthful than the Jamaican national average), but at the same time those 60 years and over were about 21 percent of the population (9% higher than the Jamaican national average).¹²⁹ Accompong Town is therefore over-represented in younger and older people in comparison with the overall Jamaican population.

To the community of Accompong Maroons, and similarly the other three Maroon communities, networks and claims of belonging extend beyond the physical community. Outside Accompong Town are thousands of (Accompong) Maroons living in neighboring communities such as Aberdeen, Santa Cruz, and Montego Bay, while others are as far away as Kingston, New York, and London.¹³⁰ Community leaders and members estimate that there is a total of 12,000 to 30,000 Accompong Maroons worldwide.¹³¹ It is not uncommon to see many individuals moving

¹²² Bilby, “Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica,” 2–3; a few works explore Maroon identity such as: Barbara Kopytoff’s “The Development of Jamaican Maroon Ethnicity” (1976); Mavis Campbell’s “Marronage in Jamaica: Its Origins in the Seventeenth Century” (1977); and Kenneth Bilby’s “Two Sister Pikni: A Historical Tradition of Dual Ethnogenesis in Eastern Jamaica” (1984).

¹²³ Bilby, “Maroon Autonomy in Jamaica,” 4.

¹²⁴ “Maroons Seek Voice in Parliament,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 19, 1988, 11.

¹²⁵ “Maroons Staking Claim to Columbus’ Gold,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), April 2, 1995.

¹²⁶ Currie, interview; Harris Cawley, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, August 01, 2012; Lawrence Rowe and Lance Ricketts, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, January 8, 2012.

¹²⁷ Social Development Commission, *Community Profile*, 4, 13.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³⁰ Hanley Reid, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, December 21, 2011; Jean Besson, “Folk Law and Legal Pluralism in Jamaica,” *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 31, no. 43 (1999): 40; Currie, interview; Garfield Rowe, interview.

¹³¹ Williams, interview; Cawley, interview.
“Maroons at Accompong,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 21, 1964; Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

between Accompong Town and different communities in Jamaica. Maroon individuals in different parts of Jamaica often take an active part in the affairs of their community.

For the sake of brevity, I will mention the basic cultural contours of the population of Maroons, highlighting the culturally distinct aspects of the Maroon population. But I note overlaps, not just divergence. Often, the difference from the wider Jamaican culture is attributed in the literature to a greater degree of “African-ness” in their cultural practice and expressions.

Maroon origins are important for identity formation, as signifiers of cultural difference that are also concrete inherited practices that make them slightly different. However, the overall larger Jamaican Black population shares the same general origins as Maroons. The literature points to the difference in origins is perhaps in degree (this will be further explored in chapter three). Over the last two centuries, a variety of scholars have written on African influence, survivals, and transformation in Maroon communities.¹³² In general terms, African origins are argued without specific ethnic or regional origins that link to a range of cultural practices. At other times, specific cultural groups, such as the Yorubas, Igbos, Akan, and Congolese, are argued to have influenced the development of particular cultural expressions. However, in relation to specific cultural groups, Akan origins are often stressed the most, especially in religion, herbal lore, language and performative arts. So arguably, Maroons preserving more African traditions and practices in their communities make them a little different from the wider Black Jamaican population.

In other words, despite the different cultural origins of Black Jamaicans, Maroons make specific claims to an Akan origin. As would be shown in later chapters, it does not matter whether these claims are valid. What makes Maroons different are their extant cultural practices, their material conditions, and their political organization. These may be explained in terms of specific African origins, whether valid or not.

In the religious realm, Maroons are similar to other Black Jamaicans in practicing a variety of belief systems. The Accompong Maroons’ main official religious belief system is Christianity. Following varying degrees of “Africanization,” there are seven churches, which include the Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman, Church of God International, Assembly of Zion, Seventh Day Baptist Church, and New Testament Church of God.¹³³ Religious practices are not always seen in mutually exclusive terms. Thus there are also practitioners of Myalism,

¹³² There are great number of works on African survivals and transformation as they relate to Maroons. Foremost, Werner Zips’ work significantly explores Maroon–African connections in two major works. Werner Zips’ *Nanny’s Asafo Warriors: The Jamaican Maroons’ African Experience*, in Melville Herskovits’s fashion, explores African continuities and transformation through the reading of Akan or Asante history and culture into Jamaican Maroon communities. Zips seeks to counter the Eurocentric history of Maroon communities that has been always heavily influenced by the British perspective. In *Black Rebel*, Zips presents a survey of the major themes of resistance and autonomy in Maroons’ history and contemporary communities.

Other works examine African influences in Maroon communities as well. Joseph Williams’ *The Maroons of Jamaica* (1938) explored African survivals in Jamaican Maroon communities in the early twentieth century. Schafer’s dissertation, “The Maroons of Jamaica: African Slave Rebels in the Caribbean” (1973) is basically an exploration of the history of the four Maroon communities of Jamaica, significantly looking at African survivals that cite Asante/Akan cultural retentions. Beverley Hall-Alleyne’s “Asante Kotoko: The Maroons of Jamaica” (1982), published by the Institute of Jamaica, an organization of the Jamaican government, explores links between the Maroons and the Asante/Akan people.

¹³³ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 70.

Obeah/Science (Kromanti Play), and Rastafarianism. Alternative religious practices will be explored further in chapter four.¹³⁴

In terms of herbal lore, the communities have had a long history of herbal plant use. Plants are used by the wider Jamaican population but arguably more so in Maroon communities, with distinctive variations. The Maroons' use of herbal medicine is in the forms of distinctive herbal tonics, tea, and baths.¹³⁵ Although the practice of using herbal medicines has declined significantly in recent decades, it is still important among some people in the communities. The practitioners of Obeah, Myal and Kromanti Play are often specialists in herbal use.¹³⁶ The herbs are used to cure ailments and sicknesses, such as headaches and arthritis.¹³⁷ The Maroon communities have a wide range of medicinal herbs, often sold to non-community members from other parts of Jamaica and abroad.¹³⁸

In language, the Maroons, speaking both English and Jamaican Patois, once spoke a language called Kromanti. It is argued that the language is rooted in the Twi language of the Akan people in West Africa.¹³⁹ In the past, the language was spoken in all of the Maroon communities.¹⁴⁰ At this point, depending on the specific Maroon communities, some people might know a few phrases or words but the full language is no longer in use.¹⁴¹ This will be elaborated on in chapter four.

¹³⁴ For further readings on Maroon belief systems, see the following works. Kopytoff's "Religious Change Among the Jamaican Maroons: The Ascendance of the Christian God Within a Traditional Cosmology" (1987) explores the early co-existence of Maroon cosmology and Christianity, then the later and eventual confrontation that caused the ascendance of Christianity in the early twentieth century. Ernestine Galloway's "Religious Beliefs and Practices of Maroon Children of Jamaica" (1981) mainly looks at the religious beliefs and practice of Maroon children, primarily of Accompong Town. Emmanuel Obasare's dissertation, "Implications of Jamaican Maroon Understanding of Ancestors: An Interpretation" (2005) describes the historical development of Maroon ancestral beliefs and practices. He argues that their beliefs and practices could be used to develop their communities. Other readings on Maroon belief systems include: Ann B. McIver's dissertation, "The Evolution of Belief Systems and Religious Practices Among the Maroons of Accompong, Jamaica" (1978); Sultana Afroz's "From Moors to Marronage: the Islamic Heritage of the Maroons in Jamaica" (1999) and "The Manifestation of Tawhid: The Muslim Heritage of the Maroons in Jamaica" (1999); and Bilby's "The Kromanti Dance of Windward Maroons."

¹³⁵ Wright, "Accompong Maroons of Jamaica," 71.

¹³⁶ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 72; Lumsden, interview; Williams, interview.

¹³⁷ James Chambers, interview by the author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, December 22, 2011; Yvonne Chin, "The Herb Women of Accompong," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), November 4, 2002, accessed December 2, 2012, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20021104/flair/flair4.html>.

¹³⁸ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 72–73. A few documents explore herb and plant use in Maroon communities. Milton Cohen's dissertation, "Medical Beliefs and Practices of the Maroons of Moore Town A Study in Acculturation," argues that the Maroons of Moore Town, in their acculturation process, partially accept modern medicine but they "continue to place great emphasis on their traditional patterns." Summer Ragosta's dissertation, "Historical Influences on the Development of Indigenous Jamaican Maroon Ethnomedicine Comparisons with West African and Arawak Ethnopharmacopoeia," heavily drawing from oral histories, argues that West African, particularly Akan, and Arawak significantly influenced the unique Jamaican Maroon use of ethnomedicine.

¹³⁹ Bev Carey, *The Maroon Story: The Authentic and Original History of the Maroons in the History of Jamaica, 1490–1880* (Gordon Town, Jamaica: Agouti Press, 2012), 185.

¹⁴⁰ Wilson, "Performance of Freedom," 73.

¹⁴¹ Kenneth M. Bilby, "The Kromanti Dance of the Windward Maroons of Jamaica," *New West Indian Guide* 55, no. 1 (1981): 65. For further works on the topic of Maroon language, see the following: David Dalby's "Ashanti Survivals in the Language and Traditions of the Windward Maroons of Jamaica" (1971); Mervyn Alleyne and Beverley Hall-Alleyne's "Language Maintenance and Language Death in the Caribbean" (1982); Kenneth Bilby's "How the Older Heads Talk: A Jamaican Maroon Spirit Possession Language and Its Relationship to the Creoles of Suriname and Sierra Leone" (1983); and Ian Hancock's "Maroon Societies and Creole Languages" (1992).

As it relates to performance arts, the Maroons perform a unique custom or ritual called Kromanti. With the instruments, including the Abeng (horn blown instrument) and drums, Kromanti is performed through singing, drumming and dancing. It is most popular for burials and a variety of the communities' celebrations.¹⁴² Its origins is traced to Africa, specifically Akan peoples. This will be elaborated on in chapter four as well.

Overall, the Maroons are not completely a monolithic group. Maroons may converge and diverge culturally with the wider Jamaican population but they share more in common than in difference. In the cultural realm, it is the ideas about heightened African-ness which complicates the issues of nationhood and sovereignty. Maroon culture and cultural expressions will be explored in greater details in the following chapters.

Then and Now: Meaning of “Maroon”

Before concluding, it is important to clearly present a comprehensive definition of who the Maroons are. What it is to be Maroon has changed over the last three centuries. As communities, they have faced and challenged significant historical and political erasure. With a clear definition, it is possible to understand the significance of Maroon communities and their place in the African Diaspora.

The word “Maroon” comes from the Spanish word “*Cimarron*.” According to the philologist Jose Juan Arrom, Cimarron, which had an Arawakan/Taino root, was originally used to refer to feral cattle, then to Amerindians and finally to peoples of African descent who had fled from slavery on Hispaniola.¹⁴³ As the cultural anthropologist Richard Price asserts, the word was then adopted as “Maroon” and “Seminole” in English, “Marron” in Dutch and French, and “Bush Negro” in Dutch Guiana (Suriname).¹⁴⁴

In order to grasp the Maroon experience, scholars have to have a comprehensive understanding of the concept. We know that the present-day Maroons are descendants of individuals who fled slavery or colonial or hegemonic authorities to establish communities of their own.¹⁴⁵ In the literature, Maroons are also variously referred to as fugitive slaves, runaway slaves, and self-liberated formerly enslaved persons.

As we engage the concept, it is important to familiarize ourselves with Maroons' response to how they are named. Maroons, at least in Jamaica, loosely refer to themselves as “Maroons” but also consider themselves in their language of Kromanti as “Fiiman” (“Freeman”).¹⁴⁶ According to Colonel Wallace Sterling of Moore Town:

¹⁴² Kenneth Bilby and DjeDje Jacqueline Cogdell have written about Maroon music. In particular, Cogdell published *Remembering Koyo: History, Music, and Gender in the January Sixth Celebration of the Jamaican Accompanying Maroons* (1998) and Bilby wrote *Making Modernity in the Hinterlands: New Maroon Musics in the Black Atlantic* (2000). Also, Bilby has compiled and published a set of Maroon music on CD, including: *Drums of Defiance: Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica, Maroons of Jamaica, and Music of the Maroons of Jamaica* (1981).

¹⁴³ Richard Price, “Maroons in Anthropology” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, ed. (Oxford: Elsevier Science 2001), 9253; José Juan Arrom and Manuel Antonio García Arévalo, *Cimarrón* (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: [s.n.] 1986), 1.

¹⁴⁴ Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), xii.

¹⁴⁵ Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2004), 124; Terry Weik, “The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas: Resistance, Cultural Continuity, and Transformation in the African Diaspora,” *Historical Archaeology* 31, no .2 (1997): 82.

¹⁴⁶ Frank Lumsden, interview by author, Charles Town, Portland, Jamaica, January 6, 2012.

Let's put it this way: to begin with, the word "Maroon" was not used in a positive sense in describing our fore-parents. It was more of a derogatory way of describing them. To that extent, our fore-parents had never generally called themselves Maroon, but would have referred to themselves as *Yenkunkun*. "Yenkunkun" here means a people who are self-reliant, a people who are independent, people who live and work together for the good of everyone. So, it was some sort of brotherhood, some sort of communal thing. So even today we as descendants of Maroons refer to ourselves at *Yenkunkun Pikibo*. That means we are the descendants of those who were here before us, and those of our fore-parents who chose to live together to fight for their own common good to oppose the slavery they were living under.¹⁴⁷

In addition, Colonel Noel Prehay of Scott's Hall Maroon community, in a speech on August 1, 2012 on Emancipation Day holiday in the English-speaking Caribbean, stated that *Yenkunkun Pikibo*, which is Kromanti, means "free and independent people."¹⁴⁸ But, in June of 2011 at Charles Town Maroon community's Quaco Day celebration, Prehay said there was no such thing as Maroon and it makes him sick to his stomach to hear people speak of Maroons.¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, many Maroons accept the name of Maroon but challenge the Western/British interpretation of the word. The Accompong Town tour guide Lawrence Rowe defines the word "Maroon" as freedom fighter, although he, like many other Maroons, is aware that the word to the Spanish and the British means "wild and untamed savage."¹⁵⁰ According to Melville Currie of Accompong Town, a local historian and former deputy colonel:

If you look for the word "Maroon" in the dictionary, you will find "wild, untamed or to be cut off." We were wild. The British called us the wild and the untamed ones, because they could not tame us to bow to them. We were living in the woods and all that. When the Treaty was signed we were cut off from the rest of Jamaica, so we were marooned. We are the marooned ones. We were marooned by the parishes of St. James, Westmoreland, Trelawny, and St. Elizabeth. We were marooned from the rest of the island.¹⁵¹

In other words, from this perspective, Maroons are free men, women, and children with the vision to separate themselves from colonial and oppressive regimes to often create autonomous communities.¹⁵² Indeed, freedom and self-reliance, as opposed to wild cow, defines their core meaning.

I argue that the communities of Jamaican Maroons, like Maroons throughout the Americas, are places where liberated men and women from slaveholding regimes or other hegemonic authorities attempt to implement their own idea of a self-governing community.

¹⁴⁷ Wallace Sterling, interview by author, Moore Town, Portland, Jamaica, December 1, 2011.

¹⁴⁸ Noel Prehay, "Introductory Remarks," (speech, Scott's Hall, Jamaica, August 1, 2012).

¹⁴⁹ Noel Prehay, "Welcome Remarks," (speech, Quaco Day celebration, Charles Town, Jamaica, Jamaica, June 23, 2011).

¹⁵⁰ Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

¹⁵¹ Currie, interview.

¹⁵² Martin Luther Wright, *1992 Festival of American Folklife: June 25–June 29; July 2–July 5* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), 74.

Maroon communities, in a climate of appalling violence and sharing a common experience of abjection, make a radical break from some of the most exploitative regimes in early modern America. These communities are the legacies of not only resistance to slavery but of collaborations among diverse peoples, mainly those of African descent, attempting to resist colonialism and the Western hegemonic order. At the same time, in attempting to self-govern, Maroons were conscripted and considered collaborators of the very system of slavery and colonialism they were resisting. The path to self-determination does not clearly follow a straight trajectory of resisting and overcoming, but intermittent victory and setbacks in a shifting terrain in a complicated racist geopolitical order that is difficult to escape fully. Nevertheless, these communities resulted from the desire of peoples to make a home in a difficult environment after enduring displacement, slavery, or colonialism. These communities led to the emergence of several distinctively unique peoples on the island of Jamaica and throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Conclusion

In concluding, there are a variety of views on the historical, political, and cultural development of the Maroon communities. In a chronological order, this chapter presents the context and background of the Maroon history and development. In a descriptive manner, it discusses the over three hundred years' history of resistance and struggle that is highly centered on the issues of freedom and autonomy/sovereignty. The significance of being Maroon and a resistor to slavery and colonialism is highly contested. The history of struggle is an uneven one. In many respects, the Maroons have been in a "war of position" with the colonial and post-colonial states. In the following chapters, the dynamics of Maroon communities, the African Diaspora, and sovereignty will all be explored.

CHAPTER THREE: ORIGINS

One of the things that people need to bear in mind is that the history of our fore-parents did not start the day they stepped off the slave ships, on the shores of these islands. The history of our fore-parents started thousands of years before when they were living in Africa.

–Colonel Wallace Sterling of Moore Town¹⁵³

Introduction

This third chapter analyzes origin claims of Maroons as they relate to the articulation of diaspora. As Stuart Hall affirms, articulation is both enunciation and forming linkages.¹⁵⁴ Maroons use origins or make originary claims as a means of anchoring and linking themselves to an African homeland and other peoples of African descent. The chapter explores Maroon voices, especially those of community leaders and elders, on their language and methods of enunciating these originary claims. Also, the study presents the Western and other representations of the origins of these communities. Through multiple sources, Maroon and otherwise, the chapter demonstrates that there is a divergence on the meaning and significance of Maroons' origins. In fact, a nuanced look at the expression of these claims illustrates that there is an ideological struggle between Maroon and Western worldviews on the meaning of Africa. The chapter demonstrates that originary claims are not only enunciated but used to make particular linkages, internally among the Maroons themselves and externally with other peoples of African descent. Hence, the chapter argues that the originary claims of Maroons are connected to the critical practice and articulation of the African Diaspora. Ultimately, this builds a case for linkages between Maroons' critical practice and articulation of diaspora and their sovereignty claims, which will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

Originary Claims

Like all diasporas, Maroons articulate an idea about their common origins in an African homeland. Maroons make claims to a common origin. In their case, it is to Africa. The idea of a common origin is central to the formation of these communities. As Joseph Harris argues, having the characteristics of “[c]ollective memories and myths about Africa as the homeland or place of origin” is central in defining the African Diaspora.¹⁵⁵

The claims to origins in Africa are a critical practice with ideological significance. Often, Maroons' enunciation of originary claims is a means of giving language to present preoccupations through a particular kind of representation of the past. As Stuart Hall argues, “language is the medium par excellence through which things are represented in thought and thus the medium in which ideology is generated and transformed.”¹⁵⁶ In many respects, the originary claims of the Maroons are central tenets in shaping their ideological view. Here, as Hall asserts, ideology consists of the “mental frameworks—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy

¹⁵³ Sterling, interview.

¹⁵⁴ Fiske, “Open the Hallway,” 213.

¹⁵⁵ Harris, “Expanding the Scope of African Diaspora Studies,” 158.

¹⁵⁶ Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, 36.

in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works.”¹⁵⁷ Hence, examination of the Maroons’ nuanced enunciation of origins reveals the significance and power of their ideological view and critical practice, as will be explored in this chapter.

Maroons’ Voice

An optimal way to capture Maroon voices is through their oral histories. As a form of collective historical memory, oral histories tell the story of where a group of people come from and how they should act in the present. Oral histories allow the research subjects’ understanding, meaning, and interpretation to be (re)presented as valid. They acknowledge that social reality is mediated through meaning and symbolic communication rather than “objective” concrete “facts.” This does not mean that the concrete and the objective are unimportant; rather, it reveals that what is even more important are their interpretations. Through the use of oral histories and the interrogation of originary claims, the chapter explores ideas about the past and engages what David Scott refers to as “conceptual problem of political presents and with how reconstructed pasts and anticipated futures are thought out in relation to them.”¹⁵⁸

Maroons have always asserted originary claims to Africa.¹⁵⁹ Even during the British colonial period, this stress on the claims of African origins was affirmed. As in the case of the Colonel of Accompong Town, Colonel H. A. Rowe, who stated in the 1930s that “the maroons have no Arawak blood in them—the Maroons are pure negroes,” indirectly claiming only African origins.¹⁶⁰ Here, there is a rejection of hybridity and hybrid origins. At that time, the reference to “pure” was to signal and challenge the idea of “mongrel” origins. Maroons’ critical practice challenge this characterization and imposition.

Maroons have articulated originary claims to Africa in an even more pronounced way in the post-colonial era of Jamaican history. In the 1990s, according to former Colonel Martin Luther Wright, Accompong Maroons traced their origins to both Arawak Indians and Africans who escaped Spanish and English domination to establish independent communities.¹⁶¹ He further stated: “They [Maroons] continue to practice and enjoy traditional customs handed down by our American and, particularly, African guerilla ancestors.”¹⁶² As with some other Maroons’ views, origins are acknowledged as hybrid but Africa is centrally positioned as the most important root. Hence, I am arguing while the Maroons acknowledge origins outside of Africa, the latter is privileged. Some, however, reject totally these assertions of hybridity.

Some Maroons argue that African presence in Jamaica preceded slavery and colonialism and coincided with the initial European presence. The former Colonel Harris Cawley (1984–88) traces the origins of the Maroons to two continents—Africa and Europe—but privileges African origins. He argues people originally from Africa that went to Europe as well as those who came directly from the African continent as site of the Maroons’ origins:

¹⁵⁷ Jorge Larrain, “Stuart Hall and the Marxist Concept of Ideology,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, 47.

¹⁵⁸ David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 1.

¹⁵⁹ The present Maroons of Jamaica all believe they were descended from “Spanish Maroons” before dividing into the Windward and Leeward groups then further divided into the four current communities (Accompong Town, Charles Town, Moore Town, and Scott’s Hall).

¹⁶⁰ H. A. Rowe, “The Maroon’s Celebration,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 22, 1938.

¹⁶¹ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 64.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 67.

The Maroons were among the first Africans that came to the islands under the Spanish. Because you know in Spain they have a lot of Africans. So when Christopher Columbus was exploring the Caribbean, a lot of Africans came with them and they were the hard type of people. So afterwards, the Spanish started to import them from Africa to work on the plantation. They were the first ones who came in to inhabit the land, after the Arawaks, and they lived here for 461 years after the British took over in 1655.¹⁶³

Thus, according to Cawley, the early Maroons who originated in Europe were actually Africans, many of whom had formerly served in the courts of Spain.¹⁶⁴ Cawley, Colonel Frank Lumsden of Charles Town Maroon community, and other Maroons believe many of the Maroons originated in Spain before being joined by West Africans. In this view, Maroons are emphasizing and signaling African origins in great civilizations not only in Africa but in Europe as well. But, most importantly, this signals Maroons' claims to territory began at the exact time of European conquest. The implication is that the original African presence was constituted by free and modern subjects rather than un-free slaves.

The originary claims to Africa reference multiple locations on the continent and even pre-colonial African presence in Europe. In many instances, the identification of a specific place in Africa highlights the point of origins to the continent. It is a way of arguing that there are details that prove the claims of African origins and highlight deep roots in the continent. It must be noted that in highlighting certain groups, Maroons do not deny the existence of the dozens of other possible groups. It is important to examine the details of these claims, which ultimately further ideological struggle and critical practice about the meaning and significance of origins in Africa.

Various Maroon individuals have expressed the view about roots in Africa or specific African groups. Some make reference to specific African groups such as Akan, Igbo, or Congolese, to which they are directly linked. In their various oral histories, Maroons make ethnic and cultural claims to these groups including references to artifacts.

