

LOCATING 'AFRICA' WITHIN THE DIASPORA: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAITI AND FREE AFRICANS OF
PHILADELPHIA FOLLOWING THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to produce an Africological model that lends attention to epistemological questions in African diaspora research through theoretical and culturally based analysis, ultimately to aid the historical and psychological restoration of Africans in diaspora. This work reflects the theoretical and historic stream of scholarship that centers geographic Africa as the adhesive principle of study in shaping and understanding the cultural and political ally-ship between different African diasporic communities. My aim is to illustrate what Africa represents in diaspora and how it was shaped in the conscious minds and actions of early Africans in diaspora from their own vantage point. Secondly, through a case study of the intra-diasporic relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution, this work lays precedence for the expansion of an African diasporic consciousness. The significance of the intra-diasporic relationship is in the mutual recognition that Haitians and Africans in North America considered themselves a common people. Moreover, they developed an international relationship during the early 19th century to serve their mutual interest in African freedom and autonomous development despite Western expansion. My research locates Africa as the place of origin for dispersed and migrating African diasporic communities, operating as a binding source. In this study Africa is explored as a cognitive and geo-political cultural location for African people in diaspora. I support that African diasporic communities exist as extended African cultural locations of awareness which can and have been negotiated by communities depending on their agency, support, and circumstance to achieve collective goals.

To the African ancestors who trusted me to tell their story,
To all of the Africana women who came before me and who sit with me,
And to the cultural keepers of our traditions,
I dedicate this work to you.

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Maferefun Egbeorun,

Maferefun Egungun,

Maferefun Orisha

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The oppressed and the exploited of the earth maintain their defiance: liberty from theft. But the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, 1986

Disillusioned and frustrated in the slave societies but confident in their ability to develop their communities, diaspora Africans also formed institutions to express their collective identity and aspirations...And although legal codes forbade them to speak African languages and to practice their religions and culture, many of them did, often in secret.

Joseph E. Harris, *Africans and Their History*, 1972

The purpose of this study is to produce an Africological model that lends attention to epistemological questions in African diaspora research through theoretical and culturally based analysis, ultimately to aid the historical and psychological restoration of Africans in diaspora. Africology is defined as, “[T]he Afrocentric study of phenomena, events, ideas, and personalities related to Africa...Africology is sustained by a commitment to studying the life narratives, cultures, values, and possibilities of the African people trans-nationally and trans-continentially...it opens the door for interpretations of a reality base in evidence and data secured by reference to the African world voice.¹ In Africological studies there are three paradigmatic approaches: functional, categorical, and etymological. “The etymological paradigm deals with

¹ Molefi Kete Asante, *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Africology* (Brooklyn: Universal Write Publications LLC, 2015), 15, 18.

language, terms of words and concept origin.”² In this study, the concept ‘African diaspora’ is interrogated, critiqued, and expanded from the Afrocentric paradigmatic lens.

In existing scholarship the term African diaspora is a comprehensive way to conceive of Africans throughout the world. It allows for constructions of histories and contemporary realities that stretch beyond geographic boundaries. Additionally, the conceptualized African diaspora gives language to that which is observable but difficult to scientifically validate. Yet we know that certain cultural forms exist despite barriers of language, time, and geography. Conversely, a difficulty in African diaspora research is that it holds a fluctuating analytical focus. Therefore, it can be applied to either decenter Africa or make Africa the centralizing and adhesive principle of study in contemporary works.³

This work reflects the theoretical and historic stream of scholarship that centers geographic Africa as the adhesive principle of study in shaping and understanding the cultural and political ally-ship between different African diasporic communities. My aim is to illuminate what Africa represents and how it was shaped in the conscious minds and actions of early Africans in diaspora from their own vantage point. Secondly, through a case study of the intra-diasporic relationship between Haiti and free Africans of

² Asante, *African Pyramids of Knowledge*, 16.

³ See Tejumola Olaniyan and James Sweet, *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); See (for decentering analysis) Dawne Y. Curry, Eric D. Duke, and Marshanda A. Smith, *Extending the Diaspora: New Histories of Black People* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Frank Andre Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); John A. Arthur: *African Diaspora Identities: Negotiating Culture in Transnational Migration* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010); See (for centering analysis) Sheila S. Walker, *African Roots/ American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2001); James H. Meritwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina University Press, 2002); Michael A. Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution, it lays precedence for the expansion of an African diasporic consciousness. African diasporic consciousness is the awareness and acknowledgement of being an African world person in relation to Africa as the identified Homeland or place of origin. However, what one does with this consciousness is a result of agency, support, and circumstance. In my theoretical development, African diasporic consciousness does not replace pan-Africanism, it precedes it. I seek to identify what the African diaspora has meant to Africans in diaspora. My research locates the significance of Africa as a cognitive and geo-political cultural location for African people in diaspora. I support that African diasporic communities exist as extended African cultural locations of awareness which can and have been negotiated by communities depending on their agency, support, and circumstance to achieve collective goals.

