Better "Death in Its Most Awful Shapes" than Life in Nova Scotia: Climate Change and the Nova Scotia Maroons, 1796-1800

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When contemporary climate scientists define their object of study, they typically treat climate as a statistical value, or the "average weather." According to the Cryosphere Glossary, for instance, or the glossary developed by the US National Snow & Ice Data Center, climate is a "synthesis," a composition "characterized by long-term statistics (mean values, variances, probabilities of extreme values, etc.) of the meteorological elements in that area." In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) echoed this sense of climate as a "statistical description in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period of time" but noted further that these "quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, precipitation and wind" (Glossary). For the most part, these definitions agree, each emphasizing change over time in pursuit of an average — but in the eyes of many ecocritics, the more important feature these definitions share is their consistent emphasis on measurable conditions, or the set of "variables" in which change can be perceived and expressed numerically. For more than a decade, scholars across the environmental humanities have identified this empirical theory of climate as a serious obstacle to clear communication about the history and the nature of current climate crisis, an obstacle that has made it especially difficult to acknowledge the many unseen operations of the global political order — including capitalism, colonialism, or liberalism — that will organize and amplify future catastrophe (Chakrabarty 213-16; Moore 51-74; Ghosh 9-11; Sharpe 111-12). To respond to this representational problem, many of the same writers have called for new approaches to narrating the climate crisis, or new ways of imagining what constitutes a climate that might be, as Ian Baucom has put it, more "adequate to the situation of our time" (123).

To date, this invitation has inspired many new and productive approaches to illuminating the environmental operations of cultural forces from capitalism to what Christina Sharpe calls "the wake of slavery" (102-34; see also Simmons). However, this effort has exposed a related problem. Under neoliberalism — or, as Wendy Brown has it, "a peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms" (17) — thinking about life itself has narrowed in much the same way as thinking about climate. Following the neoliberal formulation of the subject, Brown explains (via Foucault), the image of the human as a creature of needs has given way to an image of the human "as an entrepreneur of [one's] self" (80), the "figure of human capital" flattening to a mere "portfolio of investments" (70). Equally worrying, in Brown's view, is what this sense of the human as a fundamentally economic subject "has . . . sent packing": "a heart" (84), first of all, but also any notion of this self as a fundamentally political subject, with all the capacities of moral reflection, association making, and empathy required to live "a good life" with others (88). What's more, this neoliberal narrowing of the human subject appears to have facilitated other, more dangerous forms of expansion. As both Brown and Nancy Fraser have explained further, the aspects of human life submerged by *homo oeconomicus* include all the diverse social capacities required to raise children, to maintain households, to sustain social connections, and to maintain cultural norms and knowledge across generations — or, in Fraser's phrase, the "indispensable background condition[s] for the possibility of economic production in a capitalist society" ("Contradictions" 102). This work, Fraser observes, is often unpaid and imaginatively located "outside" the conditions of the more valuable production it enables, but the notion that any of this affective labour is in fact cheap, infinite, or easy to replace is evidence of capitalism's "built-in tendency to self-destabilization" (101). By "compromising the social capacities, both domestic and public, that are needed to sustain accumulation over the long term," she explains, "capital's accumulation dynamic . . . destroy[s] its own conditions of possibility" and produces, as in the present, the persistent edge of economic crisis and a corollary "crisis of care" (99). As an elaboration of the central claim in Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, this observation is not new — but as the consequences of this process for the "disintegrated communities, ruptured solidarities, and despoiled nature" that Polanyi

imagined in 1944 now loom (Fraser, *Fortunes* 228), writers like Fraser, Brown, and Jason W. Moore have turned back to the contradiction he articulates, aiming to more closely examine how the structure of the communities Polanyi identifies with social protection might prop up or extend capitalist structures of domination, and to find new ways of narrating the process by which all this labour has been made so obscure, and so cheap, so far (Moore 1-30; see also Fraser, *Fortunes* 228-29). In the midst of crisis, that is, the priorities of these political and economic theorists are similar to the priorities of the ecocritics above: in each sphere, the loudest call is for new models of thought and expression or new ways of registering where we are now — the "situation of our time" (Baucom 123) — and how we got here.

With this imperative in mind, the primary goal of this article is to present a model for this process — an illustration, first, of the rhetorical moves by which the new and narrower sense of both climate and life was introduced and naturalized, and then a model for thinking about each of these terms more capaciously — in the following case study: the short-lived effort, at the end of the eighteenth century, to move a community of escaped slaves (or "Maroons") from Trelawny Town, Jamaica, to Halifax, Nova Scotia. At the moment this resettlement project was proposed, a significant transformation both in the notion of climate and in the economic order was already under way. According to many historians of science, this moment marks the epistemological origin of the present climate crisis, or the rise — and evolution, together — of these empirical models of thinking about climate and capital. Confronted, in an age of imperial travel, with persistent evidence of both cultural difference and environmental conditions that confounded classical notions of climate, early modern travellers began to seek alternatives to the long-standing claim that features like temperature, humidity, or soil quality were determined primarily by latitude — and in North America in particular, this effort focused on generating explanations for climatic extremes that would help to maintain the promise of European investment in these colonies. The case study below takes place in the midst of this epistemological shift, and the debate at its centre — about the viability of this settlement — both crystallizes the key issues at stake in this transformation and foreshadows the human consequences and wider costs of continuing to presume that the most urgent consequences

of climate change can be best understood by examining only conditions available to empirical measurement.

For contemporary ecocritics, furthermore, the question that inspires this debate — could this community of Maroons live in Nova Scotia? — demonstrates how changing ideas about climate can produce related shifts in thinking about what makes a life, or what it means to be able to live anywhere. On one side of this debate, as the first half of this article will demonstrate, British parliamentarians with interests in developing colonies outside North America insisted that the cold posed a physical threat to the Maroons, invoking classical theories of climatic determinism to naturalize the death and illness endemic among relocated populations. As critical race scholars have observed, however, the same technique would be used to naturalize high cold weather mortality rates in Black and enslaved communities well into the nineteenth century — and, as medical sociologist Ingrid R.G. Waldron has recently demonstrated, we can see the same strategy still at work in the narrow terms of contemporary discussions about what constitutes environmental injustice, which have so far tended to obscure the role of social policy in producing a livable climate (*There's* 49-52). Even in the eighteenth century, however, there was a sense that the opposition these British parliamentarians constructed between the world of human culture (or human bodies) and the natural environment was likely false — and so, on the other side of this debate, more optimistic advocates for North American settlement insisted that any climate could be made livable with the right type of support. This is true — but in the context of this wider transformation in thinking about climate, the radical potential of this argument was dampened by its advocates' myopic preoccupation with a narrow and exclusively empirical theory of life. To demonstrate that the Nova Scotia settlement was thriving, its administrators tended to emphasize small changes in measurable conditions like the size of the colony's population (or, more striking, the collective weight of the Maroons' bodies), implying that the bare survival of these bodies was enough to demonstrate the project's sustainability — and as a result, the material support that followed these claims was never enough to maintain anything more than this sparse and narrow form of life. Both in the struggle to establish a Maroon settlement in Nova Scotia and in the way it failed, then, this short-lived effort offers contemporary ecocritics a valuable illustration of how a model of climate that focuses exclusively

on what can be measured helps to open land and people to exploitation, and also a warning about what kinds of inequity we risk reproducing by extending the ideas about climate we have inherited from this moment.