In Accompong Town, their oral histories stress Asante, Kromanti and Congo origins. According to the Maroon historian and former Deputy Colonel Melville Currie, the Maroons of Accompong Town came from different groups of Africans, especially Asante, Kromanti, and Congo tribes. He said after the Africans left the plantations to go to the hills they separated themselves into "tribal" groups, just as they were in Africa. He said that is why there are different burial grounds in Accompong Town where each tribe buried their dead.¹⁶⁵ In present-day Accompong Town, there is a particular burial ground where the Asante, Kromanti, and Congo ancestors were laid to rest. Kojo, Nanny, and Accompong, three of the most influential historic Maroon leaders, are cited as being Asante or Kromanti by most Maroons.

Many times, Asante, more often than Kromanti and Congo, are emphasized in Accompong Town as a specific ethnic group of origin. The current Deputy Colonel of Accompong Town, Norma Rowe-Edwards, said she was told by her father that she was a descendant of the Asante tribe from the Gold Coast of West Africa.¹⁶⁶ According to Rowe-Edwards in her book, *My Father Said*, the ancestors of the Accompong Maroons were "Ashanti,

¹⁶³ Cawley, interview.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Currie, interview.

¹⁶⁶ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 20, 34.

Coromante, and Congo.”¹⁶⁷ Other members of the Rowe family consider themselves to be a part of the Asante clan line. For instance, in Accompong Town, it is often argued that the Rowe family are descendants of Kojo, Nanny, and Accompong.

The prominent tour guide Lawrence Rowe claims Maroon origins from different African groups but emphasizes Asante, Kromanti, and Congo. He mentions that the “Maroon family” came from many different tribes, including Asante, Congo, Igbo, Kromanti, Mandingo, and Yoruba.¹⁶⁸ Rowe holds the view that the Kromanti were the largest group of Africans among the Accompong Maroons. As a tour guide, he regularly shows visitors the Asante, Kromanti, and Congo Burial Ground as an example of the groups’ presence among the early Maroons.¹⁶⁹ According to Rowe and a few other community members, there are currently different groups of African tribes living in different parts of their settlement. He cites how the Congo tribe and their descendants lived toward the northeastern end of the community.¹⁷⁰ Rowe describes the Congo people as being short and stocky people. He says that when most of the Congo people came from Africa they lived at a place in the community called “Creep Up.”¹⁷¹ In contrast, Rowe considers the Asante to be physically bigger and fearless.¹⁷² He also mentions Kindah as the site where all the different African tribes in a blood pact came together in brother- and sisterhood to fight the British.¹⁷³ At the annual Kojo Day celebration in Accompong Town, that I witnessed in 2012, 2013, and 2015, these three groups—Asante, Kromanti, and Congo—were highlighted the most in the public presentations among Maroon origins.

The Windward Maroons—of Moore Town, Charles Town, and Scott’s Hall—also highlight Kromanti (Akan) origins. Kromanti is also mentioned as one of the major groups that Kojo used in his battles against the British. In 1977, the Moore Town Maroon Milton MacFarlane published a work entitled *Cudjoe of Jamaica* in which he cites claims that Kojo’s father, Prince Naquan, was born to the Koromanteen house and Kojo was brought up in the proud and strict tradition of the Koromanteen people. MacFarlane says that Kojo’s father “taught him all about the homeland in West Africa and the lives of the Koromanteens.”¹⁷⁴ Further, MacFarlane writes:

Almost all the Africans brought to the British West Indies were shipped from ports on the west coast of the [African] continent, particularly Nigeria and the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana). The first English fort on the Gold Coast, in 1631, was at Kromantine, and this name in various forms was later applied to all slaves from the Gold Coast, who were in the majority. Most of the names of the Maroon leaders—Cudjoe [Kojo], Accompong, Quacu, Kishee, Quao—are versions of common names among the Akan peoples of Ghana.¹⁷⁵

Indeed, the names “Kromanti,” “Kromanti,” or “Coromantee” refers to African captives not an ethnic group of Africans who disembarked from the port of Kormantine and some other ports of

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁸ Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ MacFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 18, 24.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 18.

what is today Ghana.¹⁷⁶ According to MacFarlane, during battles with the British in the early eighteenth century, Kojo often reflected on the easier life his forefathers lived in West Africa.¹⁷⁷ MacFarlane further claims that during the negotiation with the British over a peace treaty, Kojo told the British Colonel Guthrie that the Maroons only desired to return to their home in West Africa.¹⁷⁸ The point here is that in making claims to African origins the Maroons sometimes identify a specific place in Africa as their homeland in an effort to drive that point home.

What is important here is not that their African past is only acknowledged. The point is it shows how and the manner in which this narrative has become central to Maroons' construction of identity and in their conscious representation of self. This is what distinguishes the Maroons from the rest of Jamaican Black society, notwithstanding their profound similarities, even in practice.

Colonel Wallace Sterling of Moore Town argues that the Maroons' origins are indeed in Africa and emphasizes the significance of Asante. According to Sterling, connecting to both African and Amerindian roots:

One of the things that people need to bear in mind is that the history of our fore-parents did not start the day they stepped off the slave ships, on the shores of these islands. The history of our fore-parents started thousands of years before, when they were living in Africa. And it is also true to say that some of our fore-parents were Amerindians. So it's not that all of them were Africans: some of them were Amerindians. And they had a history of how they governed themselves wherever they were. Our African fore-parents, because they are the more dominant ones, when they were in Africa, they pretty much had their system of government. There was a chief or a chieftainess—a ruler.¹⁷⁹

Sterling is claiming Africa as the main site of origins of his fore-parents.¹⁸⁰ But this claim is doing more than identifying a place of origins. It is part of the critical practice and ideological struggle positioning African civilization as ancient and powerful. It speaks to the heart of the cultural politics of representation and struggle over meaning and recognition.

In addition, Sterling stresses Asante when he speaks about a specific site of origins. He states that Nanny, like many of the Moore Town community members, came to Jamaica from West Africa and was from the "highly spiritual Asante tribe."¹⁸¹ As a critical practice, Africa represents a place of great significance, challenging the claims to exclusive civilized modernity by Europeans.

Beverly Carey, a Maroon descendant of Moore Town and author of *Maroon Story*, emphasizes the Asante as the main ethnic group of origins but also acknowledges other African and Amerindian groups.¹⁸² Carey believes that many descendants of Asante (and Akan) live in present-day Maroon communities.¹⁸³ According to Carey, Maroons spoke several languages but the most common was Kromanti, which she argues closely resembles the modern African Twi

¹⁷⁶ Kwasi Konadu, *The Akan Diaspora in the Americas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 122–23.

¹⁷⁷ McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 40.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁷⁹ Sterling, interview.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ "Uncovered: Nanny of the Maroons," *Flair Magazine*, October 20, 2003, 5.

¹⁸² Carey, *Maroon Story*, 1.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 175–76.

language.¹⁸⁴ As Carey and other Maroons rightly assert, there is not an ethnic group in Africa known as Kromanti.¹⁸⁵ Most recently, instead of referring to “Kromanti” many Maroons speak about Akan or Asante. Carey made reference to knowledge about certain Maroon families in Moore Town who were described as also being of Igbo, Dahomean, and West African Muslim origins.¹⁸⁶

The former Colonel C. L. G. Harris of Moore Town and a Jamaican government legislative member cites Asante as the group’s main site of origins. According to Harris, “The majority of Maroons, as my ancestors came to be referred to, originally came from West Africa. Through oral tradition claims are made that the majority of those who came were mainly of the Ashanti ethnic group, who were forcibly brought to Jamaica as slaves by the Spaniards.”¹⁸⁷ Harris traces the Maroon language of Kromanti to the Twi language that is spoken by the Asante people.¹⁸⁸ He readily cites a range of Kromanti words that he deems are from the Akan language. For instance, he says that the name of god as *Nyamkopong* or *Nyame* and certain objects and entities such as *unsu* (water), *unsa* (rum), *edwiani* (food), *kwedu* (banana), *ekutu* (orange), and *prako* (pig) indicate West African connections and Akan origins.¹⁸⁹ What is important to note is not the veracity of the claim, since some cannot be sustained, but the point is the claim itself.

Overall, the claims to African origins made by Maroons have great implications. They are ideological arguments for recognition as human civilized subjects with histories of presence in civilizations that are thousands of years old in Africa. Such claims challenge the prevailing Western view of Black abjection. The fundamental point of these Maroon claims is that they serve as a critical practice and an ideological positioning in claims to having a long history and connection to ancient cultures and civilizations, Africa in general and at other times specific groups.

Other Voices

While there is general and universal agreement of the African origins of the Maroons and of Black Jamaicans in general, there are significant differences over its meaning and significance. Often, these other voices of abjection are what the critical practice of diaspora challenges and struggles against. These other voices are presented in and by newspapers, eyewitnesses, researchers, members of the public, and colonial and state authorities, over the last two centuries. There is a struggle over the meaning of Africa and of African descent. “African” in the worldview of Europe tends to signify a space of the uncivilized and the savage. This worldview has legitimized the historical denial of Maroons’ demands for sovereignty as an autonomous people. It denies the capacity of Maroons ‘agency. Western literature is filled with accounts of Maroons living in the “state of nature.”

These other voices participate in the ideological struggle as it relates to Maroon existence. Jean and John Comaroff point to this role of Western ideas in eyewitness accounts and other stories of the African.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 185.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 406.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 185, 426.

¹⁸⁷ C. L. G. Harris, “The True Traditions of my Ancestors,” in *Maroon Heritage: Archaeological, Ethnographic, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. E. Kofi Agorsah (Barbados: Canoe Press, 1994), 36.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 42.

[I]t is often the telling that is as significant as the tale itself. The profound forces that motivated them, and the varied vehicles of their awareness, emerge not so much from the content of those stories as from their poetics; that is, from their unselfconscious play on signs and symbols, their structures and silences, their implicit references.¹⁹⁰

In these voices one can search for the unconscious and unintentional slips that provide clues to the real meaning and intention of the source's words.¹⁹¹ It shows what Maroons are specifically challenging and what Black people in general struggle against.

Some of the earliest accounts of the origins of the Maroons have come through European narrations. In the mid-eighteenth century, one of the first detailed discussions of the Jamaican Maroon origins was written by a Jamaican merchant, James Knight. He considered the Maroons to be a mixture of liberated Africans who were enslaved by the Spanish followed by other Africans who later joined them after British colonization. His reference to their primarily "Cromantine" origin was accompanied by a description of this group as "bloody minded" and "murderous."¹⁹²

Similarly, Edward Long, a prominent Jamaican historian, continuing and expanding on the writing of James Knight.¹⁹³ He states that many of these Africans came from Lobby, Sutton, and Downs plantations in Jamaica to join the "Spanish negroes." Long also referenced Coromantines and Madagascar peoples as specific ethnic groups among the Maroons in explaining the "jealousies and uneasiness" [sic] among the Maroons "owing to their different countries and customs."¹⁹⁴ Long expressed identical sentiment as Knight about the savagery of the Maroons.

In 1803, the British author Robert Dallas, in his *The History of the Maroons*, following Knight and Long, presented a more detailed view about the Maroon origins and its significance. The Leeward Maroons headed by Kojo in his view "were joined from time to time by a number of slaves, principally those imported from the Coromantee country, a people inured to war on the coast of Africa."¹⁹⁵ Once again, origins are linked to the uncivilized savagery of Blacks. Agreeing with Maroon oral tradition, the idea of different ethnicities among the Maroons is in Dallas' work while emphasizing the differences within the Maroon community and relating them to their tribal origins, he failed to mention the history of alliances among the different groups in his account of the Leeward Maroons.¹⁹⁶

... by another tribe of negroes, distinct in every respect; their figure, character, language, and country, being different from those of the other blacks, their skin is

¹⁹⁰ Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 36.

¹⁹¹ Thompson, *Postmodernism and History*, 124.

¹⁹² James Knight and Edward Long, 1746, "The History of Jamaica to 1742," file 12416, Edward Long Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, NY.

¹⁹³ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of the Island: With Reflections on Its Situation Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government: Illustrated with Copper Plates* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 49.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 49–52, 54

¹⁹⁵ Robert Charles Dallas, *The History of the Maroons, from Their Origin to the Establishment of Their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone: Including the Expedition to Cuba, for the Purpose of Procuring Spanish Chasseurs, and the State of the Island of Jamaica for the Last Ten Years: with a Succinct History of the Island Previous to That Period*, (London: Printed for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1803), 29.

¹⁹⁶ Dallas, *History of the Maroons*, 30, 31.

of a deeper jet than that of any other negroes; their features resemble those of Europeans, their hair is of a loose and soft texture like a mulatto's or quadroon's; their form more delicate, and their stature rather lower than those of the people they joined; they were much handsomer to an European eye, but seemed not to have originally possessed such hardiness and strength or never as the other people under Cudjoe; and although it is probably that the intercourse with the latter had existed between seventy and eighty years, and an intermixture of families had taken place, their original character was easily traced in their descendants. They were called Madagascar's, but they I do not know, never having heard that any slaves were brought from the island of Madagascar. It is possible there may be some other district in Africa called by the same name. ...some of the old people remember that their parents spoke, in their own families, a language entirely different from that spoken by the rest of the negroes with whom they had incorporated.¹⁹⁷

Dallas mentions Coromantees and Madagascar among others as the specific ethnic groups comprising the Maroons. He equates phenotypical features with levels of savagery among the groups.

In character, language, and manner; they [the Maroons] nearly resembled those negroes, on the estates of the planters, that were descended from the same race of Africans, but displayed a striking distinction in their personal appearance, being blacker, taller, and in every respect handsomer; for such of them as had remained in slavery had intermixed with Eboe negroes and others, imported from countries to the southward of the coast of Africa, people of yellow complexions, with compressed features, and thick lips, who were in every respect inferior to themselves.¹⁹⁸

What is ideologically fundamental here is that Maroons and Black people in general are seen as primitives and inferior. Dallas attempts to rank the Maroons' level of savagery in relation to other people of African descent.

There are many other sources that Maroons' narrative and critical practice of origins challenges. The press is one of the important sources. In the colonial era, the press and most other sources tend to continue to link origins to savagery. But leading up to decolonization, the linking of Maroon origins to primitiveness was at times challenged by views of the history of the struggle for freedom. The press continues to stress African origins, and when specific origins are specific they are often Cromantine/Kromanti, Akan, and Asante. In the early twentieth century, Asante as an origin emerges as stronger. In the latter half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first, claims of origins and the meaning ascribed to them begin to challenge the slanted European discourse about race. The central issue here is how African origins were interpreted and what were the characteristics attributed to each of the African groups that explained the degree of savagery. It is an ideological struggle over meaning and significance.

In the over three-hundred-year-long colonial era of Jamaica, the Western press in Jamaica has presented Maroons' origins as an indication of their savagery. For the most part, in this

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 31–32.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 87–88.

period, Maroons' origins have been cited only as generally in Africa, with associated ideas of primitiveness, but often no details of specific locations. In the late nineteenth century, it became more popular to at times identify the specific origins of Maroons, although Africa in general was still emphasized. The press tended to side with colonial views on origins as evidence of savagery. For example, in 1866, in *Every Saturday: A Journal of Choice Reading*, an American literary magazine, an article entitled "The Maroons of Jamaica" acknowledges Maroon origins claims, stating that Maroon "numbers continued to increase, for they were joined from time to time by discontented slaves, principally those imported from the Coromantee country, on the coast of Africa, a people inured to savage warfare."¹⁹⁹ Once again, savagery is linked to origins. In 1898, *Harper's Magazine* stated that when England took Jamaica from the Spaniards in 1655, there were about two thousand enslaved Africans on the island, most of them being pure Africans, but including a few hybrid offspring of Blacks and the aboriginal Arawak Indians. The article referred to the Maroons as "Koromantyns" (or Kromanti), "mongrel looking," and having "mental traits unmistakable African."²⁰⁰

For the rest of the colonial period, the press increasingly identified Kromanti as the place of Maroons origins.²⁰¹ In the *Afro-American* newspaper, an article by the Jamaican-American writer J. Roger considered the Maroons to be made up of many "Coromantees."²⁰² Although Rogers spoke in admiring terms of the Maroons, the reference to origins is linked to their war-like nature. According to a *Jamaica Gleaner* article in 1938, the peace treaties the Maroons signed with the British were "signed in a manner fitted to the wild nature of these sons of Koromantee slaves."²⁰³ Although Kromanti was mainly the specific group mentioned in the press, there were more and more references to other groups. The 1938 article emphasized that the Maroons came from the tropical land of Sierra Leone.²⁰⁴ Also, it was in the 1930s that the *Jamaica Gleaner* started referencing the Asante increasingly as the specific origin of the Maroons.²⁰⁵

In the press of the post-colonial period of Jamaica, the idea of Maroons' origins being generally in Africa or West Africa continues, but increasingly other specific groups are identified, and there are more references to other ethnicities or regions. Moreover, a different tone and association with Maroon origins develops. The *Jamaica Gleaner* often printed specific references to Kromanti and especially Asante.²⁰⁶ In the international press, multiple origins were

¹⁹⁹ "The Maroons of Jamaica," *Every Saturday: A Journal of Choice Reading (1866-1874)*, January 13, 1866, 50.

²⁰⁰ Phil Robinson, "The Maroons of Jamaica," *Harper's Weekly*, October 29, 1898, 3.

²⁰¹ "Schism in Ranks of the Maroons," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 3, 1936; "A Fact a Day about Jamaica," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), October 25, 1946; "The Maroons—300 Years a Free People," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), September 24, 1958; "The Maroons at Accompong Town," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 29, 1927; "Changed Times for the Maroons," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), October 27, 1934; "The Institute of Jamaica the Jamaica Portrait Gallery Notes on Recent Interesting Additions," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), July 12, 1904.

²⁰² J. Rogers, "'Wonder Slave' Mystified British with Brilliant Strategy: Ragged and Misshapen, Cudjoe, Commander..." *Afro-American* (Baltimore), July 26, 1930.

²⁰³ "Schism in Ranks of the Maroons."

²⁰⁴ "Maroons of Jamaica, the Most Beautiful of the Black Races," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 31, 1938.

²⁰⁵ "Two Centuries of Maroon Life," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), October 2, 1946; "Such were the Maroon Treaties (Last Article in Series by Clyde Hoyt)" *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), October 22, 1946; "Origin of the Maroons," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), July 14, 1962.

²⁰⁶ "A Heroine for Jamaica," *Sunday Gleaner Magazine*, October 26, 1975; "Nanny," *Flair Magazine*, October 21, 1991, 8; "Rebel with a Cause," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), February 21, 2003; "Maroons Celebrate Freedom Anniversary in Jamaica," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 24, 2003; "Accompong Maroons Reunited," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 3, 1998.

acknowledged. For instance, in the *Washington Post* in the 1970s, Alex Shoumatoff, wrote an article entitled “The Proud People of Jamaica’s Untracked Cockpit Country,” which traces the origins of the Maroons to multiple continents. According to Shoumatoff, “The Maroons are descended from the most warlike tribes of western Africa, brought as slaves to Jamaica: Mandingos, Gold Coast Coromantees, Asantes, Ibos, Whydahs, Nogos, Sambos, Congos and Angolas.” He further states that “the maroon numbers were increased by runaways, mulattoes with Spanish blood and later Madagascars.”²⁰⁷ He even asserts, just as the former Colonel Harris Cawley had done, that some of the Maroons were Moors and Berbers who had come to Jamaica in 1509 as mercenaries with Diego Columbus.²⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the international press, in identifying specific origins, often acknowledges Kromanti or Asante. As references to the Asante increase, overtones of savagery are not as closely associated with the Maroons. Anti-colonial narratives and Maroons’ resistance began to receive more coverage in the press.

Other witnesses who have visited the Maroons have relayed Maroon ideological view on the meaning and significance. These significations must be read as critical practice of Maroons identifying specific origins in a sense of pride to challenge western view of Black people having no history.

In the early twentieth century, a number of authors and scholars, including Katherine Dunham, Zora Hurston, and Melville Herskovits, visited Jamaican Maroon communities and witnessed Maroons tracing their origins to Africa.²⁰⁹ At times, these individuals observed specific ways in which Maroons expressed their origins. In the 1930s, one of the earliest anthropologists to visit Jamaican Maroon communities was Joseph Williams, who stated that in Moore Town the name for Maroons was “Brew-fro Ashanti,” meaning “once were Ashanti.”²¹⁰ Another anthropologist, Anderson Cooper, while living among the Accompong Maroons in the late 1930s and early 1940s, stated that certain families identify themselves with specific African ethnic groups. He gave the examples that the Rows are Fanti, Whites are Congo, Miles are Asunga, and Fosters are Igbo (“with straight noses”). Cooper mentioned that Congo was the most powerful nation in numbers.²¹¹ In addition, according to Beverley Carey in 1959, Dr. Joe Adamofio, a Ghanaian who visited Moore Town, thought that the Maroons were speaking Twi.²¹² These individuals broadcasted or supported ideological claims of the significance of Maroons’ origins in Africa.

It is in the post-colonial period of Jamaica, through scholars, that the observation of Maroons’ views about their specific origins has been made even more public (with implicit ideological consequences). Many scholars have heard and witnessed Maroons’ articulation of their origins in Africa. A number of scholars who have visited the Maroon communities witnessed the Maroons claiming connections to specific ethnic groups. In the 1970s, Daniel Schafer witnessed the Scott’s Hall Maroons saying they “live Asante.”²¹³ In the 1980s, the

²⁰⁷ Alex Shoumatoff, “The Proud People of Jamaica’s Untracked Cockpit Country,” *Washington Post*, December 31, 1978.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ “The Maroons at Accompong Town”; Katherine Dunham and Ted Cook, *Katherine Dunham’s Journey to Accompong* (New York: Henry Holt, 1946), 19.

²¹⁰ “Fr. J. Williams and the Life of the Maroons,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), July 12, 1937; Joseph Williams, *The Maroons of Jamaica* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College Press, 1938), 465.

²¹¹ Anderson Cooper, 1939, box 3, folder 3, Anderson Cooper Papers, West Indies Collection, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.

²¹² Carey, *Maroon Story*, 185.

²¹³ Werner Zips, *Nanny’s Asafo Warriors: The Jamaican Maroons’ African Experience* (Kingston: Ian Randle,

linguist Mervyn Alleyne, observed that the Maroons have words taken from Twi–Asante but also the Temne and Limba languages of Sierra Leone.²¹⁴ In the early 2000s, Summer Ragosta noted that during her interviews in the Moore Town community the elder Isaac Bernard told her there are four African tribes of Maroons in their community: Chankofi (associated with the Bernard family), Dokose or Akan (associated with the Harris family), Timbambu (Congo), and Wendandu.²¹⁵ The point here is the listing of specific groups of Africans is a critical practice that is articulated by Maroon to challenge western subjugation and argue for the continued connection to past civilizations.

Kenneth Bilby, the most renowned expert on Jamaican Maroon communities, who has worked with the Maroons, especially the Moore Town Maroons, for over 30 years, has the most to say about the specific tribes identified among the Moore Town Maroons' ideas of their origins.²¹⁶ Bilby observed a strong connection with Kromanti and Akan but other groups were acknowledged as well, such as Igbo, Mandingo, and Congolese.²¹⁷ All this is that Maroons enunciation is linked to the critical practice of African linkages.