The Haitian revolution and the African America response to it represent an optimal level of African diasporic consciousness. As a result, the developing relationship between these diasporic communities set precedence for the organizing of a mass exodus of African Americans to Haiti in recognition of their common African ancestry and experience in diaspora; ultimately transcending their recently acquired Western nationalities. While the exact number is unclear, between 1824 and 1825 alone, one of the highest estimates records as many as 6,000- 13,000 African Americans voluntarily left North America, particularly from Philadelphia, to take up citizenship in Haiti. This migration was aided with the support of the Haitian government and organizing bodies within the free African community in Philadelphia.⁴ In an exploration of these

⁴ Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti: Made During Residence in the Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830); Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration,*

relationships and historical period, it is evident the African diaspora has functioned to fortify an expanding sense of peoplehood within the African world abroad (outside of the African continent) and to exercise autonomy through extended community ally-ship. A great contribution of my attention to the relationship between African Americans and Haitians following the Haitian Revolution is not only its novelty but my intentionality in laying foundation for the utility of the expanding African world. Most of the scholarship employing the African diaspora as an analytical framework has only observed the presence of African diasporic communities in relation to European settlers, encounters, and calamity. This study seeks to highlight the benefit of the presence African diasporic communities have in relation to each other and in relationship to Africa as the adhesive principle between these communities.

In the context of diaspora, the relationship between Haiti and Philadelphia makes a worthwhile case study for several reasons in addition to the ultimate point of interest being the Haitian emigration project. Just as Saint Domingue (Haiti) was known as the “Pearl of the Antilles” for its wealth, Philadelphia’s ships and seamen were internationally infamous. Philadelphia was a city of merchants, mariners, and political activist. During the Haitian Revolution hundreds of refugees of different social statuses from Saint Domingue settled in Philadelphia because of its international prominence. Philadelphia also held the largest free African American community in America at this time. Philadelphia had become a center for anti-slavery and implemented the earliest

and Destiny of the Coloured People of the United States (Philadelphia: M. R. Delany, 1852); Haytien Emigration Society of Philadelphia, *Information for the Free People of Colour, Who are Inclined to Emigrate to Hayti* (Philadelphia: J.H. Cunningham, 1825); Benjamin Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for African Americans; and on the Mulatto as a Race for the Tropics* (Philadelphia: T.B. Pugh, 1860); Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

abolition laws with the Gradual Abolition Act of 1870. This law guaranteed freedom to any enslaved African who had lived in the city for up to six months after their slave-owner had established residency. Between 1780 and 1793 there were an estimated 850 migrants to the city, primarily of African descent, when combining Saint Domingue refugees and enslaved Africans from southern American territories.⁵ Philadelphia was brimming toward a political revolution just as Haiti was erupting. Symbolically in the 18th and 19th centuries, Philadelphia represented the free capital of North America and Haiti became the first free African independent state under Western expansion soon after. If there was going to be a strong diasporic ally-ship in subverting European slavery in the ‘Western world’, historical research should anticipate that the relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia would be most significant.

To understand my contribution to the utility of the African diaspora framework one must first consider that I am working from the perspective that Africans in diaspora have not gone from being slaves to being free; we have gone from being free to enslaved and thus have been fighting to return (H)ome ever since. I argue African diasporic locations exist as extensions of Africa and forge intra-diasporic relations as necessary to exercise collective agency and African autonomy. To support my conclusions this dissertation evaluates existing scholarship on the conception and application of the African diaspora as an analytical framework. I apply the Afrocentric paradigm and African worldview model to generate an alternative orientation from traditional diasporic research to identify the African diasporic experience from a location of African agency,

⁵ Charles L. Blockson, *The Haitian Revolution: Celebrating the First Black Republic* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company Publishers, 2004).

culture, and methodological positioning toward Africa as the epistemological source. The culmination of my theoretical and cultural development to reorient the African diaspora conceptual framework emphasizes the intra-diasporic relationship between 19th century Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia as momentous to discuss the implications of the existing African diaspora. The Haitian Revolution notably influenced ‘New World’ realities and conceivable futures. The grand narrative about this period reveals the relationships, feelings, and fears of Europeans as a result of the Haitian Revolution. My narrative demonstrates the significance of the Haitian Revolution to the Haitians themselves and perspectives on the perceived benefits of the revolution by African people in 19th century North America.