In addition to explicating the aspects of this history that predict present conflict, however, this article also aims to illuminate the positive lesson in this case. Through a close reading of the parliamentary records of debate about this colony, it is possible to register the values at work on each side and to trace them into the present — but in reading "through" these records, or against their grain, it is also possible to expose, in the traces of the Maroons' petitions on their own behalf, productive alternatives to these narrow ways of conceiving of climate and the type of life it can support. Both in the nature of the complaints the Maroons register with the Governor of Nova Scotia and in the figurative language of the petitions they sent to their British advocates, the Maroons insist that climate refers to much more than miserable material conditions — and that life, by corollary, refers to more than the bare ability to survive in Nova Scotia. Often, in fact, the Maroons' complaints emphasize conditions that historians now describe as elements of social reproduction, or the tools and circumstances necessary to reproduce cultural norms and to make work possible, both day over day and across generations (Merchant 175). Taking seriously the Maroons' remarks on the more and less material conditions of an environment in which they really "could live" (*Parliamentary* 5: 307), then, this article concludes by exploring how their more capacious theory of climate might help contemporary ecocritics to revise both the terms and the timelines of discussions about what it will mean to live with climate change. Following the Maroons' gaze out from the untenable situation of their present to the more desirable climate of an imagined future, these petitions offer us a model and a challenge: how might looking forward — or daring to imagine a livable future — help us to expose the absence of the conditions necessary to support that form of life in the climate of the present?

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Before discussion among British imperial administrators became focused on whether "Death in its most awful Shapes" might improve upon "a Residence in Nova Scotia" ("Maroon Petition to the House" 92), the proposed settlement was — like many eighteenth-century settlement decisions — intended to resolve a security issue that had

emerged elsewhere in the British Empire (Knowles 33-34). In 1796, Jamaica was governed by Alexander Lindsay, sixth earl of Balcarres — and for Balcarres, the Maroon community of Trelawny Town represented a serious insurrectionary threat. According to historian Mavis C. Campbell, this fear of Maroon rebellion was not uncommon among imperial administrators. As she explains, because the term ("maroon") refers to "those blacks who fled plantation slavery to establish their own alternative communities," the existence of these communities — "within a given slave society, but outside the purlieus of the slave-masters' jurisdiction" — represented for many a reminder that the power of the "slavocracy" was limited (Introduction ix). For Balcarres, this general fear was amplified by the size of the community and by its militancy, as Trelawny Town had remained independent from the rest of the colony's plantations since the beginnings of English rule, and not even the successful peace agreement brokered following the Second Maroon War (1795-1796) could quell his persistent sense of threat (Zilberstein 120; see also Campbell, *Maroons* 225-30). In Balcarres's view, relocation was the only way to manage this risk — and so in 1796, he opened debate about where else in the British Empire the Trelawny Maroons should go, proposing that the 568 deportees could be relocated either to Sierra Leone, recently established as a British settler colony, or to some part of British North America (Zilberstein 121). From the beginning, however, there were concerns about the latter option. In particular, skeptics worried that Nova Scotia, likely to feel alien to the Maroons, might be perceived as a punitive choice — and as a result, Halifax was initially identified only as a stopover during the deportation (Zilberstein 121-22). When the Maroons arrived, however, Lieutenant Governor Sir John Wentworth saw in this population a solution to the labour concerns dogging the province since the departure of more than one thousand Black Loyalists in 1792, and so he began a campaign to make the resettlement permanent (Zilberstein 121-22). As part of this effort, Wentworth insisted that the climate posed no obstacle to the cultivation of either the Maroons' health or the colony's potential — and yet, in the long debate that ensued, climate remained a serious point of contention, increasingly to the exclusion of other considerations that originally motivated concern about the political implications of the resettlement, and with serious consequences for the support available to the Maroons during their first winter there.

For those who opposed Wentworth's campaign from the start, shifting the focus of this debate to material concerns — like the capacity of the Maroons' bodies to withstand the shock of the move — was especially convenient, because it seemed to make the case against the colony as obvious as these physical limits. By insisting, first, that climate was a primarily physical phenomenon best described by prevailing conditions like hot or cold temperatures, and then by positing that some bodies simply could not survive some of these conditions, critics of the colony could identify any death among the displaced Maroons as evidence of this incompatibility — and as proof, by extension, that no amount of investment could solve this central problem. Particularly for British administrators with competing interests in Sierra Leone, then, this approach was popular: over and over, as Robert Charles Dallas observes in 1803, criticisms of the settlement invoked an old belief that "the pinching of frost will not be agreeable to fibres accustomed to the full flow of blood produced by the rarefaction of the torrid zone" (200), and so "a cold climate is generally understood to be insupportable by negroes" (199). Speaking to the House of Commons in May 1798, for instance, General George Walpole frames the proposed resettlement as an inherently violent one, pleading with his colleagues to consider "what . . . humanity consisted . . . in transporting a whole people, in direct violation of the stipulated terms of a capitulation from the hottest climate under the torrid zone to the coldest region in North America[?]" (*Parliamentary* 6: 95). Here, although his phrasing betrays some disappointment with the dissolution of the peace agreement he had helped broker (Zilberstein 142), his point is clear: the cruelty of the proposed resettlement is not merely in the move, but rather in the wide difference between the Jamaican heat and the Canadian cold, because bodies "from" one extreme are unlikely to thrive in the other. In addition to reframing the problem as one of physical capacity and the choice before Parliament as a matter of compassion for the Maroons, however, this determinist view of climate allows Walpole to naturalize the Maroons' own complaints about the move, flattening their concerns into another simple opposition between their bodies, born under "the torrid zone," and the Canadian cold. In February 1798, Walpole presents a petition to the government that he received from the Maroons the previous August, and though it, too, identifies climate as a principal problem, this petition appears to define climate more capaciously

than does Walpole: according to the parliamentary record, Walpole reports that "the Maroons were ready to yield themselves sacrifices to the laws . . . and were desirous that such of them as were taken with arms in their hands might be shot, if their wives and children should be permitted to remove to a climate where they could live" (*Parliamentary* 5: 307). Here, the Maroons do suggest that if given a choice, they might choose death to secure more freedom for their families — and yet for all that this hyperbole reveals of the urgency of their desire to move, it is not quite the same as asserting, as Walpole had, that the cold itself will kill them. According to Walpole, however, and to other critics of Wentworth's campaign, even the Maroons' brief reference to climate is enough to confirm that the proposed move is tantamount to "a national Murder" ("Letter from One" 14), and thus to cast its proponents as essentially inhumane.