Of course, the Jamaican state, like the former British colonial authorities, holds the view that the origins of the Maroons are in Africa. However, the Jamaican state references a wider group of specific African ethnicities than the mainly Kromanti or Koromantyn that British Jamaica recognized, especially Asante. Statements about Maroons' origins stem from a variety of state offices and officials. For instance, the Jamaica Information Service, the state's main media voice, mentions that the Maroons were Asante people originating on the Gold Coast of Africa.²¹⁸ The African-Caribbean Institute of Jamaica, a body of the Government of Jamaica that preserves Jamaican cultural forms and history, has done extensive work on Maroon history and origins linking Maroons to Akan groups in Ghana.²¹⁹ In 2012, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Portia Simpson-Miller, in a speech in Accompong Town, linked Maroons' and Afro-Jamaicans' origins to present-day Ghana and Nigeria.²²⁰ In January 2014, Lisa Hannah remarked; "they [Maroons] managed to bring together Africans dispersed from various tribes from the Continent under one common cause: to regain their freedom from the enemy and retain their ancestral Asante culture and heritage."²²¹ All these have a lot to do with Jamaican nationalist discourse but it parallels Maroons representation of themselves coming from great civilizations. Hence, it is a critical practice of challenging Western understanding of Black peoples.

2011), 44.

²¹⁴ Mervyn C. Alleyne, "Language Maintenance and Language Death in the Caribbean," *Caribbean Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (1982): 56.

²¹⁵ Ragosta, *Historical Influences on the Development of Indigenous Jamaican Maroon*, 85–86.

²¹⁶ For further readings see: Kenneth Bilby "Swearing by the Past, Swearing to the Future: Sacred Oaths, Alliances, and Treaties among the Guianas and Jamaican Maroons," *Ethnohistory*, 44, no. 4 (Autumn, 1997): 672; Bilby's *True-Born Maroons*.

²¹⁷ Bilby, *True-Born Maroons*, 82, 80; Bilby, "Kromanti Dance," 57;

Ragosta, *Historical Influences on the Development of Indigenous Jamaican Maroons*, 86.

²¹⁸ Charmaine McKenzie, *Maroons of Jamaica: A Glance at Their History* (Kingston: Jamaica Information Service, 1991), 6.

²¹⁹ Hall-Alleyne, "Asante Kotoko," 29.

²²⁰ "Address by Prime Minister, The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller to the Maroon Conference," *Jamaica Information Service [JIS] News* (Kingston), October 29, 2012, accessed December 3, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/address-by-prime-minister-the-most-honourable-portia-simpson-miller-to-the-maroon-conference/>.

²²¹ "Minister of Youth and Culture's Remarks at the 2014 Maroon Celebration," *Jamaica Information Service News* (Kingston), January 9, 2014, accessed April 10, 2014, <http://jis.gov.jm/minister-youth-cultures-remarks-2014-maroon-celebration/>.

The Jamaican state sees Maroon origins in a mostly positive light, identifying these origins as part and parcel of the struggle for Jamaican nationhood. Apart from the sovereignty claims of the Maroons, the Jamaican state is undivided in its support of the Maroons' ideological views on the significance of African origins as a place of great and ancient civilizations.

Other public intellectuals and eminent figures have acknowledged the meaning and significance of Maroons' origins in Africa in general or specific pre-colonial Ghana. For instance, in the 1970s, the public intellectual and author Olive Lewin argued that the Maroons were Asante brought to Jamaica by the Spaniards and their tradition has remained almost fully intact until today. She stated that the Maroons can still communicate with people from Ghana without interpreters.²²² In 2012, at the Kojó Day celebration in Accompong Town, the Nigerian Ambassador Peter Oyedele remarked with pride that "I feel as if I am in Africa," highlighting what he perceived as a triumphant African cultural continuation in Jamaica.²²³ Overall, originary claims can be seen as critical practice that challenges Western abjection.

Deployment of Originary Claims

The Maroons' view of their origins is a critical practice and ultimately ideological, serving a number of purposes. First, it is used as a means of nation-building for Maroons. As Paul Gilroy suggests, diaspora Blacks view the acquisition of roots "to construct a political agenda in which the ideal of rootedness was identified as a prerequisite for the forms of cultural integrity that could guarantee the nationhood and statehood to which they aspired."²²⁴ More significantly, as Stuart Hall argues, it serves as a source of identity and culture-formation by displaced and ruptured populations who identify a site of origins as a base to rework new and distinctive cultural patterns and forms.²²⁵ Finally, the critical practice and view serve as a means to challenge the Western narrative of Black abjection, contesting the foreclosure of Africans as modern subjects and their location on the constitutive outside of the civilized state.

Maroons' critical practice and ideological view of their claim to African origins thus serve as the source that underpins their linkages to Africa and the African Diaspora. Their claim to African origins are important for Black identity and diaspora articulation. It allows them to connect to other peoples of African descent in Jamaica, the rest of the Caribbean, the Americas, and Africa. Indeed, the assertion of and claim to African origins is used as a means of articulating unity that is built internally within Maroon communities and externally with other communities of African descent.

In Maroon Communities

First, claims of African origins are used to build internal linkages and solidarity in Maroon communities. It is important to note that the community of Accompong Maroons, like the other three Jamaican Maroon communities, extends beyond those individuals who live at present in the physical community of Accompong Town. The Accompong Maroon community is seen as comprising the ancestors (as living spirits), the "born" (living), and the "unborn" (future

²²² "Canadian Women Told of Maroon Culture," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 12, 1976.

²²³ Horace Hines, "Maroon Celebrations Kick Starts 'Jamaica 50,'" *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 19, 2012, accessed December 4, 2013,

<http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/Maroon-celebrations-kick-starts--Jamaica-50- 10588223>.

²²⁴ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 112.

²²⁵ Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 224–25; Hall, *Thinking the Diaspora*, 13.

offspring).²²⁶ The ancestors who originated in Africa are the foundation of the community. The community includes individuals who could and do claim and trace their origins to these African ancestors. It also includes Accompong Maroons who are connected to Maroon families throughout Jamaica and the world (in the past, present, and future). Maroon identity exists across time and place. It is about memory or re-memory that challenges prevailing discourse, pedagogy, and knowledge. Maroon identity is therefore a particular and specific example of diasporic critical practice and enunciation.

The Maroons see themselves figuratively as one big family. In the east, the Charles Town, Moore Town, and Scott's Hall Maroons all view themselves as Nanny pikibo, which means "children of Nanny" in the Kromanti language and Nanny being the sister of Kojo and Accompong (the founders of Accompong Town). In the west, the Accompong Maroons, acknowledge the other groups of Maroons as brothers and sisters coming from the same so-called original Spanish Maroons, and seeing themselves as one big family. This view is celebrated in their annual Kojo Day festival at Kindah in the community.

Kindah is both a place in central Accompong Town and a relation. Accompong Maroons define *Kindah* as an African word meaning "we are one family."²²⁷ The physical place called Kindah is where the different groups of Africans of different tribal origins, including Asante, Kromanti, and Congo, came together as one family. As Melville Currie asserts:

While the war was going on and the division was there, they [Maroons] had problems. So, under the [Kindah] Tree all tribes met and there they pricked the arches of their hand, like they would have done in Africa, and they all drank the blood in the name of peace and brotherhood. Hence, the name Kindah. "We are one family."²²⁸

In Accompong Town, Kindah is important in the building of solidarity among different groups of peoples of African origins in the community. For the Maroons, this was beyond a strategic alliance: community-building in a claimed common origin in Africa was a means to form unity. According to Rowe-Edwards, anywhere Maroons met it is considered Kindah, whether in Accompong Town, Kingston, or any other place.²²⁹

Some Maroons even go further and link most of the Accompong Maroon families to the Rowe family, the largest family in the community, which they argue is directly descended from Nanny, Kojo and Accompong (all individuals said to be Asante). According to the former secretary of state Mann O. Rowe, both Kojo and Nanny were part of the Rowe family. He claims that the other large families such as the Wright, Reid, Crosse, and Foster families, are also related to the Rowe family as well.²³⁰ The universality and common acceptance of this notion that "it is one family" was reflected directly in the words of a young farmer and tour guide, Lawrence Rowe whose duty was to represent the community to its visitors.²³¹ Ann-Marie Hutchinson, a community council member, believes that there were originally twelve Rowe

²²⁶ Garfield Rowe, interview.

²²⁷ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 79.

²²⁸ Currie, interview.

²²⁹ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 63.

²³⁰ Mann O. Rowe, interview by unknown interviewer, undated, interview T265, African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica.

²³¹ Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

brothers whom she believes could explain the large number of Rowes in the community.²³² Regardless of the number of Rowes, for the Maroons of Accompong what is important is that the Rowes have become the symbolic center in the discourse of common descent and its link to African origins.

Maroons' collective identity is similar to clan-based notions of belonging that are often linked to African ethnic/linguistic originary claims. According to the former Colonel Cawley, you are Maroon by blood, and all Maroons are descendants of the original Maroons of Accompong Town.²³³ Additionally, Cawley states that anyone who could prove that he or she has Maroon blood is a Maroon.²³⁴ For Cam Foster, anybody who was born in Accompong Town with the Maroon family name along with their descendants who may be from or outside of the community are Maroons.²³⁵ Oftentimes, these Maroons' origins are linked to Akan peoples.

In this regard, Maroons make a claim to a clan-based system that they deem is African. It is significant as a basis for challenging statist authority and for justifying alternative forms of organization not instantiated in the nation-state. It demonstrates how Maroon identity (like Black identity) is constituted as an alternative form of organizing that can extend across the borders of the nation-state. In many ways, this gives credence to Gilroy's argument about diaspora Blacks' identity.

In the African Diaspora

The use of origins is a critical practice and is deployed as a means of making linkages not only internally but also externally to other peoples of African descent. Maroons believe that they have a common African origin with all African-descended peoples. As Colin Palmer postulates, diasporas are "symbolic communities and political constructs," members tending to "possess a sense of shared identity that transcends geographic boundaries."²³⁶ Maroons recognize their connection to other people of African descent. Hence, since Jamaica acquired its independence, the Maroons more than before actively articulate diaspora.

In other words, originary claims to Africa and their enunciations play a central and critical boundary-defining role for inclusion in the African Diaspora. Such claims can be enunciated and narrated in various ways. Accompong is one example, what is important is that they are mutually recognized as originary claims to Africa. In other words, what is important is that the originary claims to Africa enunciated in various forms are what link Maroons to other communities of people making similar claims. Indeed, the importance relates to recognition that may be seen at times as "solidarity" and "unity".

Maroons both enunciate and make linkages to other Black communities. Oftentimes, different groups of African descent articulate diaspora in different ways. The issue is that the enunciations of African origins, however different, are central to recognition of linkages. Through identifying a specific place of origins, Maroons position themselves as authentic holders of a supposedly "deeper root" of African heritage in the Western Hemisphere. As Maroons interpret it, their communities act as unique sites for the furthering of connection and sharing of African values and cultural practices. Linkages are produced in and through mutually recognized enunciations, including those related to African origins. Indeed, linkages are

²³² Hutchinson, interview.

²³³ Cawley, interview.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Cam Foster, interview by author, Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, December 30, 2011.

²³⁶ Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora," 29.

produced because they are recognized as enunciations of blackness and because the latter are understood to be based on African origins.

In Jamaica and beyond, everyone, especially peoples of African descent, is encouraged to celebrate a unique, authentic, and independent “African” community in the Americas. According to former Colonel Meredie Rowe of Accompong Town, in Jamaica, “The Maroon community is still the only significant organised Black link with our African past.”²³⁷ All members of the diaspora have links to an “African past,” but some Maroons argue that they do a better job of preserving such links. Moreover, in 1999, Sidney Peddie referred to the annual Kojo Day celebration as the “cradle of our culture” in Jamaica.²³⁸ Here, Maroons state the provocative claim that their connections to African origins make them central to Jamaican core culture (which, they imply, is African). Furthermore, Beverly Carey declares that Black Jamaicans wanting to express their African connections regularly attend Accompong Town’s Kojo Day celebrations, a “performance” of African origins.²³⁹ These views about the celebrations could be applied to all the other Maroons’ annual celebrations and numerous events to include not only Afro-Jamaicans but also other peoples of African descent beyond Jamaica.²⁴⁰ Various people enunciate blackness differently, many with explicit claims to African origin such as the Maroons.

In an increasingly globalized world, peoples of African descent come to Maroon communities from not only other parts of Jamaica but as far away as the United Kingdom, Suriname, and Nigeria. A range of African-descended individuals and groups participate in the activities in the various Maroon communities. In the post-colonial Black world, this view of furthering enunciation of diasporic linkages developed fully in Maroon communities. In other words, post-colonialism was accompanied by an intensification of Black linkages throughout the world and this process has intensified with globalization.

In post-colonial Jamaica linkages between groups of African-descended occur in the Maroon settlements. In the last few decades, the annual number of visitors or sojourners to Maroon communities has increased from hundreds to tens of thousands of people. People come to visit the Maroon communities from everywhere, mainly all over Jamaica, but also from North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.²⁴¹ For instance, in 2007, on Accompong Kojo Day alone, as reported in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, an estimated figure of “25,000 visitors” hailing from every corner of the globe attended the celebration. Not nearly as large as Accompong Town, the other three Maroon communities each have an annual celebration, with figures ranging from dozens to thousands of visitors. In addition, each Maroon community has dozens to over a thousand visitors annually. The tens of thousands of people who have come and visited these Maroon communities are mainly peoples of African descent. Many come in solidarity to celebrate Maroon culture, believing they share common origins with the communities. The communities are sites of sharing of diasporic experiences, histories, and cultures supported by arguments of common origins in Africa. What makes the Maroons unique are their claims to African authentic cultural practice. Although many of these visits are organized and encouraged by the tourist

²³⁷ “Maroons Concerned about Development of Kings House Lands,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), November 1, 1995.

²³⁸ Pamela Fae Jackson, “Tourist Trek to Accompong,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 14, 1999.

²³⁹ Carey, *Maroon Story*, ix.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ “African Inspiration at Maroon Celebration,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 11, 2010; Charles Campbell, “Caan Ketch Quakuh... Groundins,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), June 8, 2010, accessed December 4, 2014, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/Caan-Ketch-Quakuh>.

industry and by the state as forms of heritage tourism, they are linked to originary claims and are related to claims to African authenticity.

Indeed, Maroons invite people, especially those of African descent, to come and explore authentic African roots and heritage with them. This may very well be Maroons' own strategic adaptation to globalization, but it is through articulation of diaspora that this is made possible. Diaspora, as articulation, produces the conditions that undergird the motivations for the visits: the desire to see authentic African cultural practice and forms. Globalization and the tourist industry are the material conditions that allow the circulation. In celebrating with other people of African descent, Keith Lumsden, chairman of the Maroon Council of Charles Town, asserts: "We're trying to get our people to reconnect with their African roots to show them that it's a wonderful thing." In addition, Colonel Peddie believes that encouraging others to celebrate with them is a great opportunity for Jamaicans to learn more about the traditions of their African fore-parents.²⁴² This outreach is not just for other Jamaicans but for peoples of African descent in general. What is enunciated is an authentic African practice that has combined with tourist and marketing technologies in the global circuits of blackness. The Maroons represent the materialization of authentic African roots.

Of the four Maroon communities, Accompong Town leads the way in increasing interactions with the wider African world through articulation of diaspora. What is being enunciated is a relative unsullied form of Africinity. Often, Maroons make links with specific groups of Black people or just Black people in general and this occurs at various celebrations, conferences, and events. For instance, in 2005, Accompong Kojo Day celebration was held under the theme of "Celebrating our African Ancestry: The Ghana Connection," with activities held from January 1st and culminating in the main Kojo Day celebration on the sixth of January. According to the state-run Jamaican Information Service, (JIS) News, the Colonel of the Accompong Maroons, Sidney Peddie said "that the theme recognised the important connection between Jamaica and Ghana, noting that most of the early maroon leaders had originated from the west coast of Africa."²⁴³ In 2007, Maroons, again under the leadership of Peddie, participated in the Joseph project, which commemorated the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. The project aimed to establish links with the descendants of enslaved Africans worldwide, with the goal of working towards healing the wounds of slavery.²⁴⁴ In October 2012, the Accompong Maroons explored links with other Maroons and Afro-Jamaicans at a conference that had the theme "The Africans in Jamaica—Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Maroons for Democracy, Governance & Development."²⁴⁵ In all of this, diasporic linkages are made through originary claims to Africa, especially Ghana. What is being enunciated here are direct links to Africa as bases for diasporic claims by the Maroons. They have become involved in the global circuits of blackness on the basis of these claims.

²⁴² "Blowing of Abeng to Highlight Maroon Celebrations," *JIS News* (Kingston), December 30, 2005, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/blowing-of-abeng-to-highlight-maroon-celebrations/>.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Garfield Myers, "Maroons Hold 'Mother of all Celebrations' at 268th Annual Festival," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 8, 2006, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/96134_Maroons-hold--mother-of-all-celebrations--at-268th-annual-festival.

²⁴⁵ "International Conference to Examine Life and Culture of Maroons," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), October 15, 2012, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/International-conference-to-examine-life-and-culture-of-Maroons>; "Young Maroons Upbeat about the Future," *JIS News* (Kingston), December 27, 2012, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/young-maroons-upbeat-about-the-future/>.

Many government officials express views of shared origins and solidarity with Maroons. Although it may be interpreted as a tactic for co-option and control of the Maroons, it is nevertheless a diasporic articulation. For instance, at Accompong Town, Lisa Hanna, Minister of Youth and Culture, connecting with Maroons, argued for a return to their roots in order to move forward, stating that they could learn a lot from the Asante governance structure, which ensured that every member of the community was taken care of.²⁴⁶ She later declared that she aims to engage the Maroon community in a cultural mission for the protection of Jamaica's children. She wants them to recapture the Asante approach of working with the community, to care for, respect, and love their children.²⁴⁷

The way in which African origins are enunciated in Maroon communities produce these visits of other peoples of African descent. Maroons signify and represent the original condition of being African. It is nostalgia that is at the root of these visits. In other words the visits are the product of articulation. They concretize linkages.

The most visible visitors are the leaders, representatives, and diplomats of Black people from various parts of the world. In recent years, Maroons have visits from cultural and diplomatic leaders from other peoples of the African descent from countries such as Barbados, the United States, and Suriname. These leaders collectively speak on behalf of and represent tens of thousands of people in the Americas. The leaders bring greetings from their people and celebrate their connection to Maroons and the communities' achievements. Indeed, in these contacts of the diaspora, it is more than mere expression of camaraderie but actually a moment of exchanging ideas of what is it to belong to the African Diaspora. It is articulating and re-articulating diaspora. In other words, these are particular examples of the manner in which diaspora is a process of constant re-articulation (by incorporating new and changing forms of Black enunciations and developing, expanding, and intensifying linkages and that this is occurring as a result of new conditions of Black circulation facilitated by postcolonialism and globalization).

In the post-colonial era, Maroons directly make linkages with other African-descended peoples far and wide. Fundamentally, these articulations and re-articulations are based on recognition of common African origins. Jamaican Maroons, through leaders, cultural groups, and performers, make linkages in different parts of the world in places such as Accompong Town, the United States, and Africa.²⁴⁸ For instance, in Accompong Town in 1998, a five-member Surinamese delegation led by the Paramount Chief, Nana Lafanti Abone, of the Matawai nation attended the Accompong Kojo Day celebration. Both communities, essentially re-articulating diaspora, at that time discussed possible trade, cultural, and other exchanges with each other.²⁴⁹ Again, in 2006, the Surinamese Maroon leader Kenrick Cairo participated in a conference in Accompong Town discussing concerns of interest to all Maroons under the theme: Restoring,

²⁴⁶ "Minister Hanna Calls for Return to Traditional Values," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 7, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/minister-hanna-calls-for-return-to-traditional-values/>.

²⁴⁷ Minister Hanna to Engage Maroon Communities in Cultural Mission," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 9, 2013, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/minister-hanna-to-engage-maroon-communities-in-cultural-mission/>.

²⁴⁸ "Maroons to Re-trace Footsteps of Ancestors," *JIS News* (Kingston), July 17, 2009, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/maroons-to-re-trace-footsteps-of-ancestors/>; "Canadians Learning About Maroon Culture," *JIS News* (Kingston), August 7, 2009, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/canadians-learning-about-maroon-culture/>.

²⁴⁹ "No Filming of Maroon's 259th Anniversary," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 6, 1998; "A Colourful Maroon Celebration," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 8, 1998.

Preserving and Protecting Our Heritage.²⁵⁰ In the United States in 1992, at the Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folk life, Maroons from Suriname, French Guyana, Mexico, United States, and Colombia were brought together. This was a moment for Maroons to express their cultures and also a site for dialogue on diasporic linkages based on originary claims. In 1997, according to the *Jamaica Gleaner*, the then-Colonel Meredie Rowe reported that he went to Africa to participate in a high-level conference with tribal chiefs from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin American countries including Suriname and Mexico, as well as the United States, where connections were explored.²⁵¹ Overall, the point here of all of these is that diaspora is being constantly rearticulated.

Many high-profile African leaders have re-affirmed African linkages to Maroons, especially leaders from Ghana and Nigeria. Also, as mentioned above, in 1997, Maroons made significant contact with Ghana through Colonel Meredie Rowe and a small Maroon delegation that visited and met with government officials and chiefs of the country. The Colonel also attended the Pan African Festival (PANAFEST). According to Rowe, the objective of PANAFEST, in line with many of the Maroons' goals, was to "develop a framework for the identification and analysis of issues and needs, central to Africa's development and to the improvement of the quality of life of people of the entire continent and the diaspora."²⁵² He attempted to establish partnerships with Ghana, including aiming to twin Acropong in Akuapem, Ghana with Accompong.²⁵³ In Ghana, with acknowledgement of shared origins, Colonel Rowe said he was offered a Ghanaian passport and accepted the title of paramount chief, which came with the granting of assets, including property, suited to his office at a ceremony in his honor.²⁵⁴ These ties are built on the idea of common African origins.

Moreover, in 1994, the then-Prime Minister of Ghana, Jerry Rawlings, was the honored guest at the Accompong's annual celebration, acknowledging Maroon links to the present state of Ghana. In the same year, the Accompong Maroons invited guests included Paramount Chief Oseadeeyo addo Danpawa III of Acropong in Ghana.²⁵⁵ In 2007, Accompong Maroons celebrated with Nana Kwanne Akyen, a chief from Ghana.²⁵⁶ In 2008, a Ghanaian delegation was invited to Accompong's Kojo Day Celebration. According to Colonel Peddie, the Maroons are descended from the Asante tribe of Ghana, with which they are in close communication from time to time "because they are our brothers."²⁵⁷ Originary claims to Africa are enunciated and linkages are made that privilege Ghana.

²⁵⁰ "Maroon Homecoming," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), December 25, 2005, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/95332_Maroon-homecoming; Myers, "Maroons Hold 'Mother of all Celebrations.'"

²⁵¹ "J'can Delegation Participate in Panafest," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 29, 1997.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ "Accompong Maroons Reunited."

²⁵⁴ "J'can Delegation Participate in Panafest"; "Ghana Confers Title on Maroon Leader," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 6, 1998.

²⁵⁵ "A Colourful Maroon Celebration," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 8, 1998; "Accompong Maroons Reunited."

²⁵⁶ Horace Hines, "African Chief to Toast 'Best ever' Maroon Festival," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), December 28, 2006, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/117153_African-Chief-to-toast--best-ever--Maroon-festival.

²⁵⁷ Horace Hines, "Suriname, Ghana Maroon Groups for Accompong Celebrations," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 3, 2008, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/130968_Suriname--Ghana-maroon-groups-for-Accompong-celebrations-Sunday.

In recent times, the Nigerian High Commissioners, including Adebowe Adefuye, Ruffus Satunase, Peter Oyedele, and Olatokunboh Kamson, have been fixtures at various Maroon communities' celebrations.²⁵⁸ In 1992, the Nigerian High Commissioner, Professor Emmanuel Ugochukwu, speaking at the Accompong annual celebration and acknowledging the connection with Maroons and other peoples of African descent, called for unity of all Black people as the answer for the problems that Black people face. He viewed Kojo and Nanny as trailblazers in Black people's fight for freedom.²⁵⁹ Other diplomats celebrate with Maroons as well. For example, in 2012, the Ghanaian Dr. Kwame Bofo, United Nations director and representative for the Caribbean Kingston Cluster Office, in solidarity with Maroons was in attendance for the Kojo Day celebration.²⁶⁰ Other Black foreign leaders and dignitaries, believing in shared origins, support Maroon communities' historical and contemporary struggle for independence.