My research explores three major assumptions that allow for reinterpretation of this historic period and contemporary studies on the African diaspora more generally.

1. The African diaspora reorganizes global proximity; whereby Africa exists in multiple places at once through cultural replication.
2. African cultural locations established through the process of diaspora, link diasporic communities by common origin and collective consciousness referred to as diasporic consciousness.
3. The relationship pursued between Haitian and African American diasporic communities following the Haitian Revolution represents more than the attempt to escape European slavery in the modern era; it represented the potential establishment of a new African world presence and centralizing location for diasporic African communities.

One cannot question the significance of self-determination in African diasporic orientations toward abolition and freedom on African terms, particularly emerging from Haitians and African Americans in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The period is of interest because it is considered a most significant transition point in the development of world history for both Africans and Europeans alike. The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) follows the American Revolution (1765-1783) and overlaps the French Revolution (1789-1799).⁶ More importantly, the Haitian Revolution did not begin as a ‘slave revolt’. The Haitian revolution was the height of three hundred years of perpetual resistance to European slavery. With the alignment of African agency, support, and circumstance, the outcome of the Haitian Revolution was the total emancipation of enslaved Africans from both French and Spanish colonial rule and the establishment of the first free African Republic in Western territory. This single revolution also destabilized the permanence of slavery within the entire French empire. The lesser known narrative, which is essential to this development, is the significance of the relationship Haiti fostered with free Africans of Philadelphia during this turning point in world history.

The fundamental ground work needed to understand the significance of this historic intra-diasporic relationship, however, is in the careful theoretical and African cultural work that orients historical accuracy and interpretation. Identifying the Haitian Revolution and its impact on the African diaspora is irrelevant if we do not actually know what we are looking at, both then and now, from the perspective of the Africans involved. The construction of Africa in the consciousness of free and enslaved Africans remains an

⁶ Susan Dunn, *Sister Revolutions: French Lighting, American Light* (New York: Faber and Faber, INC., 1999).

adhesive principle in the examined dimensions of the African diaspora. This consciousness enables diasporic groups such as Haitians and African Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries, even while more readily speaking different languages, to corroborate in imagining a new and independent African state.

To support this study I engaged profound theoretical African thought and philosophy to access the artifacts and presence of African culture in movement and over time. I identify the emblems of deep structures of African culture and how they manifest in practice for the benefit of African communities. Some of the deep structure emblems can be coded as both tangible and intangible cultural markers including: memory (which is explored with more complexity as consciousness), orientation to ones' home or ancestral ground, ancestors, spirit/ spirituality, collective social organization, and language. The presence of Africa is extended throughout the world by the generational inheritance of these cultural markers in diaspora. It is imperative that scholarship which intends to understand the African diaspora continually evaluate how Africa is located in the consciousness and cultural practice of African communities on the Homeland, being the African continent, and abroad in relation to each other. Therefore, I advance a theoretical shift in the construction of the African diasporic experience that counters the idealized sever from Africa in thought and practice. Counter to the popular African diasporic theoretical frameworks which assert 'New World' African people have splintered into a series of hybrid cultures and people groups, I posit that African cultural orientation and diasporic consciousness persist among Africans in diaspora in relation to their orientation to Africa as the Homeland.

Purpose of Research

Broadly, the objective of this study is to demonstrate how the African diaspora exists as an extension of Africa and more specifically how members of diasporic communities perceive their relationship to other members of the African world. As an Africologist, the objective of this work is to provide an epistemological reorientation to African diasporic scholarship that has disposed of Africa as a historical and contemporary source of interpretation for African diasporic development and expansion.

The purpose of this research is to examine the subjective narrative of how Africans settled abroad exercise their agency and self-affirming cultural practices. Consequently this study does not assume a link between African diasporic pursuits and the expansion of Western ideals, institutions, and cultural expressions. I am asking how African people in Western territories are building Africa where they are rather than presuming Africans have opted to voluntarily and optimistically build Western nation states which are not manufactured to include them. A goal of this research is to identify what is passively considered the obvious but rarely examined; African people utilizing their culture to create triumphant and affirming realities for their communities. I seek to answer how African diasporic communities exist in relation to each other and their consciousness of Africa as the Homeland. It is particularly noteworthy to narrate the African American diasporic potential to build Africa where they are because America is more readily viewed as an extension of Europe. Can we be in Africa and Europe at the same time? As stated by Marimba Ani,

There are areas like Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and so forth, where we assume African retentions exist, while areas like the Bahamas we have been conditioned to associate with the commercialization and Americanization that results from an

intense and exploitative tourist trade. But African survivals are strong in these areas as well. They persist in cultural irony side by side with stone-washed jeans and discos. They exist in the areas of belief, sometimes in ritual, religious practices, in language, dance and custom.⁷

This type of statement encourages researchers to press beyond race-based analysis. We are aware that African people live in places like the Bahamas and North America but do we assume that *Africa exists* in these locations? The subtext reads that the criterion for recognizing Africa is not met simply by observing racially ‘Black’ people in a particular area. More than phenotype, the *Africa* in African diasporic communities is tempered by cultural association with the Homeland. My aim is to thoroughly vet this idea in the subjects’ construction of culture and location.

