Maroon Theory and Me-thou-poiesis[1]

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Abstract:

Taking *maroon* as a complexly embodied psychoanalytic hermeneutic aesthetic in Caribbean literatures in English, I tell a story of my own production as a curriculum scholar *with* others through poetry and photographs. In many ways, aspects of my experience of doctoral education in curriculum studies in Canada can be described as a *marooning*. This perhaps is not a unique experience. However, in my case, very early on in the process I physically abandoned my doctoral seminar and though my body returned to the classroom in the coming weeks I do not think my spirit ever has. That moment has become an identity marker, somatically sutured and indexed to a mythopoetic re-construction of a-Being-not-at-home-with-oneself. And as such, that moment serves to situate *maroonage* and to prompt a discussion of *maroon theory* and its place in curriculum theorizing.

Keywords: mythopoetics, maroon theory, post-colonial autoethnography

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[1] This term is a play on mythopoiesis. The "myth" is transformed into relationality. The Me-thou is a play on/nod to Buber's I and Thou text. The point is to crack apart the conceptual mythopoetic into its underlying autobiographical embodied experiences in the Me-thou relation whilst acknowledging that Buber's "I" is not the same as the Gen-X Millennial "Me." Me-thou is an interruption.

The death of curriculum studies will come not because of its flight from the field, but because of its lack of reckoning with its own history. This reckoning is not simply an intellectual exercise, but also a structural, personal, and spiritual process. It requires that curriculum workers in every educational context collectively light the fire and expose ourselves and our ideas to the heat; that we become more rather than less burnt; more rather than less dirty; more rather than less "Brown". (Gaztambide-Fernandez & Murad, 2011, p. 14)

Shifting shades of Brown swirl in a caramelization reaction.
Seventeen and learning to make pelau[2] before heading off,
to Study.
Abroad,
I still take my tea with sugar. (Khan, n.d.)

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Section 1: Me-thou-poiesis

Ah splinter in d "I"[3]

*O*n the sixth day, a little past the half-way point in my first year doctoral seminar, after two hours of not uttering a single word, apart from *"I did not read it,"* I silently packed up my belongings, got up, handed in, face-down, a midterm doctoral assignment that I had described as "inviting parody," and made the bright blustery mid-afternoon walk home, cold splinters burning in my eye.

Much was on my mind. A student's unexpected death a few weeks prior during routine surgery—the second from my graduating (secondary school) class of 2001, the same year I was first diagnosed with depression—was being worked through via the medium of film in another course. And news of my mother's illness, cancer in the spine and lungs, secondary tumors, waiting for my sister to call to say that they had found the primary source and whether it was treatable or not…

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[2] A Caribbean dish of rice, peas, and stewed meat prepared in a single iron pot.
[3] Three meanings are alluded to here: the literal (something impairing vision); the metaphorical fracturing of individual subjectivity and some little mote/motif in the Self.

Figure 1: X-ray showing secondary tumors. (For copyright information, see endnote[i].)

It was not.

"Whose side would you be on?" Such an "unhomely" question. Only a curriculum studies curriculum that seems to have unduly concerned itself with picking "sides"—aligning oneself with a singular side of the disjunction, not inviting pursuit of the productive conjunctive, nor "complicated conversations," an impoverished partitioning and imagining of an educational situation—would, could, think to ask it. Are there only 2 sides? Suppose you're not picked by any side? Or picked last?

Back at the apartment, I crawled into bed, pulled up the covers and slept, soundly. At night, alone, in the silence, I would write the first draft of a poem ("Caramel Maroon," below). And though my body would return to the seminar classroom and to curriculum studies in the coming weeks and years, and I would eventually "finish" this "Introduction to Curriculum Studies" course, I do not think that my spirit has…

Yet,
Here I am, contributing to this.[4]
Even while,
I feel no "sense of belonging"[5] (Good, Rattan & Dweck, 2012) here in this community.
But I am trying.
Am I, really? ;-) and, if so, what and who is on trial?

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[4] This paper was originally accepted for the Provoking Curriculum Studies Conference (2013) but due to 'circumstances' following completion of my PhD was not able to be presented.

[5] Sense of belonging is defined by educational psychologists Good, Rattan and Dweck (2012) as "involv[ing] one's personal feelings of membership and acceptance in an academic community in which positive affect, trust levels and willingness to engage remain high" (p. 702).

Caramel Maroon

My blue ballpoint pen rests uncomfortably upon the blue lined notebook paper.
Its broken clip leaves a scar like a soldier's shattered helmet.

It cuts a cross,
crucifying lines,
point extruded,
ready,
quivering
with every shallow breath and nervous shake of restless feet,
betraying the throbbing in my left cheek
that comes from holding tongue and thought in check.
She lies,
waiting for me to pick her up,
pull sword from stone,
and press into memory of forgotten trees.
No ink will spill past that meatus today!
I can no more be unfaithful to my muse as to myself.
The pen that moves and the tongue that speaks,
without examined piety,
authors ruin.

A maroon narrative continues to write itself on *this* plantation…
　　I am brown, and yellow and red,
　　dirty proud blood—
　　submarine memory of Eastern caravans and caravels—
　　Caramel maroon,
　　residue of sugar's ménage with fire, oil, and iron.