Even outside of a debate about which British colony the Maroons' resettlement could help develop, however, the political implications of Walpole's effort to reinvigorate a long-standing tradition of writing about the health risks associated with travel between hot and cold regions are likely to have been obvious to many eighteenth-century observers. At the moment Walpole invoked this model, a dramatic shift in thinking about the relationship between climate and place was already underway, driven in large part by early modern European travellers' many disastrous encounters with North American extremes. Prior to the eighteenth century, as Karen Ordahl Kupperman has explained, European travel to the New World was often motivated by a belief that climate was defined by latitude and that the globe was divided into a series of climatic bands: two temperate zones on either side of an equatorial torrid zone and two frigid zones at the poles (1262; see also Glacken 91-100). Versions of this theory varied, but most imagined that although conditions differed between bands, the climate of any one place would be similar to that of all other places within the same band. Presuming this was true, early modern Europeans thus looked west expecting "Newfoundland, which is south of London, . . . to have a moderate climate, and Virginia . . . to be like southern Spain" (Kupperman 1262). The stakes of these predictions were high. Again and again, as historian Sam White observes, the first European settlers in North America arrived unprepared for the changeability and extremes of the climate that greeted them, and again and again, these

settlers found both their comrades and hopes "frozen to death" (*Cold* 132-53). Under pressure to describe these harrowing conditions in terms that affirmed the colonies' capacity to sustain European bodies and profitable crops, however, these early settlers were slow to abandon the theory of climate that inspired this investment, opting instead to proliferate alternative explanations for why North America seemed, just for now, to be so cold. Often outlandish, the optimism of these theories also occasionally appears insidious, as many of them encourage early settlers — in the face of mounting human costs — to interpret any experience that did not meet their expectations as just an aberration, an unusually cool or wet summer or two (see Kupperman; White, *Cold*; Wear).

The tenacity of this classical theory of climate calls attention to the political claims it helped to maintain. Flourishing during the first waves of what would become a massive expansion of early modern travel, a view of climate that presumed not just that air differed in different places but also that, in John Arbuthnot's phrase, these different "Air[s] operate[] sensibly in forming the Constitutions of Mankind" offered European observers a convenient explanation for the wildly varying ways of life this roaming brought into focus (146; see also Wahrman 88-91; Glacken 562-65). In addition to lending itself to arguments for various forms of racial and cultural hierarchy, however, this theory also seemed to absolve early European settlers of some forms of responsibility for the most unsettling consequences of the climatic change their appearance had introduced to North America. Rooted in Hippocratic medical philosophy but reinvigorated in the middle of the eighteenth century by continental naturalists like Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, this determinist argument presumed that climate acted upon all things equally, which meant that any changes in the characteristics of the plants and animals indigenous to a particular region could be used to anticipate similar changes in the physical or moral characteristics of any person who spent too long under the same air (Parrish 90-102; Fleming 11-19). For some early European settlers, of course, this theory inspired fear (Wheeler 39) — but for many others, it offered a sort of relief. On all sides, early North American settlers were confronted with evidence of the genocide initiated by the Columbian exchange: disease caused by unfamiliar germs was widespread, its effects exacerbated by the destruction of indigenous cultural norms wrought by new

weapons, forced labour, and a new economic order (Crosby 132-44; White, *Cold* 24-26). As a reassuring explanation for all this death, however, a determinist theory of climate recast these consequences of invasion as a constitutional weakness of indigenous bodies and — as part of what Mary Louise Pratt calls "narrating the anti-conquest" — positioned the European observer as innocent, even endangered by the same threat (Pratt 37-66).[1] For all of these reasons, then, this model of climate remained useful for European advocates of an imperial project especially invested in its paternalistic justification and eager to absolve those involved of responsibility for the violence of the colonial encounter. For Walpole, these qualities were aligned with his inclination to naturalize any deaths that might follow the Maroon resettlement in Nova Scotia — and so, when he invokes this tradition with references to the extreme conditions and physical limitations likely to sink the project, he makes his case by capitalizing on both a long-standing tradition and a contemporary fear.

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On the other side of the aisle, however, advocates of the settlement were unconvinced by Walpole's superlatives, and many were skeptical of his suggestion that some bodies were simply not suited to certain places. In an Age of Peregrination, after all, it wasn't difficult to find evidence to contradict this claim. Indeed, as David Hume argues in 1748, even armchair travellers could observe a great variety of manners among people who share the same climate ("I believe no one," he scoffs, "attributes the difference of manners in Wapping and St. James's, to a difference of air and climate"), and significant similarities among peoples of different climates who happen to have come into contact in different ways (220). In the context of the wider debate about the deterioration that a determinist model of climate seemed to predict among European colonists, furthermore, critics of Walpole's argument were also quick to point out, in Zilberstein's phrase, that "racial climatic determinism was an exceedingly inconvenient idea for governing settler populations in a global empire" (134). Aiming first to expose and then to counter the self-serving implication of Walpole's complaint, Wentworth and other advocates for the settlement focused their rebuttals on the fact that many of Walpole's chief concerns were grounded in outdated and misleading ideas about climate, beginning with a serious misunderstand-

ing about the heat in Trelawny Town. As a case study in how writing about climate was politicized in this moment, Wentworth's responses to Walpole thus usefully illustrate both the theoretical and policy implications of this debate — and in the model of climate Wentworth presents as an alternative to Walpole's determinism, contemporary ecocritics can find an early example of the narrow view of both environment and life that still shapes so much debate about environmental justice and adaptation to the present crisis.

Initially, many of the settlement's early advocates aimed simply to disprove Walpole's claims about just how cold it was in Canada, or to demonstrate that "the Maroons had been accustomed to a climate very different from what had been called the 'burning heats of Jamaica'" (*Parliamentary* 6: 91). For Wentworth, however, the fact that so few of these rebuttals tackled Walpole's premise — that moving between climatic zones posed a risk to the Maroons' health — limited their political potential. From the outset, then, Wentworth takes a more radical approach, arguing that critics like Walpole had misunderstood the nature of climate and further that that misunderstanding had become a convenient excuse for avoiding material responsibility. According to Wentworth, not only was it safe to move a body between climatic zones, but any climate could be a good climate for any body if met with the right tools and habits — and as controversial as these claims might have been to some readers in England, much of his correspondence suggests that he really did attempt to manage the Nova Scotia settlement with these commitments in mind. He comments often, for instance, on the Maroons' "perfect health" ("Wentworth Report" 2; "Letter from Sir John" 2) but consistently links this to the material supports he has secured to preserve this condition — and in 1797, responding to the Maroons' "considerable apprehensions of the long winter" ("Wentworth Report" 2), Wentworth notes that he has provided the settlement with doctors and remains confident that the Maroons will therefore pass the winter "well fed, warmly cloathed, and comfortably lodged" ("Wentworth to Portland, 13th August" 19). Without disputing the difference between the typical conditions in Jamaica and Nova Scotia, Wentworth focuses instead on what the Maroons need to navigate the winter — and implies, if only by framing these observations as submissions to Parliament for further material support, that his colleagues' preoccupation with the possibility that some bodies simply cannot survive

the cold has made it too easy for the House to elide discussion on how to pay for these practical necessities.

