Richard Bodek & Joseph Kelly (eds.), *Maroons and the Marooned: Runaways and Castaways in the Americas*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020. xxiii + 198 pp. (Paper US\$30.00)

Maroons and The Marooned: Runaways and Castaways in the Americas brings together literary analysis of castaways, the marooned, and scholarship on Black Maroons in the Americas. The manuscript is the culmination of a 2016 interdisciplinary conference at the College of Charleston that examined the influence of *marronage* and Black resistance to American slavery on *maroonage*, or cast-away, narratives.

The book is organized in nine chapters. In the first three, which concentrate on Black Maroons, the authors contend that *marronage* exemplifies empowerment and agency in Black communities during the era of racial chattel slavery in the Americas, and they note that *marronage* is the foundation for all acts claiming liberation. The following six chapters analyze narratives of hostile weather, shipwrecks, deserted islands, and encounters with exotic cultures and peoples to understand the influence of “being marooned” on modern consciousness. The premise is that “as *maroons* are the etymological root of *being marooned*, so too must *maroonage* be anchored to *marronage*” (p. xvii).

In the first section, J. Brent Morris and James Spady expand the scholarship on *marronage* in and around the U.S. Carolina low country. Morris argues that Maroons in the Great Dismal Swamp united with American Indians and coordinated with other Black rebels to plan and carry out acts of resistance. Framing the Maroons as fringe, liminal, and deep is especially helpful for examining the relationships between *marronage* and other forms of defiance such as short-term absences and guerrilla attacks. Morris’s discussion of the swamp in Black memory and culture in the nineteenth century is also exciting and worth further development. Spady, too, studies the relationship between Maroons and other forms of Black resistance. Focusing specifically on Gullah Jack and the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy in South Carolina, he challenges the notion that *marronage* is always, or simply, spatial. Nevertheless, his attempt to compare mental freedom, what he terms “psychic marronage,” to physical *marronage* is unconvincing because of how rooted Maroon identity and culture is in physical territory.

There is some common ground between the essays in Chapters 4–9 and the trajectory of Maroon studies. For example, both Steven Mentz and Simon Lewis seek to “generate space for new histories of freedom, movement and circulation” (p. 83) in their essays on the Bermuda Assemblage and the work of Yvette Christiansë. The notion of probing “the boundaries of freedom and slavery” aligns with new trends in Maroon studies. So too is the move toward compara-

tive analysis of bondage, freedom, and sociocultural practices among Maroons and other marginalized groups.

The innovative conceptualization of *Maroons and the Marooned* stands as an intriguing concept but with a flawed execution. Despite the contributions of the various authors, comparisons between those who are marooned and the Black Maroons fall short. The 2016 conference and this subsequent manuscript were inspired by Mentz's argument in *Shipwreck Modernity* (2015) that castaways, like the Maroons, move through phases of shock, immersion, and salvage, often having to make a new life for themselves in inhospitable lands. While this may be accurate, the passive act of being castaway, or even exiled or imprisoned, is surely not the same as the deliberate action that is central to Maroon identity. Likewise, even destructive acts of nature cannot approximate the human-made and perpetuated system of oppression, degradation, and violence that is racial chattel slavery. Given these two noteworthy differences, it is problematic to accept accidents or acts of nature as "hinges" between *maronage* and *maroonage*. Although the authors note the significant discrepancies between the two terms regarding goals, actions, and impetus, they nevertheless advocate for such a connection.

Overall, the authors provide a new point of comparison for Maroon studies that may be worth refining. For example, it might be interesting to compare Black Maroons and deserters. So too might be an analysis of home, community building, and subversion in *maroonage* literature, in comparison to Black Maroon communities—without trying to force a link between Maroons and the marooned. As it is, the arguments made are probably more useful to literary scholars trying to deepen analysis of *maroonage* narratives (shipwreck, et cetera) than to scholars of Black Maroons, men and women who actually rebelled against enslavement and often formed communities of their own throughout the Americas.

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