　　I, inheritor of dust and salt and coral fragment,
　　by downing tool
　　scratch a comma in this world…

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Call and Response

When I first started graduate education in Canada I was confused but curious about the question-answer routines enacted in our seminars. A question would be put forward, and frequently, someone would respond almost immediately, and then another and another... I didn't understand this pattern of turn-taking that I was observing in which there seemed little wait-time for thoughtful consideration of the question and little direct intervention of the professor as the conversation unfolded except to "keep it civil".
Decentralized control (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2015)
or self-organized irresponsibility?
I also learned that if I waited, held my tongue, and indicated that I wished to speak, on most occasions this would be ignored by the collective unless the professor directly intervened.

I once tried it the other way, for a moment, and started to speak without indicating that I desired to speak—as I had seen others do—but I think I might have come across as being "aggressive," "arrogant" and "disrespectful"; at worst a representative of something I think I remember someone calling the
"hegemony of colonial patriarchal relations."

Maybe it was?
Maybe I am?
Who am I?
Am i-
capable?

Section 2: Orient-ting

"Public discourse about the doctoral curriculum is largely absent" (Young, 2001, p. 4).

"This course has been designed to provide students with an *orientation* to the field of curriculum studies" (Doctoral Seminar 1 Course Outline, 2008; italics added).

To orient, literally means to arrange facing the east ("Orient," 2016). It is associated with taking one's bearings: i.e. where one is positioned in relation and relative to some identifiable points in a landscape. In cultural studies and postcolonial theory, it is used to refer to systems of representations that position/construct an alien Other as abject or exotic object (e.g. Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2006). As an international doctoral student in a Department of Curriculum Studies in Canada (later aspirationally re-named /re-branded as a Department of Curriculum *and* Pedagogy) the metaphor is in many ways apt to describe the curriculum as I experienced it and as announced in the course outline of the first doctoral seminar.

This orient-ting[6] (double entendre intended) has been a productive experience. It has pushed me to locate sources outside the set fames with which I was presented and with which I was asked (if not explicitly) to "identify." To locate landscapes and mindscapes in which I find a better *fit*. I find for example that my current curriculum experience has already been well represented in the literatures of exile (e.g. Madsen, 1999). In these literatures I have (re-)discovered/located a trope, a resource I did not know I had available—namely, the concept of the maroon narrative, whose features include concerns with innocence, exile and hurt, and a movement towards an understanding of identity, resistance, rebellion and survival, withdrawal, flight and dis-ease, transculturation, creolization and miscegenation and artistic or mythic rebirth. Archetypical figures include those of the shipwrecked European adventurer, the rebellious native/slave, the mulatto and the writer/artist in exile, all of whom must become resourceful, resilient and adaptive. In this way the maroon is able to make a home elsewhere out of whatever is at hand (James, 2002).

This paper, in one sense, recapitulates the sort of psychological and physical disconnection from peoples and places, what Reed-Danahay (1997) calls "a rewriting of the self and the social" (p. 4), the struggle(s) to make anew, something new out of something old, in an at-times unforgiving academic environment that has until recently been infrequently addressed in the literatures (academic and non-academic) about doctoral education (Lesko et al, 2008). It wrestles with the difficulty of putting insides and outsides in relation (Ellsworth, 2005), or, to adopt a more mathematically themed metaphor via origami, of introducing a fold, a limen, a memory within the medium, within an individual self. Taking *maroon* as a complexly embodied hermeneutic in Caribbean literatures in English and deploying it in relation to my experiences here in Canada I have tried to "tell a

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[6] Here I am speaking/writing in Trinidadian Creole dialect and seeking to evoke multiple meanings: orienting as verb; orient "thing" as noun (one of the many meanings of ting in the dialect corresponds with that of the standard English "thing"); and disorienting as an adjective to describe the experience.

story of my own production" as a curriculum scholar *with* others through poetry and photographs.

These emotionally laden moments of self-other negotiation have become markers, touch-stones, etched into mind and self (D'Amasio, 2010) which I have indexed to a re-construction and re-presentation of a-Being-not-at-home-with-oneself. In this[7] poetic re-collection of fragments of self-identity, I have attempted to honour the origins of my maroon heritage situated within a colonial history in pursuit of first sugar and then oil and now "Industry,"[8] understood in its broadest trans-phenomenal sense, as well as my own more recent ancestor maroons, coming from the Middle East, China, Europe, Africa and India to intermingle with "older" New World Amerindian maroons and the peculiar genetic legacies they have bequeathed to me. As a "brown-skin-boy" from the Caribbean island of Trinidad, I have become aware of the advantages, privileges, price, and perils of "exoticism" or "foreign-ness" and of any sort of untamed, (note, not "wild") assertive, heterosexual masculinities in the academy.

Indeed, at my very first conference (in 2005) as an international graduate student, one of the very first questions posed to me by Bill Pinar was, "*Do you feel exoticized*?" I did not understand the conceptual space that he was coming from at the time as I had not yet engaged with thinking or reading about the debates about identity politics and post-identity politics—the politics of belonging and not-belonging and of academic visibility and invisibility. I was coming from a different place altogether. A place where I had not yet been able to name the identity that I was attempting to perform, albeit differently (Khan, 2010).

