INTRODUCTION

In the mountainous interior of Jamaica live several groups of people known as Maroons. They are the descendants of African and Creole slaves who escaped from bondage during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and fled to the mountain forests, where they were able to from their own societies. Despite repeated efforts, the British colonists were unable to destroy these rebel communities. The Maroons successfully adapted to their new environment, and developed a formidable military organization based on an innovative style of guerilla warfare. The British found it ne-
cessary to sue for peace, and in 1739 concluded treaties with the Maroons, granting them legal freedom, parcels of land, and a sort of vague, incomplete political autonomy.9

Today there are four major Maroon communities in Jamaica: Accompong, in the western part of the island; Scott’s Hall and Charles Town, in the east-central part; and Moore Town, the largest community, in the eastern Blue Mountains. These communities today are politically and economically more or less integrated within the larger Jamaican society, but their inhabitants retain a distinct ethnic identity. While present day Maroons for the most part share the culture of other rural Jamaicans, they maintain a definite cultural distinctiveness within a few limited spheres. One such domain, and the central topic of this paper, is the system of beliefs and practices relating to the supernatural.

The information presented below, unless otherwise indicated, refers specifically to Moore Town. Although much of it would apply accurately to the other Maroon communities as well, each community displays significant variations of its own.4

RELIGION IN MOORE TOWN

There is little in the historical literature from which we can draw a picture of the traditional religion of the early Maroons.5 The most we can assume is that some sort of religious syncretism began to occur at an early stage as Maroons from a great many different African cultures first came into contact. Drawing from several West African (and possibly Central African) models, the result must have been unmistakably ‘African’ in a broad sense — although there is some possibility also of early Christian influence through slaves who joined the Maroon communities after several years spent on the plantations.6

Christian missionary activity first reached Moore Town in the 1820’s. Within a few decades an Anglican church had been built in the center of the village and virtually the whole community converted. Throughout the century the Anglican church remained the sole mission in Moore Town and dominated the religious life of the community.7 In spite of the thoroughgoing conversion of Maroons
to Christianity on the surface, it appears that the traditional religion continued to be practiced as a separate system. The process which Spicer (1954: 665-670) called ‘compartmentalization’ seems to have operated in Moore Town in the religious sphere. Christianity and the traditional religion coexisted as separate systems, each with its own concerns. While Christianity provided the setting for worship and preparation for the afterlife, the more immediate problems of everyday life, as well as the major crises, were handled in the context of the traditional ceremony known as Kromanti dance (also called Kromanti Play). The two systems existed simultaneously, apparently without conflict.

This situation continued into the twentieth century. However, by the 1940’s, the influence of several other Christian sects had reached Moore Town. Within a short time the Anglican hegemony had been replaced by a more complex picture, as new churches sprang up within the village and claimed their own converts. In recent times a large number of foreign-based fundamentalist sects such as the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the Church of God have gained dramatically in popularity. Unlike the Anglican church of Moore Town, some of these churches violently and actively oppose the traditional Maroon religious practices in general, and the Kromanti dance in particular. For this reason, and a variety of others, the traditional religious system of the Moore Town Maroons has declined to the point that very few younger Maroons participate in it or have any real understanding of it.

The majority of the people in Moore Town today belong to one or another of the several Christian churches in the village. Many of these churches forbid participation in traditional Maroon rituals. Thus it should be borne in mind that a large segment of the community no longer participates in the ceremony of Kromanti dance, on the infrequent occasions it is held. Nevertheless, many elements of the traditional belief system continue to be shared by all segments of the community, and during times of crisis even the strictest Christians may deign to seek aid from one of the few remaining ritual specialists.

Although the Kromanti dance complex is waning in importance for the majority, it continues to occupy a primary place in the lives of a few individuals. The main body of this paper is devoted to an
examination of this complex as it exists today. As in the past, the Kromanti dance and the belief system associated with it remain ‘compartmentalized’, and there is little evidence of Christian syncretism, even though some of its primary practitioners are also practicing Christians.

Once again, in reading what follows, it should be kept in mind that the Kromanti dance is no longer a community-wide event; nor is it held on a regular basis. But it continues to have importance for a large number of Maroons, although fluctuating participation makes even an approximate estimate of this number impossible.

THE SPIRIT WORLD

In traditional Maroon belief, there is one supreme deity, the omnipotent creator, known as Yankipong or Tata Nyame, who inhabits the sky. Yankipong is generally seen as being remote from the living and unconcerned with everyday human affairs. Nonetheless, in times of extreme crisis it is felt that his aid may be sought through prayer. But direct communication with Yankipong is not possible.

Below Yankipong are the spirits of the ancestors. There is no pantheon of intermediate deities such as one finds in many African and Afro-American religions. The spirits of the dead, called duppies, jumbies, or bigi-man, are closely linked with the living and have a great deal of influence in daily human affairs. They possess the power to bring about either good or evil.

Close contact is maintained between living Maroons and the ancestral spirits. Duppies may be manipulated by the living for their own purposes. In most respects they resemble living persons very closely. Like the living, they have desires and needs, emotions and personalities; like human beings, they can be angered or appeased, threatened or cajoled. They do possess, however, super-human powers, and if given the proper attention and favors, will sometimes put these powers at the disposal of living individuals. Power over spirits is sometimes referred to as obeah, as in the rest of Jamaica, although this term has been supplanted by the more modern term, science. Nowadays in Moore Town ‘obeah’ carries negative impli-
cations, for it has come to mean the use of power by outsiders for evil ends.

The ancestral spirits are arranged in a sort of vague, informal hierarchy. At the apex are the spirits of the earliest Maroons, who lived centuries ago. Few of these are remembered by name, although the great heroes, such as Kojo and Nanny, have not been forgotten. Also near the top of the hierarchy are four early Maroon warriors (sometimes referred to as ‘generals’):

1. Swiformento
2. Okonoko
3. Puss
4. Welcome

These ancient spirits are more distant from the living than the spirits of those who have died in more recent times. As a result of their great age they have acquired tremendous power, but in turn they have become farther removed from human affairs. In fact, they have become more or less inaccessible to the living. These four topmost ‘generals’ are said to correspond to four ‘tribes’ or ‘nations’ (both of the foregoing terms are Maroon usages):

1. Dokose
2. Ibo
3. Mongola
4. Prapa

There is a certain amount of confusion as to which individual corresponds to which tribe, but these are the four most commonly mentioned tribes from which the present day Maroons are said to have sprung. Each of the four ‘generals’ is vaguely conceptualized as the apical ancestor of all Maroons descended from the tribe to which he corresponds.

The concept of ‘tribes’ among the present-day Maroons is rather nebulous. Most traditionally-oriented Maroons assert that one or another African tribe is dominant in their family history, although they will add that there has been so much intermarriage between tribes in the past that it is sometimes very difficult to single out the one particular tribe which outweighs all others in importance. The only social context in which this notion of tribes comes into play is the traditional ceremony of Kromanti dance, in which certain songs are said to relate to specific tribes, and to invoke the spirits of past Maroons descended predominantly from one or another of these tribes. Aside from the four tribes listed above, which are con-
sidered the principal tribes in the Maroon ancestry, several others are cited by present-day Maroons as having contributed to early Maroon society. Among these are: Mandinga, Nago, Wesuman, Mabiwi, Mabere, Timbambu, Oyesu, Okrio, Okriba, Chankofi. All of these individual tribes are subsumed under the one most powerful tribe, the Kromanti tribe, which has become almost synonymous with the name ‘Maroon’, and the primacy of which is taken for granted.

Under the four ‘generals’ is another group of four ancient warriors whose spirits also possess great power:

1. Wendandu Kofi  
2. Jinsandi Kofi  
3. Kromanti Kofi  
4. One-yeye Kofi

None of these early Maroon spirits play much of a part in the ceremony of Kromanti dance. Although spirit possession is an important feature of the ceremony, usually only the younger, less powerful spirits take possession of living individuals; it is said that possession by one of the truly ancient spirits is extremely violent and may lead to the death of the person possessed.

Under the upper echelon of ancient spirits lies a large body of ancestral spirits whose powers decrease in proportion to their closeness to the living. A very large number of such spirits are remembered by name, and it is this group which is in constant interaction with the world of the living. Every Maroon no longer alive, within the past few generations — so long as he or she is still remembered by the living — belongs to this group.

CEREMONIAL ORGANIZATION

There is no special cult organization connected with Kromanti dance. Participation is open to all adult Maroons; non-Maroons are excluded, except under certain special circumstances. Ceremonies used to be held regularly, several times a week, in a structure known as the asafo house, located near the center of the village. Several years ago the asafo house fell into disuse, and today public ceremonies are usually held at a nearby spot known as Bump.
Grave. Aside from these infrequent public ceremonies, private ceremonies are sometimes held at individuals' homes. Although in principle any adult Maroon may participate in these, in practice they are usually attended only by a select few who are invited.

There are two types of Kromanti dance: Business dances and Pleasure dances. The latter are dances which have no purpose other than entertainment, and in which spirits are not purposefully invoked (although spontaneous possession will sometimes occur in this context). Business dances, on the other hand, are taken very seriously, and are only held in order to achieve some clear purpose through the invocation of ancestral spirits. Most often Business dances are held for the purpose of healing spirit-caused illnesses, although nearly any problem can be dealt with in this context. In times of crisis a Business rather than Pleasure dance will be held, and the aid of ancestral spirits will be sought. Business dances are more frequently held than Pleasure dances.17

The Fete-Man

The ritual specialist, and the central personage in Kromanti dance is known as the fete-man. There are a number of alternative names for him: dancer-man; work-man; Business-man; titai-man; kumfu-man.18 But the most common form is fete-man.

At any given Business dance there is usually one key fete-man who is chosen in advance to work for the person seeking aid. Although several fete-men may be present at the dance, it is this particular chosen individual who is responsible for effecting the cure, or the resolution of the problem if it is something other than an illness.

Kromanti dance usually begins shortly after nightfall and continues until daybreak; when very serious problems are involved, the dance will sometimes continue for several days and nights. During the initial stages of the dance, anyone present is permitted to participate in the dancing, which is sometimes done in ring formation. However, after several hours the dance loses its recreational character, and the central fete-man becomes possessed by an ancestral spirit. At this point, the proceedings become very grave and
formal, as the possessed *fete-man* takes complete control of the ceremony. During the remainder of the ceremony, except for short periods when he is absent from the danceground, the *fete-man* is the center of attention. He gives commands which must be followed, and he alone dances, unless he invites others to join him. He also decides which songs are to be sung.

Although this central position is most commonly occupied by males, there are also a lesser number of respected *fete-women* who achieve an equal degree of power and whose services are equally valued.

*The Pakit*

The primary source of a *fete-man*’s power is his *pakit*. A *pakit* is an ancestral Maroon spirit which has devoted itself to a particular *fete-man*, and has become his own personal possession. A *fete-man*’s *pakit* is seen as the key to his success, and is at the very root of his power. If a man’s *pakit* is weak, then he will not excel as a *fete-man*; if a man’s *pakit* is strong, then he will most certainly achieve great things in the realm of the supernatural. *Pakits* are owned only by *fete-men* and are not well understood by the general population. In almost every case, a man’s *pakit* is the spirit of a Maroon who, during his own lifetime, was a practicing *fete-man* with a *pakit* of his own. It is said that whenever a living *fete-man* dies and enters the spirit world, his spirit will eventually find another living *fete-man* to which to devote itself.