In this effort, however, and no less than Walpole, Wentworth was also capitalizing on a long-standing tradition in early modern climatic thought, amplifying the contradictions in the determinist explanation for the failure of early North American settlements to encourage investment in an alternative model of climate more supportive of British imperialist ambitions. More specifically, Wentworth's campaign turned on what many colonial administrators would have recognized as the notion of acclimatization, or the possibility that climate could change or *be* changed by new settlers — and on the suggestion, implicit in his observations on the Maroons' flourishing, that such a change might already be under way in Nova Scotia. Compelling, at least from the perspective of British advocates for North American settlement, for the ways it reframed the widespread death that characterized early efforts as a temporary stage in a process that opened more hope for future development, the literature on this possibility often focused on one indicator: the progress of the "seasoning" process. By "seasoning," these writers referred to the expectation that although a certain number of people might die within a settlement's first year, this mortality rate would diminish as the climate and population became more suitable to one another over time (see Wear 22; White, "Climate" 5). In 1672, for instance, cartographer Richard Blome celebrates just how "agreeable to the *English*" Virginia's climate has become "since the clearing of *Woods*; so that now few dyeth of the *Countreys* disease, called the *Seasoning*" (141-42). As this statement suggests, the causal argument of stories about seasoning runs in the opposite direction of Hippocratic determinism: although Blome does identify climate as a significant determinant of health, he also imagines that the number of trees that could be cleared by human hands in a single season is enough to transform a continental climate into an oceanic one — and in so doing, he takes the power to manage climatic effects on human health back into human hands. To the same end, the seasoning narrative was also attractive to advocates of North American settlement for the way it reframed the presence of certain populations as a climatic indicator. By yoking any change in the mortality rate of these populations to a change in climate and then attributing the relatively smaller number who "dyeth of . . . *Seasoning*" to improving conditions, these narratives invite their audi-

ence to interpret any future shifts in this same population as indicators of related climatic change. If it is true that "the clearing of *Woods*" made Virginia's climate so much more "agreeable" that increasing numbers of English settlers could survive it, the reverse seemed to hold, too — and any evidence of European plant, animal, or settler populations on the rise could suggest that North America was warming up.

By reframing the high mortality rates reported by early North American settlers as a necessary stage along the path toward development, then, the seasoning narrative counters the possibility, implicit in the determinist response to the same crisis, that the colonial enterprise in North America is doomed to failure, and even seems to encourage more assertive interventions — from clearing native trees to introducing new agricultural methods — intended to open these seemingly unruly environments to further exploitation. In addition to the ideological work this theory would do to facilitate the expansion of Britain's eighteenth-century empire, however, the narrow views of both climate and life that it helped to promote have had enduring consequences for thinking about the ends and evidence of anthropogenic climate change. To begin with, when proponents of these seasoning stories identify the slow rise in the survival rates of imported plant species and settler communities as evidence of a change in local climate, their first aim might have been to reframe those unsettling reports of widespread death — but in the process, they also reinforce the claim that climate really could be changed by changing (or "improving") the land. By this point, much has been written about how this theory of improvement would help both to legitimize the Enlightenment science that still underpins contemporary climate discourse and to facilitate eighteenth-century British imperial objectives abroad (see Drayton 3-83; Zilberstein 150-56) — and though climate historians continue to debate the most productive way to measure the influence of the epistemological conditions this theory helped to promote, many agree that the practices it inspired (from draining swamps to widespread experiments with transplantation) have had a material impact on both the global climate and our thinking about its availability to change (see Bewell 115; Mikhail 216-17; Menely 485; Markley 119-20). Less well studied, however, are the consequences of the seasoning story Wentworth appears to have found more promising — or the suggestion that because people, like plants, can be coaxed to survive through interventions not at all related to conditions like

temperature and wind chill, it may be possible to change the colony's "uninhabitable" reputation by changing the inhabitants themselves. If it was true, Wentworth's campaign suggests, that a change in the Maroons' rate of survival was enough to suggest a change in the climate, managing the climate might really be a matter of managing their exposure to its extremes — and for this reason, Wentworth's reports to British Parliament often focus on the recommendations he has offered the Maroons (from wearing shoes outside to working on "little farms, with the means of culture and raising stock"), emphasizing the "progress of *their* improvement" rather than the improvement of the land or air ("Wentworth Report" 3; emphasis added; see also "Wentworth to Portland, 13th April" 107-09).[2] For all of Wentworth's effort to imagine an alternative to Walpole's essentialism, however, the theory of climate he ends up advancing is even narrower than the determinist model he set out to rebut — and in this transformation, contemporary ecocritics might find a useful illustration of the multiple and unpredictable ways that the environmental thought we have inherited from this moment has been shaped by the economic order that emerged at the same time.

In one view, what Wentworth's emphasis on material support appears to suggest is that the aspects of climate most available to human influence have always been those most local, as close as the walls of the buildings and the fabric of the clothes he promises the Maroons — and if all of these conditions are in order, he implies, there is no need to try to change the climate of the whole province to resolve the seeming incompatibility between the Maroons' bodies and its air. From the perspective of the present, furthermore, there is radical potential in this suggestion that a change of climate might be accomplished through Parliament and policy as well as new agricultural practices, and that mitigation efforts might extend past large-scale infrastructure projects to compassionate efforts to reduce individual exposure. In this case, however, considering the genealogy of Wentworth's claim — or its roots in this debate about bringing climate under control — might also help to explain why so little of this potential, and of the generous view of human life on which it rests, would be realized in this settlement. For Wentworth, the Maroons' value exists mostly in their function as a labour force (Zilberstein 119; see also "Wentworth to Portland, 30th May" 114) — and so when he presents evidence of their improvement as evidence of the colony's enduring value, the indicators he selects

betray the increasingly narrow view of human life that underpins this new method of quantifying climatic change. In July 1798, for instance, Wentworth notes that most of the Maroons "now weigh two-thirds more than they did when they arrived here, so fat and lusty are they grown" — and as Zilberstein observes of the same letter, he appears especially proud of the fact that this growth has been achieved in spite of the Maroons' "unabated complaining" (127). As a corrective to determinism, this, too, is the invitation the theory of seasoning makes available to colonial administrators: by positioning evidence of physical growth as evidence that a climate can support life, the theory of seasoning both holds open the promise of future development (in Nova Scotia or in other cold places) and makes it possible to imagine that evidence of thriving could be weighed on a scale, narrowing the notion of human life required to claim that triumph to mere presence — or, as in this case, to mere pounds.