Overall, in Maroons' interactions with these various groups, one sees expressions of diasporic articulation. Diaspora is the critical practice of asserting Black humanity. In addition, these are the concrete manifestations of these assertions.

Conclusion

Origins are significant for Maroons and the African Diaspora. They are also a central tenet in the critical practice and articulation of diaspora. Origins is used in all diasporas to anchor communities to a homeland. As Kim Butler argues, to be part of a diaspora "there must be some relationship to an actual or imagined homeland" and [w]hatever the form of this bond, it provides the foundation from which diasporan identity may develop."²⁶¹

Maroons enunciate and make linkages to peoples of African descent through their claims to African authenticity. It is in their oral histories. It is in their family lineage-based system that claims affiliated ethnic backgrounds. It is in their Kromanti language. It is in the very name of Accompong, a derivation of the Twi name Acheampong, and the community's sacred sites of Kindah and the African burial grounds.

It is beyond whether or not multiple sources and perspectives agree that Maroons are from Africa, but the meaning and significance attributed to it is what is important. It is in fact a critical practice and ideological struggle, challenging European racist thought about Black abjection.

Diaspora is articulations of blackness by people who claim African origins. For the Maroons enunciations are linked to African origins. Often, the Jamaican Maroons claim origins in specific places in Africa—especially present-day Ghana.

Originary claims are employed to build not only internal but external linkages with other African-descended peoples. This view is re-affirmed not only by other diasporan Blacks but by African leaders, diplomats, chiefs, and cultural artists. In the twenty-first century, Maroons continue to articulate and re-articulate diaspora significantly through originary claims.

²⁵⁸ "Respect Sacrifices of Forefathers," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 12, 1989; "Former Maroon Colonel Says Thanks," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 11, 1999; "Charles Town Maroons Celebrate Culture," *JIS News* (Kingston), June 30, 2011, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/charles-town-maroons-celebrate-culture/>; Garfield Myers, "Maroons Gather to Celebrate 275-Year-Old Peace Treaty," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 6, 2013, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/January-6-come-again-13322164>.

²⁵⁹ "Unity of Black Nations the Answer," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 10, 1992.

²⁶⁰ "Maroons Celebrate—Mark 274th Anniversary Signing" *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 14, 2012;

²⁶¹ Kim, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," 192.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRADITIONS

It is most important to understand that these people [Maroons] brought language, culture and extra-sensory attributes from Mother Africa some five centuries ago which survived the vicissitudes of existence in what was once a “strange land”—an inhospitable environment—and they are dedicated to the preservation of all that [is] best in their past.

Former Colonel C. L. G. Harris of Moore Town²⁶²

Introduction

The fourth chapter analyzes traditional African claims in Jamaican Maroon communities as related to the articulation of diaspora. At the outset, the chapter concisely presents the significance of traditions in Maroon communities. Then it briefly sketches the relevance of hermeneutics in understanding Maroons’ claims as related to traditions. Afterward, the chapter identifies and systematically examines what Maroons have deemed to be African traditions in their communities’ material and non-material culture. In exploring these traditions, the chapter suggests a history of an ideological struggle over meaning and significance of African traditional claims and practices. The final section illustrates how Maroons concretely use these claimed African traditional practices as a means of connecting with other peoples of African descent. Thus, the chapter argues that Maroons make use of claimed African traditions in their critical practice of diaspora. Building on the previous chapter, it looks at Maroons’ articulation of diaspora to engage their sovereignty claims, which will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

Maroon Traditions

In many ways, Maroon traditions are multifarious. Herein, the notion of tradition refers to enduring cultural patterns that evoke continuity with the past. In Maroon communities, tradition is both the notion of actual continuity and the belief that certain practices are legitimate because of their antiquity.²⁶³ In these respects, Maroons’ traditions, like those of the wider Jamaican population, are in many instances hybrid, with African, European, and Amerindian influences.

The traditions of Maroon communities are impacted by the geographic location of their often dispersed members. Most Maroons live outside of their designated territory in Jamaica. Hence, the majority of Maroons interact and live with people who may not share exactly the same traditions or culture. Moreover, some Maroons may be perceived or actually behave no different culturally from other Jamaicans in their traditional practices. In addition, the inclusive nature of Maroon community-formation, which is lineage-based, makes it possible for any persons regardless of their cultural background to be considered Maroon as long as they can trace their ancestry to any of the original communities. This allows members who may be completely culturally detached from self-identified Maroon populations for years or even generations to become part of the community. For a community, this creates the situation of a people that have complex cultural traditions and practices. In other words, the traditions and cultural practices of Maroons are not monolithic.

²⁶² C. L. G. Harris, “The Maroon and Moore Town,” in *1992 Festival of American Folklife: June 25–June 29; July 2–July 5* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), 73.

²⁶³ Craig Calhoun, *Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 488.

Nevertheless, Maroons continue attempts to preserve what they perceive as their core traditions and strive to maintain connections with each other. Many Maroons still try to continue specific traditional practices in spite of the high level of migration in and out of their settlements to and from other rural and urban areas. All Maroons are encouraged, especially in Accompong Town, to return annually to their communities to celebrate their traditions and culture. Thus, hundreds of people return to the Independence Day celebrations that are seen as a time of communion with their communities. At other times, Maroons periodically return to the community when they are unemployed or to make familial visits. Further, Maroons stay in contact with the community through interpersonal and familial relations via letters, cellular phone, and the Internet. Fundamentally, Maroon community is organized around a common core of beliefs and practices centered in their physical communities notwithstanding population dispersals and the hybridized reality of Jamaican cultural formation to which it is subjected.

Claiming African Tradition

Although they draw on several traditions, Maroons claim African traditions as the most important. For this reason, this chapter focuses on these claimed African traditions and their significance. However, the work is not intended to argue the veracity of “tradition” or a claimed tradition being “African” or not but to explore how it is understood as African by the Maroons. In this respect, the chapter looks at rhetorical strategies as they pertain to claims about traditions in an attempt to explore the hermeneutics of Maroons in the matter.

To create a framework for exploring Maroon traditions, it is important to engage hermeneutics as it relates to the claims of the communities. As Paul Ricoeur suggested, hermeneutics is a way of interpreting textual and non-textual materials to attain the meaning and significance of phenomena.²⁶⁴ Hermeneutics permits an interrogation of verbal and nonverbal communication. In other words, I want to examine how Maroons express and represent their traditions and provide meaning to them by examining the hermeneutics and semiotics of their texts, oral histories, performances and rituals, artifacts, etc and what they signify. Fundamentally, the chapter examines the claims of Maroons to an African tradition and the significance of these claims.

Maroons readily articulate the significance of African traditions. Many Maroons have specifically expressed concerns about losing what they consider to be their treasured African traditions. In fact, many Maroon leaders and elders have been particularly troubled by the dilution of the African traditional beliefs and practices in their communities. Indeed, it is part of a critical practice that struggles against cultural erosion. As early as the 1960s, former Colonel C.L.G. Harris of Moore Town stated with concern that Maroons have “maintained certain traditions” but “some of these more important customs have been passing away.”²⁶⁵ In a 2012 interview, Colonel Ferron Williams of Accompong Town argues that he would love to see the maintenance of their fading “African tradition” in every way, including in “words, food, and dress.”²⁶⁶ In early 2013, Accompong council member and principal of the local school, Garfield Rowe, stated that “if we are not careful, we are going to lose a lot of our culture, a lot of our history, and a lot of our tradition.”²⁶⁷ He thinks that the “younger folks tend to want to adopt

²⁶⁴ Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 31, 33; Ricoeur and Taylor. *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 234.

²⁶⁵ C. L. G. Harris, “The Spirit of Nanny,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 6, 1967.

²⁶⁶ Williams, interview.

²⁶⁷ Garfield Rowe, interview.

more to the American and European sort of culture instead of the African.”²⁶⁸ Internal community dialogue on the preservation of African traditional practice is common. Through both material and nonmaterial cultural expressions, Maroons ardently claim certain traditions as being African and assign great value to them. The point here of referring Maroons fear of cultural erosion is to highlight the significance they place on cultural traditions and their desire to maintain them. It is in a sense a critical practice challenging Westernization and marginalization of their cultural form.

In this chapter, I am arguing that Maroons use both material and non-material culture in their significations of their African origins and their claims to an authentic Africanity. These include the significance they attach to their forms of organization. It is African originary claims, signified by the presence of these forms, that are articulated in diaspora. These different signifying forms and practices in both material and non-material culture are explored in this essay.

Material Culture

The chapter will be examining signifying objects of material culture to explore the manner in which they are used in claims of African authenticity and origins. These artifacts differ across the various communities. Some are particular to specific communities while others are shared by the different communities. The most popular of these are musical instruments.

The Abeng is the most ubiquitous and celebrated of the objects used to signify African origins in Jamaican Maroon communities. Its name comes from the Twi language and it originated in present-day Ghana.²⁶⁹ The instrument is made from a cow’s horn in a similar manner to how it is made in Ghana.

The history of Abeng use has been traced to the emergence of the Maroons in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Throughout the centuries, the Abeng has played a central role in the narrating of Maroon history and culture.²⁷⁰ In the islands of the Caribbean, it is unique to the Jamaican Maroons.²⁷¹ Maroons consider the Abeng to occupy a central role in the founding and subsequent development of their communities. Its use has been institutionalized by the incorporation of an Abeng Blower as an official in the governing Maroon Council.

In 2011, the Chief Abeng blower of Accompong, Hansley Reid, explained the origins and other significance of the Abeng in the following way:

The Maroons carried four Abengs from Africa to Jamaica, and there were four men who were in charge of blowing the Abeng, which was the only source of communication in Jamaica for the Maroons at the time. One was in Stone Gutter Spanish Town, St. Jago de la Vega, the other was in Manchester at Williamsfield, [an]other was in Balaclava, and one on top of the Peace Cave as a community blower to tell the people how far away the enemy was from them. So the person from Spanish Town would send the echo, telling them that the enemy is coming and how far away they are, the person from Williamsfield would receive that echo, then send it to the person in Balaclava, then the one in Trelawny Town

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 22.

²⁷⁰ Dallas, *History of the Maroons*, 89; Dunham and Cook, *Katherine Dunham's Journey to Accompong*, 54.

²⁷¹ The Abeng can be found among the Maroons of Suriname and French Guyana.

Accompong picked it up and sent it out; then it was scattered all around so they could know how to ambush the British.²⁷²

The Abeng, considered to be one of the only few physical objects that came over from Africa, is important for a number of reasons. Originally, it was useful for the protection and preservation of Maroon culture against the British colonialists. Its long and ancient use in Africa and the Caribbean makes it also an important symbol of Maroon independence. It appears on the national flag of the Accompong Maroons. It is also an instrument used to play the unique African-derived Kromanti music of the Maroons. In addition, according to Reid, the Abeng is still blown to acknowledge special occasions such as community gatherings and the passing away of community members, and for the annual Maroons' Independence Day celebration. Furthermore, the Maroons, like the Akan people, to which it is linked, use the Abeng to facilitate communication with their ancestors.²⁷³ The author witnessed this at the Asante's Akwasiade Festival on June 22, 2014 in Kumasi, Ghana.

Other popular and notable instruments in Maroon communities are drums, especially the Gumbe or Gumbay, which is linked to African traditional practices. Drums have become a universal symbol in the making of African originary claims by other communities of African descent throughout the world. Maroons view the drum as an African musical instrument even though its origins on the continent is unknown. When Maroons identify a specific place for the drum's origin, they often refer to the present-day region of Ghana. In Accompong, many Maroons argues that the Gumbe came from the Asante and Kromanti in Ghana.

There are different views on the naming of the Gumbe. While there is no consistent views on the etymology of the name Gumbe, there is no disputing its African provenance. In the academic literature, it has been linked to regions outside of West Africa. The Caribbean linguist Dalby mentions that the word Gumbe is derived from the Bantu word *ngoma*, a generic term for drum in central, eastern, and southern Africa.²⁷⁴ Further narrowing the origin of the word, Konadu, in *Akan Diaspora of the Americas*, views the name of the drum to be from the Bakongo people.²⁷⁵ Although many Maroons identify present-day Ghana as the drum's place of origin, they do not dispute the African origins of its name. What is paramount among the Maroons is that the drum is African in origin. In a visit to Ghana, I did not observe the use of a similar drum by the Asante, however, a square drum, played with both hands and feet, was observed in ceremonial use by the Ewe people.

Drums (Gumbe and others) have been played all over the world since time immemorial, but for Maroons drums are used to symbolize African connections. Werner Zips in his research found the Gumbe drum to be similar to the drum used on special occasions among present-day Ga and Fante peoples of Ghana.²⁷⁶ Olive Senior, in *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage*, cites the use of the drum in different parts of Jamaica as well as in the rest of the Caribbean and West Africa.²⁷⁷

²⁷² Reid, interview.

²⁷³ Rowe and Ricketts, interview; Bilby, *Music of the Maroons of Jamaica*, 3; Zips, *Nanny's Asafo Warriors*, xix; Bilby, "Kromanti Dance," 56.

²⁷⁴ Cited in Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, "Remembering Kojo: History, Music, and Gender in the January Sixth Celebration of the Jamaican Accompong Maroons," *Black Music Research Journal* 18, no. 1/2 (1998): 84.

²⁷⁵ Konadu, *Akan Diaspora in the Americas*, 151.

²⁷⁶ Zips, *Nanny's Asafo Warriors*, 71.

²⁷⁷ Olive Senior, *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage* (St. Andrew, Jamaica: Twin Guinep, 2003), 217.

The drum is used as a signifying practice of African origins in a number of ways. It is an important instrument used in summoning the most powerful of the African-born ancestors. It takes part in the African diasporic religious expression of Myal (Myal will be further elaborated on in this chapter). It is also used in the Maroons' unique African-derived Kromanti music. Overall, the drum is valued as a traditional instrument that came from Africa. Once again, its significance is the role it plays in the assertions of African authenticity (whether or not it can be found in a specific place in Africa).

Maroons associate other instruments and items with their African heritage. For instance, in Moore Town, some of the other instruments that are considered African include: *oprenteng* drum; *kwat* (made from bamboo); and *adawo* (a machete struck with a piece of metal).²⁷⁸ Also, on ceremonial occasions, a few objects are displayed to showcase African connections. For example, Maroon leaders and cultural performers often wear traditional African garments at many public gatherings. African traditional symbols in material culture are most significantly used in the Maroon communities during their annual celebrations such as Kojo Day (in Accompong Town), Nanny Day (in Moore Town), and Quaco Day (in Charles Town). A full-page spread of Maroon elders dressed in "traditional African gear" was displayed in the *Jamaica Gleaner* in 2009.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, as former deputy colonel Melvin Currie of Accompong indicates, a few jewelry items are worn that are made from trees such as the *kakoon* and *nikala* or *walli* which he and other community members claim are used in Africa.²⁸⁰

Larger objects, such as structures and grave sites, found in Maroon communities are also associated with African roots. In general, the Maroons consider their settlements as African communities in the Caribbean. Accompong, the name of the largest community is claimed to be a derivation of the popular Akan name of Acheampong.²⁸¹ In Maroon communities, Accompong in particular, there are a number of landmarks or significant cultural and historical sites, which have become in a sense symbols of African traditions that are reproduced in material culture.

One can see signifying elements of African connections in architecture and community artwork. Many Maroons believe that African architecture was much more popular in the past of the communities, mainly the building of thatched houses.²⁸² In contemporary times, Maroons identify a few structures which they claim are directly linked to Africa. In Charles Town, there is an Asafu Yard complex that has a stage, courtyard, and museum. The idea of an *Asafu* comes from the Akan concept and word that has been used in Charles Town and neighboring Moore Town communities to refer to a meeting place, usually of warriors. The Asafu complex is seen as a meeting place for the community in Charles Town. The term Asafu references traditional African practice and form. It is a critical practice that challenges European notions of African savagery and the absence of political order. In addition to the architectural complex, there are a few murals and works of art related to Africa in Charles Town. One mural tells the story of Maroons' origins in Africa as "kings and queens," their journey through the middle passage, and their struggles in Jamaica. A sankofa bird is carved into the door of the museum.²⁸³ *Sankofa* is an

²⁷⁸ Bilby, "Music of the Maroons of Jamaica," 3; Sterling, interview.

²⁷⁹ Keril Wright, "Accompong Town Maroons Celebrate 271 Years of Freedom," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 8, 2009; accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/144575_Accompong-Town-Maroons-celebrate-271-years-of-freedom.

²⁸⁰ Currie, interview.

²⁸¹ Rowe and Ricketts, interview; "Renewing the JA/Ghana Link," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), July 31, 1997.

²⁸² Huggins, interview.

²⁸³ "Maroon Stories Artfully Etched in Wood", *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 30, 2013, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130630/arts/arts1.html>.

Akan word meaning to “reach back and get it.” These reference and replicate similar images that I observed in my visit to several Ghanaian cities, such as Kumasi, Accra, and Elmina, during the summer 2014. Indeed, as the *Gleaner* mentions, for Colonel Lumsden of Charles Town the images epitomize the preservation of Maroon history and heritage through art.²⁸⁴ African forms are being inscribed in Maroon identity.

The point here is that the claim to African authenticity and authentic African practice and forms relates to the contemporary presence of these practices and forms. It is a claim to authenticity and purity. The particular question here relates to how those claims are enunciated and what they signify. What is unique and special about the Maroons is that their claims are to a much more pure form of African culture and practice.

Of the four Maroon communities, Accompong Town has the most historical and cultural sites that are linked to Africa, including the African Burial Grounds, Sealed Grounds, Kindah Tree, and Herbal Garden. They are sites symbolic of African connections and uniqueness.

First, there are two main sites for the African burial grounds. The first is located in northeast Accompong Town: the Asante, Kromanti, and Congo burial ground that for the Maroons is a claimed living testimony of the African origins of the people. It represents some of the various predominant groups of Africans that the Maroons claim they came from.²⁸⁵ In addition, Old Accompong Town is where Accompong Maroons have been going to offer honor to their ancestors over the centuries. The honoring of ancestors (often called ancestral worship) is another form related to African originary claims. The ceremonies are performed on the sacred ground where the graves of Kojo and other leaders are located. Maroons believe that this practice came from their African ancestors.²⁸⁶

Second, there are sixty Sealed Grounds throughout Accompong Town that are considered by the Maroons as African, and supernatural areas where various ceremonies are held for the protection and celebration of the community. These are all signifying practices of African authenticity. In many respects, they are more than a belief or what they believe. These things are in-scripted in their ways of being and consciousness of self. The important issue is their signifying import (their semiotics). These are meaning embedded in symbolic communication and symbolic interaction. They are sites to connect with the ancestral spirits and associated with the belief system of Myal—also a claimed African tradition.²⁸⁷ All these are African forms of religious and spiritual practice imbued with symbolic significance in Maroon claims.

Third, the Kindah Tree, an ancient mango tree, represents African unity for the Maroons. According to Deputy Colonel Norma Edwards-Rowe, the word *Kindah* is an African word that means “We are family.”²⁸⁸ It has been claimed that for centuries, on Kojo Day, people first gathered at the Kindah Tree.²⁸⁹ Melville Currie, the Maroon historian and former deputy colonel,

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Zips, *Nanny's Asafo Warriors*, 109; “Developing Accompong,” Tourism Product Development, Co., accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.tpdco.org/dynaweb.dti?dynamodule=news&dynapage=digestnews&id=166&dynawebSID=7c4443888d86163491d999f41de273f1>.

²⁸⁶ “Spirit Possession in Afro-Jamaican Religions and the Kromanti Play,” African Caribbean Institute/Jamaica Memory Bank, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://acij-ioj.org.jm/spirit-possession-in-afro-jamaican-religions-and-the-kromanti-play/>.

²⁸⁷ Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

²⁸⁸ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 79.

²⁸⁹ DjeDje, *Remembering Kojo*, 95.

states that under the Kindah Tree is where Kojo and the other Maroons leaders came together.²⁹⁰ It was where the different groups of Africans—especially the Asante, Kromanti, and Congo—came together in a blood pact to unite to fight the British. For the Accompong Maroons, the Kindah Tree represents the unity of different groups of Africans—a site of building solidarity based on claimed African traditions.

Finally, the other site of symbolic maintenance of African traditions is the Herbal Garden. In 2015, it was in disrepair although it has been used to symbolize the importance of herbal lore tied to African origins. The Garden was an offshoot of the work done by the Accompong Traditional Medicine Creative Group and Youth Project from the 1990s. The stated objective of the garden was to serve “as an educational vehicle to teach plant identification and management, reforestation, processing, and ecology.”²⁹¹ Lawrence Rowe, the tour guide and youth herbalist, worked with the herbal group. He refers to the physical structure as the “Asante Hut.” Its circular shape and thatch roof are reminiscent of West African huts. He continues to believe that the goal of the hut, like that of the organization, is preservation and conservation of medicine herbs that continue a claimed African way of life.²⁹² Arguably, it represents the continuity of African traditional practice more than a goal of preservation and conservation.

In all of this, one can see the symbolic significance of material culture in originary claims about Africa, relating to the production and reproduction of the “African-ness” of Maroon identity. Such significance is related to the understanding that “African” material (and non-material) culture has allowed the Maroons to substantiate the claims of an authentic African present.

Non-Material Culture

In claiming African linkages, non-material cultural forms are perhaps much more important in the enunciations of African authenticity. As Bilby asserts, the culture of the Maroons “came to reside almost entirely in intangibles such as values, ethics, and consciousness of a shared past—as well as coded forms of expressive culture.”²⁹³ In fact, more than intangibles, symbolic practice of non-material cultural traditions of Maroons associated with Africa are discernible in many forms but most evident in the political system, belief systems, language, and the arts (including ceremonial/ritual performance). All of the Maroon communities consider a traditional African system as the foundation of their current political and land-tenure structure. Maroons argue that they have maintained their African political system for more than three hundred years. Furthermore, Maroons specifically claim the Akan political system in the founding of their communities.²⁹⁴ Hence, the symbolic and hermeneutic role of political practice can be seen in the articulation of diaspora. It is important to note that what is being enunciated is African tradition. It is the basis of linkages (in other words, both are constitutive elements in African Diaspora which is a product of articulation).

In Maroon oral history, the African chieftaincy or kingdom type of governing system was established by the Maroons during the founding of the communities in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. As the Maroon descendant and author Beverly Carey asserts, the early

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 94.

²⁹¹ Accompong Traditional Medicine Creative Group and Youth Project, *Maroon Traditional Medicine* (Accompong Town, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, ca. 1994), 8.

²⁹² Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

²⁹³ Bilby, *True-Born Maroon*, 30.

²⁹⁴ Michael Angelo Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 109.