Any Maroon may strive to become a *fete-man*, but it is felt that certain individuals are born with a special gift, and only such persons can achieve true greatness in this field. These individuals often begin to exhibit their gifts at an early age: they are able to see or sense the presence of *duplicates* around them while still children, and their unusual behavior is interpreted to mean that they possess a sort of innate affinity with the spirit world. Sometimes these gifted persons enter into an informal apprenticeship with an older *fete-man*, who teaches them the secrets needed to manipulate the spirit powers. But apprenticeship is by no means a necessary stage in the process of becoming a *fete-man*. In fact, any adult Maroon who is
able to attain a *pakit*, by whatever means, is capable of becoming a *fete-man*.

There are several possible ways of obtaining a *pakit*. For a few especially fortunate persons the process is a quite simple and passive one: the spirit of a former *fete-man* takes a strong liking to them, and offers itself to them as a *pakit*. This occurs most often in a dream, in which the spirit approaches the sleeping person and communicates its desire to give itself to him. In such cases there is no choice, as refusal of the offer would anger the spirit and result in dangerous repercussions. Once this relationship between living person and spirit is established, the former is well on the way to becoming a *fete-man*. The spirit, which is now his own personal *pakit*, will visit his dreams often and begin to teach him the knowledge — much of it secret — necessary to a *fete-man*.

In some cases, the process of acquiring a *pakit* is more violent. The spirit which decides to become a person’s *pakit* may simply take possession of that person while he is in a waking state. When this occurs, the possessed person loses control of his behavior and is unconscious of his surroundings. Sometimes his behavior will become violent and unpredictable, and it will appear that he is going mad. Little by little, however, it will be understood what is happening: a spirit has chosen to be this person’s *pakit* and, being too impatient to teach him gradually, has possessed him prematurely.

The majority of persons who wish to become *fete-men* do not receive a *pakit* in this way, but rather, must go and actively seek the help of a *fete-man*. It is possible to buy a *pakit* from an experienced *fete-man* (although this is considered unethical); if things are done properly the *fete-man* should be willing to perform this service free of charge, out of friendship for the receiver, and in recognition of his natural rapport with the spirit world.

A *fete-man* will never give away his own *pakit*, of course. He will instead give another spirit with which he has become acquainted in his work, and over which he has achieved a certain amount of power. The private ceremony in which a *pakit* is given to a person is known as *wash-head*, for it involves the bathing of the recipient’s head with a special herbal mixture. Contained within this mixture must be a special ‘weed’ which corresponds to the recipient’s tribe;
it is said that for every tribe represented among the Maroon there is a matching 'weed' — for example, Ibo weed, Dokose weed, Nago weed, Mandinga weed, Chankofi weed. Although in reality 'tribal' divisions among the Maroons have long since faded into the past, a prospective fete-man should have some idea of which tribe is dominant in his ancestral background, so that the proper 'weeds' can be used in washing his head.

In many cases, the person whose head is being washed must also be taken to the grave of the person whose spirit is to become his pakit. At the graveside, the fete-man introduces the spirit to its future owner, and goes through a series of motions intended to cement the new relationship. If things go as planned, the person for whom the ceremony is being held is now a pakit-man, a fete-man who is equipped to dance Kromanti. However, pakits given in this way are not as powerful as those which offer themselves to individuals of their own will, for the fete-man who gives a pakit retains the power also to take it away.

Pakits sometimes visit the world of the living in the form of an animal.22 Each pakit has its own special animal form which it adopts whenever it chooses to manifest itself physically. The most common form taken by pakits is that of ananaka, the snake, but there is a wide variety of other possible forms, such as opele, the johncrow (vulture); okrema, the chickenhawk; or sumans, the crayfish.23 Pakits are said to visit Kromanti dance in these animal forms on occasion; they are said to resemble natural animals, except that they emit a whitish glow from within — they shine in the dark. Several informants who had snake pakits claimed that these would sometimes appear while they were dancing Kromanti, and would coil around their bodies as they danced.

One of the most important functions of a pakit is that of protection. Kromanti dance is viewed by Maroons as a sort of metaphorical warfare, on a spiritual rather than physical plane. The work of the fete-man is conceived of as a fight — a battle between the spirits controlled by the fete-man and those afflicting the person seeking his help. (The term 'fete-man' is derived from the verb 'fete', from a deep layer of Maroon creole, meaning 'to fight', as well as 'to dance for sickness'.)24 For this reason every fete-man risks incurring a 'blow' — a spirit-caused injury — anytime he dances Krom-
manti. Even during the course of his normal daily life the fete-man must be prepared against attack from the vengeful spirits he has previously opposed in Kromanti dances. His pakit offers full-time protection against such assaults, and if his pakit is extremely strong, then he is virtually invulnerable to spirit-harm of any kind. But most pakits do not function perfectly all of the time, and thus must be given special attention before any crisis situation is to be approached. Using special ‘weeds’ and other secret paraphanelia, the fete-man must trim (also sometimes pronounced ‘prim’) himself — ritually prepare himself and his pakit in a private ceremony — before facing any dangerous tasks involving the spirit world. Interestingly enough, in Maroon oral tradition the word ‘trim’ is also used to refer to the ritual preparation of the ancient Maroon warriors before going into battle.

Spirit Possession

No Kromanti dance can achieve its purpose without one or more of the participants becoming possessed by the spirit of an ancestor. It is common, especially early in the ceremony, for a number of persons to experience possession by ‘stray’ or ‘wandering’ spirits that happen to be passing by the danceground and are attracted to the scene by the music. Such spirits usually visit Kromanti dance merely to ‘pleasurize’ themselves, and their possession will normally last for a relatively short time, since they have no special duty to perform at the Play, but have only come to dance and enjoy themselves. In contrast, the fete-man will at some point — if things proceed properly — be possessed by his pakit, and will then take full control of the ceremony and begin to perform the rituals necessary to bring about the resolution of the problem at hand. During the greater part of the rest of the ceremony the fete-man will remain in a state of possession, although there are likely to be intermittent periods in which the spirit disengages from him, followed eventually by periods of repossession. At times the fete-man will remain in an uninterrupted state of possession for several hours. In between periods of possession by his pakit the fete-man may also be possessed by other spirits with which he has become
familiar, who come to the Play to satisfy their curiosity or to offer additional help. But the fete-man’s pakit is the primary spirit in the ceremony, and will manifest itself through possession more frequently than these other spirits. As previously mentioned, it is said that the pakit will also sometimes visit Kromanti dance in the shape of an animal.

The term for spirit possession in general among the Maroons is myal. Although the random possession experienced by casual participants is somewhat milder than the calculated possession of the fete-man by his pakit, both types are called myal. In ordinary speech a person who becomes possessed is said to ‘get in myal’, ‘take myal’, or ‘catch myal’. When he goes in myal fully, it is said that his ‘head turns’. The special terminology of spirit possession, as in many New World black religions — for instance, Haitian Vodun — is based upon an equestrian metaphor. The spirit refers to the person whose body it is possessing as its horse, and the act of possession itself is known as riding. (The possessing spirit will also sometimes refer to its horse as its ‘boy’, and will say that it is ‘walking on’ its ‘boy’.) Anytime a fete-man is dancing for a Business Play, he will tie his head with a specially prepared kerchief known as a saddle, which has been treated beforehand with special ‘weeds’. The saddle is a precious possession, for it must be worn by the fete-man in order for his pakit to mount him properly.

The condition of myal, especially the myal of the fete-man, is extremely serious and must be treated with great caution, for it is potentially very violent. Bystanding participants who are not possessed (persons not in possession are said to be live-head or clean-yeeye) must stay clear of the possessed fete-man, and should not approach his vicinity unless called forward by him. Possessed Kromanti dancers have inhumanly quick and unpredictable tempers, and the slightest incident may suddenly arouse their anger. Maroon spirits are pugnacious by nature, and the older the spirit — and thus, the higher its position in the hierarchy of the spirit world — the more excitable it will be. A favorite object of Maroon spirits is the afana, or machete, and should a possessing spirit be given the slightest cause for anger it will instantly get ahold of this weapon and launch into a series of threatening gestures.
Possession is usually brought on by music and dancing, although some *fete*-men also commonly experience spontaneous possession in the absence of external stimuli. In the latter case, the *fete*-man may be sitting calmly at one moment, and in the next instant he bolts forth from his chair with great force and goes into a sort of loping, spinning motion. When this happens, the possessed individual must be attended to immediately by a helper who will tie his head with his *saddle* and answer his commands. In the context of *Kromanti Play* there are several explicit signs which warn onlookers of the onset of possession. The person going into *myal* begins to execute a very distinctive dance motion, a sort of jerky, spinning movement in which one leg is crossed over the other in a rapid backward kick. His legs begin to quiver rhythmically, and as he bounds back and forth in this circular motion, his eyes are directed upward in a blank stare. This continues for some time, and as the state of possession stabilizes, the individual, still in motion, expels a succession of piercing screams. In a matter of time, the spirit will 'cool down', but before this occurs it is dangerous to approach the person in possession.

The intrinsic fierceness of Maroon spirits is one of the most remarkable things about them. Although they share human emotions and desires, these are exaggerated and distorted to such an extent that when they possess human beings they behave completely irrationally and unpredictably. Spirits appear to operate according to an inscrutable logic of their own. *Clean-ye ye* persons in the presence of a possessed individual must obey certain basic rules, so as not to inflame the spirit. They must never smoke while a person is in *myal*. They must remove all shiny objects from their bodies, such as watches or jewelry, for these are repugnant to the spirit. Above all, they must never address the spirit by its *horse*’s name, or even mention the *horse*’s name to another person while the spirit is in possession; to do this could cause serious injury, or possibly death, to the *horse*.

As the possessing spirit begins to cool down, it becomes somewhat more tractable and willing to communicate with the living human beings around it. The possessed individual is addressed by the living as *granfa* or *old man* if the possessing spirit is a male ancestor, and as *grandy*, if a female. The *granfa* or *grandy* in turn ad-
dresses living Maroons as pikin, or nyuman. The linguistic situation at Kromanti dance is quite complex; several different language forms are employed within the dance context at different times. The normal dialect of the Maroons — which is essentially the same English-based creole spoken throughout Jamaica — is appropriate for communications between living persons. On the other hand, the ‘spirit language’ used in conversations between spirits themselves, or spirits and living persons, appears to consist of a deep layer of Maroon creole which has been maintained only in the context of Kromanti Play. Although English-based, and sharing many lexical and grammatical features with the ‘standard’ Jamaican creole, it is partially unintelligible to non-Maroons, as well as Maroons who have no experience of Kromanti Play. Finally, there is the language form known as Kromanti, or simply as Language, or Country. DALBY (1971: 38) was correct in conjecturing that this Kromanti ‘language’ is in fact not a fully functional language, but rather, ‘an esoteric repository of isolated words and set phrases’. Although a few phrases of Kromanti are used in a code-like way for communication, the majority of words and phrases are used for other purposes, and the meanings of some of them have been lost. The main function of Kromanti words seems to be the invocation of spirits; the words in and of themselves have magical power. There is virtually no English content to Kromanti (it appears to be derived largely from Akan, with a smattering of other influences), and being the language of the ‘first-time’ Maroons, it provides a connection through which the almost unlimited power of these earliest ancestors can be tapped — if the user has accurate knowledge of it. In the times of greatest crisis, the fete-man feels he can rely on the inherent power of deep Kromanti — its power to mobilize the ancient, most powerful Maroons in his behalf. Even the remotest ancestors will respond to the deep Kromanti and offer their aid, if the language is properly understood and applied.