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On both sides of this debate, Walpole and Wentworth ground their arguments about whether the Maroons can live in Nova Scotia in much older models of climate, each adapting the terms of either Hippocratic determinism or optimistic acclimatization narratives to encourage British investment in one direction or another. By explicating the details of each argument that betray the influence of these older modes of thinking about climate, however, this case study makes it easier to see how these traditions continue to shape current thinking about what constitutes real risk or vulnerability to a sudden change of climate and how social policy could help to manage those risks. From writers like Walpole, we have inherited this tendency to insist that both this risk and the many ways in which it is unequally distributed are somehow inevitable, and yet, even as this analysis has been debunked by contemporary scholars who seem to share Wentworth's sense that social policy can play a role in mitigating (or deepening) disaster, we have also carried forward, from Wentworth's camp, the insidious inclination to measure both risk and our responsibility for mitigating others' exposure to it mostly in material terms. For nearly all of the three centuries between this debate and the present, Walpole's determinist theory of climate has cropped up again and again whenever it becomes profitable to naturalize or otherwise to obscure responsibility for preventable

death. During the period preceding the Civil War in the United States, for instance, climate was often used to naturalize the wide gap between winter mortality rates in white and Black communities (Klepp 478-79), and some notions of "racial vulnerability" to cold endured until well into the twentieth century (see Coelho and McGuire). By carefully tracing the economic factors that exacerbate vulnerability to cold weather illness, however, historians like Susan E. Klepp and Christian Warren have persuasively demonstrated that although the rates of death due to respiratory disease do spike in Black communities during severe winters, these rates are best explained by racialized disparities related to access to food, housing, medicine, work, and other dimensions of exposure (Klepp 478-79; see also Warren). Read alongside this scholarship, Wentworth's initial insistence that the Maroons have nothing to fear from the cold if only they are "equally protected and encouraged as other [of] His Majesty's Subjects" ("Wentworth to Portland, 29th October" 32) appears all the more prescient — as does the warning Wentworth offers his fellow governors, more and less explicitly, that to continue to accept the terms of Walpole's complaints is to give Parliament an excuse for neglect. In other words, by introducing his critique of Walpole's determinism in the context of requests for greater support in the form of clothing and food for members of the displaced settlement, Wentworth demonstrates that there was some sense, even in the eighteenth century, that Parliament might have a role to play in managing the risks associated with exposing members of any community to a sudden and dramatic change of climate — and some awareness, by extension, that a new and less determinist theory of climate might require a new or more resource-intensive notion of good governance.

For all the radical potential in Wentworth's suggestion that social policy has a role in managing the effects of exposure, however, it's the fantasy of control at the core of his argument that has had the more enduring influence on contemporary debates about climate and risk, his imperialist preoccupation with demonstrating the success of his settlement anticipating our current inclination to insist that the only harm worth mitigating is harm that can be measured. Perhaps more unsettling, where this alternative to the transparent racism now associated with determinism has resurfaced in more contemporary debates about, say, Canadian immigration policy, it is often disguised as compassion, the claim that survival alone is enough to demonstrate a hospitable

climate used to obfuscate or to interrupt discussion of other elements of climate that might expose other forms of obligation. This is precisely what happened during the years after Confederation, for instance, when a number of campaigns emerged to inspire more Americans to move north by emphasizing the size of the plants grown across Canada and the many agricultural benefits of snow (or, in Zilberstein's phrase, "poor man's dung") (Wear 23-27; Zilberstein 109). In the Immigration Act of 1910, however, new Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton added a caveat to these claims: the Canadian climate might be capable of supporting large crops and animals, but the government retained the right to prohibit the landing of immigrants "belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada" (*Act* 14; see also Knowles 91). By 1911, when a group of Black Oklahoman farmers, fleeing rising mob violence, attempted to emigrate north, restrictions tightened further, as a series of western Canadian boards of trade prompted the federal government to more specifically prohibit "any immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada" (qtd. in Yarhi; see also Shepard). In the end, this revised order was never proclaimed, but as historian Robin W. Winks points out, Canadian immigration authorities and medical officers continued an active campaign to discourage Black settlement throughout this period, and the thousand or so Black farmers who did settle in the west make up a tiny percentage of the (nearly 1 million) Americans who emigrated to Canada between 1896 and 1911 (310-12; see also "Hundred"). There is much more to say about the persistence of anti-Black racism in Canadian immigration policy, of course, and the 1911 campaign echoes other dimensions of the Maroons' case that have nothing to do with climate, but when read alongside this earlier campaign to use the Maroons to prove that all climates of the British Empire were equally available to settlement, one dynamic does become easier to see. By invoking these old ideas about climates unsuitable for certain bodies, the 1911 Laurier government implies that the danger these farmers would find under Canadian skies was either equal to or greater than the danger they faced under Oklahoma's Jim Crow laws — confirming, in the process, the enduring political function of a concept of climate too narrow to register the influence of other violent elements of culture.

* * *

At a moment when, as Wendy Brown has observed, all "fields, persons, and practices are economized" by the "governing rationality" of neoliberalism (37), old questions about how the project and methods of literary analysis might contribute to or help to counter this order have come to feel more urgent. Under these circumstances, a study that traces the political uses of writing about climate from Wentworth's defence of this Nova Scotia settlement through to the far-reaching exclusions of Sifton-era immigration policy presents a few possible answers. By identifying that impulse to "economize" in these historical political texts and then explicating the rhetorical moves that naturalize it, literary analyses of cases like this one can remind contemporary critics that even the seemingly progressive forms introduced to counter essentialist thinking were forged under pressure to expand British imperial enterprise in North America. As a result, such analyses can also cast new light on the ways those priorities persist in the forms of writing about climatic threats still dominant today. In addition to this diagnostic work, however, a look back at the roads not taken in this eighteenth-century debate can reveal alternatives to this "economi[zing]… rationality" of the present (Brown 37). By 1800, after all, this settlement had failed — in August, nearly the entire community of Trelawny Maroons left Nova Scotia for Sierra Leone — and although, as Zilberstein explains, it remains a matter of historical debate "whether [the Maroons] left the province mainly to escape the cold or whether [their] complaints were merely an effective means for expressing their grievances against the provincial and metropolitan governments" (128), the fact of this debate alone suggests there might be something in the Maroons' account of their own experience not quite captured by Walpole's and Wentworth's presentations to Parliament. Now, however, by taking up the methods of transatlantic scholars to read "through" the official records of this debate for traces of the first form and substance of the Maroons' petitions on their own behalf (see Baucom; Mallipeddi), a curious reader can find, in the figurative language the Maroons develop to register their frustration with the settlement's administration, an approach to conceiving of both climate and life — or what makes a life livable — that is quite contrary to the empirical measures of change and risk that Walpole and Wentworth each champion. For the Maroons, as the next section will demonstrate, an inhospitable climate is defined not just by the cold but

also by the presence or absence of what historians now call the conditions of social reproduction, or the tools and circumstances necessary to reproduce cultural norms and make work possible, both day over day and across generations (Merchant 175). For historians of science and empire, this is a productive revelation all on its own, evidence of a flexibility of thought related to both climate and the atmospheric consequences of the British imperial project not always obvious in its official records — but considered now, at a moment when the most realistic forecasts of our climatological future predict a similarly dramatic transformation in local climates even for those communities able to remain in place, the Maroons' view of climate also has the potential to transform debate about what we mean when we describe the present crisis as "anthropogenic," drawing the policy responsible for uneven access to these conditions of social reproduction onto the same plane as extractive industry and thus opening new fields of action for future mitigation and adaptation work.