Within the African world, the expression of African people is often considered colorful and dynamic. It is simultaneously traditional and modern and in this way African culture continues to be distinctly recognizable while also elastic enough to cater to the various needs of African people in a variety of locations around the world. In the discourse on diaspora, my work contributes a specific delineation that locates African diasporic communities in the context of Africa; Africa as a multifaceted, transnational and transcontinental entity. An African world perspective in this research inherently requires readers to make sense of the idea that African people are not only persons who are born on the African continent. If this is true, then it is in fair judgement to divorce ourselves from the practice of fragmenting diasporic African identities into hybrids or creoles for example. This is a superfluous activity. The maturation of the African world

⁷ Marimba Ani, *Let the Circle be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora* (New York: Nkonimfo Publications, 2004), 20.

will compel African historiography and diasporic work to transgress false boundaries of nation-state structures.

This study is primarily exploratory and descriptive; exploratory in my attempt to develop a rough understanding of the pending phenomenon that African people of the diaspora exist as extensions of Africa, and descriptive by measurement and report of characteristics distinct to the population and phenomenon under study. With this research project I hope to extend the scope of Africana Studies, African Diasporic Studies, and historical interpretations of world organization. The entry of the Africana Studies disciplinary perspective and approach should lend different outcomes than the ones most popularly considered- History as primary, followed by Anthropology.⁸ The centering of Africa as the heartbeat of diasporic African expression and ontological imagination is central to the development of this work. My aim is to privilege how African people view themselves within their own cultural context and how they forge relationships with each other to maintain a collective self-determined future.

Statement of the Problem

In thinking through the significance of the African diaspora and why it should be studied I have spent time probing how research has been framed and what collegial consensus have been about diasporic Africans before sprinting to a specific research question. From my study I have observed that much of the popular scholarship produced

⁸ Kim D. Butler, “Clio and the Griot: The African Diaspora in the Discipline of History” in *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines*, ed. Tejumola Olaniyan and James H. Sweet (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 21-52. See, Franklin E. Frazier, *The Free Negro Family: A Study of Family Origins Before the Civil War* (Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1932).

on the African diaspora is methodologically hostile and reductionist in perspective. There are works that have been generated, primarily by historians and anthropologists, who speak of African people in the diaspora as existing in great isolation from Africa in memory and in practice.⁹ Even when this does not seem to be the intention of some of these works, this scholarship fosters historical inconsistency in observing and contextualizing African peoples of the diaspora. Moreover, isolationist diasporic scholarship enables European slavery and colonialism to be the premier genesis for understanding who African people in the diaspora are and what they are to become.

For example, popular text produced by scholars such as Paul Gilroy completely annex Africa and substitute it with the Atlantic Ocean as the beginnings or origin of what he calls “the Atlantic World”. In his 1987, *There Aint No Black in the Union Jack* and his 1993 *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy posits that ‘black’ people particularly in Europe, are constantly evolving in expression and borrowing from culture in the United States and Caribbean. He states, the *diaspora* is merely one term to describe the “new cultural exchange that is taking place”.¹⁰ In Gilroy’s work, neither Africa as a geographic location or a cognitive location is a factor in investigating people of African descent who exist in

⁹ See, Clifford, James, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994); Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 19 (2001): 45-73; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006); Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Paul Zeleza, *In Search of African Diasporas: Testimonies and Encounters* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2012); Emily Raboteau, *Searching for Zion: The Quest for Home in the African Diaspora* (New York: Grove Press, 2013); Michael L. Conniff & Thomas Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora* (New Jersey: The Blackburn Press, 1994); Frank Andre Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cuban and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephan Small, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*. (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

what he terms “the Atlantic World”. What is worse is the creation of false origins. African people did not emerge from the Atlantic Ocean. The ‘Atlantic World’ is an erroneous concept and masons an intellectual brick wall for genealogical research among other things. With works such as these, which remove Africa as the central location and Homeland of diasporic Africans, people of African descent are left vulnerable to definitions that bind them only by their social and political status in their current or host country. This type of research inevitably becomes a way to de-emphasize the cultural and historical ties of African people, it privileges colonial and racially oppressive systems of identification, and it reduces African people to shifty, accommodating entities. To state the problem simply, this is a dangerous exercise and becomes empirically irresponsible because the implications emerging from this growing body of research present people of African descent around the world through the eyes of their often oppressive host countries in which they are bound by their given social or political status in those respective locations. The links to their historical legacy and contribution to civilization are therefore forfeited. A revisionist history has occurred.