While the younger Maroon spirits which routinely possess the living normally use the deep-level creole in their communications, they also sprinkle their speech with bits of Kromanti ‘language’, so as to draw on the power of their predecessors. Uttering fragmentary bits of Kromanti ‘language’ in this way — in an exclamatory tone, without any specific communication intended — is known as
‘cutting Country’, and is a distinctive pattern of Maroon behavior shared by the living and the spirits of the dead alike.32

After the spirit possessing an individual calms down, it becomes more malleable and willing to listen to the desires and needs of the living persons surrounding it, so long as its commands are obeyed. Normally, at any Kromanti dance there is a person who accepts the role of kwatamassa (quartermaster), a sort of special assistant who remains unpossessed and follows the orders of the granfa or grandi, fetching for him whatever ritual objects or other items he may request. The kwatamassa sometimes also acts as an intermediary between the granfa and living individuals, some of whom may not understand the spirit language very well.

Many of the spirits who possess persons in Kromanti dance are recognized by participants as someone they had once known as a living person. Some spirits will directly identify themselves by name, while others will only give behavioral clues as to their identity. Most spirits can be recognized by certain idiosyncrasies, such as a limp, or a twitch, or some special facial expression for which they were known while alive. Once the possessing spirit has calmed down somewhat, and is recognized by some of the participants, the atmosphere becomes a bit more relaxed, and there may even be some joking or bantering between the grandi and participants. But people must always remain somewhat cautious in the presence of a grandi, even when a certain warmth of feeling is apparent, for Maroon spirits are never as rational or predictable as human beings, and are subject to sudden changes of temper.

A major part of Kromanti Play revolves around the performance of physical feats by persons in possession. There are many reports of possessed fete-men climbing trees backwards or upside down, flying though zinc roofs without causing damage, or devouring whole glasses or bottles. One of the most impressive feats, said to be performed only rarely today, involves the use of a machete. The fete-man, in possession, cuts or stabs himself severely — sometimes, it is said, he actually disembowels himself — and then disappears into the woods. When he returns in a short while the wound is completely healed, with little or no scar tissue to show where it originally was. There exist today Maroon oral traditions relating how the ancient warriors were once trained in this art of magical healing be-
fore being allowed to join in battle against the English.

When the spirit cools down, and after a good deal of begging on the part of the individual seeking his help, the granfa will eventually agree to take the case, and will start to perform a series of rituals lasting through the night, some of which will be briefly described at a later point. After the granfa has finally completed the work for which he has been called, he will be ready to return to the spirit world. The spirit may be able to ‘pull’ itself off its horse, but, more often, will request the assistance of the kwatamassa, with a command such as ‘kre me haas’! (‘clear my horse’). In order to ‘clear’ the possessed individual, a particular object chosen by the spirit must be held by the kwatamassa or someone else — the object can be anything from a wooden stick or glass bottle to a piece of chalk — and passed over and around the individual in a series of motions, while he reclines on his hands and feet. The last motion consists of a circular movement directly over the head, and as soon as it is completed the person who has been in possession jerks back into the arms of the kwatamassa and lets out a gasp. Once the spirit has been ‘pulled’ in this manner the person who was possessed stumbles about in a dazed and confused condition for several minutes. When he becomes lucid he claims that he remembers nothing that took place during the period of his possession.

Divination

Every fete-man possesses a special object known as a jege, which is given to him by his pakit soon after their relationship is first established. The pakit usually appears in a dream and tells the fete-man that he should look in a particular secret place where an important object has been hidden. The pakit guides him to this spot, where his jege is waiting, and begins to explain its uses to him. Almost always the jege resembles a marble between a half-inch and two inches in diameter; it is usually a light shade of amber in color, and is transluscent, with a dull, slightly pocked surface.

The jege is one of the most important tools of the fete-man, for it is crucial to the practice of divination. Without his jege a fete-man is nearly powerless, because he is unable to determine the ultimate
source of the problem he is supposed to be treating. Although there are variations of method between individual /ete-man/, the most common procedure for using the jege is outlined below.

When a prospective client first consults a /ete-man/ for help, there is a period of private discussion during which the /ete-man/ attempts to 'read' the person — to tell the person what exactly his problem consists of, and what sort of help he desires, before the latter has had a chance to clarify it to the /ete-man/. This is really a formality meant to convince the prospective client of the /ete-man/'s mystical prowess. The /ete-man/’s success in this endeavor is assured by the power of his jege, which rests in his pants pocket at the time, along with certain powerful ‘weeds’ he has prepared with rum beforehand. If the reading is a success and the /ete-man/ decides to accept the case, a date is set for a Kromanti dance. In the meantime the /ete-man/ ‘trims’ himself and his paki for the dance, by observing certain private rituals.

After the dance begins the /ete-man/, while still clean-yeye, eventually commences the process of divination. He brings out his abaso, a white enamelled metal bowl (formerly made of wood), and sets it on the ground in the dancing area. In the bowl is a mixture of crushed ‘weeds’ and rum. The /ete-man/ takes his jege from his pocket (sometimes a /ete-man/ will receive more than one jege from his /ete-man/, and will use all of them together), and places it in the bowl; then he picks up the bowl, and begins to roll the jege around in it. One /ete-man/ described the process this way:

> Sometimes you must get a plate and put the marbles in it, and then throw some rum in the plate. When you throw the rum in, the marbles are going to dance in the plate, they’re going to spin around. It’s the jeges, the marbles in the plate, that you have to use to read the sign now. The marbles are going to show you definitely what happened to the man. Some of the marbles show you how long a man has been sick. You have marbles with marks on them, anywhere from one to a hundred marks. When the marbles are spinning in the plate, anywhere you see them rest and stop on a number, you can say whether it has been four days, or five days, or two days that the man has been sick."'

The jege shows what is the underlying, spirit-related cause of the problem at hand. When the paki later possesses the /ete-man/, the granfa will then act in accord with this knowledge to bring about a solution or a cure. At times the clean-yeye divination proves to be incomplete or otherwise insufficient, and the granfa must use the
himself to get to the root of the problem.
The oracular power of the jege may be brought to bear on a wide variety of problems, and is by no means limited in application to the context of Kromanti Play. Fete-men often use their jege for personal purposes, such as reading the future so that they may be warned in advance of approaching dangers. Jeges are also important in the process of ‘capturing’ and confining malicious spirits, for they evince the crucial signs which indicate whether or not an unseen spirit has been subdued.

In recent times some fete-men have begun to supplement their jeges with the use of a crystal ball obtained in one of the larger towns.

**Herbal Medicine**

The Maroons are famous throughout the island for their outstanding knowledge of the wild plants which abound in the forests surrounding them. A great number of these are said to possess medicinal properties of which only the Maroons are aware; in fact, many Maroons will say that there is no plant on the face of the earth which does not have a use. In the context of Kromanti Play, the medicinal properties of wild plants (usually called ‘weeds’) are seen as secondary to their spiritual powers. How these powers are understood varies from one individual to the next. Some informants stated that every plant has a spirit of its own, while others asserted that the power of a plant derives from its association with a particular ancestral Maroon spirit. In any case, the power of plants can be great, and is often employed in ritual contexts.

Outsiders stand in awe of the Maroons’ legendary grasp of supernatural plant lore. Several non-Maroon informants living in outside locations told the author of incidents in which they had seen Maroons use ‘weeds’ to ‘cramp’ an individual. Typically, such stories would relate how a Maroon in an argument with a non-Maroon would pull some ‘weeds’ from his pocket and, while ‘cutting Country’, would spray a mouthful of rum on them. Within a matter of seconds the Maroon’s antagonist would be paralyzed on the ground, suffering convulsions. Several fete-men in Moore Town
corroborated these accounts, and claimed that the use of ‘weeds’ for cramping persons in this way, whether in defense or offense, was common.

_fete-men_ must become expert herbalists; if their _pakit_ is good, it will teach them a great deal about the uses of different herbs. So essential are ‘weeds’ in the manipulation of spirit powers that Maroons often use the phrase, ‘rubbing trash’ (‘trash’ meaning ‘weeds’), as a synonym for ‘working science’ — that is, manipulating spirits.

During the course of a _Kromanti dance_ there is usually a point at which the possessed _fete-man_ runs off into the woods to pick the herbs which are required for the completion of the ceremony. The _fete-man_ will sometimes be gone from the danceground for an hour or more. During this time he finds the combination of ‘weeds’ to be used in the cure. Since the spirit is riding him, he is able to locate the plants, some of which are rare, in pitch darkness, without the help of a torch or any other source of light.

When he returns with the special herbs, they are crushed and blended with rum (and sometimes animal blood) in a bowl. This mixture is used to ‘bath’ the person for whom the dance is being held: it is applied to his skin in a vigorous rubbing motion by the _fete-man_ and the _kwatamassa_. This occurs near the end of the ceremony, usually shortly before daylight. The mixture should remain on the skin for several days, and the person being treated may use only white rum, and no water, to bathe himself during this period. Sometimes the patient is also told to drink an herbal potion which has been previously prepared by the _fete-man_.

‘Weeds’ are also important in the manufacturing of a ‘guard’. A guard is a protective power which is fastened to a human being and works to fend off potential spirit harm. Every _fete-man_ must have one, to work in conjunction with his _pakit_; many non-specialists also possess guards which they have purchased from a _fete-man_ in a private ceremony. The guard is usually administered in the form of an herbal potion, although sometimes it is also applied externally to the skin. Once given, it will last indefinitely, but must be kept absolutely secret, or else it will ‘spoil’, and lose its protective efficacy. Some informants say that a good _fete-man_ can sense when a person has a guard, for he will be able to perceive a slight glow emanating
Animal Sacrifice

Most Kromanti dance ceremonies require the sacrifice of an animal to the fe-te-man’s pakit, in return for the work which the pakit has agreed to carry out. The sacrifice is performed by the fe-te-man, either while clean-jeye or in a state of possession. The animal’s blood is an important ingredient in the herbal mixture which will be used in the ceremony.

The animal chosen for sacrifice is most often an okoko, or fowl, preferably a white one; if the case is an easy one a pigeon may be used instead, or if it is particularly difficult, an oprako, or hog, may be employed. Unlike certain Afro-Jamaican cult groups in other parts of the island, the Maroons never use goats for sacrifice. The goat is strictly taboo for this purpose, and although many Maroons nowadays will eat goat meat with no compunction, it is said that in older days Maroons would carefully avoid it.

The sacrifice is performed by cutting off the head with a machete, or cutting the throat, if a hog is being sacrificed. The blood is caught in a white bowl, and is used for making certain ritual marks on the patient, either before or after the ‘weeds’ are added to it. The meat is later cooked and served to participants, but a portion of it is prepared separately for the spirit, without salt, since salt repels spirits.