This shift in perspective — or this effort to highlight the theory of climate at work in the Maroons' representation of their own experience, and so to read their petitions outside of the terms established by British administrators like Wentworth and Walpole — could also add productive nuance to our understanding of the Nova Scotia case itself, opening a path for further inquiry into how marginalized populations of the transatlantic world leveraged the language of Enlightenment science to realize their own ends. Up to this point, most historians who have considered the Maroons' remarks on Nova Scotia have followed what Jeffrey A. Fortin calls the "ice thesis" (31n103), interpreting the Maroons' claims that they "could live" only in "some warmer part of the Globe" (*Parliamentary* 5: 307; "Maroon Petition to Portland" 60-61) not as an endorsement of classical climate theory but rather as an attempt to amplify the stereotypes about their vulnerability implicit in that theory in order to garner the sympathy of a previously fearful audience.[3] Without denying the possibility that some Maroons really did loathe the cold, these analyses focus on the similarity between the outcome the Maroons appeared to desire (to be "removed as soon as possible" ["Maroon Petition to Portland" 61]) and the solution to the seeming incongruity between their constitutions and the climate proposed by observers like Walpole, suggesting that the Maroons may simply have found it more productive to complain about the cold to

advocates who already expected them to do so than to attempt to make the same case on other grounds (Fortin 20, 6; Zilberstein 121; Asaka 211n36). There is good evidence to support these arguments, as many of the Maroons' comments on their physical environment do sound quite determinist, even arguing, like Walpole, that "such a Phenomenon is no where to be found in nature . . . as a West Indian to be reconciled to Nova Scotia" ("Maroon Petition to the House" 92). And yet, when the Maroons explicitly articulate the goals of their political correspondence, the theory of climate implicit in these remarks has much more in common with Wentworth's sense that all conditions are available to change through good governance and appropriate material support.

For instance, in what Campbell identifies as one of the "least edited" pieces of Maroon correspondence (Headnote 58), Maroon Captain Andrew Smith responds to rumours of "the French coming here" by promising that "by Heaven cold as the Weather may be we will warm them every step of the road they take towards Halifax" — and by thus refusing to be deterred by the elements, "we shall offer our services in a Body to the Prince who treats us as if he had the confidence in us . . . shewing him that we are and ever will be a brave and loyal people" ("Captain" 59).[4] Here, although Smith acknowledges that the weather is cold, he assures his correspondent that the effects of these conditions can be offset with the right motivation (in this case, a political commitment), a variation on "mind over matter" not all that different from Wentworth's sense that the Maroons' experience of Nova Scotia will be "improved" along with their diet and religious education ("Wentworth Report" 2-3); like Wentworth, the Maroons appear to agree that their perception of Nova Scotia's extremes will be shaped as much by the settlement's governance as the temperature of the air. When it comes to Wentworth's governance itself, however, the Maroons most often describe its climatic effects in negative, even visceral, terms: in one petition, they "assure your Grace [the Duke of Portland, secretary of the Home Office], that whatever information has been received from Sir. Jn. Wentworth, or any other person, stating our satisfaction in residing in this Province, is so far void of truth, that the very idea of it makes us shudder" ("Maroon Petition to Portland" 61); in another, they "state to His Majesty's Ministers that the representations made by Sir Jn°. Wentworth of our situation in this Country as communicated by the English papers, are so far from truth that we most humbly beg

for a speedy removal to any others of His Majesty's Dominions, more congenial to our habits" ("Maroon Petition to His Majesty's" 65). In each case, the Maroons insist they simply aim to correct Wentworth's misrepresentation of their "situation," but whenever it appears in their petitions, this term refers to more than the settlement's location (see also "Maroon Petition to Balcarres" 3). To begin with, they explain, much of the money Wentworth has requested has been spent on securing "Comforts of the Country" for the settlement's administrators, all the while "there is not one Acre of Land cleared for planting," so he has in this way misrepresented their living conditions — but he has also misrepresented their feelings about these conditions, suggesting they are happy when they are not ("Maroon Petition to Wentworth" 62). In this view, the Maroons' "situation" in Halifax is at once a material condition and an affective position, but both, they suggest, are shaped by its governance — and so governance, too, appears to be encompassed by the environmental terms they use to describe the "situation" they wish to change.

In most of these petitions to Parliament, furthermore, the Maroons do more than identify the presence of conditions they find incompatible with West Indian life, including but not limited to the cold. In fact, a significant proportion of the Maroons' complaints foreground instead the absence of conditions that might, if they had been available, have made it easier to imagine how "a West Indian [could] be reconciled to Nova Scotia" ("Maroon Petition to the House" 92) — and for all of Wentworth's bold remarks, in his own correspondence, about the type of material support required to ensure that any body can survive any climate, it is almost never clothes, shoes, or certain forms of shelter that the Maroons report missing. Rather, even as their potato crops were destroyed by an early frost, the Maroons appear more frustrated with Wentworth's refusal to supply the tropical fruits, vegetables, and spices — from yams and bananas to cayenne pepper — that previously were staple items of their diet, as well as by his unwillingness to provide them with "money to spend on Rum, Sugar, Cocoa, and Coffee" — or what he calls "indulgences" — in sufficient quantities ("Wentworth Report" 3, 4). All on their own, then, these complaints suggest a model of climate different from either of the options at odds in Walpole and Wentworth's debate, if only because the Maroons' sense of the conditions necessary to support life include many more social and "habit[ual]"

features than even Wentworth has imagined. In addition to suggesting a model for imagining both climate and life more generously, however, the figurative language of the Maroons' petitions encourages questions about what would constitute a place where they "could live" and what it means to "live" anywhere, particularly at a moment — anticipating our own — when the risks and rewards of climates made by human hands seem to be distributed so unevenly.