Additionally, ‘the African diaspora’ within the literature often implies a necessary dialectic relationship. African people are described as simultaneously holding positive and negative feelings toward their existence outside of the African continent; positive feelings towards being a part of world history and negative feelings toward being forced and torn away from their homeland. For example, James Clifford describes *diaspora* as a condition presupposing longer distances and separation more like exile while holding a constitutive taboo on return. These settlements are considered non-temporary dwellings; the displaced communities are collective and tenuous “homes away from home”.

Diasporic communities are further characterized by a shared history of displacement, suffering, and resistance.¹¹ While elements of this conclusion may be relevant, this analysis is limited in affording African people agency where they are by geographic location and within their consciousness. By presupposing all persons in the African diaspora suffer from perpetual psychological and most often geographic exile from their Homeland, two conclusions are subject to exist in all subsequent research: 1) Africans in diaspora have weaker individual and/or collective identities in relationship to Africans born on the Homeland, and 2) it is more advantages for people of African descent to remain in Africa.

As Molefi Kete Asante surmises in *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, our location, consciousness, and will for agency equip the Africana Studies scholar with the proper perspective from which we can interpret all world phenomenon.¹² In an era where the African diaspora is quantifiably becoming more expansive it will be important to identify Africa as the Homeland, center, core, or otherwise ancestral ground of the African diasporic community. It is not necessary to orphan Africans who are not physical located on the land mass geographically identified as Africa. If Africa is to only exist in a singular space then the nomenclature, African diaspora, is deceptive at best. To position the lingering problem that inspires my research question, it is not a particular dilemma facing my subjects of study. The glaring problem that my research intends to address has to do with the absence of social science and historical *perspective* and *analysis* on a research area that is reportedly flourishing. While many studies claim to explore what is identified as the African diaspora, little attention has been given to the members of the

¹¹ James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994): 304.

¹² Molefi Kete Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

diaspora as agents in the construction and maintenance of diaspora. This has resulted in macro level analysis that value the subjects of diaspora in relation to national or social structures and institutions or anthropological and historical observations of diasporic communities, but yet in isolation from the idea that diasporic communities are connected to an existing African world with contemporary Africa at the center. What have communities of the African diaspora been building or attempting to build where they are settled as extensions of the African world? What do diasporic Africans consider themselves to be besides ‘second class citizens’, marginalized, third world, exiled, colonized, or minority among other pejorative characterizations that have been readily assumed in academic discourse?

Rationale for Research

Considering the work on the African diaspora it becomes important to identify how scholars of Africana Studies may approach this phenomenon differently. Africana Studies, while new in existence within the academy is a well-developed intellectual and social project. It emerged in 1967-68 at San Francisco State University by way of a series of student and community protest. Being born into the academy as “Black Studies”, this discipline argued for “a more relevant education”.¹³ African American students among the many ‘other’ were exhausted from being on the margins of education, politics, art, science, technology, and the economy in both the Western academy and society at large. One of the major objectives of this movement was to produce a

¹³ Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) 22-90.

systematic and groundbreaking intellectual program that would provide African American students in particular, with a political education that placed students of African descent at the center of analysis. This central objective is why works such as those produced on Afrocentricity, have laid the foundations for much of what distinguishes Africana Studies from other disciplines.

Afrocentricity is a paradigmatic intellectual perspective that privileges African agency in the examination of African phenomenon. According to Molefi Kete Asante in *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, Afrocentricity as an intellectual concept is a ‘location’ for the study of African people as subjects and not objects within their own historical and cultural frameworks.¹⁴ The concept of an *agent* or *agency* is defined as one who can act independently in their own best interest and have the ability to advance human freedom.¹⁵ This is a critical principle in the development of Africana Studies because the primary pitfalls in the Western academy, regardless of which traditional field, are consistently in submission to European hegemony, false multiculturalism, and the ideal of universality. In “Africana Studies’ Epistemic Identity” Serie McDougal III furthers,

An Academic discipline’s epistemic identity is located in its unique concepts, theories, and paradigms. A discipline is distinguished by several key characteristics: its unit of analysis, subject matter, approach to inquiry, and purpose. A common error in the study of academic disciplines is the tendency to identify a discipline exclusively by its units of analysis and subject matter. A unit of analysis is the who or what that is being studied and subject matter refers to the general topics of study...For any discipline to qualify as a discipline, it must offer a significantly unique approach to the construction of knowledge.¹⁶

¹⁴ Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 2007.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 40-41.