Ritual Objects

Each fe-te-man possesses certain ritual objects which he keeps inside his house until the time of the ceremony. Aside from his jege and his saddle, he may keep a pair of Kromanti drums at his yard. These drums are sacred, and must be given special care, for they provide the music for Kromanti dance. Another object which may be used in a ceremony is the junga, the traditional Maroon spear, made of a carefully sharpened metal blade attached to a long
wooden haft. Although used primarily for hunting wild hog in the surrounding hills, the *junga* is an object of pride and a symbol of Maroon identity, and may also be used in *Kromanti* rituals. Most *fete-men* like to keep a *junga* in their yard, whether or not they are hunters.

Many *fete-men* possess a special switch made from the branch of a tree which is sometimes used in *Kromanti Play* as a whip. On certain occasions it may be necessary to flog a person who is being afflicted by a *duppy*, either to scare the *duppy* away from him, or to exact atonement from him, if he has done something wrong which has caused the *duppy* to injure him of its own accord.

If a *fete-man* is especially lucky he may gain possession of a *thunder-ball*, a small stone-like object with a round or oval shape and a smooth surface. *Thunder-balls* are usually found in the ground, a few inches below the surface. It is believed that they fall from the sky, and that they are special gifts from *Yankipong*. A person who stumbles upon a *thunder-ball* is entitled to several years of good luck. *Thunder-balls* are greatly desired by *fete-men* in particular, for once acquired they will act as a general enhancer of power.38

Fire, or *timbambu*, is an important element in *Kromanti dance*. Maroon spirits are attracted by fire, and often a *granfa* will call for *timbambu-sticks* — pieces of partially — burned wood with red-hot embers at one end — to be used in a spectacular dance which sends showers of sparks about the danceground. *Timbambu-sticks* may be used also to test the bravery of bystanding participants, or in certain ritual operations.

Almost any object may obtain ritual significance in the context of *Kromanti Play*, for the *granfa* may decide to choose whatever object he pleases to perform certain operations — often for reasons that only he comprehends. But certain objects and materials are used more commonly than others, such as bottles, machetes, sheets, sticks, eggs, rice, thread, pieces of chalk, rocks, mirrors. The *granfa* may call for any of these during the *Play*, and in most cases only he understands the significance of the objects and knows what to do with them at that moment.
Ritual Motions

*Kromanti Play* always involves certain very distinctive ritual motions. One of these, called ‘spinning’, consists of a sort of twirling movement which requires two persons: one of them takes the other’s hand, and holding it above the other’s head, guides him through a full turn, and then back again. After this, the person who initiated the spin gently pushes the other person down into a squatting position and steps over him, whereupon the other person, still squatting, turns around to face him again, and the motion is repeated. These motions are a typical part of possession behavior, although they are sometimes also performed by *clean-ye* persons.

They are repeated very often in the context of *Kromanti Play*. When a *granfa* spins a living person, it is said he is ‘cutting off destruction’ — that is, he is clearing away any evil influences which may be lurking nearby. Spinning is thus a sort of gesture of goodwill, in which the *granfa* transfers a small part of his power to other persons participating in the ceremony.

Another very important set of motions is known as *busubrandi* (sometimes called *faiakre*). The *fete-man*, either while possessed or *clean-ye*, puts the patient in standing position and begins to pass one of his ritual objects around the two of them in a very distinctive manner: first he passes it around his own body, between and around each leg, around the torso, then under each arm and around over the opposite shoulder, and finally over his head. When this is done he performs the same sequence of movements on the patient. Then he takes each of the patient’s feet and traces the form of a cross on each sole; he follows this by similarly ‘marking’ the palm of each hand, the nape of the neck, and the forehead. Sometimes animal blood is used in making these marks on the patient. The process of *busubrandi*, like spinning, imparts a measure of the performer’s power to the person undergoing it. But beyond this, it enlists the aid of other spirits over which the performer has control, and draws them to the living person, so that the latter may benefit from their benevolent power.

The pouring of libations is also common at *Kromanti Play* as is the practice of ‘blowing’ rum. In the latter, a mouthful of white rum is sprayed, in a fine mist, in the direction of a particular person...
or object. Once again, this action can be used to draw the power of spirits to oneself or others. It is also used by the kwatamassa during the early stages of possession to help pacify the inflamed granfa.

The metaphor of ‘tying’ is often used by fete-man in discussing their methods of operation. A fete-man may ‘tie’ himself before going to a Kromanti Play at which he is just a casual participant, so as to prevent his pakit or other spirits from possessing him. Or he may try to ‘tie’ a rival fete-man who is using spirits to work against him. When he catches a malevolent spirit and traps it in a glass bottle, he says that he has ‘tied’ the spirit. The usage of the word ‘tie’ thus corresponds to the idea of subduing or controlling a spirit. The metaphor is undoubtedly drawn from the practice of capturing a spirit by tying it with a specially prepared string or piece of cloth. A good fete-man knows how to ‘mek knot’ in such a way as to trap a spirit indefinitely.41

Aside from the above-mentioned ritual motions, each fete-man learns from his pakit a large set of idiosyncratic ritual operations used for a number of different purposes. Therefore, at each Kromanti Play there occurs a large amount of ritualistic behavior which is not socially patterned, and the meaning of which remains a mystery to all, except the fete-man, or the spirit possessing him. Each fete-man keeps to himself his own personal store of knowledge which is not meant for others; every fete-man must have his own secrets.

Music and Dance

Music and dance are integral parts of Kromanti Play, without which the ceremony cannot be held. The musical ensemble usually consists of a pair of drums, each of which is called printing; a machete used as a percussion instrument, called ‘iron’, or adaugo; and sometimes a hollow piece of bamboo beaten with two sticks, called kwat. The Kromanti drummer, known as the okrema or printing-man, is secondary in importance only to the fete-man.42 He must be highly skilled on his instrument, and must be familiar with a diverse repertoire of drumming styles. When the fete-man becomes
possessed and ‘throws’ his songs, the okrema must know exactly which drum style goes with each song. If he plays poorly or makes mistakes the granja will become agitated and refuse to work. Normally, two drummers are needed at Kromanti dance, one to play the supporting drum, called the ‘rolling drum’, and the other to play the lead drum, called the ‘cutting drum’.

There are several different types of Kromanti songs, some of which are associated with specific styles of drumming. The lighter, less serious songs are known as Jauwbone, and although they may invoke spirits at times, they are used mainly for entertainment and recreational dancing. The words of these songs are usually in English or creole. A large number of other songs are grouped according to the ‘tribe’ with which they are associated. Among these are Ibo, Prapa, Mongola, Dokose, Mandinga. These songs are more powerful than Jauwbone songs, and are used to invoke Maroon spirits belonging to the same tribes. They contain fewer English words than Jauwbone. Another lighter group of songs is called John Thomas (closely related to yet two other styles known as SaLeone and Tambu). These songs may also be used to invoke spirits, although their power is limited.

The most powerful group of songs is known as Country. Maroon Country songs have a unique quality unlike any heard in other parts of Jamaica. They are accompanied by an explosive drumming style which approaches free rhythm — that is, the drumming is in speech mode and lacks a consistent underlying pulse — and they are chanted in a rather slow, dirge-like manner. Few of the Country songs have any English words; they consist, rather, of Kromanti words. These songs are usually saved for the peak of a crisis, for they call forth the greatest powers available to living Maroons. Such is their power that they usually will cause possession to occur within a matter of seconds. Country songs are very sacred and should never be sung without a purpose, for they attract large numbers of duppies very rapidly, and these spirits will be seriously angered if they have been summoned capriciously.

Each of the musical styles mentioned above has a corresponding dance style. While casual participants are welcome to dance for enjoyment during the early hours of Kromanti Play, and are familiar with the lighter styles, the later hours are usually reserved for the
fete-man, who is supposed to have mastered a varied and complex set of dance movements to match each of the different drumming styles.

Although spontaneous possession may occur without music on occasions, at most times music is required to bring about the controlled possession of a person by a particular spirit. Individual spirits have their own favorite songs, and these may be used at a Kromanti dance specifically to invoke them. Each fete-man also has a personal pakiti song which he may use to invoke his pakiti when he wishes to be possessed.

OUTSIDERS IN KROMANTI DANCE

Among the Maroons, a strong ethic of secrecy pervades all matters pertaining to traditional ritual. Although fete-men will share a certain amount of their specialized knowledge among themselves, even then they are reluctant to dispense with too much. There is a strong feeling that every individual must covet and protect a certain core of secret knowledge for himself. While he may exchange a good deal of information — perhaps even the greater part of what he knows — with other Maroons, he must always keep one last ‘key’ to himself, as a sort of last resort which can be seized upon in a dire emergency. One fete-man put it this way:

Every nation is supposed to have a secret. Most have a secret. My secret I can’t let out. Some people would like to get the details of everything, but no one can get all the details, because a part of the key is there. That key is a very amazing key. That is my key. It keeps everything steady.44

This ‘key’ must be kept absolutely secret and must be shared with no one, for once another person is given access to it he acquires the same measure of power, and should he decide to turn against the person who let out his secret, the latter would no longer have an ultimate defense.

On a more general level, secrecy about traditional Maroon beliefs and practices is a dominant theme running through Maroon culture.45 Even the most general, widely-known areas of ritual knowledge must be kept within the in-group, and protected from the cu-
riosity of visiting outsiders. Non-Maroons are not permitted to learn of these things. There are supernatural sanctions against the giving out of Maroon knowledge to outsiders, and thus Maroons have developed patterned ways of ‘dodging’ the queries of meddlesome outsiders. (The Maroons have a special word, jijiyo, meaning ‘to dodge’ – that is, to evade or mislead, by means of trickery or subterfuge, persons with whom one is at odds; the concept is somewhat similar in meaning to that of ‘to fool someone’.) There are several strategies regularly employed to protect secret Maroon knowledge from those who should not have access to it. This broad rule of secrecy is tacitly understood by all of those who attend Kromanti Play, and is reflected in a few maxims which one hears repeated frequently in ritual contexts:

1. ‘Yeye see, mouth shut.’
2. ‘He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life.’

Those who violate this rule and talk too freely to outsiders are likely to incur the wrath of the ancestors, and may suffer some spirit-caused misfortune, such as an illness.