I Name Myself

Autobiography has come to form a significant current in the streams of curriculum consciousness in the post-reconceptualist era. In autobiography studies, increasingly, scholars have turned to "out-law genres" (Kaplan, 1992) such as slave narratives and prison diaries. Autobiographical narration also forms an important strategy in postcolonial literatures and criticism (Moore-Gilbert, 2009, 2012). In the latter, acts of naming and re-naming are significant as markers in the histories of (Anglo-European) colonized peoples. Nakai (2011) argues that unlike European autobiographies such as Rousseau's *Confessions*, slave narratives "were not personal confessions but political statements written for a public

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[7] "This" here is deliberately ambiguous. The previous sentence is also self-referential. Thirdly, the conceptual development of the piece does not proceed in a 'straight/forward' manner. These 'slippery' and 'evasive' language strategies could be described as a postcolonial fractal aesthetic or a mythopoetic maroon aesthetic in that it is simultaneously a conscious and deliberate "writing back" and against the grain of academic reading strategies, a frothy tide moving in and out, waves folding in and over and under each as they perfuse the imaginary boundaries, and provoke remembrance of the poems that open and close the piece (parts) and the entire paper (the whole) and seeing how they relate to and recursively resemble each other. Heterologous to the "subterranean" anarcho-arborescent rhizomatic philosophy of knowledge offered by Deleuze and Guattari, post-continental's archipelagic *Philosophy of the Sea* (Irobi, 2006) proposes instead that "the unity is submarine" (Braithwaithe, 1974, p. 64). That is, in addition to the workings of the "troublesome" unconscious mind, the visible pan-electric mycelial coverage of material and ideological flows across the planet reveals and masks the connected oceanic passages, voyages of origin and trauma, a global drama, where the bodies of slaves and slavers—shipwrecks—do not rest in peace. We think to work separated-ly. But, underwater, the unity is submarine.

[8] Creative Industries, Knowledge Industries, Service Industries, Culture Industries, Body Industries, Tourist Industries, and on a trope in education of the "industrious" student as one who applies themselves to study.

cause: the abolition of slavery" (p. 1) and whose intended audience included "the abolitionist movement and its advocates" (p. 7).

But back to the doctoral seminar, in visiting the instructor in his office a week after "jumping overboard" and attempting to tread carefully in the cold emotional waters and bring forth a language and voice to account for my abandonment of the seminar and my colleagues, his cautious, and at that time curious, response was a not knowing "what to make of ~~your~~[my] confession."

This paper is not a confession. This paper and performance does, however, share some features with the type of autoethnography known as "oppositional autobiography" which Nakai (2011), drawing upon Mary Louise Pratt (1992), takes as "primarily a transcultural phenomenon in which the autoethnographer appropriates or mimics[9] the narrative modes and idioms of the dominant . . . culture . . . opening up the possibility of anti-colonial interventions" (p. 3). While autoethnography as an area of study emerged from its disciplinary home in anthropology in the mid-20th century (Patton, 2002, pp. 132-133) (see Figure 2) and, as Burdell and Swadener (1999) point out, had been in use "for over two decades by literary critics, anthropologists and sociologists" (p. 22), in education, references to autoethnographic research (in English) have a presence beginning in the late 1980's and 1990's and include presentations which span narrative through performance (Hughes, Pennington & Makris, 2012), and that offer, "vehicles for talking to each other across the borders of discipline and identity locations" (Burdell & Swadener, 1999, p. 25).
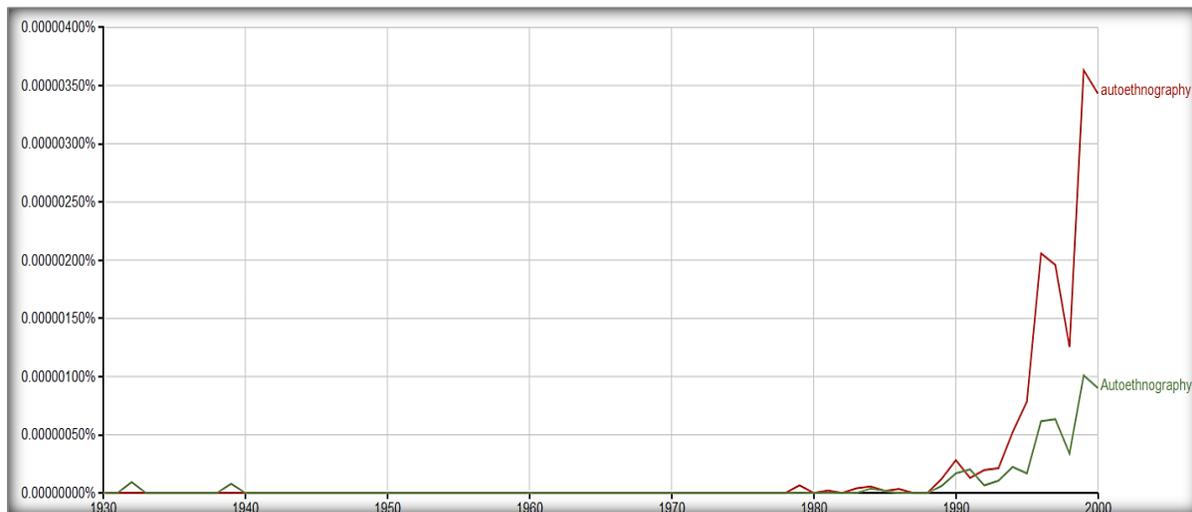

Figure 2: Google Books Ngram Viewer showing usage of "autoethnography" in Google's corpus of scanned books in English between 1930 and 2000. [No instances prior to 1930] (Google, 2016).