¹⁶ Serie McDougal III, “Africana Studies’ Epistemic Identity: An Analysis of Theory and Epistemology in the Discipline,” *Springer* 20 (2013): 1, 6.

Some of the major concepts that orient Africana scholars differently from scholars of ‘traditional disciplines’ are: Afrocentricity, *djed*, dislocation, and conscientization.¹⁷

These concepts are identified because Africana Studies scholars are not just practitioners who study subject matters on Africa/ African people, these scholars are able to construct new knowledge because of *how* they study Africa and African people.

These basic concepts are just some of the strategies used to ground the objectives and intentions of the discipline of Africana Studies. As intellectual advancements they also provide a platform to assess the evolving nomenclature assigned to what is identified as Black Studies, Africana Studies, African American Studies, and Africology. Africana Studies anticipates committed scholars to interrogate the agency of African people within the context of their own culture and history. These persons are expected to properly locate historic analysis, socio-political place, significant myths and

¹⁷ [Note] *Afrocentricity* is a pyramidal paradigm that guides empirical research with the fundamental elements of epistemology, orientation, and perspective. Afrocentricity should be employed as an instrument to locate the African experience in historic analysis and interpret ‘knowing’ by rooting African narratives with the agency of African people from their own cultural and historical locations. See Molefi Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 1-14. *Djed* is an Egyptian concept meaning a ‘strong place to stand’. Afrocentricity employs ‘*djed*’ because Afrocentricity assumes all relationships to be an interplay of margins and centers. Thus, in the Western academy it is essential for the Africana scholar to hold a strong position from which he/she can interpret and interrogate his/her own phenomenon and this phenomenon in relation to global affairs. See Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 15. *Dislocation* is a result of the colonial process that has led to conceptual and psychological distortion, or no less than confusion, in the exportation of the African experience and reality. With over 500 years of colonial chaos, the Africana scholar is obligated to consciously be located and is accountable for the direction of the African legacy at hand. See Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 25-28. *Conscientization* is the most important concept in understanding Afrocentricity. Asante asserts, *consciousness precedes everything else; without consciousness there is no unity*. Conscientization requires an African person to be consciously African and to express a will for agency. More specifically, a person can express African culture, values, and customs (which is Africanity, often confused with Afrocentricity), and not be consciously African. See Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 32, 109.

literatures that give way to traditions and beliefs, African perspectives of meaningful chronology, and to carefully apply etymology- the origins and locations of terms.

Africana Studies continues to expand and evolve to meet the needs of its students, expand the academy, and aid the broader African population which specifically exists in a time of internationally instituted hostility toward African people.

In 1984, James Turner reminds Africana scholars that we are to legitimize our works with vigorous study and create push back to racisms, generate scholarship (through teaching and publishing), disseminate our work by establishing journals, and preserve the texts and findings we consider classics in our discipline. According to Turner, the goal is to create lasting pan-African relationships in the African world.¹⁸ In 1987, James Stewart contributes to the framing of Africana Studies by forwarding that ‘Black Studies’ should advance from being a movement to becoming institutionalized. Institutionalization was seen by Stewart as the key to a self-perpetuating development that could improve the lives of African people.¹⁹ Terry Kershaw writes in 1992 that along with Afrocentricity, Africana Studies scholars should employ theories and methodologies that encounter the experiences of African people as necessary and valid points of scientific study. Kershaw asserts that ‘Black Studies’ should take its rightful place in the academy as the leader in the development of research and scholarship focusing on Black experiences.²⁰

¹⁸ James Turner, “Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge,” in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 74-86.

¹⁹ James Stewart, “The Field and Function of Black Studies,” in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 44-50.

²⁰ Terry Kershaw, “The Emerging Paradigm in Black Studies,” in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 496-505.

Foundational contributors to the discipline of Africana Studies including Molefi Asante, James Turner, James Stewart and Terry Kershaw among others, identify ways in which the scientific inquiry of Africana Studies scholars may approach phenomenon such as the African diaspora with distinctive methods and objectives. Within my research there have emerged four themes in the literature on African diaspora which I have examined to reach the best platform for building the Africana Studies discipline.