Membership in the Maroon community is conceived of in terms of a vague ideology of blood relationship. Any person born of two Maroon parents is a full, or ‘true-born’, Maroon. Outsiders, meaning persons with no Maroon blood, are referred to by the general Kromanti term, obroni. In common speech, black persons who are not Maroons are referred to by the term niega, which may or may not have derogatory connotations, depending on the speaker and the context. Traditional Maroons will never refer to themselves or other Maroons as niegas, but will insist that, as Maroons, they belong to a different ‘nation’ from niegas. Many Maroons harbor feelings of superiority over niega people, although in day to day contacts they will show few signs of aloofness or hostility toward the latter. In many cases, Maroons develop close friendships with niegas from neighboring districts, and intermarriage between the two groups is common. (The child of a Maroon and a niega is called a white-a-miggle, and is considered half-Maroon.) In fact, in most contexts little or no distinction is made between Maroons and niegas. There is constant interaction between
Maroons and outsiders, both within Moore Town and in surrounding areas, and more often than not such relations are amicable. Nevertheless, in *Kromanti Play* the distinction between Maroons and niegas — and, for that matter, all other outsiders — is of paramount importance. It was previously mentioned that outsiders are strictly excluded from *Kromanti Play*, except in certain cases. In actuality, these exceptional cases are fairly common. People from outside districts, well aware of the Maroons' reputation for supernatural cunning, often visit Moore Town seeking help of one sort or another, sometimes traveling many miles. Once they have been directed to a fete-man, he may offer to help them by means of salo — that is clean yeye spirit work, in which no possession occurs. On the other hand, the case may be too serious for relying on salo, and may require the higher power which can only be achieved in the context of *Kromanti dance*. If this is the case, the outsider is warned of the danger of *Kromanti dance*, and if he gives the impression that he is sufficiently brave, a dance will be planned for him. Traditionally, if dancing for another Maroon, a fete-man should not charge a set fee for his services, but should ask for 'yeeye-sight', meaning a token contribution the amount of which is decided by the patient. However, when dancing for outsiders, most fete-men will charge set amounts, ranging anywhere from twenty to more than one hundred dollars.

When an obroni attends a *Kromanti Play* he must be handled with extreme caution, for nothing will so enrage a possessing Maroon spirit as the presence of an outsider. This point cannot be exaggerated. Upon sensing the presence of an obroni, whether a niega or any other outsider, the granfa will invariably become violently inflamed, and the life of the outsider will be in peril. There is a fairly consistent pattern of behavior occurring in such situations, as described below.

When the time comes to hold the *Kromanti dance*, the obroni is sequestered in a hut or house a short distance from the dance-ground. The dance begins and eventually, as the music gets hotter, the fete-man becomes possessed by his pakti. Almost immediately the possessed fete-man (now called granfa) becomes agitated and begins to sniff at his own armpits — a gesture which is recognized by the other Maroons present to signify that he 'smells' a 'different
blood' in the vicinity. The granfa instantly calls for an afana (machete) and starts to rant and rave about the obroni in his midst. When he gets hold of his weapon he may charge the house where the obroni is located and begin to violently chop at the walls, as he shrieks out obscenities directed at the obroni and the living Maroons at the ceremony who are responsible for his presence. Meanwhile, the kwatumassa and other Maroons present beg the granfa not to hurt the obroni, who has only come for help and intends no harm.

Eventually the granfa will cool down somewhat and it is then deemed the proper time to bring the obroni out. The obroni is instructed to stand directly behind the kwatumassa and hold his hands from behind. Thus linked together, the two of them make their way out to the danceground. As soon as the granfa sees them he instantly becomes incensed once again and charges at them. The kwatumassa must stay in front of the obroni at all times and act as his protector. So long as he stays between the granfa and the obroni, the latter will be safe, for as a rule a granfa will never shed the blood of another Maroon. The granfa lunges at them from all sides, attempting to find a way around the kwatumassa, all the while shouting and slashing the air with his machete. When he begins to show signs of cooling down again, it is time for the obroni to face him on his own. The obroni is placed standing up with his back against a bamboo pole or the wall of a house; before leaving him, the kwatumassa warns him not to move or show any signs of fear. He is told that if he runs he may be injured.

Once again the granfa charges at the obroni and begins to hack with great force at the surface over his head. As he chops from all sides, splinters of wood or bamboo fly about. He may put the point of the machete at the obroni's chest or throat and begin to apply pressure. When he is satisfied with the obroni's courage, he will at last step forward and shake his hand, indicating his acceptance. But before the granfa can begin to work for him, the obroni must be sworn to an oath of secrecy. This oath is administered by the granfa. He takes his machete and places the blade in the obroni's mouth, sharp side in. While uttering an incantation, he pours a mixture, called asikere (sugar and water), over the upper edge of the machete and down the patient's throat. Sometimes the obroni will
also be instructed to repeat certain words after the granfa, and to take the machete and thrust it into the ground three times. When this is done the obroni is fully sworn, and is warned that should he tell anyone about what he sees during the ceremony, he will suffer disastrous consequences.

Once an obroni has been sworn by a granfa, the spirit that was riding the feté-man at the time knows him and will recognize him during future possessions. However, if a different spirit rides the feté-man, the swearing process will have to be repeated in its entirety, since the spirit has not yet been introduced to the obroni. After the obroni has been given the oath by the spirit that will be helping him that night, the business at hand may proceed. Depending on the nature of his case, the obroni will be put through a series of ritual operations, some of which were described in an earlier section of this paper. In many cases the cure will require more than one dance, and the obroni will have to return at a later date for further treatment.

**OUTSIDE INFLUENCES IN KROMANTI DANCE**

As mentioned before, Kromanti dance has been subject to a process of compartmentalization, and there is little evidence of syncretism with features from Christianity or other religious systems from outside. However, there has been a slight influence from the traditions of magic practiced in urban areas. The word ‘science’, used in reference to magical or spiritual practices, is itself derived from urban traditions. But the Maroons have adopted the term for their own purposes, and use it to refer to traditional Maroon practices. Nowadays, Maroons state that they work science, while outsiders work oseab. The major distinction between these two forms lies in the materials used: Maroon science relies on the natural power of ‘weeds’, either to heal or injure, whereas the oseab practiced by niegas depends on magical oils, powders, candles, and other manufactured paraphernalia, and is seen as usually being evil in intent. Many of the materials used in oseab are imported from esoteric companies in the United States which specialize in good luck charms and other ‘novelties’. Books and manuals of ‘Black Magic’
are also used by outside practitioners of obeah. These books, most of which are published in the United States, have been outlawed in Jamaica, but are highly desired by obeah-men.

While a few Maroon fete-men have begun to use urban methods and materials in the context of Kromanti Play, and particularly in working salo, the traditionalists, who make up a majority, refuse to incorporate these non-Maroon elements in their work. They disparage those who use books, and oils and powders, asserting that this only serves to dilute the natural power inherent in Maroon 'weeds'. Some fete-men state that the oils and powders used in obeah actually repel Maroon spirits; manufactured oils and perfumes and natural herbs, they insist, simply do not mix, so it is better to rely on one or the other than to try and combine the two. Nonetheless, a number of less traditional fete-men feel that there is no incompatibility between traditional and imported materials, and regularly make use of manufactured items such as books, crystal balls, oils, incense, candles, rings, and other charms, alongside their jeges, saddles, and Maroon 'trash' (herbs).

RELATIONSHIP OF KROMANTI DANCE TO AFRO-JAMAICAN CULTS

DONALD HOGG, in an interesting paper (1960), has speculated on the possible origins of two Afro-Jamaican religious cults, Kumina and Convice, in the traditional religious practices of the Windward Maroons. These two cults, concentrated in the eastern parishes of Jamaica, are practiced in areas adjoining the Maroon districts, and display a more African character than the Afro-Christian cults found throughout Jamaica, such as Pocomania (Pukkumina) or Zion Revival. HOGG suggests that these cults, particularly Convice, may have developed among the Maroons, or at least have had a historical connection with the spread of individual Maroons to surrounding areas after the general emancipation of slaves in 1838. The hypothesis is an intriguing one, but the data collected on the Kromanti dance tradition would seem to lend it only partial credence. Relying on the sparse data available on Maroon religion at the time, HOGG (1960 : 16) correctly notes that
...the little information available on Maroon religion indicates that it is similar in many respects to Convince. For example, both involve animal sacrifices, possession by ghosts, religious dancing, ritualized aggression, the use of ghosts for Obeah, and copious consumption of rum during ceremonies. The members of both cults have strong propensities for climbing trees when possessed and are reputed to accomplish the same kinds of miraculous feats.

Everything in this statement would hold equally true for the Kumina cults, which are found in an area which roughly coincides with that in which Convince occurs. There are several other parallels between the Kromanti tradition and both Kumina and Convince which Hogg does not mention. For instance, in both Kromanti Play and Kumina, spirit possession is termed myal; Convince workers, on the other hand, more often use the expression 'tek body' to mean possession. Convince members tie their heads with a kerchief known, as in Kromanti dance, as a saddle (although it is tied in a very different manner), while Kumina people generally do not tie their heads at all while in possession. Both Kumina and Convince devotees, like Maroons, make use of an equestrian metaphor in speaking of possession. In all three traditions, possessed persons adopt a different mode of speech from the living, and in Kumina, participants refer to the most powerful and deepest level of language as Country, as do the Maroons.56

In spite of all the above, members of all three traditions are quick to point out the differences between them, and these would seem, from a broader perspective, to outweigh the similarities. Both the Kumina people and the Maroons think of themselves, in a somewhat ill-defined way, as 'nations', and representatives of both traditions, while recognizing that they share a related African ancestry, vehemently reject the idea that the two groups share the same cultural and historical heritage. Kumina members refer to themselves as 'Africans', members of the 'bongo nation', and view the Maroons as a 'different nation' closely related to them, but with a separate cultural tradition. Conversely, Maroons refer to Kumina people as the 'bongo race', and think of them as a separate 'nation' with a different tradition. Maroons and Kumina people are said by members of both groups to represent 'two sides' of a larger, broader African tradition which also encompasses other Jamaicans of African descent.

This contention of separate identity and origin would seem to be
borne out by the available facts. There is a good deal of objective
evidence indicating that the Kromanti and Kumina traditions stem
from two separate cultural-historical streams which have been in
contact over a long period, and thus have borrowed back and forth
from each other. Even today, Maroons commonly visit and partici-
pate in Kumina ceremonies in St. Thomas parish, where they are
treated with special respect. Although much of what the Maroon
visitor witnesses at the Kumina ceremony will be familiar to him in
essence, much of it, unless he has been trained in the Kumina
tradition, will also appear strange. By the same token, on the less
common occasions that a Kumina person is allowed to visit a
Kromanti dance in the Moore Town area, there is much that he
will readily grasp, but the larger part of what happens will not be
understandable to him. The primary reason for this is that the
ceremonies of Kumina and Kromanti, while sharing many general
elements and possessing broad structural similarities, are based on
different behavioral patterns and distinct visual and aural cues,
many of which are related to spirit possession. When a Maroon is
possessed by a Maroon spirit, a Kumina person will not understand
his actions or his language, and the same is true conversely.

In particular, the linguistic evidence strongly supports the theory
of a separate origin for Kumina and the Maroon Kromanti tradi-
tion. Informants very quickly point out that ‘African’ Country
(that spoken by Kumina people) and Maroon Country are very dif-
ferent, and are not mutually intelligible. In fact, it seems fairly clear
at this point that the Country spoken by the Kumina people is basi-
cally of Kikongo (Central Africa) origin, while the Country of the
Maroons shows a strong Akan influence. The Kromanti
‘language’ of the Maroons and the Country of the Kumina people
(which they sometimes refer to as ‘Kongo language’) are totally
distinct. In addition to this there are several significant details in
which the Maroon and Kumina traditions differ. For instance, the
Kumina tradition lacks an equivalent concept to the pakit, which is
so important in Maroon tradition; nor does it include a specific
instrument of divination such as the jege. Kumina ceremonies
often include the sacrifice of a goat, which is strictly taboo in the
Kromanti setting, and hogs are never used unless Maroons are
present. Although Maroons and Kumina people share a large
number of songs, these are sung in different ways, and all belong to
the lighter categories of songs. The deeper Country songs of the
two groups are in different languages, and are backed by completely
different drumming styles. The drums themselves and methods of
playing differ markedly; those of the Kumina people are short, with
a broad head, and are turned on their sides and mounted while
played, while those of the Maroons are long and slender and played
in an upright position, held between the legs.