In naming myself "caramel maroon," I wish to emphasise how seriously I take the act of naming oneself (and others) as an ethically fraught act. While Hughes, Pennington and Makris (2012) place the origin of autoethnography over a half-century ago, as a

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[9] Note that this mimicking from the margins of power-knowledge is qualitatively different from the mimicking from the center of power-knowledge. Its destination is not "mockery" of the dominant culture but awareness, i.e. by temporarily self-transposing the dominant genre onto one's performance of self, the possibility of recognition of an Otherness that emerges from self is made possible.

situated practice in the discipline of anthropology, recent work in reconceptualising postcolonial autobiography (e.g. Moore-Gilbert, 2009) extends the origins beyond this disciplinary Anglo-European formulation. Historian Marcus Rediker (2007), for example, draws from the 1789 autobiographical[10] writings of former American slave, deep-sea sailor and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano (1789/2001) whom he describes as "the first person to write extensively about the slave trade from the perspective of the enslaved" (p. 109). In particular, he argues that the narrative demonstrates that the author was aware of "naming as an act of power" (p. 129). Rediker recounts that after enslavement the name, *Olaudah Equinox*, was taken from the man and changed repeatedly by his masters on the boats he travelled. He was called *Michael*, then *Jacob*, then *Gustavus Vassa*, until, finally, he reclaimed his own name (p. 129).

Nakai (2011) argues that "Equiano is an autoethnographer in Pratt's sense of the word: he has created an oppositional genre by appropriating the narrative modes and idioms of western autobiography" (p. 7). This position is also supported by Moore-Gilbert's analysis (2012). Rediker (2007) points to the ethical complexity of naming in reminding that, "just as the loss of a name was part of the culture stripping of dispossession, the assignment of a new name could be an act of aggression and domination" (p. 129). And indeed in choosing the new name, *caramel maroon*, for myself, I recognise that my assertiveness may sometimes be interpreted as aggression, on occasion arrogance, though there is never any intent to dominate or humiliate or appropriate.

My secondary purpose in this work has been to present my narrative poetically, and not as a confession; this "writing back" is not an indictment of any individual or institution, but a testimony. Like slave narratives, it is also a political statement aimed at the intellectual, political, moral and economic leadership—the head, heart and hands—of curriculum scholars. However, the primary purpose and the public/political cause to which it attempts to ally itself is the "waste" (Bauman, 2004) represented by all those doctoral conversations and "attritioned" and atrophied candidates that until recently have gone unrecorded and unacknowledged except in departmental accounting ledgers of "time to completion" rates, individual instructors' grade-books, on web-pages of recent "placements"/"promotions", alumni magazines, and as they factor into university rankings of research "productivity". As Rediker (2007) notes of the slave trade,

> Most merchants . . . insulated themselves from the human consequences of their investments, thinking of the slave ship in abstract useful ways, reducing all to columns of numbers in ledger books and statements of profits and loss. . . . The time has come for a different accounting. (p. 353)
> It is well past time[11].

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[10] Rediker (2007) acknowledges that at present there is controversy regarding the authenticity of his account and biographical details. However, he asks the reader to note this caveat and to consider Equiano as an "oral historian, the keeper of the common story, the griot of sorts…which means that his account is no less faithful to the original experience, only different in its sources and genesis" (p. 109). Readers interested in the origin of this controversy are directed to Carreta (2003, 2006). In drawing upon his account and interpretation of Equiano's autobiographical narrative I have honored Rediker's request.

[11] Furedi (2015) discusses the current media obsession with slavery as "an opportunistic manipulation of historical memory" that ultimately causes "confusion as to what constitutes our responsibility as human beings, and what does not." Indeed, since beginning this piece at least 2 years ago there has been increased interest in popular media and scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic on the Trans-Atlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans and with other forms of enslavement that persist into the present.

Interactive Aside: Two (or More) Minutes

In preparation for the remaining sections, it is worth taking two minutes to view Kahn and Bouie's (2015) poetic interactive infographic in Figure 3 and Burdumy and Rothman's (n.d.) visualizations in Figure 4, while remembering the significant bodies (both European and non-European), blood and money that each "dot" or pixel of colour represents (and fails to represent).
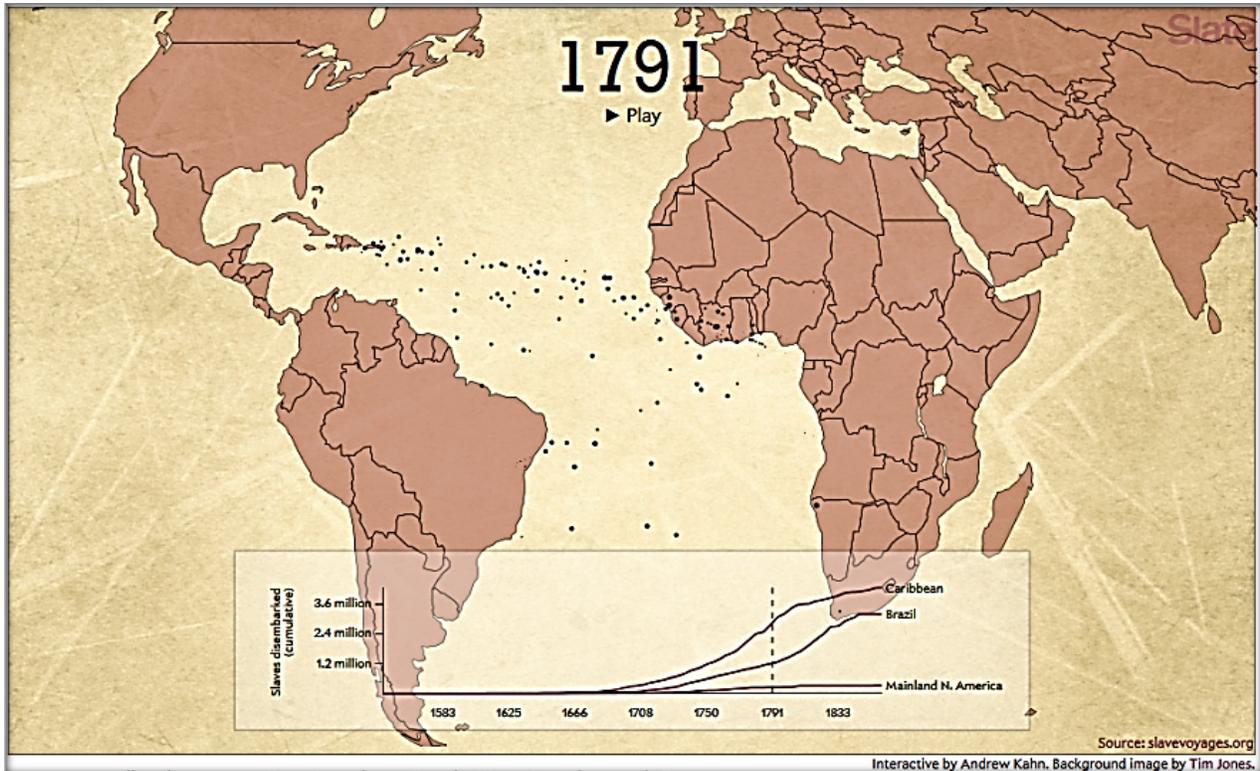