1. Black Internationalism: This theme advances during the 1950s in a period of interwar conflict and anti-colonial movements. It was significantly inspired by the Harlem Renaissance and Pan-African conferences held in a number of diasporic locations. *Black internationalist* consisted of university professors, students, Black intellectuals and public figures, and artist whose intent was to create a collective cultural and political movement internationally. *Black internationalist* also popularized international movements around feminism, communism, and pan-ethnic activism.²¹
2. Return to Africa: This theme emerges at multiple times throughout history but is most identified by movements including Ethiopianism, francophone scholarship (Cheikh Ant Diop and Frantz Fanon for example), Garveyism, and Negritude. The *Return to Africa* discourse emphasizes Africa as the homeland and as a desirable place of return and renaissance.²² In 1957 Kwame Nkrumah gave his

²¹ Michael O. West & William G. Martin, *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International Since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Also see, Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of black internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

²² John A. Arthur, *African Diaspora Identities: Negotiating Culture in Transnational Migration* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010); James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002);

Independence Day speech in Ghana announcing, “We are going to demonstrate to the world, to other nations, that we are prepared to lay our foundation- our own African personality... Our liberation is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa”.²³ This contribution solidified the ownership Africa to the diaspora in addition to Africans living on the continent during the peak of anti-colonial and Jim Crow struggle. Africa as a singular place having a unified consciousness would be later codified by scholars such as St. Clair Drake using phrases like “African interest”.²⁴

3. Politics of the Diaspora: This theme becomes an umbrella for the series of pan-African activities around the globe. The more contemporary association with this theme is the ‘European based Black consciousness’ collectives. However, these participants differ from the pan-Africanist because they question the viability of liberation ideologies being able to translate from one national context to another. Therefore, the focus of these recent developments is based more in the liberal state than in the conceptual ‘diasporic community’. The ‘European based Black consciousness’ collectives are most influenced by scholars such as Frantz Fanon and the 1960s-70s Black Power Movement in the United States which is seen as more applicable to the politics of ‘Black’ people transnationally.²⁵

Obiagele Lake, “Toward a Pan-African Identity: Diaspora African Repatriates in Ghana,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 (1995): 21-36.

²³ “BBC World Service, Focus on Africa News Story,” last modified March 2, 2007, http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/focusonafrika/news/story/2007/02/070129_ghana50_independence_speech.shtml.

²⁴ St. Clair Drake, “Negro Americans and the African Interest,” in *The American Negro Reference Book*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1996), 662-705.

²⁵ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 2003; Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 1993; Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, 1987.

4. Home Away from Home/ Dispossession: This theme is much influenced by the work of scholars such as James Clifford and Stuart Hall. Clifford asserts that Africans in the diaspora are in a state of exile and are tempered by the reality that neither returning to the original homeland or being fully accepted in the host country are options. Clifford notes that the homeland remains real through collective memory or myth and is a place of refuge in the group consciousness of the dispossessed. He characterizes the commonalities among diasporic Africans as being dispersed, suffering, and engaging in resistance.²⁶ Stuart Hall engages dispossession differently. He asserts that Africans in the diaspora are a part of a “complex structure” operating against the super structure of dominance. Hall refers to the global capitalist and imperialist systems as “systems of dominance”. His main point is that the diaspora creates a situation where difference can exist just as much as commonality= complex structure. This model is useful when considering how nation-states exist as structures of dominance while “complex structure(d)” communities can simultaneously confront this system as atypical unified fronts through social and cultural resistance.²⁷

In my estimate the most important theme is *Return to Africa* because as Michael Gomez states in “Of Du Bois and Diaspora: The Challenge for African American Studies,” centralizing Africa should be the priority in future scholastic developments.²⁸

²⁶ James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994).

²⁷ Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance,” in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, ed. Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara, & Ruth Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 16-60.

²⁸ Michael Gomez, “Of Du Bois and Diaspora: The Challenge for African American Studies,” *Journal of Black Studies* 35 (2004): 175-194.

Gomez argues that the “dilemma”, of Africana Studies scholars lies in their “double-consciousness” toward Africa. Scholars with this dilemma feel a lost or alienation from Africa and a rejection from America. This leaves scholars in a most problematic situation when they also embrace an aversion to Africa. To rid ourselves of this unnecessary split consciousness we must, as scholars, be located. That simply means we operate from a strong place to stand, our *djed*, and with accountability.

Supported by works falling under the *Return to Africa* theme, it seems most appropriate to examine the movements and expansions of people of the African diaspora with planted feet in the location of first origin; Africa. All other beginnings are attenuated by fractured histories. As Molefi Kete Asante surmises in *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, our location, consciousness, and will for agency equips the Africana Studies scholar with the proper perspective from which we can interpret all world phenomenon.²⁹ In an era where the African Diaspora is quantifiably becoming more expansive it will be important to identify Africa as the homeland, center, core, or otherwise ancestral ground of the African diasporic community. With this as a disciplinary assumption at hand, both epistemologically and methodologically, the liberatory thrust of Africana Studies can be demonstrated. If Africa is not the centralizing location in African diaspora scholarship then the subjects of diasporic communities are liable to become enslaved twice over by the masters of penmanship.