Maroons attempted to re-create an “African village” with an “Asante-like political system.”²⁹⁵ The Moore Town Maroon author Milton MacFarlane asserts African governing practice by stating that “Kromanteen laws and customs” from West Africa were used in the organizing and governing of Maroon communities.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, according to Colonel Wallace Sterling of Moore Town, Maroons had a long history of governing themselves all the way back in Africa, where there was a “chief or chieftainess.”²⁹⁷ For Colonel Frank Lumsden of the Charles Town Maroons, their governing structure was based on an “Akan system.”²⁹⁸ Colonel Noel Prehay of the Scott’s Hall Maroons states that the political system of the Maroons came from their Asante ancestors.²⁹⁹

Maroons often proclaim that their governing system is similar to African chieftaincies. Maroons argue that although the current official title of the head of the Maroon government is a colonel, his or her role has some resemblance to an African chief. The former Deputy Colonel Melville Currie of Accompong states that the colonels were known as “chief” during the period of the war between the Maroons and the British in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.³⁰⁰ Deputy Colonel Norma Rowe-Edwards asserts that the “leaders were given the honorary title as Chief. I am not sure at what time the subsequent leaders were called Colonel, a Colonial title, but that is what the leader is called today.”³⁰¹ According to Colonel Prehay of Scott’s Hall, the political system of the Maroons came from their Asante ancestors, but the title “colonel” did not; and although he uses the title, he sees himself more as a chief, which he believes is more in line with his African ancestors’ view.³⁰² Similarly, Melville Currie acknowledged that Accompong Town is ruled by a colonel, but “you can call him the chief, as they were in Africa.”³⁰³

The Maroons believe that the land tenure system is derived directly from Africa as is the role played by the colonels in its administration. The colonel, as the supreme authority figure among the Maroons, holds the titles for the entire community (a position that is viewed as African in tradition). He or she apportions the land among the Maroons.³⁰⁴ Most Maroons attribute the establishment of the land tenure system to their African ancestors. The Moore Town Maroon writer Milton MacFarlane was told by his grandfather, “Cudjoe was taught, and observed, that the land the maroons occupied belonged to all of them, and its amicable distribution and use must be perpetuated. In short, the old West African code of communal living was transported almost intact to the Jamaican mountains, enabling the Maroons to govern themselves with internal peace, according to the old ways.”³⁰⁵

Many Maroons, particularly in Accompong Town, believe that they have preserved an African lineage system of political leadership. Often, in over three centuries of leadership in Accompong, the all-male individuals have been selected not from a royal family per se but from influential Accompong Maroon families in the community, with many Rowes, Wrights, and

²⁹⁵ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 148, 334, 366.

²⁹⁶ McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 84.

²⁹⁷ Sterling, interview.

²⁹⁸ Lumsden, interview.

²⁹⁹ Prehay, “Welcome Remarks.”

³⁰⁰ Currie, interview.

³⁰¹ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 123.

³⁰² Prehay, “Introductory Remarks.”

³⁰³ Currie, interview.

³⁰⁴ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 15.

³⁰⁵ McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 26.

Cawleys serving as colonels.³⁰⁶ According to former Colonel Wright of Accompong Town, at least one member of these influential families “was made Chief at some point in time. The fact that they were also related shows that there was a strong tendency towards a kinship-based network or that leadership rested with dominant family group.”³⁰⁷ Mann O. Rowe, along with a number of other Maroons, argues that some of the community founders, such as Kojo and Nanny, were a part of this ruling “Rowe royal family.”³⁰⁸

In Maroon communities, there are different religious practices that overlap in forms and are enunciated as African practices. Kenneth Bilby’s research established that while Christianity is officially and formally practiced, Maroons make reference to African derived belief systems in the rituals that relate to their everyday life. Bilby specifically identifies Kromanti Play (a Maroon religious practice), but Maroons also rely on other similarly African-derived belief systems such as Obeah and Myal.³⁰⁹ The syncretized Christianity of the Maroon may or may not be considered by some Maroons as African, but Kromanti Play, Obeah/Science, and Myal always are. Maroon individuals may practice all four, or prefer one belief system over another. This section will focus on the three spiritual systems for which Maroons make firm rhetorical and symbolic claims of being of African origin.

A significant claimed African traditional belief system in Maroon communities is Obeah, or Science. The Maroons believe that their practice of Obeah generally originated in Africa. Asked for specifics, most Maroons point to its source as being Kromanti or from the present-day region of Ghana. Olive Senior, in *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage*, argues that the root of the practice is in West Africa but the origins of the word may be *bayi* or *obayifo* from Akan.³¹⁰ In contrast, Kwame Konadu, in *The Akan Diaspora in the Americas*, points out recent criticism of the Akan origin of the word and argues that Igbo’s *dibia* is a more likely source.³¹¹ Maroons argue that Akan, Igbo, and other African groups all influenced the development of Obeah. The bottom line is that the Maroons claim the practice’s origin in Africa, giving it great symbolic significance.

There is an ideological battle between the British and the Maroons over the meaning and significance of these religious practices. Colonial references to the African origin of Obeah were deployed as significations of African savagery. In the eighteenth century, Bryan Edwards argued that “Man, in his savage state, in all parts of the world, is the slave of superstition” in reference to Obeah.³¹² According to Edwards, “in common with all the nations of Africa, they [Maroons] believed, however, as I have observed, in the prevalence of Obi; and 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.”³¹³ In the nineteenth century, Robert Dallas stated that “it is true, that a prejudice in favour of the magic of obeah prevailed among them [Maroons], as among other Negroes.”³¹⁴ Dallas also considered this a negative trait.

³⁰⁶ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 11.

³⁰⁷ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 70.

³⁰⁸ Mann O. Rowe, interview.

³⁰⁹ Bilby, “Kromanti Dance,” 54.

³¹⁰ Senior, *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage*, 357.

³¹¹ Konadu, *Akan Diaspora in the Americas*, 140.

³¹² Bryan Edwards and William Young, *An Historical Survey of the Island of Saint Domingo* (London: John Stockdale, 1801), 318.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 320–21.

³¹⁴ Dallas, *History of the Maroons*, 92.

In ideological terms, Maroons see Obeah/Science as spiritually momentous and powerfully significant, given its African origins. They believe that they were able to overcome the British because their powers were derived from being able to continue African traditional practices. Hence, there is a politics of representation at play here in the different narrations of Obeah. It ties in directly to diaspora as a critical practice that challenge European abjection.

Harris Cawley, a former colonel and pastor of the United Church of Accompong, describes the belief system and its history in the Accompong community as follows:

It is something that has come from Africa with the Africans. It was with them. It is practiced even in my day. In the early 1940s there were men who practiced Obeah. Obeah was something that was against the government of the day. But the Maroons have an exclusive state so they were allowed to do what they want. So people generally come out here and ride up into Accompong, accessibility up the road. So they were quite a few Obeah men because they made money. So it was the occupation. People would come from, even from Kingston, and prominent men too. And these men who were the Obeah men, they had a family, they lived in a house, and since they were making money they lived a kind of lavish life, above the ordinary man.³¹⁵

What is important here is that the Maroons believe that Obeah/Science came from Africa and being able to continue the practice made them significantly powerful. Perhaps, what is most important is it is a direct challenge to notions of modernity by claiming that its practitioners are modern, in material terms, and that it was a service provided to “modern” people.

In the context of claiming an African worldview, Cawley elaborates on how an Obeah man and woman engage their spirits:

Every man has a spirit. You have a spirit, I have a spirit. Okay, the spirit that is within us is alive that we get from the creator, that is in us. So sometimes when a man dies, his body is going to raise and interact or interfere with people. So they [Obeah person] always want to trap that spirit so that they can put that spirit into subjection to their will. That is where the Obeah and the spirit come in. But not everyone is the person who is a wicked man. It is easier for them to interact. But if he was a righteous man, it is hard for them to break that. So if the man was righteous and godly, and feared god, it would be hard for that Obeah man to get that spirit to do his will. But when the man is not righteous and loves a wicked life, they can get him to do wicked acts. That is how I understand it, because they used to work and they say that these things work.³¹⁶

This is a reference to the universality of the spirit as a foundation for all humanity. In other words it locates African practice in the domain of universal humanity. It rejects colonial exclusion as one of bad faith.

The practitioners who work with the spirits of the dead tend to consider themselves Scientists who are continuing African spiritual practices. James Chambers, a self-acknowledged practitioner of Science, believes that their powers come from Africa. He states all of the early

³¹⁵ Cawley, interview.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

Maroon leaders such as Kojo, Nanny and Accompong, who were Africans, “were high in the Science.”³¹⁷ He believes that many people outside of Accompong Town are afraid of the Maroons because of their powerful Science (which came from Africa).³¹⁸

Another interrelated belief system of the Maroons is Myal, which is also claimed to be African in origin. The Maroons see Myal as a system of communicating with the ancestors, usually through spirit possession.³¹⁹ According to Cawley, “Myalism is a mysterious operation of an individual under spiritualistic influence.”³²⁰ It is a belief system not only of the Maroons but also practiced by the wider Jamaican society. Oliver Senior describes Myal as “an old religion concerned with healing in Jamaica.”³²¹

Maroons see Myal as being an African tradition that values the powers and influence of their ancestors. In this cosmology, the most powerful of the ancestors are those who were born in Africa. For the Maroons, as Beverly Carey describes:

Maroons believed that their ancestors were wiser and greater than they themselves; that these ancestral spirits were around them or within call; that they cast a watchful eye over events in the community, shared its concerns; that these ancestral spirits often frowned on the action of their off-spring but could also be pleased. They felt that these ancestors could reach out to them and give them of their wisdom, and, indeed, they actively sought out these relationships between the other (spiritual) world and the real world in which they lived.³²²

The claim here is to a direct connection to Africa through the ancestors. It is a claim to being African. In addition, as former Colonel Harris Cawley of Accompong Town observes, Myal originated with their ancestors in Africa.³²³ According to Hansley Reid, the Abeng Blower of Accompong Town, if the “necromantic spirits” should come into someone, the ancestors such as Kojo, Nanny, or Dundi may come through that individual.³²⁴ Colonel Williams, speaking on behalf of the Accompong’s cultural dancers, argues many of the dancers experience ancestral possession and states that when persons are in Myal “they do not know what they are doing and what has taken place until they get out of Myal.”³²⁵

In Accompong Town, Myal experience is most evident on the day of the annual Kojo Day Celebration. Harris Cawley sees Myal at this time as a way to exhibit the goodwill of the ancestors, influencing the community positively.³²⁶ Often, the cultural dancers of Accompong Town are spiritually possessed and they argue that they talk to the ancestors, especially at the Kojo Day celebrations. It is a time of drumming, singing, and dancing with the pouring of libations. It is similar to the practice today among some of the Akans of Ghana.

Kromanti Play overlaps and is interconnected with Obeah and Myal, all having roots claimed to be in Africa. At times, some Maroons use these different words interchangeably about

³¹⁷ Chambers, interview.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Cawley, interview.

³²⁰ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 8.

³²¹ Senior, *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage*, 341.

³²² Carey, *Maroon Story*, 182.

³²³ Cawley, interview.

³²⁴ Reid, interview.

³²⁵ Williams, interview.

³²⁶ Cawley, interview.

the same belief system. In the Windward Maroon communities, particularly of Moore Town, the highly secretive and infrequent Kromanti Play is most readily identified and its practice is most prevalent there.

According to Colonel Harris of Moore Town:

Through the years the Maroons maintained certain traditions and rituals which not only kept them a closely knit organization but evoked the wonder, admiration and respect of others.... Then, too, was the continual drumming and dancing — spoken of at [Kromanti] “Play” — which is credited with cures bordering on the miraculous. This particular operation is not easy to describe, one must see it to understand, and yet such a statement may be woefully misleading since being a witness, especially an alien one, could indeed make understanding more difficult. The “dancerman” was one of a special set who entered the “ring” (a circular opening formed by the drummers, ordinary dancers, singers and spectators) when the singing and drumming reached a crescendo and the dancing its peak of eeriness. Every action of his — even his speech — was changed to that of the particular departed kin whose spirit had now found habitation in his body. In this state he revealed the past and unfolded the future with mystifying accuracy: explicit instructions were given on any especial subject under consideration; after this someone skilled in the art sent the spirit back on its way and the dancerman once more became a normal person. He was then said to be “cleared.”³²⁷

Former Colonel Harris traces the origins of this practice to Africa, particularly the Akan. This passage relates to the direct claim to Africa and African wisdom through ancestor possession. Even further, its significance is not merely to locate Africa within the domain of a universal humanity. It also a critical practice that challenges European claims to superiority by positing African culture and the central role that spirituality plays as an essential human trait (that is rejected by Europe).

In 2012, Colonel Noel Prehay of Scott’s Hall, stated that Kromanti Play is from Africa. He mentioned it as a practice shared only among the Windward Maroons of Scott’s Hall, Charles Town, and Moore Town.³²⁸ He described it as drumming and dancing intended most of the time to heal the sick, cure disease, and ward off evil occurrences.³²⁹

Obeah/Science, Myal, and Kromanti Play, all claimed to be African, are interrelated and interconnected concepts and practices. Kenneth Bilby found that Maroons originally used “Obeah” to refer to ancestral powers associated with Kromanti Play. He also believes that many Maroons use the word “Science” because Obeah has been stigmatized as negative.³³⁰ Folk writer Olive Senior understands that the colonial authorities and the literature on the matter conflated elements of the “African religious complex” brought to the Caribbean, whether medicine men, priests, or other practitioners.³³¹ She argues that Europeans designated all of the spiritual belief systems as Obeah. In a *Businessweek* article in 2012, Colonel Prehay of Scott’s Hall said that

³²⁷ C. L. G. Harris, “Spirit of Nanny,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), August 6, 1967.

³²⁸ Prehay, “Introductory Remarks.”

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Bilby, *True-Born Maroon*, 480.

³³¹ Senior, *Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage*, 357.

“Our Obeah is a good Obeah.”³³² He was presumably referring not to only Obeah but to Myal and Kromanti Play as well. Arguably, the point is that the practices are conflated from several original ones notwithstanding specific attributions in present representations.

It is believed that Maroons practice a more potent form of these African derived belief systems. Although Obeah and Myal are shared with other peoples of African descent, Maroons are viewed as having a stronger and more potent African-influenced expression of the practices. Kromanti Play is unique to the Maroons. Many Maroons argue that their ability to harness supernatural powers to achieve protection and the capability to destroy their enemies are based on their preserved African spiritual belief systems. It is the belief that the spiritual world can impact the physical world that made the Maroon community viable and a sovereign space during British colonial rule. This belief continues in present-day Jamaica.

Language is also used as a signification of African practice. The Kromanti language, or rather, dialect, of the Maroons is an important symbolic link to Africa. In the academic literature, it is well established that Kromanti has been strongly influenced by the Twi language of the Akan people in West Africa. Kromanti in Maroon communities is seen as a concrete link to the African continent, and Ghana in particular. It is reflected in the Maroons’ lexicon, with such words as *Abeng*, *Asafu*, and *Kindah*, and cultural practice including Kromanti Play, story-telling, and Kromanti songs. As the Maroon descendant Beverly Carey remarks, “The Maroons spoke several languages. However, the most common was one which the Maroons called Kromanti, closely resembling the African form of the Twi tongue.”³³³ At present, Kromanti dialect, not a language any more as such, is employed to showcase authentic African connections in the everyday lives of Maroons.

There is an ideological struggle between the British and Maroons over the significance and the meaning of Kromanti. Early in the Western literature, Kromanti was mentioned as being from Africa but often associated with the savagery of the groups. Bryan Edwards made one of the earliest written references to the language in the 1760s. He refers to the language of the Maroons as “a barbarous dissonance of the African dialects, with a mixture of Spanish and broken English.”³³⁴ In 1803, Dallas explicitly mentions that Kromanti is the dominant language spoken among the Maroons.³³⁵

In the early part of the twentieth century, the anthropologist Joseph Williams, viewing the language as highly influenced by Twi, found it to be in various states of decline. In Accompong Town, Williams found the decline to be most evident. However, the language was spoken and in better condition among the elders in Moore Town. In Charles Town and Scott’s Hall, the language was in the best shape, with children being taught it.³³⁶ This refers to efforts to preserve tradition and maintain African derived practices. It is a critical practice of Maroons in challenging western hegemony by attempting to maintain the language.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, other scholars, acknowledging its African influence, explored the language in greater detail. The linguists Mervyn Alleyne and Beverley

³³² David McFadden, “Caribbean Maroons Hope Tourism Can Save Their Culture,” July 10, 2012, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-07-10/caribbean-maroons-hope-tourism-can-save-culture#p2>.

³³³ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 185.

³³⁴ Edwards and Young, *An Historical Survey of the Island of Saint Domingo*, 320-1.

³³⁵ Dallas, *History of the Maroons*, 33, 92.

³³⁶ Mervyn C. Alleyne and Beverley Hall-Alleyne, “Language Maintenance and Language Death in the Caribbean,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (1982): 57; Williams, *Maroons of Jamaica*, 464.

Hall-Alleyne concluded that Twi dominates the Kromanti language.³³⁷ Kenneth Bilby and Dalby support the idea that Kromanti appears to be the Akan language with a smattering of other influences.³³⁸ At the same time, Alleyne and Dalby maintain that Kromanti is not a fully functional language but an “esoteric repository of isolated words and set of phrases.”³³⁹ In present day, Maroons use Kromanti words and phrase to highlight their African connections.

Today, in Accompong Town, some Maroons know a few words and phrases, but the full language is only a memory. According to former deputy colonel Melville Currie of Accompong, a few people used to speak Kromanti during healing ceremonies and in Kromanti songs.³⁴⁰ The Maroon elder James Chambers of Accompong states many of the older people knew the language but they passed away never having taught the younger people. He mentioned the influential elder Nanny Rowe as one of the speakers who recently passed away.³⁴¹ Rowe’s grandson Lance Ricketts said he learned a few words from his grandmother.³⁴² He mentioned words such as *binequa* (non-Maroon), *Obruni* (white man), and *Nyankipong* (god).³⁴³ Although the language has faded, the Maroons use the remaining lexicon to emphasize African authenticity of their culture.

In the Windward Maroon communities of Scott’s Hall, Moore Town, and Charles Town, there is a wider range and use of Kromanti words and phrases. Maroon leaders, such as Colonels Lumsden, Prehay, and Sterling, would often greet each other and other people in Kromanti. At the Quao Day celebration in Charles Town in 2012, Colonel Prehay of Scott’s Hall taught the audience that *eso* means “water,” *esa* is “rum,” and *enpaypay* “knife.”³⁴⁴ In spite of the language, the remaining lexicon is used as signifiers of Africa.

For the Maroons, the connection of Kromanti to Africa is significant for a number of reasons. Kromanti words are used to bring to light African connections that are linked to the communities’ survival. Maroons celebrate their language as a critical practice and their ability to preserve their African history and tradition in spite of British colonialism and slavery. Kromanti is conjured up to increase the spiritual, cultural, and social significance of an event, whether public gathering, healing ceremonies, or pouring libations. It is used ritualistically. More than by any other group of African descent in the Caribbean, the ability of the Maroons to maintain an African tradition in language is viewed as the reason why they successfully established and maintain autonomous communities. Fundamentally, Kromanti is used as a form of enunciation of African traditions.

Another claimed signification of African tradition is the arts. The art forms are interconnected with other claimed African traditions, whether in non-material culture such as Kromanti words or material culture such as murals. In other words, claimed African traditions are made in the lexicon and in art practices. In the Maroon communities, specific art forms are celebrated and linked to African traditions: literary, visual, and performance arts.

As a literary art form, story-telling is symbolically linked to an African past in Maroon communities. Maroons readily acknowledge story-telling as historically significant. According to the Moore Town writer McFarlane, Kojo “was a spellbinding speaker who could hold with

³³⁷ Alleyne and Hall-Alleyne, “Language Maintenance and Language Death in the Caribbean,” 55.

³³⁸ Bilby, “The Kromanti Dance of the Windward Maroons of Jamaica,” 65.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Currie, interview.

³⁴¹ Chambers, interview.

³⁴² Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Prehay, “Welcome Remarks.”

equal ease the attention of the mountain village Maroons or that of his regular soldiers with tales and ‘Anancy’ stories.”³⁴⁵ Further, as Maroon author Beverly Carey testifies, “Evenings found the children gathered by the older folk, where they were regaled with stories from the African homeland, of the prankster Anancy (Anansi), and of the wild animals and beasts which they would never see, except in their imagination.”³⁴⁶ Although Anansi stories are fairly universally used throughout the West Indies, they are nevertheless significant in Maroon identity and a means of connecting to Africa.³⁴⁷

Indeed, story-telling links to Africa have a long history in Maroon communities, especially Anansi stories. Their significance and popularity have been referenced by many observers over the years including Katherine Dunham in the 1930s.³⁴⁸ In the 1960s, the popularity of Anansi stories was even covered in the African American newspaper *Afro-American*, highlighting their link to Ghanaian folklore.³⁴⁹ In the 1970s, Laura Tanna collected some African-derived folklore in Jamaica, including a few Anansi stories in Accompong Town.³⁵⁰

The Maroons try to keep the African-linked art form of story-telling alive. It is deemed an important symbolic link to African tradition in the everyday lives of Maroons. Today, many of the elders in the Maroon communities are able to recite a number of stories, particularly Anansi stories, that are linked directly and concretely to the Akan peoples.³⁵¹ In both Accra and Kumasi in Ghana, the author conversed with many Akan individuals, finding similarities in the Anansi stories in Maroon communities.

Another significant art form besides story-telling is ceremonial/ritual performance, which holds great symbolic significance as signifiers of African practice. Ceremonial performance is usually in the form of singing, drumming, and dancing. The Maroons see it as a continuation of African traditions. It is an activity shared with many other peoples of African descent. At just about every community or public event, the Maroons sing, drum, and dance. These events include conferences, burials, marching, and the annual independence day celebration.³⁵² The ceremonial rituals are also interconnected with the Maroons’ belief systems (Myal, Obeah, and Kromanti Play), political system, and language.

The Maroons trace their performance rituals to Africa. According to Hansley Reid, the Abeng Blower and Science practitioner of Accompong Town, the music and dance of the Maroons do come from Africa:

Cudjoe, Nanny, and Dundi learned that their people were being captured as slaves on the ships, so they joined them on the slave ship with their four-corner drums, their shakers, and their square drum and came to Jamaica at Morant Point in St. Thomas in the east. They worked with the slave masters there for about 3 to 4 days, then they started to play the drums and the shakers and dance and sing their Kromanti, and there came the evil spirit from the Kromanti song which dealt with

³⁴⁵ McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 84.

³⁴⁶ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 176.

³⁴⁷ MacFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 24.

³⁴⁸ Dunham, *Katherine Dunham’s Journey to Accompong*, 44.

³⁴⁹ “Jamaicans Have Roots in Ghana,” *Afro-American* (Baltimore), August 13, 1960.

³⁵⁰ Laura Tanna, *Jamaican Folk Tales and Oral Histories* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications, 1984), 93.

³⁵¹ Cawley, interview; Currie, interview.

³⁵² Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 6.

them [the British]. When the slaves heard the Kromanti from where they were, they knew that it was their people, so they traced them and then they had a rebellion against the English. They started the rebellion in the east and ended it in the west. When Cudjoe and Nanny started the war and got all their people, they began to slay the butcher's pigs and eat them. They reaped all the food from the vineyard and they [the Maroons] ate and drank it.³⁵³

This is an etiology of African origin upon which claims to an African present are based. Whether they come from Africa is not so much the point I am making. What is important is their use as significations of an African reality.

The Maroons songs are claimed to have origins in Africa. As the Maroon writer Beverly Carey asserts, Maroons' "songs were woven into their stories of long past Africa, of the experiences and victories of their ancestors."³⁵⁴ According to former Colonel Martin Luther Wright of Accompong, reported DjeDje, "The language of many of the songs is mixed. In the old day they [Maroons] sing it in African, but we doesn't do it in African, because a lot of the African songs and language has died out now. But if you go over to Moore Town and Scott's Hall, their [African] language is fluently spoken. But in Accompong, they just remember a few of these songs."³⁵⁵

The Kromanti songs in and of themselves might not be about Africa or necessarily identical to any specific African tradition of music, but their roots are viewed as being based in Africa by Maroons. Lance Ricketts, a farmer and tour guide of Accompong, considers Kromanti song to be African songs.³⁵⁶ These songs may more mark Maroon identity, but they are significantly used to make African originary claims. Although the songs are significantly creolized, Maroons insist that the Kromanti songs continue their African tradition.

As the musicologist DjeDje observes, the Kromanti songs are a fusion of elements from various African and European cultures in form, melody, and rhythmic organization. She notes that the African component is similar "to a West African drum ensemble, where the master drummer is the primary improviser; the vocal leader in a Maroon ensemble can be regarded as the 'master' musician because she freely and spontaneously changes her part."³⁵⁷ DjeDje also noticed that, as in most African musical traditions, call-and-response was central to the performance, and the melodies of the songs performed are based on additive rhythms, a hallmark of African music.³⁵⁸ Maroon music is hybridized, but it is argued that they enunciate African origins.