Figure 3: Screen capture of Kahn and Bouie's (2015) interactive infographic "The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes." For the animated visualization, link to
http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html
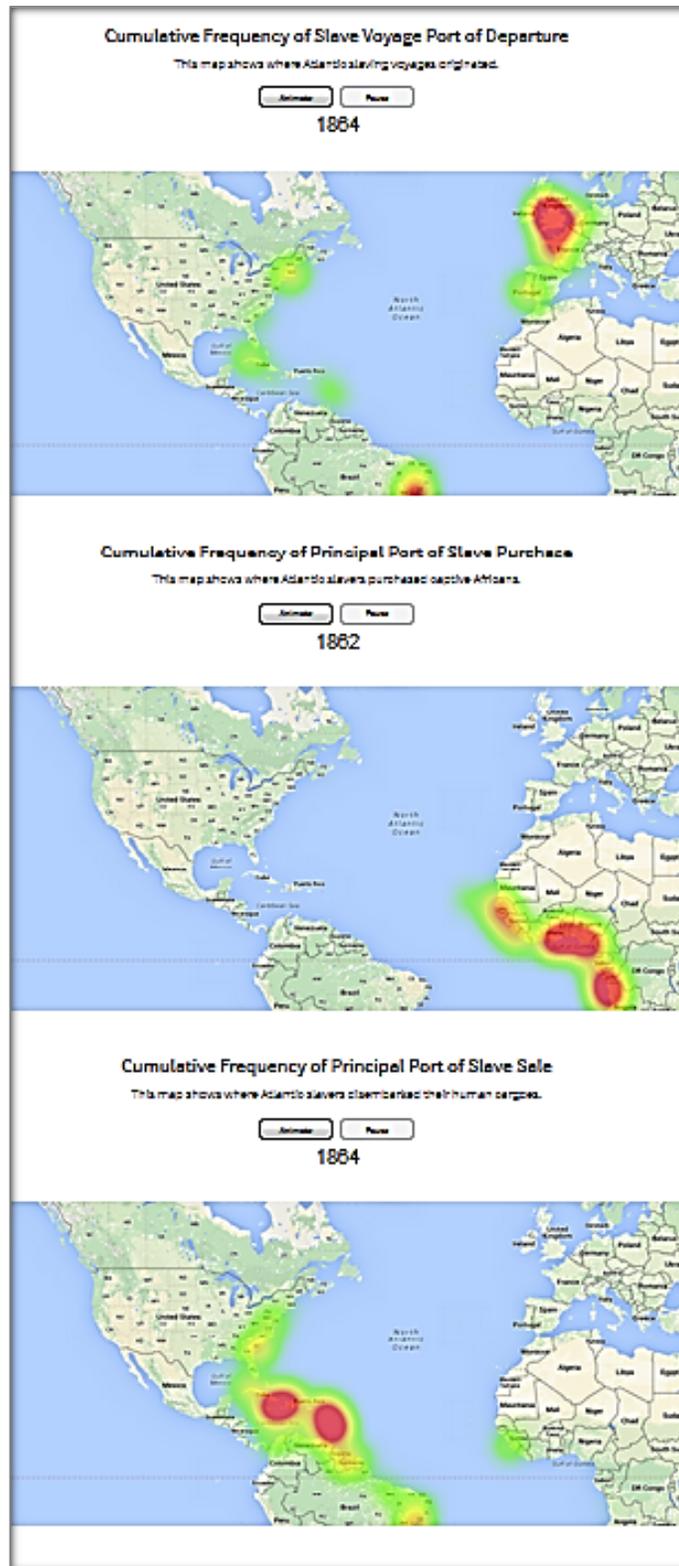
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Figure 4: Screen captures from Burdumy & Rothman's (n.d.) Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Visualization showing the "triangular trade" (Europe→Africa→Americas→Europe). For the animated visualization, link to http://mcb226.github.io/SlaveTrade/

Section 3: The Maroon Concept

In this section I introduce a theoretical foundation for the concept of *maroon* used in this paper. I take as my starting point the expanded perspective of the significance of the maroon as a useful trope as articulated by Caribbean theorist and educator Cynthia James (2002). While related concepts like exile, migration, and diaspora are well-studied and can be found in the main introductory texts of postcolonial and cultural studies (e.g. Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2000, 2002, 2006; Young, 2001) as well as within their own disciplinary formulations (migration studies, diaspora studies), there are fewer scholarly considerations of *maroon* and *maroonage*. These studies tend to be confined to literary and culture studies, the historical study of maroon communities or, in one case, as a metaphor in education (Gift, 2008). While Gift (2008) uses the concept to explore the teaching of the Transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans, the concept, to the best of my knowledge, has not been used either literally, or as a conceptual metaphor, in educational or curriculum theorizing.