What the Maroons demand here might now be described by contemporary historians as a greater attention to social reproduction as an element of climate. According to Carolyn Merchant, the sphere of reproduction — or the sphere of work required to maintain the workforce and social relations — includes biological and social functions ranging from the "intragenerational reproduction of daily life [and] the reproduction of social norms within the family and community" to "the reproduction of the legal-political structures that maintain social order within the community and the state" (17). From this perspective, the Maroons' complaints about the absence of certain types of work and food that would create an environment in which they really "could live" are both observations on the importance of these social practices in the reproduction of daily life and a call for the resources required to maintain them. For instance, when the Maroons express frustration with "a Country so severely cold, and so different in every Production, from Our native Climate," they register the importance of those other "Productions" — those tropical fruits and spices — that help to guarantee that "Our Existence, . . . should it be prolonged," will not "be attended with the utmost misery" ("Humble" 57). The same is true where they note that the relief in "some Warmer Climate" would not be in the temperature but in the renewed capacity to "be enabled by Our Industry" ("Humble" 57). In all these comments, the Maroons insist that the climate in Nova Scotia is inhospitable — but by "inhospitable," they mean not just that it is cold but also that it does not support the elements of culture, from cooking to daily work, that they consider necessary for an "Existence" free from "misery," or a life worth living.[5] By insisting upon more flexible definitions of climate and life than either of the British agents ostensibly advocating for them, the Maroons' petitions highlight the absence (or obfuscation) of social reproduction from the other dominant modes of eighteenth-century climatological thought, a revelation that both adds nuance to our existing history

of the present crisis and prompts a closer look at other archives that could be used to detail and reverse this process of obfuscation. For those ecocritics more concerned with the challenges of narrating the present and the future of this crisis, however, the Maroons' petitions are equally suggestive, their strategic use of synecdoche both a useful illustration of how figurative language can illuminate aspects of life under the twin systems of expanding empire and emerging capitalism that the empirical language of parliamentary debate does not — and a positive, if not perfect, model of how writing about what we do not want to lose might also help us to register what we want from an environmental future.

Both of these possibilities rise from the Maroons' remarks on the pineapple. In a petition to the House of Commons drafted after the terrible winter of 1797, the Maroons assert that "the Soil of Nova Scotia will never answer to transplant Maroons in, nor will they ever thrive where the Pine Apple does not" ("Maroon Petition to the House" 92), invoking the language of natural history to suggest that they, like tropical plants, cannot "thrive" in this environment. On its surface, this is another observation about the conditions of social reproduction; taken literally, the Maroons are identifying the pineapple as a food item that would make life feel familiar and full, and as another example of material support missing from Nova Scotia. By introducing the pineapple's ability to thrive as a metaphor for their own, however, the Maroons also register the conceptual poverty of the sort of life available to them in Nova Scotia, one of the many inequities that defines the climate of empire. At the moment this petition was composed (1799), after all, the pineapple was still strongly associated with Jamaica — but for nearly a century, as Ruth Levitt has demonstrated, "Knowledge of the methods of growing pineapples in cold climates" had been on the rise (111). According to Levitt, the practice of cultivating pineapples in hothouses had taken hold as a "fashionable pastime of a small though increasing number of horticultural enthusiasts among members of the [European] gentry and nobility" early in the eighteenth century (110) — and "as the momentum of interest in pineapple cultivation accelerated" in Britain, this new "demand . . . created opportunities for humbler nurserymen and market gardeners to invest in pineries . . . and supply plants and fruit direct[ly] to more of the gentry" (111, 112). By the end of the century, the pineapple had become so much a part of European life that it was a frequent motif in architecture and textiles, cropping up

everywhere from the West Towers of St. Paul's Cathedral to tea caddies (Levitt 111-12; see also Gohmann) — and so, when the Maroons invite their British readers to imagine a place where the pineapple could thrive, there is not necessarily reason to believe those readers would imagine only regions south of the equator, and there are many good reasons to imagine this is precisely why the Maroons might embrace this plant as a synecdoche for their own transplantation.

Throughout the debate about the Nova Scotia settlement, the Maroons' petitions demonstrate a savvy attention to how figures like Wentworth and Walpole each leverage old and new traditions of writing about climate to make their own case for relocation, and as many proponents of the "ice thesis" have argued already, the Maroons' effort to counter concerns about their insurrectionary inclination by emphasizing their vulnerability to the cold suggests something of their capacity to manipulate the terms of this debate to their own ends. By comparing themselves to the pineapple, however, the Maroons also challenge the terms of this debate — because in the pineapple, they have found a plant widely known to be similarly vulnerable to the cold, but also one that had been cultivated in many cold places using a form of climate control entirely absent, to this point, from discussion of their settlement. From the seventeenth century forward, Levitt explains, European horticulturalists had been working to secure the year-round soil and air temperatures the pineapple required (about 21 °C or 70 °F) not by radically transforming their native climate or somehow "seasoning" the plant itself, but rather by building "bespoke glasshouses equipped with integral heating systems that warmed both the air and the soil day and night, in chilly winter and cool summer" (110). To "coax[]" the transplanted species "into fruitfulness" (110), that is, European horticulturalists created an artificial climate suited to its needs — and demonstrated, as what Levitt calls a "lively" trade in plant stock and pinery equipment expanded across the continent (111), that this climate could be exported and recreated in many different places. By implicitly comparing the pineapple's potential to their own, then, the Maroons expose a number of important differences between the way these transplantation efforts have been handled. To begin with, and all the while acknowledging the unnatural conditions required to grow a pineapple anywhere cold, their observations about the absence of pineapples from Nova Scotia highlight a difference between the fullness of the lives available to them in North

America and those available to readers back in Britain. In damp and chilly Britain, artificial climates abound, and so too does the pineapple; in Nova Scotia, and in spite of all the debate about what might need to be done (to the native climate or with the Maroons) to make this settlement viable, no similar effort has been made to support either the pineapple or the community that says it needs them to thrive. At a moment when pineapples are being coaxed to fruitfulness all over Europe, this petition thus suggests, any effort to naturalize the Maroons' experience must appear somewhat disingenuous — because if the pineapple is missing from North America, what that absence registers is not an insurmountable incompatibility between the Maroons' needs and the climate, but rather a failure to provide a metaphorical hothouse to support their transplantation.

Considered in the context of the present climate crisis, of course, the Maroons' emphasis on the pineapple might appear disconcerting. Now, the hubris — or the preoccupation with control over nature — required to attempt either of the types of transplantation captured by their synecdoche is identified as a defining epistemological condition of the current crisis, and there are few contemporary climate activists who would identify the interventions required to keep pineapples on North American tables as part of a low-carbon future. From this perspective, the Maroons' complaint may not hit the right note for those most concerned with alternatives to geo-engineering and globalized trade — but formally, this illustration of the potential in figurative language to help draw new possibilities out of the contradictions in existing responses to seemingly intractable climatological problems is nonetheless instructive for contemporary ecocritics. To this end, it is also worth noting what the Maroons do not say: by separating their observations about "the Soil of Nova Scotia" from their inability to "thrive where the Pine Apple does not," the Maroons stop short of suggesting that the presence of this fruit would make them stay in Halifax; rather, what they say they want is simply a "speedy removal" to a place where the pineapple does thrive — and at the end of the eighteenth century, as Levitt observes, that is just about anywhere other than North America (116). By implicitly comparing the technology that makes that true to the many failures to provide the same sort of support to their Nova Scotia settlement, then, what the Maroons' synecdoche seems to register is both a desire to have their needs considered to the same depth as those of this tropi-

cal fruit and also a challenge to the terms of the debate about why their situation in Nova Scotia is untenable: they may not like the cold, but as the eighteenth-century peregrinations of the pineapple make clear, changing the temperature of the whole settlement is not the only way to improve that situation. Conceived more capaciously, these petitions suggest, a change of climate might also be accomplished by a change of governance, or by an expansion of support for certain conditions of social reproduction — and this is particularly true when, as evidenced by the proliferation of the hothouse, one defining characteristic of the expanding British empire is that there were already many more and less hospitable climates circulating under the same sky.