In Accompong Town, the Kromanti songs considered to be more influenced by Africa are associated with burials in the community. In the 1930s, Katherine Dunham witnessed Kromanti grave-digging songs.³⁵⁹ The anthropologist Kenneth Bilby observed that "When a grave is being made for a deceased maroon it is customary for the gravediggers to stop working at some point, pour libations over it, and sing a number of Kromanti songs."³⁶⁰ In interviews with Accompong

³⁵³ Reid, interview.

³⁵⁴ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 185.

³⁵⁵ DjeDje, *Remembering Kojo*, 79.

³⁵⁶ Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

³⁵⁷ DjeDje, *Remembering Kojo*, 100.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Dunham, *Katherine Dunham's Journey to Accompong*, 86.

³⁶⁰ Bilby, *Music of the Maroons of Jamaica*, 10.

Maroons, they identify grave-digging songs as significantly African. The Maroon elder James Chambers of Accompong identifies many such songs as some of the most African in form.³⁶¹

The eastern Maroons share similar and at times different Kromanti songs with the Accompong Maroons. As former Colonel C. L. G. Harris of Moore Town avers: the songs sung during Kromanti Play are “categorised as Coromante, Sa Leone, Pappa and Jawbone. The first lends itself to fierce dancing; the next two are of a slow galloping rhythm and are sung mostly when it is pleasure time, the last named is the sad and soulstirring.”³⁶² “The “heavier” categories of songs are named after a number of “tribes” or “nations” that are said to have contributed to the early Maroon society.³⁶³ These names refer to certain regions or peoples in Africa.

The arts, especially story-telling and music, are deployed to signify African origins. These are some of the most visible of the art forms—whether story-telling, architecture and artwork, and ceremonial/ritual performance. They speak to a claimed African past, and some of these art forms are positioned and believed to be shared with many groups of Africans, especially Akan peoples. These practices serve as enunciations of African origins that are critical in diasporic articulation.

Diaspora as Articulation

Maroons create space to enunciate and make linkages through the use of African traditional claims that are mutually recognized as such by other African-descended peoples. Maroons share and celebrate claimed traditions with other peoples of African descent. Maroons’ commemorations of tradition take place in their communities, wider Jamaica, and beyond.

Maroon leaders, cultural performers, and other individuals have gone to other parts of Jamaica and beyond to share their African heritage. As discussed in the previous chapter, these cultural ambassadors have travelled as far away as Barbados, United States, Canada, and Ghana.³⁶⁴ The work of these cultural ambassadors is paramount. It is how the circulation of knowledge of marronage and its importance as a signifying trope of Africanity or African origins and connection occurs. It is the recognition in encounters among peoples of African descent that is critical.

Maroons generally encourage people to not only visit but stay in their communities to share African traditions, heritage, and culture. What is significant here is that the recognition of marronage as a space of authentic African practice has combined with globalization and forms of global circulation to produce Maroon communities as heritage sites and its practice as representation of this heritage. People have been visiting the Maroon communities for centuries. For instance, high-profile scholars such as Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham, and Linton E. Mordecai have visited the Maroons, seeking to explore African retentions in their communities.³⁶⁵ In the last few decades, more and more people have been visiting and staying in Maroon communities. As indicated in the previous chapter, the largest population of visitors is peoples who are themselves of African descent, particularly Afro-Jamaicans. The Afro-Jamaicans include a range of governmental officials, from head of state, such as prime ministers

³⁶¹ Chambers, interview.

³⁶² Harris, “Spirit of Nanny.”

³⁶³ Bilby, *Music of the Maroons of Jamaica*, 3.

³⁶⁴ “Maroons to Re-trace Footsteps of Ancestors,” *JIS News* (Kingston), July 17, 2009, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/maroons-to-re-trace-footsteps-of-ancestors/>; “Canadians Learning About Maroon Culture,” *JIS News* (Kingston), August 7, 2009, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/canadians-learning-about-maroon-culture/>.

³⁶⁵ “Off to B. W. I.,” *Afro-American* (Baltimore), February 25, 1939.

Portia Simpson Miller and P. J. Patterson, to officials in minor governmental offices. In addition, cultural artists and performers such as the Stone Love musical entertainers Sizzla Kolangi and local Capeoria groups have visited the communities. Moreover, each year hundreds of high school and university students visit and sometimes make extended stays in the Maroon communities. Many of the peoples of African descent coming from overseas are individuals of Afro-Jamaican descent from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, who sometimes see Maroon communities as sites to explore their “true” Afro-Jamaican or African heritage.

Hence, the Maroons have become significations of African authenticity. The importance is not that they only make origin claims to Africa (all Black people do as a condition of their blackness), but that they are authentically African. Diaspora is reflected in the linkages and connections based on these enunciations of an authentic Africanity. These linkages have the material effect reflected in the pattern of circulation, both in visits to Maroon communities and in representatives of Maroons outside the communities.

Many other African-descended people have visited. Based on newspaper accounts and the log books of Accompong Town, in the last few years, the visitors of African descent have come from North America (United States and Canada), the Caribbean (Bahamas, Barbados, and Haiti), Latin America (Belize, Colombia, and Suriname), Africa (Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria), and Europe (United Kingdom).³⁶⁶ Clearly, Maroon communities have become sites of pilgrimage to share African heritage for African-descended peoples. Many African Americans visit these communities as well, including high-profile ones such as Rapper Snoop Doggy Dog and U. S. Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater. From the Caribbean, Black leaders such as Maroon leaders of Suriname and Barbadian governmental representatives; and from Africa, many diplomats and even heads of state such as Jerry Rawlins have visited Maroon communities. Clearly, this is related to recognition and articulation of diaspora.

Maroons encourage people to visit their communities throughout the year. There are almost daily visitors among the four different Maroon communities. It is under the recasting of heritage tourism that this commemorating of shared African traditions is being positioned. Accompong Town, with virtually daily visits, is the most visited of the Maroon communities. Maroons promote visiting to share just about all of their traditions, with the African cultural traditions being most emphasized. Visitors and sojourners are taken mainly to the seven (African-influenced) cultural sites in Accompong Town: Accompong Museum; Sealed Grounds; Asante, Kromanti, and Congo Burial Ground; Herbal (Asante) Hut; Kindah; Kojo Monument (also a Sealed Ground); and Old Town. Additional activities include excursions into the wider Cockpit Country areas through hiking, bird watching, and caving. Furthermore, arrangements can be made to explore other traditions of the Maroon such as herb lore, crafts (especially drum-making), story-telling, and local foods.

Albeit not as varied, similar experiences centering on claimed African traditions can be experienced in other Maroon communities, especially Charles Town and Moore Town. For instance, in 2011, the Jamaican Information Service (JIS), the country’s information-provider agency, stated that with the nation’s school systems attempting to make Black history an important part of the school curriculum, Maroon communities are “the perfect opportunity for

³⁶⁶ “A Colourful Maroon Celebration,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 8, 1998; “Maroons Celebrate—Mark 274th Anniversary Signing” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 14, 2012; “No Filming of Maroons’ 259th Anniversary,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 6, 1998.

students to dig deep into their past, to learn about aspects of the Jamaican cultural heritage.”³⁶⁷ Hence, visitors to Maroon communities like Charles Town are encouraged. The JIS indicates as examples of the richness of Maroon communities for cultural development:

Visitors to the Charles Town Maroons’ Museum and Safu Yard in the Buff Bay Valley, Portland, can get the thrilling experience of tracing the footsteps of their ancestors into the hills, as they ascend the Sambo Hill Hiking Trail. As a practical re-enactment of the Literature Text, “The Young Warriors,” a story depicting the struggles of some young maroons, approximately 200 students and teachers of Meadowbrook High School, Kingston, embarked on the historical adventure, as they grasped the opportunity to retrace a part of their history on Friday, February 11. Excited about the journey to Sambo Hill, the students and their teachers, led by enthusiastic tour guides, carefully maneuvered the challenging terrain with its slippery rocks and damp vegetation. Literature teacher at Meadowbrook High School, Trisan Brown, said it was a good practical experience for the students. “It was designed to give them a direct purposeful experience, as they recounted the history of the maroons.” She said although the terrain was challenging, it was important for them to understand the struggles of their ancestors, as it taught them to be more appreciative of the sacrifices they made.³⁶⁸

The accommodation of African origins in Jamaican national narratives is highlighted with reference to the Maroon presence. The very acknowledgement of an African past is a signifying practice of diaspora as articulation.

In the last few decades, a range of activities in Maroon communities has appealed to peoples of African descent. The public events vary year by year, depending on the particular leadership of the community at any given time. The most popular events are the annual Maroon Independence celebrations, conferences, and community tours. The importance of these is the role of the Maroons as signifying figures of Blackness.

Many Maroon leaders have used their administrations to highlight linkages with Africa and other peoples of African descent. The effect of the enunciation of African rootedness is to locate Maroons within the articulated space of diaspora. For instance, in 1998, former Colonel Meredie Rowe of Accompong announced in the *Jamaica Gleaner* newspaper:

I also want from the Maroon perspective to remind all Jamaica as well as the wider regions that the Accompong Maroon State in Saint Elisabeth has taken the decision to hold three major events each year. All these are of cultural and historic importance carrying messages of the most effective figures of the Diaspora of the Maroons of Jamaica. [Unlike the annual Kojo Day celebration,] [t]hese events will carry a no entry fee so come with all cultural skills be it kumina, drumming, dancing, gerreh, myal, revival, skit, acrobatic skills, folklore or even anancy story, they will be all welcome.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ “Meadowbrook High Students Follow Nanny’s Trail,” *JIS News* (Kingston), February 18, 2011, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/meadowbrook-high-students-follow-nannys-trail-2/>.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Meredie Rowe, “Maroons Salute Emancipation Heroes” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), July 30, 1998.

As an additional example, in October 2011, Colonel Lumsden of Charles Town organized a weekend retreat with Capoeira and Maroon performance, while linking the two communities through a celebration of forms of African resistance.³⁷⁰ Diaspora as articulation creates these instances of bringing Black people together.

Most significantly, the event that happens year in and out is the Maroon Independence Day celebration, with significant representations of African expressive forms in the communities. It is the one given time of the year that Maroon traditions are always shared and celebrated with others. In the late 1990s, as the musicologist DjeDje states, “For the Accompong Maroons, the event is not only a reminder and signifier of their collective identity, it is one of the few occasions in their culture when music, history, religion, politics, and economics intersect to create an experience in which all are free and proud to actualize their heritage.”³⁷¹ Most of the activities in these events significantly signal the importance of the enunciations of African traditions to the understanding of marronage. It the largest single Maroon event experienced by the majority of people who visit Accompong Town.

In Accompong, although traditions are practiced throughout the year, expressive forms are displayed especially in the annual sixth of January celebration. Most Maroons consider their practices at the celebration as being African. Currie considers the dancing, food, and libation all a part of the “African Diaspora” experience and “African system.”³⁷²

This is how the Maroon leader M. L. Wright describes the celebration:

The greatest community event is the festival which is held every January to celebrate Kojo’s victory over the British which led to the treaty. This festival is planned to coincide with Kojo’s birthday and celebrates Kojo’s remarkable leadership and the sacrifice he made fighting for his people in this wild and rugged Cockpit country for so many long dreary years. The celebrations also remind all Maroons of the hard days of the struggle to maintain their freedom. Maroons reunite in their dedication to stand firm on their traditional values for freedom, liberty and respect for human dignity.³⁷³

Although this statement expresses many different ideas, African heritage is an important component, as are the freedom and self-determination that are central to all independence narratives everywhere. Thus, the signifying role of the Maroons is not confined to Africanity alone, but nevertheless it is important.

Many Accompong Maroons believe that the celebration started in the late 1730s right after the victory against the British and has continued up to present day.³⁷⁴ Apart from a two or three year absence, this celebration has certainly been occurring in Accompong Town for most of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. There have been accounts of the celebration by several observers over the years. Henry Rowe, who was colonel in the 1920s and 1930s, mentions that the celebration was in existence in the early 1900s.³⁷⁵ In the mid-1930s, Zora

³⁷⁰ Charles Campbell, “Can Ketch Quakuh...,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), June 8, 2010, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/Caan-Ketch-Quakuh>.

³⁷¹ DjeDje, *Remembering Kojo*, 69.

³⁷² Currie, interview.

³⁷³ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 68.

³⁷⁴ Currie, interview; DjeDje, *Remembering Kojo*, 91.

³⁷⁵ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 70; “Maroons Celebrate: Bicentenary of Freedom,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), March 5, 1938.

Neale Hurston on her visit to Accompong Town said that the celebration was still one of the few major events in the community.³⁷⁶ In the late 1970s, Kenneth Bilby noted that he saw thousands of outsiders at the annual sixth of January celebration in Accompong Town.³⁷⁷ As the years go by, the figures have fluctuated but there have been a general increase in numbers: 17,000 in 1992, 14,000 in 1998, and 25,000 in 2007.

As has been practiced over the last few decades, and as it has been described by M. L. Wright, the celebration is divided into four or five major parts. It begins at Kindah, the area where the Kindah Tree is located. There is preparation of food:

Maroons are very peculiar in their cooking. No women are allowed to cook on that day. Only two types of food are used; yellow yam and plantain. No food that is white in appearance can be used. This is done as a tradition which we inherited from our forefathers. For the meat no female animal or birds are used. The meat is pork and it must be boar. Roast birds are always used. On the early morning of the celebration the pig is killed. A large fire is made and covered with green leaves. The pig is put on top of the leaves, and then finally covered with more leaves. The green leaves are properly heated so the moisture will penetrate the hairy body of the pig. This will allow easy removal of the hair by scraping with a sharp knife. The pork is cooked in large containers. No salt is allowed to be used. The food is still cooked without salt today. Many attest to the fact that the food does taste fresh even though it is cooked without salt. All the main activities of the celebration take place at Kindah, the original dancing ground of the Maroons.³⁷⁸

There is singing, drumming, and dancing throughout the day but especially in the morning. The practices as reported by Cawley in the 1980s continue to this day:

The main activities during the celebration are dancing, singing and eating. The dancing and singing are done simultaneously accompanied by the playing of the Gumbe and the blowing of the horn/The horn is also known as the "Abeng." The "Gumbe" is a kind of Drum that is played with the hands. Karamante is the name given to the songs that are sung. The songs are very suggestive of the whole occasion. Some of the songs are ... 1) Law hold already oh, Law hold oh; 2) Fanny Mall a come oh, clear road oh; 3) Nina (Nanny) mi a tome, A'Juma tek yu yard; 4) Shalla kill a man aye; and other songs which depict their culture strongly. Different songs are used for different purposes.³⁷⁹

In Maroon communities, the singing, drumming, and dancing serve as a means of connecting and communicating with the ancestors (with the most important ones being Africans). As Cawley states, many Maroons experience Myal at the celebration.³⁸⁰ Colonel Williams believes when you dance Myal the ancestors dance through you.³⁸¹ In addition, as Williams mentions, the

³⁷⁶ DjeDje, *Remembering Kojo*, 92, 93.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 8.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 7.

³⁸¹ Williams, interview.

ancestors talk to you and you talk back to them.³⁸² Furthermore, according to Ricketts, at the Kindah Tree around the sixth of January, through dancing the ancestors such as Kojo and Accompong talk to or through you.³⁸³ According to Lawrence Rowe, historically, especially at the Kojo Day celebration “when the Maroons them come together they would dance in the Myal that is a traditional dance from Africa.”³⁸⁴

The second part or major site of the annual event is a visit to Old Town. On that day, only full-blooded Maroons are allowed to visit the sacred ground where Kojo, Accompong, and other past Maroon leaders are buried.³⁸⁵ This group of Maroons takes a portion of the cooked meat and feeds the ancestors before anyone else is allowed to eat the food. According to M. L. Wright,

It is during the preparation for the visit to the sacred grounds, that the sprinkling of the sacred grounds with rum and the pouring of libation takes place. During that time there is preparation of the food to be carried to feed the spirits of the Maroon heroes. The food includes pork as the meat and boiled yam. At the graves of the heroes, in addition to pouring libation (which among the Accompong Maroons is basically the sprinkling of rum over the sacred grounds) food is thrown around the area. A tense moment comes at the place when the visiting Maroons must have a period of spiritual communication with their ancestors but must be preceded by a long period of silence and mediation—what among them is referred to as a “reasoning session.”³⁸⁶

The third part of the day is the return march to the Kindah Tree where the ritual food was prepared.³⁸⁷ At this point, the returnees join the other group of performers at Kindah with the singing, drumming, and dancing. According to Cawley, “After the party returns the order will be given by the supervisor to share the food for the people. The food is shared on banana leaves. Anyone who desires to participate can do so.”³⁸⁸

The last major site of the celebration is at a place call Parade Ground (previously it was a procession through Parade Ground with the final destination of the Town Square). But now, or at least during the celebrations in 2012, 2013 and 2015, before going to Parade Ground there is a large procession through the town. Formerly the Town Square was used instead of the Parade Ground, as Wright states:

The last part of the celebrations take place in the modern Accompong Town at the monument erected in honour of Kojo. That is the part of the celebrations in which Maroon and non-Maroon come in contact and share in the merry-making. Traditional Maroon food, rum, Maroon traditional gumbey drumming, music and dance as well as family re-unions—all against the backdrop of the achievements of the past—are the order of the day. The abeng sounds from time to time, sending messages to the maroons and all who can understand. In recent years, the practice has been to invite a distinguished personality to grace the occasion and

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Rowe and Ricketts, interview.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 69.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 8.

this represent the extension of good will to the larger Jamaican and international public.³⁸⁹

At Parade Ground, speeches and performance are presented. As Cawley mentions, “The Colonel will then give his address. The speech is not long and usually it outlines some of the past programmes as well as gives a projection of what is to be done in the months ahead. Others are allowed to give their views. After the speeches are concluded the night session will be devoted to several dances.”³⁹⁰ The speeches tend to be filled with enunciations of African connections.

The Independence Day celebration is the most popular event in not only Accompong Town but all of the Maroon communities. As already mentioned, there are other activities throughout a given year in all four Maroon communities. Maroons in their words link these celebrations to their African roots. These celebrations and festive events in these communities are similar to other festive events among other Black peoples in the Americas and Africa. At least those events that make specific claims to African authenticity and relate to nostalgia. Other Maroon groups from as far away as Suriname and Africans from Ghana come and share with Jamaican Maroons their various festive expressions and performance.

Based on an idea or rhetoric of shared traditions (and origins), a range of African-descended individuals and cultural groups connect through celebrating at different festivals, conferences, and celebrations, including ceremonial ritual and cultural performance. Throughout the decades, local groups such as the Hartford Culture Group and the Mighty Beeston Mento Band have performed folk song and dances, which are from the shared tradition of Maroons, Black Jamaicans, other people of African descent, and Africa itself.³⁹¹ Performers coming as far away as Africa and South America celebrate with Maroons. For instance, in the late 1990s, Nigerian dancers performed cultural items at the Accompong Kojo Day celebration.³⁹² Also, Kifoko cultural group members, traditional dancers of the Matawai Maroon nation, sang, danced, and drummed at the Accompong Maroons celebration as well.³⁹³ At these celebrations, other peoples of African descent join in this experiential connecting with not only other living African-descended people but also ancestral spirits.

At these Maroon sites that often serve as a place of diasporic articulation connecting a number of things occur. At these celebrations and other events, dialogue on a variety of topics is explored. In other words, the Maroon sites have become centers of for the critical practice of diaspora through exchange, celebration, and dialogue across Black communities internationally. For instance, in 1991, the annual Kojo Day celebration was dedicated to Nelson Mandela and to contributing and giving verbal support to the Anti-Apartheid struggle.³⁹⁴ In 2007, at the Kojo Day celebration, Colonel Prehay of Scott’s Hall called for reparations to all Africans who suffered from the effects of 500 years of slavery, linking it to the genocidal acts against the Jews

³⁸⁹ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 69.

³⁹⁰ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 8.

³⁹¹ Myers, “Maroons Hold ‘Mother of all Celebrations;’” Garfield Myers, “Maroons Unite in Defence of Cockpit Country,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 8, 2007, accessed March 12, 2013, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/117619_Maroons-unite-in-defence-of-Cockpit-Country.

³⁹² “A Colourful Maroon Celebration,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 8, 1998; “Accompong Maroons Reunited,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 3, 1998.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ “Maroons to Honour Mandela,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 4, 1991.

in the twentieth century.³⁹⁵ It is a place where African garments and symbols are showcased in a sense of pride and unity.³⁹⁶

Through these acts and celebrations, mutual intangible benefits, such as a sense of black pride and fellowship, are derived from sharing cultural expression and art forms. Diaspora as articulation provides the space for connections with Africa through claimed traditions. It is space to explore symbols, acts, and images of what it is to be part of the African Diaspora.

In the post-colonial era, Maroons developed greater contact with African-descended leaders in Africa and the Americas. Africans participate, increasingly, and are increasingly involved in diaspora forms of circulation, contributing to our shifting understanding of blackness. Diaspora is the articulated product of these understandings and representations.

In many respects, Maroon performative space constitutes a materialization of diaspora articulation organized around the idea of African originary claims, enunciation of blackness, and Black universal linkage. This is particularly evident in the rituals and ceremonies as well as the role of Maroon communities as heritage sites (particularly Accompong).

Conclusion

In Maroon communities, European and Amerindian influences may be acknowledged, but it is the African tradition that is fully claimed. This chapter has argued that Maroons significantly make rhetorical and symbolic claims about their African traditions. Hence, as demonstrated in the chapter, it is the claim that is important not the empirical “fact” of whether or not it is the “truth” about Africa with on the ground connections in places I have mentioned such as Ghana. Most significantly, the claims around African traditions are deployed to make Black linkages. Maroons manifestations of diasporic enunciation and the linkages produced out of the claims to blackness are recognized in these enunciations. Thus, what is unique about the Maroons is their claims to African authenticity. In and outside Maroon communities, the African traditions are shared with tens of thousands of Black people through public events, community tours, and short-term stays. Fundamentally, what they do share is enunciations of blackness. Diaspora as articulation is manifested through various means. In different diasporic communities there are different means of enunciating blackness. Even in a given diasporic community, these diasporic enunciations may change over time. This is significant in furthering our understanding of what diaspora is and how it works.

³⁹⁵ Myers, “Maroons Hold ‘Mother of all Celebrations.’”

³⁹⁶ “Fashionable Maroons,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 14, 2011.

CHAPTER FIVE: SOVEREIGNTY CLAIMS

We [Maroons] are sovereign in our own right.

Harris N. Cawley, former Colonel of Accompong³⁹⁷

Introduction

This chapter explores the links between diaspora as articulation and sovereignty in Maroon communities. It therefore focuses on the Accompong Maroons, who are the most vocal proponents of Maroon sovereignty. It methodologically uses the voices of Maroons, highlighting how African originary and traditional claims situate Maroons as a sovereign community that through critical practice struggle against the colonial and post-colonial Jamaican state. The claims to sovereignty are rooted in pre-colonial and existing notions of sovereign African statehood and self-determination. They challenge European ideas of African savagery and an African Hobbesian state of nature. They assert the right to statehood and nationhood as equal with the European colonial and metropolitan states. The chapter demonstrates how through diasporic articulation, the communities are able to make certain socio-political claims on territorial space. It concentrates on collective land rights and environmental views that are attributed to African roots linked to sovereignty. Overall, the chapter argues that diaspora as articulation and critical practice by Maroons serve to further their claims of sovereignty.

Maroon Sphere/Realm

The Maroons see themselves as a sovereign nation, the founding of which is traced to its African origins. Hence, Maroons perceive themselves as a nation within a nation. This claim is constantly reiterated by Maroons and their leaders.