It is my goal to use this lesser-studied and as yet under-valued concept from Caribbean literary theory, not as a wedge, shovel, sword, or pen, but in a more mindful way—as a sacred comma, a pause, and a mindful moment for reflection.

Conceptual Development

The term 'maroon' in Caribbean history and literary theory is generally used to refer, historically, to primarily African slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries who, having escaped plantation slavery, formed independent communities in mountainous and forested areas. James (2002) notes that these maroon communities continued to "harr[y] the British . . . eventually securing autonomous existence in [some] territories" (p. 8). Tracing the different articulations of the concept, James offers evidence for an origin in the Spanish word *cimarron*, which "in the New World originally referred to domestic cattle that had taken to the hills in Hispaniola and soon after to [Amer]Indian slaves who had escaped from the Spanish as well" (p. 11). By the 17th and 18th century, the term *maroonage* had entered into Anglophone Caribbean vocabulary via its French usage and was transformed into a referent with connotations of "shipwrecked" or being "isolated", a common feeling among European sojourners (p. 14). This feeling foreshadowed the psychological ambivalence and anomie associated with the term in 19th century literature about the Caribbean when,

> "to be marooned" meant to be psychologically placed in the condition of a Caribbean runaway with all its attendant connotations of deprivation, brutality, withdrawal, and separation from ancestral culture . . . harbor[ing] connotations of pleasuring for a period in the wilds like the natives . . . [and suggesting] connotations of 'tourist" behavior. (James, 2002, p. 13)

As the concept evolved over time, "depictions of *physical confrontation* in a plantation context" (italics added) associated with plantation runaways waned and emphases on "*psychological confrontations* mainly in villages and urban yards" (italics added) increased so that, "*maroon* becomes less associated with open rebellion . . . and more associated with self-analysis, rootlessness, and identity formation within the context of ethnic diversity and ethnic estrangement" (James, 2002, p. 55). James elaborates:

> In the hands of Caribbean poet and cultural critic Kamau Brathwaite,

> maroonage becomes a trope in which ruin and dispossession become "the survival rhythm from which [societal] transformation may proceed" (232). Thus he introduces features such as resilience, survival, resourcefulness and innovation alongside concepts such as ancestral guidance and tragic warriorhood into his maroon embrace. (p. 8)

The concept of psychological maroonage as "withdrawal, with flight . . . manifesting itself in internal dis-ease" (James, 2002, p. 8) is developed further by Gordon Rohlehr, as James explains in exploring the terms "'self-in-maroonage' and 'the submerged self' . . . terms connotat[ing] inner resistance and self-affirmation" (p. 8). An important future direction is to connect the literary dimensions of maroonage with the literatures in psychology on displacement, immigration, belonging and resilience.

Cultural maroonage is perhaps the conceptual articulation that will be most familiar to readers. René Dépèstre defines it as "an artistic mission of resistance—In postcolonial terms, artistic effort that stakes its distinction on writing against the grain of the European and European depiction of the Caribbean" (as quoted in James, 2002, p. 9). In maroon narratives, postcolonial emphases on 'writing back' and 'contrapuntal readings' represent "an emergent voice that seeks to refashion English. [It] no longer wishes to be destabilized by the English pentameter . . . [and is] burdened with an "urge to interrupt the text" (James, 2002, p. 6). This mission of resistance manifested in writing back and contrapuntal readings can be seen as an example of polyphony at play in these works in the way that the multiple ideas of maroon and maroonage inter-relate, the way they *shape* each other through *dialogue*.

Maroon Significations

Accompanying the evolution of the concept is its growing set of significations over time. The complex evolutionary entanglements and miscegenated[12] history of the term maroon in Caribbean literature to date is recapitulated in a polyphony of *textual* signifiers which are dually inflected/infected in ways that correspond to differences in the intersubjective positionings of its two archetypical protagonists—the European and the non-European maroon—and by their somatopsychic vulnerabilities, or what James (2002) euphemistically describes as the consequences of "the differing conditions of their tenure in the Caribbean" (p. 14). James' (2002) comprehensive listing of these signifiers is worth quoting at length:

> Among textual signifiers of maroon narrative, negative landmarks include: feelings of abandonment, exile, isolation, and withdrawal, lawlessness, plunder and piracy; the plantation; slavery; domination; racial conflict and prejudice; a sense of historyless-ness and dispossession; mental aberrations; power struggles and revolts; betrayal and revenge; an ambivalent relationship with the past, with the past home and with

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[12]According to James (2002),

> Transculturation and creolization are also central to Caribbean maroon theory, Unlike "assimilation" …transculturation signifies both hybridity in cultural features such as language and customs, and reciprocal interpentration of cultures…[while] creolization connotes interpenetration of cultures, but toward adaptation…The mulatto [becomes] a key figure in transculturation, métissage, and creolization. Consequently, miscegenation becomes an important marker in maroon texts as a medium for deconstructing the polarity between European and non-European. Miscegenation also provides a metaphor for collaboration and syncretism (p. 10).

the adopted home as loved places, lost places and places of hurt; itinerancy, a sense of transience and a sense of impermanence; a preoccupation with and a high regard for foreign standards, an illusion of greener pastures elsewhere; distortions of normative standards such as beauty; dystopia and defilement; and a tendency to license and abuse.