Furthermore, there is a marked contrast in the overall tenor of
Kumina versus Kromanti ceremonies. The factor of secrecy is
nowhere near as important in Kumina as in Kromanti Play. Kumina
ceremonies are open to anyone who wishes to attend, al-
though an admission fee is sometimes charged. Kromanti Play, on
the other hand, is restricted solely to Maroons, a rule which is
strictly observed, except in certain special circumstances, as pre-
viously noted. Kumina ceremonies include no tradition of giving
oath, such as is found whenever an outsider attends a Kromanti Bu-
siness dance. Moreover, there is no comparison between the insti-
tutionalized belligerence of the possessed Kromanti dancer, usually
bordering on frenzy, and the sporadic aggression sometimes dis-
played by Kumina devotees when possessed. The difference is not
merely one of degree, but also of quality: Maroon spirits are belli-
cose by nature, whereas the 'bongo spirits' which possess Kumina
people vary widely in temperament, and some have very mild dis-
positions. Even those 'bongo spirits' which tend to behave
violently never display the sustained ferocity which is the norm for
Maroons in a state of possession.18

But all of the above evidence is merely circumstantial. The
strongest case for an independent origin of Kumina is to be found
in Monica Schuler’s recent historical work (1980) on the post-
Emancipation immigration of Africans to Jamaica in the nine-
teenth century. Shortly after Emancipation in 1838 the large land-
owners and planters began to experience a serious shortage of labor
as the newly freed former slaves rapidly abandoned the plantations
to start their own settlements in the hills. To ameliorate this situa-
tion the planters developed a scheme for the ‘voluntary’ immigra-
tion of free wage laborers from Asia and Africa. A major part of
this plan revolved around the importation of laborers drawn from
the population of ‘recaptives’: that is, Africans from various parts of the continent who had been captured as slaves, and subsequently intercepted by British patrols (sent out to suppress the slave trade) before the slavers on which they were stowed reached their destinations. Most of these ‘recaptives’ (also known as ‘Liberated Africans’) eventually ended up in Sierra Leone, where a colony had been established for the ‘repatriation’ of Liberated Africans. The Jamaican government (as well as several other West Indian governments) arranged for the recruitment of large numbers of these Liberated Africans. Between 1841 and 1867 more than eight thousand such Liberated Africans, representing many different tribal or ethnic groups, entered Jamaica as wage laborers (SCHULER 1980: 112-113). Most of these persons were transported from Sierra Leone or St. Helena, but a smaller number were brought directly from the ships on which the British had intercepted them. Although many of these people considered themselves temporary immigrants, few were given the opportunity to return to Africa, and their descendants remain in Jamaica today.

Many of the Liberated Africans brought to Jamaica were resettled on plantations in St. Thomas, the parish in which Kumina is today strongest. At this point it may be said that the evidence points overwhelmingly to a relatively recent origin for Kumina; all things considered, it appears that the religion and ceremonial dance which is today known as Kumina was introduced to Jamaica by Liberated Africans between 1840 and 1870. It is quite possible that the religious system introduced by the newly-arrived Liberated Africans syncretized with elements from Afro-Jamaican cults already present in the island, but in any case the Kumina tradition of today still clearly bears the cultural stamp of recent arrival. The presence, for instance, of a large number of specific and relatively ‘pure’ Central African cultural and linguistic retentions in Kumina strongly supports the theory of recent origin. (It comes as no surprise that the majority of the immigrant ships arriving in St. Thomas parish during the nineteenth century came not from Sierra Leone, but from St. Helena, where the Liberated African population was almost exclusively of Central African origin.) It is important to note as well that the contemporary oral traditions of more prominent Kumina cultists strongly support the theory that
Kumina originated among the Liberated Africans in Jamaica (SCHULER 1980: 65-96). Some of MONICA SCHULER’s Kumina informants in St. Thomas claimed to be but a few generations removed from a specific Central African ancestor (Ibid: 70-80), as did several of this author’s Kumina informants. All of the above would seem to lend credence to the oft repeated assertions of both Maroons and Kumina people that Kromanti dance and Kumina represent the traditions of two different ‘nations’.  

The Convince cult is particularly interesting, and deserves to be treated separately. While bearing some similarity to Kromanti tradition, the Convince cult, in the author’s view, appears to be the result of a syncretization of elements from the tradition to which Kumina belongs with other elements stemming from the early attempts at Christian missionization in Jamaica, going back to the nineteenth century. Some Convince informants used the title ‘61 Revival’ interchangeably with the name ‘Convince’, apparently making reference to the sudden upsurge of Christian enthusiasm known as the Great Revival which swept Jamaica during the 1860’s. Convince men, like the Kumina people, claim to belong to the ‘bongo nation’, and in fact assert that they are of the same ‘nation’ as the Kumina people, but use different spirits and methods of working. At the same time most of them recognize that the Maroons belong to a different ‘nation’ altogether, and employ different methods of spirit-work, as well as different language, songs, and dance movements. Convince men, when possessed, behave and speak in a manner totally uncharacteristic of Maroon granjas. Although they may become violent at times, they lack the intensity and the unremittent truculence of possessed Maroon jete-men. And unlike Maroon granjas, they are not inflamed by the presence of persons with ‘different blood’. Convince ceremonies, like Kumina, are open to all ‘well-wishers’ who choose to attend.

Possessed Convince workers speak the Jamaican creole with a very peculiar accent, different from speech modes in both Kumina and Kromanti, although they spice their conversations with a fair number of words from the ‘African Country’ of the Kumina people, and a lesser number of words from Maroon Kromanti as well. In addition to this, they have a small vocabulary of words which are used only by Convince spirits. The songs used to invoke
spirits consist either of reworked Christian hymns, newly composed songs with an unconventional Christian emphasis, or folk songs of a recreational nature, some of which are also sung by Kumina groups. Convince men in general do not know any of the higher Maroon songs, nor do they understand more than a slight bit of Maroon Country.

Interestingly enough, there are a few Maroons from the Moore Town area who have adopted Convince work in favor of their own Kromanti tradition, and present day Convince men state that it was not uncommon in the past for Maroons from Moore Town, Charles Town, and Scott’s Hall — as well as persons of partial Maroon descent from neighboring districts — to take up the Convince tradition. One of the author’s informants was a Maroon who formerly danced Kromanti, but decided to put that tradition aside and take up Convince work while he was living in the parish of St. Thomas. He was fully conscious of the differences between the two traditions, and felt that Convince was not his own ‘real’ tradition, but preferred it over Kromanti Play because he found it was less of a strain on his body. Another informant, a ‘bongo man’ from St. Thomas, was trained in Convince by a Maroon from Moore Town who had lived in St. Thomas for several years and adopted Converse. This man recounted how his ‘boss’ used to become possessed by both Maroon and ‘bongo’ spirits, and described how the spirits from the two different ‘nations’ would act differently. (This man was able to imitate fairly accurately the distinctive speech patterns of a Maroon granfa). He stated that when his ‘boss’ was possessed by ‘bongo’ spirits, the spirits would sometimes comment that their horse was a Maroon, and belonged to a ‘different nation’ from them.

Most fele-men in the Moore Town area today have encountered Convince during visits to outside villages, and some have joined as casual participants in Convince ceremonies. All of these individuals feel that Convince is properly the tradition of a different ‘nation’, although they are aware that a small number of Maroons take part in Convince ceremonies.

All of the above leads to the conclusion that the Convince cult developed apart from the Kromanti tradition, in outside locations, among persons who were familiar with Kumina and considered
themselves members of the same ‘bongo nation’, but who had adopted and reinterpreted certain superficial Christian elements to fit their own religious system. It is quite likely that Maroons, as they migrated away from their settlements, participated in and influenced this development also. This sort of interaction between Maroons and outsiders, in outside ritual contexts, still occurs to some extent today. It is reasonable to assume, however, that such contacts, whether in the past or present, would result only in limited Maroon influence of a rather superficial sort. For the people who hold Kumina and Convince as their own traditions are, after all, obrones — and, as such, are not entitled to learn the deeper levels of Maroon knowledge. Even today, Maroons who have lived outside their communities for several years are generally loath to discuss the details of the Kromanti tradition with the obrones amongst whom they live, despite the unrelenting curiosity of the latter.

KROMANTI DANCE AND MAROON IDENTITY

It seems clear enough that the tradition of Kromanti dance serves to reinforce a sense of distinct Maroon identity among its participants. Nearly all of the most important symbols of Maroon identity — the Kromanti drum, the junga, the Kromanti ‘language’, and most importantly, the complex patterns of institutionalized behavior connected with spirit possession — are brought into play in Kromanti ceremonies. The exclusory nature of the institution itself defines the boundary between Maroons and outsiders, who in most other contexts mingle freely, with a minimum of distinction. In fact, it is impossible for an outsider, without previous knowledge of an individual, to know whether or not this person is a Maroon — unless the latter engages in the patterns of symbolic behavior which distinguish Maroons from outsiders, most of which are integrally connected with the Kromanti dance complex. Only after a Maroon externalizes these symbols does his unique identity become apparent to outsiders.

Many visitors to Moore Town and other Maroon communities have been struck by the peaceful aspect of the contemporary
settlements, in contrast to the militaristic societies described in the historical accounts of the early Maroons. To these observers, it seems that the Maroons have undergone a thorough metamorphosis, a volte-face in life-style which has severed them from their past. On the contrary, in present day Moore Town historical consciousness is not lacking; in fact, the unique history of the Maroons is essential to their identity. As Leann Martin (1973: 180) states: ‘it is clear that the primary cultural tool as well as the primary ingredient in their cultural identity, is history.’ The living past is crystallized nowhere more clearly than in the context of Kromanti Play, in which the long-deceased of past generations return for a short time to the realm of the living to offer their aid. In the drama which ensues, they act in ways thought to represent the behavior of past generations of Maroons, who lived during a time when relations between Maroons and outsiders were fraught with violence and distrust. Like the earlier Maroon society to which many of them are said to have belonged, the ancestors possess a fundamental militaristic orientation which is reflected in the institutionalized aggression of possessed individuals. All of the important ritual objects and motions in Kromanti Play are thought to mirror the practices of past generations of Maroons. And the stress placed on secrecy is said by present-day Maroons to hark back to the days when the success of Maroons in war depended on their exclusive knowledge of the Kromanti traditions — which lent them spiritual strength in their struggles against the British.

The Kromanti dance complex represents the chief nexus in time and space of the symbols and attitudes which define and support traditional Maroon identity. As the tradition wanes in importance among the younger generation, there is a corresponding attenuation of traditional Maroon identity. This process is a complex one, and it is difficult to single out all the causative factors. But it is certain that fetes men, and those who participate regularly in Kromanti ceremonies, possess the strongest sense of traditional Maroon identity in the Moore Town area today. In the community of Charles Town, the Kromanti dance tradition has long been moribund, and there has been a near-complete loss of traditional Maroon identity among the inhabitants. In Scott’s Hall, on the other hand, the Kromanti tradition survives, but is gradually decreasing in importance,
and Maroon identity is weakening throughout the community, particularly among younger persons.