In particular, utterance about sovereignty is most significant in Accompong Town. According to former Colonel Martin Luther Wright of Accompong Town, the people of Accompong “make up a nation within a nation of the island of Jamaica.”³⁹⁸ In an oral interview with former Colonel Harris Cawley, he argues that “the Accompong State” has been an “independent and sovereign state” from since 1738.³⁹⁹ The current Deputy, Colonel Norma Rowe-Edwards, affirms that the “Accompong State” is a sovereign nation on the island of Jamaica.⁴⁰⁰

Many Accompong Maroons believe they have been an independent nation for centuries. Archival documents going as far back as the 1840s show that Accompong Maroons have been claiming that they are a nation living in a nation since then, at least.⁴⁰¹ In 1980, in a *Jamaica Gleaner* article entitled “Maroons Fear Threat to Independence,” Maroon leaders assert “that the 1738 treaty signed was still binding” and the “treaty was signed by the blood of our forefathers and if it means death, we shall die, but this treaty must stand.”⁴⁰² In this sense, their claims to independence refer back to the original treaty. In 1983, in a *Jamaica Gleaner* article, the then-Colonel Harris Cawley of Accompong Town argues that the British:

³⁹⁷ Cawley, interview.

³⁹⁸ Reid, interview; Wright, *Maroon Heritage*, 67; “Maroon Col. Thomas James Cawley Dies.”

³⁹⁹ Cawley, interview.

⁴⁰⁰ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 11.

⁴⁰¹ Kopytoff, “Colonial Treaty,” 55.

⁴⁰² “Maroons Fear Threat to Independence,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), September 29, 1980.

Should not have left the island without acknowledging our presence; turning over the said island of Jamaica in the hands of their Negro slaves concluding a Constitution without prior consultation with the Maroons with whom they had signed a Peace Treaty in 1738–39. The Constitution that was drawn up by the British for Jamaica should be a Federal Documentation participated in by the said Maroon sovereign state. The Accompong Maroons’ Military Parliament has disapproved the manner in which the British had handled the Constitution, and hereby we are requiring the British to make immediate amendment on this important issue.⁴⁰³

The fundamental point here is that Accompong Maroons see themselves as sovereign.⁴⁰⁴ Furthermore, they base their claim to sovereignty on an international treaty agreed to with the British which they consider binding. This very claim inserts them into the articulated space of diaspora.

As mentioned in previous chapters, Maroons argue that their governing system evolved from the African chieftaincy system with various subdivisions. In particular, Accompong Maroons claim the Akan political tradition in the founding of what they repeatedly call the “Sovereign State of Accompong.”⁴⁰⁵ The Maroon communities are governed with the colonel as the chief political leader, who has legislative, administrative, and judicial authority.⁴⁰⁶ The highly secretive shape and number of members in the government and the council vary from one colonel’s tenure in office to another.⁴⁰⁷ The officials tend to number between a dozen and about thirty members, with different governmental divisions, committees and sub-committees.⁴⁰⁸ See chapter 2 for details.

For the Maroons, the claim shows that they are products of independent sovereign states that existed prior to their enslavement and that they deserve to be considered sovereign on the basis of this. These claims to a prior sovereign statehood and its form of political organization is used to reference (signify) that reality. The point is that it demonstrates the organizational bases upon which sovereign statehood rests. It is a continuation of past practice.

For the Jamaican Maroons, particularly the Accompong Maroons, the Treaty of 1738–39 with the British colonial authorities is viewed as formal recognition of Maroon’s sovereignty. According to former Colonel Wright, “the result of these treaties was to make the Maroons of Jamaica a free, independent self-governing group of people.”⁴⁰⁹ Mann O. Rowe, secretary of state of the Accompong government from the 1950s to the 1990s, said that the treaty is sacred and was agreed to between two sovereign powers in Jamaica.⁴¹⁰

The point here is that their claims to sovereignty are contested on documentary grounds (as I mentioned in chapter 2 and as I have already discussed) Once again, a claim to African connections is used to substantiate the Maroon worldview. The claim to Africa is based on the notion of pre-colonial independent statist sovereignty that is now transferred to Jamaica and

⁴⁰³ “Opinions,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), December 3, 1983.

⁴⁰⁴ It is doubtful that Cawley used the phrase “Negro slaves” but this is how it was published in the *Gleaner*.

⁴⁰⁵ Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 109.

⁴⁰⁶ Zips, “Laws in Competition,” 291.

⁴⁰⁷ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 12.

⁴⁰⁸ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 12; Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 68.

⁴⁰⁹ Wright, “Accompong Maroons of Jamaica,” 64.

⁴¹⁰ Mann O. Rowe, interview.

upon which Maroon political organization is based. It is the African-positioned tradition of agreement-making to which the Maroons give preeminence. This is a dispute over the treaty itself. It uses African forms of treaty making as legitimate and rejects the documentary practice of European treaty making. The written treaty that was unilaterally changed after the British and the Maroon leaders made their agreement is considered inaccurate by many Maroons. The Maroons have remained firm on what they believe the agreement was between the British and themselves. As Rowe-Edwards argues, the blood treaty recognizes the Maroons' right to govern themselves, select a leader, create their laws, and secure their territories.⁴¹¹

Importantly, the Accompong Maroons see the peace treaty with the British as a blood treaty. For the Maroons, the blood treaty is similar but also differs from the widely published and unilaterally amended written treaty.⁴¹² According to Deputy Colonel Rowe-Edwards, based on what her father said, in reference to the blood treaty:

He said that they [British and Maroons] mixed the blood from their wounds and drank the mixture.... Kojo [founder of Accompong Town] and the white man each then drank from the mixed blood. Samuel [Norma Rowe-Edwards's father] said that blood is important and meant that the Treaty was now good.⁴¹³

This statement is critical in its assertion of African forms of treaty making as legitimate. It is an assertion of African legitimacy. Rowe-Edwards asserts that "The Treaty is a Blood Treaty" and Kojo "was willing to cut his wrist to draw blood and wanted the white man to do the same."⁴¹⁴ Beverly Carey argues that "oral tradition of the Accompong Maroons states that the terms, having been finally agreed, were (the) cemented in traditional maroon fashion, by the mixing of the blood of both black and white in a calabash bowl and drinking of this mixture with rum. This was a blood pact, and was taken extremely seriously by the Maroon people."⁴¹⁵ It makes claims to the legitimacy of African forms in international relations. Furthermore, according to Milton McFarlane of the Moore Town Maroons in *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, as he heard from his grandfather:

Cudjoe [Kojo] was not even aware that [British] Colonel Guthrie would commit the treaty agreements to paper. After both men came to an understanding of the obligations on each side, General Cudjoe considered negotiations ended, congratulated Colonel Guthrie, and was about to leave the meeting place. Guthrie was temporarily baffled by the General's attitude and earnestly asked him to wait until the articles of the agreement were all written down and signed. In turn, the General could not understand why the agreement needed to be recorded; and he said so to Guthrie, emphasising the capability of the Maroons to abide by the treaty just the way it was. In fact, Cudjoe took the opportunity to enlighten Guthrie just a little about Maroon obedience to their laws over many centuries without having had the necessity to write them on paper—proof that it was enough

⁴¹¹ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 123.

⁴¹² Currie, interview; Cawley, interview; McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 16.

⁴¹³ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 113.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁴¹⁵ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 331.

just to have them know the treaty. And most assuredly the Maroons would be adequately informed.⁴¹⁶

For the present-day Maroons, the essence of the peace treaty was that it acknowledged the Maroons to be a sovereign nation, with the two entities giving mutual assistance to each other. Maroons usually talk about the essence of the blood treaty, often not its specifics. Mann O. Rowe, former Secretary of State of Accompong Town, holds the view that the treaty stipulates that if any foreign enemies should invade the island, the Maroons are required to help; and on the other hand, if foreign enemies should invade the Maroon community, the British government should help.⁴¹⁷ Former Colonel Harris Cawley asserts that if each side (the Maroon or the British) has a problem governing, the other government is required to help the other resolve the matter.⁴¹⁸ Hansley Reid, chief Accompong Town Abeng Blower, argues that if there is ever a time when the Maroons have governing problems, they could call on the British government to assist them. Likewise, if the British government wants help from the Maroons, it can call on them.⁴¹⁹ From the perspective of the Maroons, the support they give and receive from the British and the Government of Jamaica does not nullify their independence.

To reiterate, the Maroons take the view that the written treaty is not the original peace treaty or the agreement that was made between the two sovereign powers. The written treaty has about fifteen articles, a number of which the Maroons have alternative interpretations for or else flatly refuse to accept.⁴²⁰ According to former Colonel Harris Cawley, the written treaty (as opposed to the oral/blood treaty) is one-sided in favor of the British.⁴²¹ Beverly Carey argues that the “Maroons believe that the terms were altered, dramatically and fundamentally so, and to their [Maroons’] detriment.”⁴²² In other words, the treaty was violated by the British. She believes that “They [British government] would use their legislative procedures, to which the maroons had unwisely declared their loyalty, to break the blood treaty, to use subsequent legislation, passed unilaterally, to tie the Maroons.”⁴²³ Carey further asserts that the Maroons have for generations rejected many of the terms of the written treaty (see the copy of the written treaties in chapter 2).⁴²⁴

There are three clauses the Maroons have fundamentally disagreed with or had an alternative interpretation of. In this section, we will focus on the Leeward Maroon treaty with the British authorities. First, most Maroons dispute that Kojo agreed to only 1,500 acres of land, as indicated in Article three (this will be explored further in a later part of the chapter).⁴²⁵ Second, the Maroons have a different interpretation of the placing of white liaison officers in their communities, as stipulated in Article fourteen. As Carey argues, the Maroons do not interpret this article as an attempt to control Maroon communities. Rather, the Maroon view the superintendants as commonly placed in the compromising position of having to rent from and depend on the Maroons, so they often operated in the interests of the Maroon who contributed

⁴¹⁶ McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 129–30.

⁴¹⁷ Mann O. Rowe, interview.

⁴¹⁸ Cawley, interview.

⁴¹⁹ Reid, interview.

⁴²⁰ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 364, 365, 366.

⁴²¹ Cawley, interview.

⁴²² Carey, *Maroon Story*, 336.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 338.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 340.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 359.

and were able to develop a harmonious relationship with the British authorities.⁴²⁶ Third and last, as indicated in Article fifteen, the Maroons disagree with the Governor or the Commander-in-Chief having the power or right to appoint leaders of Maroon communities after the succession of leaders has passed away. Many Maroons believe this is not historically inaccurate. Carey argues that it might have not even been a term that was discussed when Kojo made the treaty agreement.⁴²⁷

The point of all this is that Maroons had a different understanding of their agreement with the British. Maroon assertions of sovereignty led them to interpret relations with the British in ways that contradicted colonial understanding even against the practical implications and effect of constrictions and limitations on their de facto sovereignty. The fact that they were not “really” free and sovereign did not deter them from representing their condition as sovereign.

Most fundamentally, Maroons base their claims of sovereignty over territory on the traditional practice of their African origins. Land is a central element in Maroons’ struggle. As Colonel Williams of Accompong asserts, through a common Maroon adage, is the “land is for the born and the unborn.”⁴²⁸ Maroons view the lands as belonging to the entire community—namely the ancestors, the born (living members), and the unborn (all descendants). The authority upon which Maroons claims are made rests with their ancestors. Maroon families and individuals have plots of lands that are passed on from one generation to the next.⁴²⁹ The unoccupied land of Maroon territory is held by the colonel, on behalf of the community. This view and system of land use is claimed to be African by the Maroons.

The claims to territory and the authority over it are made based on African practice against colonial and postcolonial assertions of authority. Maroon sovereignty signifies: the civilized humanity of Africans signified in their capacity for organized forms of statehood with particular view of land tenure. It is a claim to African civilization and black civilized humanity. The issue is not so much the conditions, terms, and facticity of sovereignty, but its signification.

Over the centuries, the Maroons have had to struggle to continue to have communally owned lands. The land-ownership pattern of Maroon is a challenge to the state and prevailing Western thoughts on land ownership and distribution arrangements. In many respects, the control over land is the material condition upon which sovereignty claims are based. Hence, the power to tax (or to enforce tax regimes) has become one signifying element of sovereign authority. Accompong Town has been successful in maintaining communal lands without paying taxes. The British government from the eighteenth century has tried to force the Maroons to change their land-tenure system in order to tax the land. In 1842, a unilateral law was passed in Jamaica that attempted to end all previous laws concerning the Maroons, including the land-tenure rights and the peace treaties. The so-called Maroons Land Allotment Act “stated that all Maroon lands as guaranteed by the treaties were revested in the Crown, to be resurveyed and patented to individual Maroons.”⁴³⁰ According to Carey, there were further attempts to divide Maroon lands in order to tax it in 1845, 1847, and 1856 that the Maroons resisted.⁴³¹ In the 1860s, according to the Surveyor General of British Jamaica, addressing the Colonial Secretary’s Office as it pertained to the Accompong Maroons’ fierce resistance to the breaking of their communally held

⁴²⁶ Ibid.,365.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Williams, interview.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Werner Zips, “We Are Landowners”: Territorial Autonomy and Land Tenure in the Jamaican Maroon Community of Accompong,” *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 30, no. 40 (1998): 109.

⁴³¹ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 559.

lands in order to tax it:

In 1869 I surveyed the outer lines of the Accompong Township; I also ran the lines of a tract of unpatented land adjoining Accompong with a view to dividing the same in lots to be sold to the Maroons at 5/- per acre. The Maroons however refused to pay anything for the land or to have it divided in lots, none was therefore sold. They were made to understand that they could only be permitted to occupy the new land after duly purchasing the same and each man's lot was to be held by him in fee separate from the rest of the Township and not in common as formerly but these terms they positively refused.⁴³²

What is important here is that Maroons authority over land is linked to sovereignty. There is no sovereignty without control of territory. This is what a state is. The state is the apparatus and technology that legitimizes exclusive control over people and territory.

The Accompong Maroons continued to oppose attempts to apportion communal lands. There were further incidents between the British government and Accompong Maroons on this matter between 1901 and 1905.⁴³³ In 1905, the Jamaican colonial government in collaboration with the Presbyterian Church stated its readiness to double the amount of lands for the Accompong Maroons if they “agree to be treated hereafter as ordinary landowners, subject to taxes, etc.”⁴³⁴ In 1939, Governor Richard, visiting Accompong Town, offered to grant Maroons some additional thousands of acres of land under the condition that they “pay a nominal rent as public recognition of the fact that they are liable to taxes” on these additional lands.⁴³⁵ The former Colonel Harris Cawley's father, pictured in a photograph with the Governor along with the then-Colonel Robertson in the *Jamaica Standard* newspaper, remembers his father's later unsuccessfully negotiating with the Governor on the matter of Maroon lands.⁴³⁶ The Accompong Maroons continue until today to refuse to divide their lands because of the relationship between land and claims to sovereignty.

In keeping with their claimed African traditional legacy, the land has a special significance as a place in Maroon communities. Land has historic importance to the communities' origins and development. The relationship to the land is spiritual, political, and economic. Spiritual relates to claims to Africanity, political relates to claims to sovereignty, and economic relates to the conditions of subsistence. As indicated earlier, there are at least two separate burial sites that hold significance for the community, namely the ancient ancestral burial ground (resting place of Kojo and Nanny) and the Ashanti, Kromanti, and Congo burial ground. Throughout Accompong Town, there are sixty seal grounds, which are supernatural places where religious ceremonies were held for the protection of the community and sites to connect with the ancestral spirits associated with the African-derived religious system of Myal.⁴³⁷ In area about a mile east of present day Accompong Town is Old (Accompong) Town, which was once the

⁴³² T.H. to Colonial Office, October 20, 1882, Box 1-5-76-3-23, Colonial Secretary's Office, Jamaica Archives and Record Department, Spanish Town, Jamaica.

⁴³³ Hilary F. Smith, “Stakeholder Involvement in the Decision-Making for the Sustainable Development of the Cockpit Country, Jamaica” (master's thesis, State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, 2009), 57.

⁴³⁴ “Status of Maroons,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), September 30, 1905.

⁴³⁵ “Governor Offers the Maroons of Accompong Grant of More Lands.”

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ “Developing Accompong.”

center of the community centuries ago. The Maroons go to Old Town annually at the Kojo Day celebration to give food, tribute, and honor to their ancestors.⁴³⁸ The main site of the annual Kojo Day celebration is at a place called Guinea Grass, where the Kindah Tree is located. This area has been a spot for celebrating Maroon traditions for over a century.⁴³⁹ The location of the signing of the peace treaty was at a place called the Peace Cave.⁴⁴⁰ All of these link sovereignty to Africa. There are also many trails throughout western Jamaica, including the important Maroon Trail that is being opened up for eco-tourism, which have historical significance of being Maroon lands (with an African considering of relations with it).⁴⁴¹ Some Accompong Maroons would view this as giving credence to Michael Gomez's assertions that the "Akan brought an acute understanding of the role and significance of land with them to the New World. They were among those who saw the need for connection between land and political, cultural, and social freedom, a connection both tangible and spiritual."⁴⁴² The point is that Maroons have a different relation to land and it is imbued with the signifying meaning of Africa.

The settlements are the Maroons' stronghold. It is the land that the African ancestors won from the British. The written treaty acknowledges Maroon ownership of land but it limits the territorial size to only about a few thousand acres. It is the blood treaty, made through a treaty-signing method embraced as African, that is used to argue the true size of the Maroon lands. The Maroon view on the entire lands, acknowledged and unacknowledged by the state, is a critical practice that contest the prevailing Western political and philosophical understanding of land use. Control of and authority over land use is the material conditions of sovereignty. All states make claims to land, and the ultimate right to land use but the difference here is the way in which authority is legitimized and normalized. For the West it is based on the documentary practice of constitutionality, for the Maroons it is the African derived practice of the blood treaty and its associated orality. Hence, this is what makes it "African."

Accompong Town is a Maroon community with a disputed territorial size. Generally, Accompong Town is recognized as only having about 1,500 acres of territorial land. At times, the Government of Jamaica has argued that the community is only about 1,000 acres. However, according to the Social Development Commission (SDC) profile of Accompong Town, the community was "given 3,000 acres of land" at the time of the signing of the treaty by the British colonial government.⁴⁴³ The Jamaican government considers the Accompong settlement as "a special area having been autonomous for over 250 years" with limited acres of land.⁴⁴⁴

The Maroons claim control over a sizable portion of the western side of the island of Jamaica. It is a critical practice in both utterances and acts that the claim is sustained. At different times and from different people, there are slight differences in viewpoint as to the exact size and contour of the lands. The Accompong Maroons, supported by many Maroon elders, claim not only the territorial lands of 1,500 or 3,000 acres of Accompong Town but a sizable portion of western Jamaica, including an ecologically unique rainforest area with bauxite and limestone deposits called the Cockpit Country, which is about 200 square miles.⁴⁴⁵ These claims

⁴³⁸ "Spirit Possession in Afro-Jamaican Religions and the Kromanti Play."

⁴³⁹ DjeDje, "Remembering Kojo," 95; "Developing Accompong."

⁴⁴⁰ Currie, interview.

⁴⁴¹ Hutchinson, interview.

⁴⁴² Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 113.

⁴⁴³ Social Development Commission, *Community Profile: Accompong*, 4.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Cawley, interview; Reid, interview; Chambers, interview; Mann O. Rowe, interview.

are made through citing the African form of agreement-making of the blood treaty. The blood treaty gives the Maroons the right to the territory and the legitimate means to control it.

The current colonel of Accompong, Ferron Williams, holds the view that Maroon territory is much larger than the 1,500 acres as presented in the written treaty. He argues that “the Jamaican government knows that they have taken most of our lands.”⁴⁴⁶ Williams reports that a number of areas miles away from Accompong Town are Maroon lands, including Fullerswood, located in the neighboring parish of Westmoreland.⁴⁴⁷ The colonel believes that land is power and the blood treaty acknowledged the lands as belonging to the Maroons.⁴⁴⁸ Williams remarks that:

I hope that a [Maroon] regime someday will be as brave and say to the authorities in Jamaica we need for you to give us back our lands. In fact, I led a delegation from here to see the Governor General who is the head of Jamaica. The Prime Minister is not the head of Jamaica you know. It is the Governor General; and we took a map of the Cockpit Country and if we did not own the land [of the Cockpit Country as indicated in the treaty] we would not have been maintaining the roads. Why would you be maintaining roads to Trelawny if you did not have the land leading to Trelawny? Why would you maintain the road going to St. James ... if the land doesn't belong to you?⁴⁴⁹

Most importantly, the issue here is the legitimacy of the blood treaty (that dictates the true size and location of the territory).

According to the deputy colonel of Accompong, Norma Rowe-Edwards, before the signing of the treaty, the leaders of the Maroons, “Nanny and Kojo, employed a strategy that incorporated the entire expanse of the mountainous Cockpit terrain”—clearly a region they claimed as their own.⁴⁵⁰ Rowe-Edwards states that in signing the treaty, “Kojo requested all of the lands in the Cockpit Country from seacoast to seacoast.”⁴⁵¹

The former Colonel Harris Cawley of Accompong affirms that the Maroons were in Jamaica before the British invaded and they had an earlier stake to the land after the Spanish left. For Cawley, all of Cockpit Country and beyond are Maroon lands.⁴⁵² In fact, as Harris Cawley asserts in *The Sound of the Abeng*, “many Maroons still refer to this community [of Accompong Town] as Trelawny Town. Accompong was located to the South of Trelawny Town in the areas now known as White Hall, Bethsalem and Harmony Hall. But these areas have been taken away from the Maroons and settled by the Jamaican government.”⁴⁵³ He believes at least 20 percent of the lands of Jamaica belong to the Maroons.⁴⁵⁴ During his administration in the mid-1980s, he was an ardent proponent of the Jamaican government recognizing Maroon lands beyond the

⁴⁴⁶ Williams, interview.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 83.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁵² Cawley, interview.

⁴⁵³ Cawley, *Sound of the Abeng*, 10.

⁴⁵⁴ Cawley, interview.

mere 1,500 acres.⁴⁵⁵ He mentioned that in the 1940s and 1950s, during the administration of his father, James Cawley, Maroon lost lands to the Jamaican government.⁴⁵⁶

The Accompong Maroon leaders have been vocal in the local press, mainly the *Jamaica Gleaner*, on the matter of their land rights. The press began giving specific Maroon coverage starting in the early twentieth century. One of the most vocal Maroon leaders has been former Colonel Meredith Rowe of Accompong. In a *Jamaica Gleaner* article of August 19, 1997 entitled “Maroons Making Strides”, it is stated that:

The Accompong Town Maroons in St. Elizabeth are once again accusing the government of trying to steal their ancestral lands. Former Colonel and President of the Maroons Federal House of Assembly, Meredie Rowe, speaking at a press conference in Montego Bay on Tuesday, accused the government of sabotage and said that they were not forthright in their discussions on the issuing of Maroon lands for the proposed Cockpit Country Conservation project.⁴⁵⁷

A year later, in 1998, through Meredie Rowe, the paper states that “The Accompong Maroons are claiming that they control 150,000 acres of property and that the cockpits, located in the hills of St. Elizabeth and upper Trelawny, falls within it.”⁴⁵⁸

Former Deputy Colonel Melville Currie of Accompong believes that the treaty signed between the Maroons and the British in 1738 was an acknowledgement of lands larger than the Cockpit Country, going into parishes of St. Elizabeth, St. James, Trelawny, and Westmoreland. He believes that the cockpits is referred to as a country because Maroons are the only people and nation that lived in it at that time. He states that the Maroons already had the Cockpit Country before the wars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and lands were negotiated that were outside of the Cockpit Country.⁴⁵⁹ Currie views that “we are a self-governing state, an entity that makes its own laws and lives by its own code of conduct and rules.”⁴⁶⁰

The issue of land pertains to the legitimacy of the blood treaty. But, this also relates to sovereignty claims that references land.