Positive markers include: a cultivation of psychological and physical defense mechanisms; a heightened sense of warriorhood; accommodation to loss and insecurity; development of survival skills and an effort to retain ancestral ways in addition to an investment in their propagation; a lowering of standards and expectations; miscegenation and creolization; religious and cultural syncretism; a heightened respect for the spiritual world; resourcefulness, resilience, and improvisation; a preoccupation with questions of identity; a desire to make history or to write oneself into history and a desire to establish order out of disorder and to invent the world afresh. (p. 15)

In light of the above, the maroon narrative in Anglo-Caribbean literature can be said to manifest/embody a mythopoetic struggle to reconcile, or perhaps dwell-well-with, oppositional binaries at the level of divided, competing, often contemptuous selves and cultures in half-made societies.

More recently, historian Keith Sandiford (2011), further develops the idea of this mythopoetic struggle in describing a Caribbean-Atlantic *imaginary*[13] that is "at once ahistorical and metatextual . . . residing within a central mythic core" (p. 20), "uncolonizable" (p. 22), "an ocean of movements and cycles and flows" (p. 149) in which the dynamic counterorders of maroonage, or "flight to the hinterlands" (p. 30), and practices like Obeah function as critical if not *kairos* moments of deliberate epistemic "delinking" (Mignolo, 2007) from the static oppressivity of colonial orders. This imaginary, Sandiford contends,

consists in the conceptual power to dissolve conventional mental boundaries . . . that promote the myths of masters and vilify the myths of slaves . . . unit[ing] scattered parts and transcend[ing] 'instituted' negation. . . . It is the repository for meanings, memories and values in which the epistemic vitality of Caribbean-Atlantic culture may be found. (p. 150)

Sandiford's discussion of the Caribbean-Atlantic imaginary may represent one significant feature of the maroon consciousness.

In the literature of the mid to late 20th century, Caribbean maroon narratives do not only continue to depict rebellion, but wrestle with the tensions of accommodation. James (2002) notes that

Increasingly the word *maroon* comes to signify syncretic, indigenous adaptation, arising out of accommodations made by the variety of ethnicities and mixed population . . . texts depict populations grappling with the fact that they can never

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[13] Drawing upon philosopher-social theorist Cornelius Castoriadis, Sandiford takes the imaginary to be "the magma or creative force from which a society's cultural origins may be traced. . . . mostly invisible, self-creating and fluid . . . fashion[ing] the shape and order of social forms . . . creat[ing] or institut[ing] the foundations on which the values, norms, and symbols of a society rest . . . [and which are] in a processual motion of becoming" (p. 1). In this way he delineates his project as being concerned more with the "social and group relations . . . [of] individuals and communities in . . . phases of transition" (p. 16) than with the individual psyche which occupies other theorists of the imaginary such as Jacques Lacan.

reclaim the lost home that recedes in their memory. Characters . . . are challenged to find ways of dealing with a sense of distance, inferiority, and loss in evolving new identities and new societies. (pp. 55-56)

Thus the phenomenon of estrangement, of physical and psychical struggle and resistance of the "difficult knowledge" of not-B/being-at-home, comes to characterize the psychological spaces of the disparate members of the different groups involved in the colonial-modern mission and its current post-colonial variants.

While maroonage is an important element in Sandiford's (2011) articulation of a Caribbean-Atlantic imaginary that crosses and links Amerindians and African slaves' resistance and which "brings into focus the deployment of the landscape" (p. 90) in producing the imaginary, James (2002) argues that, "an Afro-centered ideology has limited the concept . . . to a focus mainly on flight, resistance and survival" (p. 1). As James (2002) argues, the experience of maroonage is perhaps "the most recurrent feature of the Caribbean narrative from the beginning of fictional writing about the Caribbean" (p. 2) where "innocence, exile, and a history of hurt, all revolving around a quest for identity" (James, 2002, p. 6) are its early signifiers and the strict Afro-centric ideological identification perhaps marginalizes other marooned populations in the Caribbean and its diasporas.

Interactive Aside 2: Revolt & Shipwrecks

The following two interactives provide a means of taking another line of flight, of going deeper and across, into the ideas presented in the previous section—that of slave revolt and European shipwreck. The first is a cartographic narrative curated by Vincent Brown (n.d.) and the second a map of new world shipwrecks in the early period of European exploration (Ships of Discovery, n.d.).