In all of the Windward Maroon communities, the distinctive Maroon cultural heritage — all of those cultural features which set the inhabitants apart, as individual Maroons, from other Jamaicans — are connected intimately with the Kromanti dance complex. The Kromanti ‘language’, the music, the songs, the dance, the whole belief system articulated through Kromanti Play, and the imperative of secrecy attached to it, are the crucial features which, joined together, form a distinctive Maroon cultural identity. It is therefore difficult to conceive of the continued, long-range existence of the Maroons as a distinct people in the absence of the Kromanti tradition.

The years immediately ahead will tell whether the Maroons lose this tradition entirely and face final assimilation into the wider Jamaican society or, as is also possible, experience a renewed enthusiasm for the Kromanti tradition which would ensure a new lease on life for Maroon ethnicity.

Map of Jamaica showing locations of Maroon communities.
1. This study was made possible by a Fellowship from the Organization of American States. The author wishes to express his gratitude to RICHARD PRICE, BARBARA KOPYTOFF, and GEORGE EATON SIMPSON for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper. He would also like to make known the deep appreciation he feels for the generous help given by his many Maroon teachers.

2. 'Creole' here refers to persons born in the New World.

3. For an overview of Jamaican Maroon history, see KOPYTOFF (1973) and CAMPBELL (1977). Marronage, or flight from slavery, was common throughout the New World. For an excellent comparative examination of maroon societies in several parts of the Americas, see PRICE (1979b).

4. This paper is based on twelve months of field work in the Moore Town area (which includes several other smaller Maroon branch settlements, such as Comfort Castle and Cornwall Barracks). The author also spent one month in Scott's Hall, and a shorter period in Charles Town, gathering comparative data. Kromanti dance is still performed occasionally in Scott's Hall, and is similar in many respects to the Moore Town version. In Charles Town the tradition appears to have all but vanished, but reminiscences collected from older residents indicate that it was very close to the traditions of both Scott's Hall and Moore Town. Accompong, however, appears from all accounts to possess a Kromanti dance tradition which differs considerably from the traditions of the three eastern communities. See DUNHAM (1946) for a brief description of Accompong traditions.

The information in this report on Moore Town is based on firsthand observation of Kromanti dance ceremonies in that community and the surrounding area, as well as numerous discussions with fete-men (Maroon ritual specialists). Ten practicing fete-men from the Moore Town area acted as the author's primary informants. For a brief description of Kromanti dance in Scott's Hall and Charles Town, based on short-term field work, see SCHAFFER (1973).

5. The few extant historical accounts make no more than fleeting references to the religious or magical beliefs and practices of the Maroons. The following passage offers a good example: 'In common with all the nations of Africa, they believed..., as I have observed, in the prevalence of Obi (a sort of witchcraft of most extensive influence) and the authority which such of their old men as had the reputations of wizards, or Oshahmen, possessed over them, was sometimes very successfully employed in keeping them in subordination to their chiefs' (EDWARDS 1796: xxix).

6. MINTZ & PRICE (1976) explores in some detail the processes (historical and cultural) involved in the formation of Afro-American cultures in the New World, with a special focus on the Caribbean. The study includes a brief discussion of religion which is very relevant to an understanding of how syncretic complexes such as the Kromanti dance evolved over time. KOPYTOFF (1976), while dealing specifically with the Jamaican Maroons, touches on several important related issues.
7. This account of the early Christian impact is based on information found in CAREY (1970), as well as current oral traditions.

8. *Yankipong* derived from Twi, ‘Onyankopon’ (‘God’) (MOHR 1909: 86); *Tata Nyame* from Jamaican creole, ‘Tata’ (‘Father’) (CASSIDY 1971: 222) + Twi, ‘Onyame’ (‘God’) (MOHR 1909: 86).

9. Examples of such intermediate pantheons in the New World are the *loa* of Haitian Vodou, the orishas of Cuban Santeria, and the powers of Trinidadian *Smango*. For further information on these, see SIMPSON (1978: 62-94).

According to SIMPSON’s classification of Afro-American religions, the *Kromanti dance* would fall under the category *ancestral cults*, which includes traditions such as the *Big Drum dance* of Carriacou or the *Kole cult* of St. Lucia (Ibid: 95).

10. Kojo (spelled ‘Cudjoe’ in the British literature) was the leader of the Leeward Maroons in the Cockpit Country of western Jamaica during the eighteenth century. Nanny was a ritual specialist and spiritual leader among the Windward Maroons during roughly the same period. Both leaders were almost certainly of Ashanti or Fanti descent, and it is said that Nanny was born in Africa.

11. Alternatively called ‘Swiple-o-Mento’ (‘swiple’ meaning slippery, or tricky).

12. The author is most grateful to BARBARA KOPYTOFF for bringing to his attention a published historical reference to Welcome (ELLETSON 1949: 107). The Governor’s secretary, in a letter to CHARLES SWIGLE, Superintendent at Moore Town, dated May 3, 1767, refers to ‘Capt. Welcome’s Badge’, which he is keeping for the present. Presumably Captain Welcome is dead by then and the question arises to whom to give his badge. A Maroon named Welcome, possibly the son of Captain Welcome, carries the letter to the Governor, and he is given the commission and rank of Lieutenant, but not the badge, at least not at that time. Presumably the Captain Welcome mentioned in this letter, who appears to have died shortly before it was written, is the ‘Grants Welcome’ remembered by present-day Maroons, a warrior of pre-treaty times.

13. The development of separate ‘nations’ or religious societies among Africans in the New World, based on tribal or ethnic affiliations, was a common phenomenon, especially in Catholic countries. See SIMPSON (1978: 51-60).

The author has not been able to trace the derivation of the word ‘Dokose’. ‘Ibo’ (or Igbo) is the name of a large ethnic group in Southeastern Nigeria. The word ‘Mongola’ was apparently used in Jamaica during the slavery period to refer to Africans from the region of Angola (CASSIDY & LE PAGE 1967: 303). The word ‘Papa’ is most likely derived from ‘Papaw’ (sometimes spelled ‘Papa’), used by Europeans in Jamaica to refer to slaves who originated in the Ewe-speaking area west of the Yoruba region (Ibid: 338-339). Some of the same ‘tribes’ are mentioned by Scott’s Hall Maroons; SCHAPER (1975: 240) heard the following names: ‘Congo’, ‘Papaw’, ‘Mandingo’, & ‘Ashanti’.

14. The word ‘Chankofi’ is most likely related to the word spelled ‘Kencuffee’ by DALLAS (1803: 31), used by the early Leeward Maroons to refer to one of the ethnic subdivisions within their group. Of the other tribes listed, only two are readily identifiable: Mandinga (Mandingo) and Nago. The former is the name of a large group in the Senegambian region, while the latter was the name used by Europeans to refer to Yoruba slaves from what is today Nigeria.
15. In several other Afro-American religions a distinction is made between different levels of intensity (or degrees of dissociation) in spirit possession, and sometimes these correspond to different categories of spirits. See Simpson (1978: 132-133).

16. *Asafo* derived from Twi, ‘asafo’ (‘troop’) (Mohr 1909: 201). ‘Asafo’ is also the name of the Fanti warrior associations in Ghana today.

17. While public ceremonies were held only a few times during the author’s field trip, scarcely a week passed in which a small, private ceremony did not take place in the area. These ceremonies were almost always *business dances* and were attended by no more than ten to twenty persons.

18. *Kumfu-man* most likely derived from Twi, ‘o-komfo’ (‘fetish-priest’) (Mohr 1909: 147).

19. For the sake of convenience, the male form, ‘fete-man’, rather than the female form, ‘fete-woman’, will be used throughout this paper.

20. Although the pronunciation of this word is identical with the Jamaican creole pronunciation of the English word ‘pocket’, it is spelled differently here, since informants insisted that these are two completely different words, without any semantic connection. They also asserted that the word bears no relation to the English word ‘packet’. It is possible that the word is of African origin, but over time has changed into a homophone of the Jamaican English word ‘pocket’. The spelling used is not intended as a precise phonetic representation. Throughout this paper, words of Jamaican provenience are spelled according to an informal approximation of standard American English spelling and pronunciation. There has been no attempt to use a consistent, systematized orthography.

21. This washing of the head is similar to ceremonies in several other parts of the New World, such as *laver-tete* in Haiti (Metraux 1959: 200), or the head-washing practiced in the Shango cult in Grenada (Pollak-Eltz 1968: 59-60). It also bears a resemblance to headwashing initiatory rites in Yorubaland (West Africa) and Trinidad (Simpson 1962: 1209-1210).

22. In this respect, the concept of *pakit* seems to be somewhat unique in the Caribbean area. In Haiti, Trinidad, and elsewhere in the Caribbean, animals are sometimes associated with magical powers, but it appears that ancestral spirits are not believed to assume the forms of animals. The closest parallel to the Jamaican concept of *pakit*, it would seem, is to be found among South American maroons, such as the Boni, some of whose deities are said to have the appearance of particular animals, such as the jaguar, ocelot, or vulture (Simpson 1978: 209-210); or the Matawai, whose *koomanti* deities are believed to habitually choose particular animals as vehicles for their earthly manifestations (Green 1974: 244).

23. *Ananka* derived from Twi, ‘o-nanka’ (‘snake’) (Mohr 1909: 175). *Opete* from Twi, ‘opete’ (‘vulture’) (Mohr 1909: 210). *Okrema* from Twi, ‘akroma’ (‘hawk’) (Mohr 1909: 91). *Sumans* possibly derived indirectly from Twi, ‘asuman’ (‘fetish’) (Mohr 1909: 75).
24. In *Kromanti dance*, possessed individuals speak a ‘spirit language’ which displays elements of what appears to be an old form of creole no longer used in normal speech. This ‘spirit language’ bears a strong resemblance to other New World creoles, such as Sranan, the language of coastal Suriname. For example, in Sranan the words for ‘somebody’, ‘belly’, and ‘walk’ (*sama, beri, and suku*, respectively) are the same as those used in the Jamaican Maroon ‘spirit language’. Likewise, the Sranan word for ‘fight’ (*feti*) is very close to the Jamaican Maroon equivalent (*féte*). It should be noted that the Maroon term *féte-man* (pronounced ‘fèh tay man’) is not related to the French word ‘féte’.

25. For discussions of the significance of spirit possession and trance in Afro-American religions, see SIMPSON (1978: 130-139) and BOURGUIGNON (1970).

26. These ‘wandering spirits’ are similar psychologically to *róros* in Trinidad. See SIMPSON (1962: 121-1212).

27. ‘Myalism’ was a nativistic movement which appears to have originated in Jamaica during the eighteenth century and to have contributed to several later religious developments, eventually blending with Christian forms to produce a unique form of native Revivalism which still flourishes throughout rural Jamaica. See BUCKWORTH (1929: 142-174), and SCHULER (1979b). Although it seems likely that some significant connection between the early myal movement and the early Maroon societies existed, the nature and extent of this link has yet to be established.