In 1998, members of the Maroon Advancement Committee (of Accompong), as reported in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, “accused the government of capturing and poaching on Maroon land for which they said they didn’t have the resources to legally reestablish their boundaries.” A member of the organization, Hugh Rowe “was concerned with the gradual advancement of crown land boundaries into the Accompong territory. He said that over the years Accompong had been decreasing in size because of legislation redefining crown land boundaries and the actions of unscrupulous government surveyors.”⁴⁶¹

It is steeped in Maroon oral history that Maroons own significant portions of Jamaican lands. According to Milton McFarlane in *Cudjoe of Jamaica*:

⁴⁵⁵ “Opinions.”

⁴⁵⁶ Cawley, interview.

⁴⁵⁷ Wright, “Accompong Maroons Cry Foul.”

⁴⁵⁸ “Maroons Accuse Govt. of Land Capturing and Culture Damage,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 8, 1988.

⁴⁵⁹ Currie, interview.

⁴⁶⁰ “Maroons Accuse Govt. of Land Capturing.”

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

When the articles [of the peace treaty] were agreed upon the Maroons had controlled, for nearly a hundred years, almost all of the lands in the mountainous regions of Jamaica. And Cudjoe won an agreement that recognized the continued ownership and control of those lands by the Maroons. However, according to Grandpa Wallen, as time passed the Backra [White] government laid claim to most of the territory, and by his day, all the Maroons had left were the five village areas in which they actually lived and cultivated; and so the real borders were a matter of dispute.⁴⁶²

Carey, in *Maroon Story*, uses oral histories and British archival documents to support the claim of Accompong Maroons to have greater territorial claims than 1,500 acres. According to Carey, the Accompong Maroons can still identify those lands, for they know where they touched the sea on the south coast and where they reach the sea on the north coast.⁴⁶³ She argues that:

When the first draft of the Treaty went to the Board of Trade and Plantations, the area of land referred to in that draft was 15,000 acres, with those numbers written numerically. The last zero was erased to make the figure 1,500 acres and thereby reduce the acreage by 13,500 acres. On the original documents, a copy of which the Accompong Town Maroons have in their possession, it is easy to identify the correct acreage.⁴⁶⁴

Furthermore, based on Carey's account, "the Accompong Maroons view that it is unlikely that Kojo "who had the run of much of the western countryside around their settlement would have been so inept as to settle for a mere 1,500 acres."⁴⁶⁵ The author believes there was a devious design of patenting land close to Accompong Town. This was at the overt encouragement, she believes, by the early-eighteenth-century Governor Trelawny, who secretly sought to restrict the lands Kojo possessed to the most mountainous and non-arable sections.⁴⁶⁶

In the last few centuries, land has been the locus of the struggle over sovereignty. In the British and Jamaican archives, there is no record of recognition of Accompong having more than 1,500 or 3,000 acres of land. But Accompong Maroons have historically believed that they were given a much larger territorial land than they have at present. There are numerous British archival documents and newspaper accounts showing Maroons' consistent struggle over lands in western Jamaica throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Land conflict occurred a number of times between Accompong and the British government, including 1870, 1880, and 1883.⁴⁶⁷ In the 1890s, in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, there was a report of a dispute at Fullerswood Estate (some distance from Accompong Town) because Accompong Maroons claimed that the Salmon family was occupying lands that belonged to them. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, there were further disputes and negotiations of a settlement on lands between the Maroons and the British government. In 1939, a *Jamaica Standard* newspaper article entitled "Governor Offers the Maroons of Accompong Grant of

⁴⁶² McFarlane, *Cudjoe of Jamaica*, 129.

⁴⁶³ Carey, *Maroon Story*, 38.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 337, 338, 359.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 420.

⁴⁶⁷ Schafer, "The Maroons of Jamaica," 174.

More Lands,” Governor Sir Arthur Richards told the Maroons “that he was prepared to grant them the lands which they were claiming from the Government of Jamaica under their two-hundred-year-old treaty with the British government.” The article further states that “in addition the Governor said he was proposing to the Maroon leaders a plan for the reservation of two to three thousand acres of the Cockpit Country to be held in trust by the community for the benefit of further generations of Maroons as communal land.” The British government at least acknowledged and attempted to respond to Maroons’ claim for larger pieces of lands that surpassed the previously acknowledged 1,500 acres. During that time period, the government did in fact offer up to 4,000 additional acres of lands but never fully agreed to give such lands to the Maroons.⁴⁶⁸

This practice of Maroons highlights the symbolic significance of control over territory. The struggle is to maintain control over territory against the intrusion of the state. It is also over the terms of such control: it is sovereign control or a form of constrained autonomy subject to the exercise of state power.

Furthermore, informed by their own understanding of their African heritage, the Maroons have ideas and visions of a harmonious and reciprocal use of environmental space. This critical practice of the Maroons challenges the prevailing state-centric and Western ideologies of humans’ relationship with the land. It particularly challenges the Lockean idea of land ownership and use. In Jamaica, Maroons claiming sovereign powers over a sizeable portion of Jamaica are ideologically struggling with the state over land used that is informed by African originary and traditional claims. More so, sovereignty is a critical practice that relates to claims of an African humanity which challenges the degradation of European modernity.

The Maroons believe that their community and the surrounding areas that belong to them, especially the wider Cockpit Country, should be protected and preserved in line with the African ancestral views. The plant and animal life, among the other things from the land, is important in the farming community. According to Norma Rowe-Edwards, they, as Maroons, have historically truly lived “in harmony with the environment; each one was a successful practicing environmentalist.”⁴⁶⁹ She elaborates that the Maroons were the first people and community in Jamaica to practice sustainable forestry. They believe in planting a tree for every tree removed.⁴⁷⁰ For her, “Man and environment were engaged in an interaction where each harmoniously cared for each other.”⁴⁷¹ This is said with the belief that the view came from her African ancestors.

Of course, this view reflects Maroons’ position and alignment with the global environmental movement from which they receive active support internationally. It also is consistent with the demands of eco-tourism from which the Maroons derive or can derive considerable revenues. The claim to African tradition justifies these strategic and economic alliances.

In the Maroon communities, herbs and plants, including the rich diversity of the Cockpit Country, have been historically treasured, and their protection is seen as a continuation of African traditions. Herbs and plants are used for healthcare purposes, from treating the common

⁴⁶⁸ “Governor Offers the Maroons of Accompong Grant of More Lands,” *Jamaica Standard* (Kingston), June 19, 1939.

⁴⁶⁹ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 102.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

cold to care for the mentally disturbed.⁴⁷² According to Rowe-Edwards, a nurse by profession, the tradition of herbal medicine was practiced by her African ancestors and passed on from one generation to the next.⁴⁷³ Accompong Council member and secretary Ann-Marie Hutchinson said that herbal plants were widely used but declined in recent years.⁴⁷⁴ The Junior Council of the Williams Administration was also involved in attempts to revive herbal use in the community and educate the younger children about the environmental significance of the community's vegetation.⁴⁷⁵ Melville Currie considers the herbs and plants in the Cockpit Country very important and argues that cures for AIDS and cancer could be found in the area.⁴⁷⁶ Fundamentally, all of this belief is tied to continued African traditions. This relates to enunciations of Africa. It is also a critical practice of struggle against the state to conduct African traditions in a sovereign space.

The Accompong Maroons, in line with traditional African views, are in agreement with each other on the protection and preservation of their community, which includes the wider Cockpit Country.⁴⁷⁷ It is a critical practice of living African traditions in their own territory. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Maroons were up in arms against further bauxite mining in the Cockpit Country which they believe is harming the environment. According to a *Jamaica Gleaner* article, the Maroons are calling on Jamaicans to join in the discussion, as they are ready to "go to war" with the Government of Jamaica over the matter.⁴⁷⁸ Hutchinson said she is in total agreement with the opposition to bauxite mining in the Cockpits.⁴⁷⁹ The community likes peace and does not want to be disturbed, so they are firmly against the idea of bringing machines to destroy "our habitat."⁴⁸⁰

Other Maroons joined the struggle to protect the cockpits, to protect this presumed African way of life. In a *Jamaica Gleaner* headline article of June 8, 2007, entitled "Int'l Maroons defend Cockpit," the Overseas Maroon Council came out against bauxite mining.

"We are unrepentantly opposed to the mining of the Cockpit Country. This section of the world should be protected because of its history," said President Carol Barnett on Saturday. Adding that the Cockpit Country is not just for the Maroons, but also for Jamaicans in general, Ms. Barnett, an Accompong Maroon living in the United States, pledged the backing of all 10 chapters of the council—spanning the United States, the United Kingdom and the Caribbean—as well as the Suriname Maroons in the fight for the cause.

The leaders of the other three Maroon communities, Charles Town (Colonel Frank Lumsden), Moore Town (Colonel Wallace Sterling), and Scott's Hall (Colonel Noel Prehay), all made a commitment to stop mining in the Cockpit Country.⁴⁸¹ Although this struggle over the use of

⁴⁷² "Developing Accompong."

⁴⁷³ Rowe-Edwards, *My Father Said*, 72.

⁴⁷⁴ Foster, interview; Hutchinson, interview.

⁴⁷⁵ Hutchinson, interview.

⁴⁷⁶ Currie, interview.

⁴⁷⁷ Garfield Rowe, interview; Foster, interview; Currie, interview; Cawley, interview.

⁴⁷⁸ Claudine Housen, "Carib Judged to Aid Maroons in Cockpit Resistance," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 13, 2007.

⁴⁷⁹ Hutchinson, interview.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ Claudine Housen, "Int'l Maroons Defend Cockpit," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 8, 2007.

land is part of the global counter-hegemonic and anti-systemic formations, for the Maroons the struggle is rooted in the ability to continue African traditions in their sovereign territory.

Conclusion

Maroons argue that it is their origins and continued African traditional practices and values that allow them to establish sovereign communities. Maroons maintain that the origins of their governing system came from Africa. They believe that their Maroon Council is modeled after Akan chieftaincy, and this model extends to their land rights and the environment. In particular, through originary and traditional claims, Maroons become inserted in diasporic articulations that have influenced their views on sovereignty. It is articulation and critical practice of the Maroons struggling against the colonial and post-colonial state in order to maintain sovereignty.

Overall, the fundamental issue here pertains to the struggles over sovereignty. Sovereignty references claims to African civilized modernity and to Africans as civilized human subjects. Hence, it rejects notions of African savagery. Here, the meaning of sovereignty for Maroons is a signification of African civilized humanity. Sovereignty is the critical practice of diaspora. It is a rejection of white supremacy.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter briefly summarizes the links between articulation and critical practice of diaspora and sovereignty. Diaspora is the network produced out of mutually recognized enunciations of blackness that create global linkages among all people with originary claims to Africa. Thus, I explored how diasporic articulations can be involved in critical practice. When diaspora is articulated, as a critical practice, it is ultimately engaged in the struggle for Black autonomy or sovereignty. The dissertation is a case study of diaspora and its articulated critical practice by studying the Maroons of Jamaica.

Originary and traditional claims are significant for Maroons and the African Diaspora. In Maroon communities, they are central tenets in the articulation and critical practice of diaspora. In this, Maroons enunciate and make linkages to peoples of African descent through their claims to African authenticity. It is in their oral histories. It is in their belief systems. It is in their family lineage-based system that claims particular affiliated ethnic backgrounds. It is in their Kromanti language. It is in their cultural and historical landmark and sites. It is in their visual, literary, performance arts. Hence, these articulations and critical practice serve to position Maroons as sovereign.

Centrally, the articulation of diaspora can be seen as a critical practice of Maroon sovereignty. Sovereignty is an assertion of African humanity. It is based on claims to African history and authenticity that are enunciated locally. These claims link Maroons to Black people everywhere. Their local specificity is the direct relationship claimed to authentic African forms. The political, economic, and social organization of Maroons differ from other communities of African descent. The enunciations of blackness differ significantly even though these communities make mutually recognized claims to blackness and it is on the basis of such recognition that linkages are made among them.

Sovereignty is a critical practice of Maroons. Thus, Maroons seek to have the Jamaican state (and other international bodies) fully recognize their sovereignty. For instance, in the 1970s, Colonel C. L. G. Harris, as a senator in the Jamaican National government, attempted to make a motion to have the Jamaican state recognize Maroons' autonomy but it failed.⁴⁸² In 1984, the then-Colonel Harris Cawley attempted without success to have the United Nations recognize the community as a sovereign nation. Also, in 2008, Colonel Sidney Peddle worked on full acknowledgement of the community's independence through the United Nations.⁴⁸³ In a 2011 *Jamaica Gleaner* newspaper article, Colonel Ferron Williams called for the autonomy of Maroon communities to be recognized in the Jamaican Constitution.⁴⁸⁴

However, the Jamaican government does not recognize Maroon sovereignty but it uses Maroon history in creating the narrative of Jamaican nationhood. Many government officials express solidarity with Maroons as foundational to national independence. For instance, in 2009, at Accompong Town's annual Kojo Day celebration, the State Minister for Mining and Telecommunications, Lawrence Broderick, stated:

⁴⁸² "Maroons Have no Special Rights under Jamaican Laws," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), February 10, 1973.

⁴⁸³ "Maroon Indigenous People Seeking Autonomy in Jamaica," *Caribbean Media Corporation News Agency* (Bridgetown, Barbados), January 8, 2008.

⁴⁸⁴ Horace Hines, "Maroons Demand Autonomy 'We Want to be Recognised by Jamaican Constitution,'" Says Maroon Chief," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 13, 2011, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/Maroons-demand-autonomy_8288186.

There are certain defining moments in every nation's history that helped to create the current atmosphere that everyone enjoys. And that peace treaty which was signed in 1738 represents a fighting spirit of our people to take on the odds at all times. If there was no Captain Cudjoe, there would have been no Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Barack Obama or Usain Bolt, so we must celebrate and remind everyone that we can triumph in any situation.⁴⁸⁵

Moreover, in 2012, at Accompong Town, the annual Kojo Day celebration was made the first official event of Jamaica's 50th anniversary of independence. Sydney Bartley, Principal Director of Culture in the Ministry of Youth and Culture of the Jamaican Government, asserted that if it had not been for the struggle of Kojo and Nanny they would not be celebrating today but perhaps would still be "somewhere cutting cane."⁴⁸⁶ Then, in 2013, at Accompong Town, Lisa Hanna, Minister of Youth and Culture, connecting with Maroons, argued for Jamaicans to return to their roots in order to move forward, observed that we could learn a lot from the Ashanti governance structure, which ensured that every member of the community was taken care of.⁴⁸⁷ She later declared that she aims to engage the Maroon community in a cultural mission for the protection of Jamaica's children, recapturing the Asante approach of working with the community to care for, respect, and love their children.⁴⁸⁸

Indeed, the post-colonial Jamaican state embraces the narrative of Maroons being freedom fighters and forerunners of Jamaican nationhood (in this nationhood which Maroons are part of but not sovereign from). Since the 1970s, Nanny has been one of the national heroes of Jamaica and almost no national event passes without acknowledgement of Maroons' contribution to nationhood. This is especially true for Emancipation Day, Heroes' Day, and Independence Day. Increasingly since then, governmental officials have visited the various Maroon communities and explored plans of cooperation with them.

Maroon communities are entangled with a variety of apparatuses of the state, including educational institutions (such as the University of Technology), cultural centers or institutes (including The Institute of Jamaica and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, and Jamaica Cultural Development Commission), environmental centers, (such as the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica), and community-development offices (including the Social Development Commission, Jamaica National Building Society, and Jamaica Intellectual Property Office).⁴⁸⁹ Hence, the Jamaican state actively inscribes Maroons into the space of the state.

⁴⁸⁵ "Accompong Maroons Urged to Preserve History," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 13, 2009, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/accompong-maroons-urged-to-preserve-history/>.

⁴⁸⁶ "Thousands Celebrate With the Maroons," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 9, 2012, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/thousands-celebrate-with-the-maroons/>; Horace Hines, "Maroon Celebrations Kick Starts 'Jamaica 50'," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 19, 2012, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/Maroon-celebrations-kick-starts--Jamaica-50-10588223>.

⁴⁸⁷ "Minister Hanna Calls for Return to Traditional Values," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 7, 2013, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/minister-hanna-calls-for-return-to-traditional-values/>.

⁴⁸⁸ "Minister Hanna to Engage Maroon Communities in Cultural Mission," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 9, 2013, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://jis.gov.jm/minister-hanna-to-engage-maroon-communities-in-cultural-mission/>.

⁴⁸⁹ Garfield Rowe, interview; Garfield Myers, "Maroons Prepared to Die for Cockpit, Says Colonel Peddie," *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 4, 2007, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/117440_Maroons-prepared-to-die-for-Cockpit--says-Colonel-Peddie; Currie, interview; "Maroons Gear up for Annual Celebrations," *JIS News* (Kingston), January 3, 2005, accessed December 4, 2012,

Other means of entanglement are through state financial investments in the Maroon communities. The Jamaican state has invested tens of millions of Jamaican dollars in Maroon communities over the years. The state has taken an active part in helping to preserve and protect Maroon heritage for mutual economic benefits. For instance, the Tourism Product Development Company Limited (TPDCo), working with Moore Town and Accompong Town, spent more than \$3 million on infrastructure work, human-resource development, and other projects for the development of the heritage tourism trade in the early 2000s.⁴⁹⁰ In 2012, the Forest Conservation Fund spent over \$5 million to revitalize a seven-mile trail from Accompong to Quick Step.⁴⁹¹ Around the same time, The Social Investment Fund granted Charles Town Maroons \$18 million to assist in the rehabilitation of the Asafu yard, museum, and bathroom facilities for their project to expand heritage tourism in the community.⁴⁹²

In this, diaspora plays a role through the linkages in which the community is involved in creating the conditions of sovereignty. Politically, the community is engaged in international relations that allow it some autonomy from state authority, economically, these linkages produce revenue and income earning opportunities independent of the state and of statist control.

Maroons struggle to have their sovereignty recognized even in the international realm. Maroons unlike most communities in Jamaica often engage directly with international and intergovernmental bodies and organizations. Although not recognized as sovereign, Maroons often operate as such sovereign and establish foreign contacts with a number of foreign national bodies including the governments of Canada, Ghana, Japan, Nigeria, Suriname, and United States. There are also relations with intergovernmental agencies such as European Union and the United Nations.⁴⁹³ Maroons engage in the critical practice as a sovereign group in at least symbolic relations with these entities.

In financial terms, Maroons seek economic self-determination and self-sufficiency. In Maroon communities, their culture is displayed and shown mostly to other peoples of African descent. In recent decades, heritage tourism has increased in Maroon communities, generating revenues in the millions in Jamaican currency. In Accompong Town and Charles Town, there are near daily tours of these settlements and their heritage sites for a fee. Most of the tourists are local Jamaicans but they have a few overseas visitors. In 2006, according to Deputy Colonel Robinson of Accompong, they have “a fair number of local visitors but that on average only five

<http://jis.gov.jm/maroons-gear-up-for-annual-celebrations/>; “Accompong Town gets Internet Café,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), March 24, 2011, accessed December 4, 2012,

http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/Accompong-Town-gets-Internet-cafe_8532767; “Junitavan Lagoon in Accompong to be Restored,” *JIS News* (Kingston), August 13, 2008, accessed December 4, 2012,

<http://jis.gov.jm/junitavan-lagoon-in-accompong-to-be-restored/>; “JIPO Paves Way for Growth by Protecting Intellectual Property Rights,” *JIS News* (Kingston), May 4, 2009, accessed December 4, 2012,

<http://jis.gov.jm/jipo-paves-way-for-growth-by-protecting-intellectual-property-rights/>; “Govt. to Focus on Cultural Industries,” *JIS News* (Kingston), March 28, 2008, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://jis.gov.jm/govt-to-focus-on-cultural-industries/>; Peter Kavanaugh, “Maroons Fight to Preserve Tradition,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), May 3, 2008.

⁴⁹⁰ “Moore Town Maroon Village to be part of Tourism Product,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), February 15, 2002, accessed December 4, 2012,

<http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/21309-Moore-Town-Maroon-Village-to-be-part-of-tourism-product>; Petre Williams, “Leveraging History,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), August 18, 2002, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/30566-Leveraging-History>.

⁴⁹¹ “Fresh Lease on Life for Maroon Trail,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 30, 2012.

⁴⁹² “Charles Town Maroons Get \$18m For Asafu Yard Rehab,” *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), June 27, 2012, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20120627/news/news91.html>

⁴⁹³ Williams, interview; Garfield Rowe, interview.

overseas visitors come to the property daily.”⁴⁹⁴ He also said that tourists visiting for a week or two are usually hosted in community member’s homes.⁴⁹⁵ Thousands of people have been attending the annual Koyo Day celebration with an entry fee of about \$400 or \$500 Jamaican (or U.S. equivalent of \$4 or \$5) per adult.⁴⁹⁶ In 2002, when there were about 17,000 patrons in attendance, it was estimated that the year’s celebrations netted more than \$500,000 in gate receipts alone.⁴⁹⁷ In 2005, former Colonel Meredie Rowe stated that the Accompong Maroon government alone collects over \$3.5 million Jamaican dollars (or \$35,000 U.S. equivalent) per year from tourist visits and other sources.⁴⁹⁸ In 2011, 2012, and 2013, these numbers of visitors correlated with my own experience. All of these visitors, who also may purchase products or other services, provide revenue to the wider community in the millions of Jamaican dollars.

Nevertheless, for the Maroons, there is a reality of incorporation into the Jamaican statist structure. However, there is the symbolic significance of sovereignty claims for all the reasons discussed. The issue is how the conflicts that ensue are dealt with and negotiated. The state cannot undermine the legitimacy of the sovereignty claims and the Maroons cannot escape their entanglement with the state. The Jamaican state needs the Maroons to sustain their narrative of nationhood that makes it so that both are entangled in each other’s existence. This is the dilemma.

Although Maroons are entangled with and inscribed into the Jamaican state, Maroons, through the articulation of diaspora, critically practice sovereignty. Maroons claim sovereignty and support these claims by carving out negotiated spheres of autonomy that are constantly changing. It is a politics of representation. Maroon blackness is enunciated through claims to authentic African practice. Non-Maroons in the New World authenticate their blackness through their collective histories of slavery. This history cannot be erased. In the same way, the history of sovereignty for Maroons cannot be erased. Maroons make claims to sovereignty as the basis of Black humanity.

Maroons, in Accompong Town in particular, believe that possessing a treaty which is still binding and having a unique history make it possible for them to continue to claim sovereignty. They want to preserve the material conditions upon which these claims are made, such as authority over land.

Fundamentally, Maroons’ critical practice of sovereignty is pitted against the reality of their entanglement with the modern (Black) Jamaican state. This critical practice is the manner in which they assert sovereignty through the use of African authenticity that instantiates them into the space of the diaspora. The state (colonial and postcolonial), on the other hand, sees Maroons as integral to its claim of sovereignty and hence Maroons are claimed to be under statist jurisdiction. Hence, forms of collaboration with the state are interpreted differently by the

⁴⁹⁴ Claudia Gardner, “Maroons not Capitalising on Tourism”, *Jamaica Gleaner* (Kingston), January 11, 2006.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Horace Hines, “Suriname, Ghana Maroon Groups for Accompong Celebrations,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston) January 3, 2008, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/130968_Suriname--Ghana-maroon-groups-for-Accompong-celebrations-Sunday

⁴⁹⁷ Conroy Walker, “Accompong Celebrations a Success Despite Concerns about Event Date,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), January 12, 2002, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/19578_Accompong-celebrations-a-success-despite-concerns-about-event-date.

⁴⁹⁸ “Accompong Maroons at Odds Over Land,” *Jamaica Observer* (Kingston), December 24, 2005, accessed December 4, 2012, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/pfversion/95214_Accompong-Maroons-at-odds-over-land

Maroons and the state. Diaspora is the linkages established among different Black communities and their peoples through enunciations of blackness. Sovereignty is an assertion of Black liberation.

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