Figure 5: Two screen captures of historical infographics regarding slave revolts in Jamaica and shipwrecks in the "New" World. For further visualization, link to http://revolt.axismaps.com/map/ & http://www.shipsofdiscovery.org/v1/shipwrec.htm

The Value of the Maroon Concept for Curriculum Theorizing

> Since the beginning of modern times each successive generation has had its shipwrecks marooned in the social void: the collateral casualties of progress. (Bauman, 2004, p. 15)

> [I]f the implications of "maroon" were explored to the fullest extent, it would be observed that the maroon experience, broadly defined, is the most recurrent feature of the Caribbean narrative. (James, 2002, pp. 1-2)

Over roughly five centuries of usage, the concept of the maroon mutates, from an embodied and enacted ecological signifier of otherness, resistance and rebellion during the birth of the coloniality-modernity-capitalism-slavery epistemic world-view, to a signifier that is expressed in the variegated psychological states and socio-cultural consciousness of individuals and societies who do not find themselves at home anywhere. While the concept persists, it tends to circulate within a too narrowly conceived scholarly imaginary of the historical maroon—though care must be taken that the literal and embodied history of the concept does not become occluded. Others have noted this unusual confinement. For example, James (2002) notes that the French Caribbean poet Edouard Glissant laments the failure of the Caribbean to make the maroon its "tutelary hero" (p. 8) In this paper, I have considered what can be learnt by taking the maroon ethos as an anomalous place of learning (Ellsworth, 2005) and encountering the difficult knowledge of those experiences, traumas, and wounds that cannot be healed, mended, cured, saved, or salved, but must be lived with for as long as they persist.

The maroon concept provides a very broad yet nuanced conceptual schema for talking about the individual and cultural experiences of education in the post-colonial Caribbean and its "outposts" in the North American, British, and European hinterlands. One of its as yet unrealized values is to enable the broadening/blurring of the boundaries of the canon of Caribbean literary and other aesthetic texts to perhaps include narratives in education and curriculum theorizing.

For the study of education and curriculum studies in Caribbean-like societies, the concept of maroonage provides an important way to read the literatures in education and curriculum studies, in particular some of the more recent work in post-colonial and postcolonial studies of education, produced by scholars in "exile". For example, how might synoptic histories of curriculum studies be re-read as *synaptic* texts, maroon narratives in which exiles and shipwrecks are to be found building anew, forming connections among peoples, places, things, and thoughts? For example, might what has come to be called "the reconceptualist movement/era" in North American Curriculum Studies not *also* be understood as intellectual maroons working across their differences in seeking to make differences that make a difference?

Imagining further, and askew, in trying to come to terms with my as yet still fraught relationship with (North American) curriculum studies, I wonder if the encounters between the pilgrim and pioneer Europeans and First Nations, Indigenous, and Aboriginal peoples that founded a new curriculum of relations in the North American New World (both the United States and Canada) could not also be cast within a maroon frame? Certainly there

are similarities in terms of the characteristics and significations identified previously—exile, a fraught relationship with home, indigenous adaptation, syncretism, slavery and revolt, and so on. Note that I do not intend to imply that maroon should mean the same thing or be used in the same way as in the Caribbean, but I find it interesting to reread and attempt to recast this early and later history of curriculum studies in North America in this way, from a perspective I find familiar, useful, productive, and provocative.

In addition, the concepts of maroon and maroonage add to the lexicon in psychoanalytic studies of curriculum studies of individuals and texts in Caribbean-like societies and to the literatures on cosmopolitanism in education—much of which is being written by intellectuals in exile, in one way or another. Sharon Todd (2009), for example, in her recent work on cosmopolitanism, reflexively notes that her monograph was

> conceived at a juncture of my own grappling with upheavals of identity, place and language. . . . My recent move to a new country and all that such relocation entails, has brought home to me the urgency of thinking through the borders of belonging and what kinds of demands we make on ourselves and others to make a new place in the world. (Todd, 2009, vii)

This grappling with issues of identity and place and language, as a result of relocation and working through the demands of cosmopolitanism and education are perhaps manifestations of Todd's own unique maroon narrative, influenced by her movements—both physical and psychological—from North America to Europe. Perhaps the concept of the maroon might have something to say to her or to other writers/educators in "exile" and those who have an interest in education in multicultural contexts.

Working on the concept of maroon across Canada, first in Vancouver (BC) and then in Calgary (AB) and now in St. Catharines (ON), I find that the concept is being influenced and inflected differently and, in particular, has yet to find its voice in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its *Calls to Action* (2015). Here, the history of separation from ancestral cultures is different from my own, and the pain, grief, and hurt of the violence of residential schools on individuals, families, communities, and indeed on cultures, still runs deep. Reconciliation will take time and effort. This suggests a revealing alternative dimension as yet unconsidered by Caribbean maroon theory—the fate of those who were physically separated from their lands via different means (legally, spiritually, economically and generationally) and whose ties to ancestral cultures remain present and visible, but at times remote, fetishized and commoditized. There is then something more even for Caribbean maroon theory to learn in considering the experience of the Indigenous/Aboriginal populations of Canada in the post-residential school/TRC era—in the returning to a home that is no longer home. An emergent question for further theoretical reflection with others is how might the experience of maroonage apply, if at all, if/when one has never left home?

What distinguishes a maroon narrative from other literatures and descriptions of exile and migration for me is the coming to awareness of an oppressive situation, the active revolt against the oppressive situation/formulation, the conscious decision not to return to that state, the psychological wrestling with these choices and the desire and activity to create something new, and hopefully less oppressive, *with* others. There is perhaps some relation, a kinship with the concept of *Ubuntu* (Swanson, 2007) in this conceptualisation.

Humanity's history is littered with maroon narratives involving natural or forced migrations, trans-cultural collisions and successful social syncretisms. In some sense we are

all maroons, especially in curriculum studies, temporarily exiled and oriented, resisting, but seeking to make a home anew, rebirthing. We are strangers in strange lands, learning who we are, and to whom, to what, and where we are in relation, carefully and mindfully.

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