28. ‘Yeye’ = eye.

29. *Afana* derived from Twi, ‘afana’ (‘sword’) (MOHR 1909: 192).

30. *Granfa* and *pikin* belong to the Maroon ‘spirit language’, and signify ‘grandfather’ and ‘child’, respectively. *Pikin* is a Portuguese-derived word widespread in New World creoles. *Granfa* is used in Jamaican creole as a term of address for ‘grandmother’. (*Granfa* is sometimes alternately pronounced *Granfara*).

31. Akan is a language group found in present day Ghana and the Ivory Coast, consisting of a number of mutually intelligible dialects, including Twi, spoken by the Ashanti people, and Fanti, the dialect of the neighboring Fanti people. The available evidence points to a predominance of Ashanti or Fanti individuals in leadership roles during the formative period of Jamaican Maroon society.

32. Much of the *Kromanti* ‘language’ (*Country*) is closely tied to speech mode drumming. The phrase ‘cutting *Country*’ is derived from an analogy to the playing of ‘drum language’. In local parlance, the lead drum used in *Kromanti dance* is known as the ‘cutting’ drum, because its rhythmic patterns ‘cut’ against those of the supporting (or ‘rolling’) drum.

33. The *jejé* used in Moore Town is clearly related to the ‘jiggy’ described by BUCKWORTH (1929: 144) as a ‘talisman’ made of a bundle of herbs (used in conjunction with a glass marble), which was used by the ‘myal people’ of western Jamaica whom she investigated.
34. Free translation from Jamaican creole, taken from a tape-recorded interview.

35. For a partial listing of plants used by the Moore Town Maroons for medicinal purposes, see COHEN (1974). In the same study, COHEN (112-132) provides a description of Kromanti Play in Moore Town which, though incomplete and based solely on the second-hand reports of informants, is nevertheless accurate in most respects.

36. Several aspects of the Maroon tradition of herbal medicine — for instance, the use of plants, baths, and guards — are common in other parts of the West Indies; it is probable that these are derived from West African practices.

37. Okoko derived from Twi, "akoko" ('fowl') (MOHR 1909: 80). Oprafo from Twi, 'prako' ('pig') (MOHR 1909: 141).

38. The equivalents of 'thunder balls' are called pierre tonnerre in Haiti, and are known as pierres or 'thunder stones' in Trinidadian Shango (GEORGE E. SIMPSON, pers. comm., 1979).

39. A similar phrase, 'cutting and clearing', is used by Jamaican revivalist cult members to refer to the ritual clearing away of evil influences (GEORGE E. SIMPSON, pers. comm., 1979).

40. 'Busubrandi' can also refer to the gestures of threat which are used to test the courage of non-Maroons, who must be given a special oath if they are to attend and remain at a Kromanti Business dance.

41. Tying of spirits is also done in a similar manner in Haiti (SIMPSON 1940: 242).

42. Perenten derived from Twi, 'o-perenten' ('a certain drum') (CHRISTALLER 1933: 389). Adeko probably derived from Twi, 'o-dawuru' ('a kind of bell to be struck with a stick') (CHRISTALLER 1933: 67). Okrema (as pronounced in Moore Town, a homophone of the word used to mean 'chickenhawk') probably derived from Twi, 'okyerema' ('drummer') (MOHR 1909: 68). For a perspective on the relationship of Kromanti dance to other Jamaican music and dance forms, see RYMAN (1980: 2-14).

43. 'Rolling' refers to the repetitive rhythmic patterns of the supporting drum, while 'cutting' refers to the sharp accentuation played on the lead drum to create excitement. This usage is also found in conjunction with other types of Jamaican drumming, such as Kumina, in which the lead drummer alternates between 'rolling' and 'cutting' on the same drum.

44. Free translation from tape-recorded interview.

45. A similar tradition of secrecy is to be found among Suriname maroons. For an engaging analysis of Saramaka secrecy, see PRICE (1979a).

46. Gyigyé derived from Twi, 'gyigyé' ('to lead astray; to entice, decoy, cheat, deceive, delude') (CHRISTALLER 1933: 160-161). The corresponding noun is 'gyigyélo'.

47. LEANN MARTIN, in her unpublished doctoral dissertation (1973: 134-154), accurately
describes some of the complex strategies used by Maroons to protect secret knowledge from outsiders.

48. The Maroon penchant for secrecy created considerable problems in the collection of data for this study, and it is possible this factor led to certain distortions or inaccuracies of data which slipped past the author unnoticed. However, all data were either culled through repeated direct observation, or were carefully cross-checked against the statements of a number of different informants. Therefore, the author feels that the picture presented herein displays a high degree of accuracy, in spite of the 'dodging factor' which is an inescapable fact in relations between Maroons and outsiders.

49. *Obromi* derived from Twi, 'o-buro-nil' ('European, white man, mulatto') (CHRISTALLER 1933: 54).

50. 'Niega' is the spelling adopted by CASSIDY (1971: 156), but the word has often been spelled 'neger' or 'naygur'. It is used throughout Jamaica to refer to black persons, and it often carries very negative connotations. It is used in this paper only because of its special usage among the Maroons as a classificatory term which distinguishes non-Maroon Afro-Jamaicans from Maroons. This classificatory usage was noted more than forty years ago by a casual visitor to Moore Town, who wrote: 'It should be noted that the term 'neagre' is not used by them to mean 'negro' as they claim that all black people are negroes of which they form a part. Neither is the term a complimenting one, but is disrespectfully used by them to describe all the blacks of Jamaica who cannot claim Maroon lineage...'. (THOMPSON 1938: 476). The term 'nenge' is used in a similar way by Suriname maroons to refer to non-maroon Afro-Surinamers (RICHARD PRICE, pers. comm., 1979).

51. 'Miggle' = middle.

52. This exclusion of outsiders has been noted by a few earlier writers. One writer who lived in Moore Town for a short time recorded these impressions: 'Besides effecting a cure, they claim that much harm can be done to intruders by these dances. They claim that no person other than Maroons dare attend without special invitation, and as a matter of fact they seem to invite no such person. Any such person daring to attend is subject to severe penalty by the weird spirit' (THOMPSON 1938: 478).

53. It seems that when Suriname maroons are possessed by Kromanti deities they are similarly inimicable to outsiders (i.e., those who are not familiar with Kromanti). HERSKOVITS & HERSKOVITS (1934: 322-323), for instance, state: 'The man who is actuated by Kromanti obia is feared by all who themselves do not have Kromanti. Obia Kromanti warns and protects and heals, but its powers are only for those who belong to the Kromanti group'.

In the case of Moore Town, the furious behavior of possessed Maroons toward outsiders is conceptualized as being akin to a physiological reaction. It is seen as a sort of blinding rage automatically triggered by the 'smell' of a 'different blood'—a condition over which neither the possessing spirit nor its medium have any control. The possessing spirit must be allowed to 'cool' down gradually, while the *obromi* is kept behind a Maroon protector. It appears that the Kromanti traditions of Scott's Hall and Charles Town lack this element at present; although Kromanti dancers from both these communities sometimes perform mock threats toward visiting outsiders, and may...
administer an oath, their behavior (from all accounts, as well as the author’s own observations) lacks the urgency and violence which is characteristic of Moore Town dancers. Outsiders are not assigned Maroon protectors in these latter communities, and possessed Maroons do not appear to invariably react with the same sort of automatic uncontrollable rage toward ‘different blood’ as is the case in Moore Town. Some older Maroons in Scott’s Hall and Charles Town indicate that in the past possessed dancers from their communities behaved more violently toward outsiders than at present. For a description of the behavior of possessed Maroons during a specific ceremony in Scott’s Hall, see Schafer (1973: 230-232).

54. The author was required as an outsider to take this oath several times; however, he was later given consent by the *fete-men* involved to write about certain aspects of the ceremony. Certain other details have been omitted from this account out of respect for the wishes of these individuals. The author also observed several cases of non-Maroon Jamaicans from outside districts who were forced to undergo the same ordeal during private *business dances*, at which they were being treated.

55. Two of the ten *fete-men* with whom the author worked closely made extensive use of oils, powders, and magic books (such as those published by Delaurence) in their work.

56. During his field trip the author attended both *Kumina* and *Convinc* ceremonies outside of Moore Town, and developed a number of informant relationships with both *Kumina* and *Convinc* devotees.

57. For evidence of the strong Kikongo influence in the *Country* of the *Kumina* people, see Seaga (1956), Lewis (1977), or Schuler (1980). For evidence of the Akan influence in *Kromanti* ‘language’, see Dalby (1971), and Schafer (1973: 249-256). Although the latter study includes several misunderstandings, it also contains a good deal of useful information.

58. For a detailed description of the *Kumina* cult in the Morant Bay area, see Moore & Simpson (1957).

59. In keeping with the idea that *Kumina* originated among the Maroons, several writers have erroneously taken the position that it represents essentially an Akan survival (see Barrett 1974; Long 1972: 18). Barrett (Ibid: 61) goes so far as to state that *Kumina* is derived from ‘the Ashanti form of ancestor worship’. Patterson (1969: 199-202), on the other hand, concludes that *Kumina* has primarily Dahomean origins. More recent studies by Lewis (1977), Brathwaite (1978), and Schuler (1980) have shown conclusively that the ritual language (*Country*) tied to *Kumina* is almost exclusively of Central African (largely Kikongo) origin.

In spite of the strong evidence of a Central African connection, Brathwaite (1978: 52) is not in full agreement with Schuler’s thesis that the *Kumina* tradition was introduced to Jamaica after slavery by Liberated Africans. However, the oral traditions collected by this author from *Kumina* devotees in several parts of St. Thomas parish strongly support Schuler on this point. Nevertheless, Brathwaite’s point would seem to have some validity, in the sense that what today is known as *Kumina*, although introduced to Jamaica after Emancipation, must be seen as a uniquely Jamaican synthesis which has over time incorporated many elements stemming from the culture.
of pre-Emancipation Jamaica. For further background on this debate, and its larger theoretical significance, see SCHULER (1979a). Appended to the same paper is a commentary (Ibid: 150-155) by BRATHWAITE which also addresses this issue. SEAGA (1969: 4) anticipated SCHULER’s position when he earlier referred to Kumina as ‘a purely African Religious cult which absorbed Myalism and became prominent in the second half of the last century, after introduction, it is said, by post-emancipation African migrants to the St. Thomas area in the 1850’s.’ See also RYMAN (1980: 4). At any rate, this recent work on Kumina confirms that it is clearly separate from the Maroon Kromanti tradition. SCHULER’s informants viewed the Maroons as a different ‘nation’ from themselves — as did this author’s Kumina (‘Bongo’) informants — and they had ambiguous feelings toward Maroons. SCHULER (1980: 150) states: ‘Central African Kumina ritual vividly symbolizes the ambivalence of the African-Maroon relationship’. A detailed discussion of the interplay of distinct ethnic identities (Maroon versus ‘Bongo’) which often occurs when visiting Maroons participate in Kumina may be found in BILBY (1979: 124-205).

60. For a detailed study of ritual interaction between Maroons and outsiders in eastern Jamaica, see BILBY (1979).
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