As the consequences of the contemporary climate crisis become more vivid and more devastating every year, the lessons of cases like this one — of how the communities that were resettled on the margins of empire narrated and survived the extreme conditions of their displacement — are becoming more urgent. Typically, as Sam White argues, historical studies of climate focus on how people have changed rather than on how the environment has changed over the same period of time ("Climate" 2), but in the context of the current crisis, this distinction has become untenable. Today, according to a recent report by Natural Resources Canada, the climatological conditions characteristic of each region in Canada are changing so quickly that native tree species would need to pull up their roots and run north in order to keep up with their suitability zones (see Aubin), and for species without this capacity to migrate, the effect of this change is still best described as displacement: by staying in place, these species — and the communities that depend on them — are losing their homes. Concerned by these changes, researchers across the social sciences and the humanities have already started to look to the past to identify some of the practices and epistemological conditions that have brought us to this point — and as a number of environmental humanities scholars have demonstrated, many of the land management practices now linked to climate change have roots in the ways that the notion of climate itself has changed over time (see Crutzen; McNeill; Asaka). Both literally and figuratively, then, case studies like this one can help to clarify how the climate of the present has been made, and in the process can raise new questions about what constitutes anthropogenic change and which aspects of contemporary environmental crises are in fact available to improvement. Considering

just the part of this story that concerns Wentworth and Walpole, for instance, close attention to the role of climate in each of their arguments could cast new light on both the past and the present of Nova Scotia's environmental crisis: in one view, their debate demonstrates precisely how notions of climate and life narrowed under pressure to expand British territory in North America, but at the same time, it anticipates some of the contemporary material consequences of that epistemological change. Today, Black and Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia are still more likely to be exposed to toxic waste sites and disproportionately affected by the extreme weather associated with climate change (Waldron, "Re-thinking" 42-43)[6] — and as a sort of prehistory of the patterns of material inequities exposed by projects like Ingrid R.G. Waldron's ENRICH (Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health) map of Nova Scotia, this eighteenth-century debate about the viability of the Maroon settlement exposes both the exclusively empirical views of climate and human life that have helped to naturalize these differences as well as the economic and political interests propped up by this effort. Now as then, if the bare presence of community is enough to demonstrate that it is possible to live with the present climate, no additional intervention is required to ensure this "Existence" will not "be attended with . . . misery" ("Humble" 57). In all these ways, then, looking back to the eighteenth century can help us to understand the origins and implications of this uneven distribution of environmental risk — but looking ahead, the challenge implicit in the figurative language of the Maroons' petitions might also help us to begin to think beyond an understanding of environmental risk still focused on what is measurable in the air and water. When the Maroons identify the pineapple's ability to thrive as the characteristic that will define the soil most likely to encourage their own flourishing, they invite their reader to join them in an understanding of the life they seek as something more than mere survival, and in an understanding of the climate that could support that life as something closer to what Christina Sharpe has recently called "the totality of our environments" (104): both, they suggest, include the conditions of social reproduction or the immaterial circumstances — like governance, like culture — that make a full life possible. With this gesture, however, they also offer us a glimpse of a new way to respond to the present crisis: one focused on the conditions necessary to support life, but as critical of the catastrophic

present as it is concerned with our climate future. For the Maroons, looking forward to a future in which they might flourish in the same soil as the pineapple also makes it possible to name what is missing from their present situation in Halifax; it is their hope for their future life — a life conceived more generously than their present circumstances will allow — that throws into relief precisely what makes that life impossible in the present, or which aspects of the present climate are already incompatible with life. What might happen if, in addition to working to protect what might be lost to climate change, contemporary ecocritics were to use our hopes for what is to come in the same way? As long as it is true, as Sharpe has observed, that the freedom to breathe is still as unequally distributed as clean air itself (112), a more capacious theory of climate could make it easier to explain how existing forms of inequity prop one another up — and it is in the future, remarkably, that the Maroons seemed to find both this new capacity and these new terms to articulate the interventions required to bring real change to the most hostile conditions of their present. In the Maroons' persistent declarations that they prefer "Death" to life in Nova Scotia, that is, we find the beginnings of a new model for contemporary debate about what it means to mitigate catastrophic climate change — and a reminder, in their observations about the absence of pineapples, both to widen our view of the present crisis to include the conditions of social reproduction currently at risk, and to ask, when imagining a livable future, what it will take to ensure that these conditions can thrive now, too.

Notes

[1] I am indebted to Kim TallBear for this framing. My emphasis here on the rhetorical gymnastics settlers undertake to claim a moral authority to resources while obscuring their role in colonial violence was motivated by her presentation entitled "American Progress Redux: Elizabeth Warren's DNA and Settler Mythology," given at the Calgary Institute for the Humanities' Annual Community Forum in 2019.

[2] For more on eighteenth-century thinking about "improvement" and imperial science, see Drayton.

[3] As historian Jeffrey A. Fortin has pointed out, Maroon communities were mostly illiterate, which means that "written accounts from Maroons are usually authored by a sympathetic — or, in some cases, hostile — white man," so scholars must approach these accounts with caution (26n12). To this end, and without losing sight of the possibility that many Maroons "were truly miserable in the cold weather," as Fortin imagines (31n103), this article aims first to place the language of the petitions attributed to the Maroons in their political context, highlighting the epistemological commitments and economic priorities

their rhetoric would have helped defend. Inspired by the method of Ramesh Mallipeddi's *Spectacular Suffering* (see ch. 4), however, this article also aims to read "through" the records about the Maroons produced by imperial administrators for what they reveal of the Maroons' daily life and priorities. By using these complaints as context, it becomes possible to interpret the language of the Maroons' petitions in terms beyond those established by the administrators holding the pen.

[4] Unless otherwise indicated in the list of works cited, the citations for the Maroon petitions and most of the correspondence examined here refer to the pagination of these documents as they appear in the invaluable *Nova Scotia and the Fighting Maroons: A Documentary History*, edited by Mavis Campbell.

[5] For more on existing efforts to widen the focus of environmental history to both include this type of loss and work to resist these forms of (social) erosion, see Perry; Smith; Stewart; Glave and Stoll, "African." All of these environmental histories centre practices of social reproduction — and particularly now, as critical studies of capitalism have become focused on the creation, the function, the cost, and the gender of externalities, further attention to archives like the Maroons' petitions could help researchers interested in the relationship between these fields to more clearly define how elements of culture like food and work similarly contribute to climate and to the operations of capital.

[6] I am grateful to Trynne Delaney for the suggestion to investigate Waldron's work. In 2020, Delaney received an MA in English from the University of Calgary; her thesis, "Dispersal," treats the spectral landscape produced by the erasures Waldron examines.

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