The concerted effort of African people to create ‘home’ wherever they find themselves has led to a far reaching cultural and political scope for conceptualizing African truths around the globe. Africana Studies is a fertile ground for the unscathed

²⁹Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*.

research opportunities in locations beyond the African continent. Little attention has been given to African diasporic communities from the Africana Studies disciplinary perspective or through the lens of the Afrocentric paradigm. Conceptually, African communities outside of the African continent have only recently been referred to as the African diaspora. As stated, a limitation of African Diaspora Studies has been the manipulation of *how* scholars have positioned Africa itself. Because of the expansion of the term, African diaspora can either center or decenter Africa as the point of entry in examining African communities abroad. The methodological question has been, how do we approach the study of the Africa(n) abroad? While this has led to much quandary within other disciplines, Africana Studies is equipped to proceed with secondary questions. By not attempting to orphan African people from their origins in Africa and thus the continuity in their cultural and cosmological expression, Africana Studies scholars have a secure *djed* from which they can build upon.

Few contemporary works have located Africa as central to the outlook, experience, identity, and future of African people living outside the designated African territory. What is examined as the African Diaspora will depend on the focus scholars will pursue in terms of Africa's relation and significance to African diasporic populations. For Michael Gomez, the diaspora functions as an endeavor that attempts to bridge (as opposed to annexing) differences of origin, status, and culture. The African diaspora conceptually builds bridges for cross-cultural links to bind people together.³⁰ Joseph Harris reminds us that until the 1960s, most Africans in Africa retained their primary ethnic allegiance, while African descendants abroad were a "stateless" diaspora. As such,

³⁰ Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

the strength of the connection between Africans and the African diaspora remained their common origins in Africa as a whole and a common social condition throughout the world.³¹

Future scholarship on the African diaspora, particularly in Africana Studies, should retain Africa as the central analytical focus; benefiting both people residing on the continent and African people abroad. Scholars of the African diaspora are to be conscious of Africa as a contemporary and historical repository for civilization, migration, cultural contribution, and Homeland for a variety of people; trans-continentially, transnationally, and trans-generationally.

This dissertation research lays a dearth of ground work for future African diasporic research projects in the discipline. I have done a rigorous study of the existing literature and have created new knowledge for identifying and understanding the presence of African communities abroad through my theoretical, conceptual, and cultural developments in this study. The aim of this study is to provide concepts and theoretical perspective that lend useful and contemporary intellectual tools which support healthy outcomes for Africans in diaspora. My work builds on the following scholarship, presented in Table 1.

³¹ Joseph Harris, "The Dynamics of the Global African Diaspora," in *The African Diaspora*, ed. Alusine Jalloh & Stephen E. Maizlish (College Station: University of Texas at Arlington, 1996).

Table 1. Africological Design



A major distinction of this work is the correlations I have made between the Afrocentric paradigm, Afrocentric historical reference points, and Afrocentric psychological tools.

The paradigm situates *how* we know what we know, the history is *what* we know, and the psychological tools orient what we *do* with what we know. As an Africological study, my dissertation was able to synthesize three different bodies of knowledge to produce a new and holistic product. This has hardly been done before. Many scholars have limited the utility of Afrocentricity by applying it only to critique Eurocentric works. As a result, the final products are typically tagged as “The Afrocentric Critique of...” or “The Afrocentric Analysis of...” leaving the body of the work cluttered with Eurocentric scholarship as the premise of investigation. I intend for my work to represent an entire Afrocentric project; in theory, content, and interpretation. In doing so my work establishes a model for future Africological works. More scholarship will be necessary in the future to distinguish works that utilize Afrocentricity as a research aid and scholarship that produces complete Africological studies.

Table 2. Africological Terminology Guide

AFRICAN	(1) A person of African descent existing in some conscious relation to Africa; most often operating within the African worldview, consciously or unconsciously, which is a product of African history, culture, and philosophy. (2) [As a member of the African “race”] A vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life. ³² (3) [Contemporary Afrocentric perspective] A person who has participated in the five-hundred-year resistance to European domination of the African continent...those who are consciously African, given to appreciating the need to resist annihilation culturally, politically, and economically, can claim to be adequately in the arena of Afrocentricity. ³³
AFRICAN DIASPORA	Constituted by African people who are dispersed throughout the world by, 1) forced migration or involuntary diaspora and, 2) transnational migration or mobilized diaspora; these multiple populations exist in permanent or semi-permanent locations outside of the African continent while still cognizant of Africa being the original homeland, linking the external populations with the internal populations through common ancestry and deep structures of culture. ³⁴
AFRICANA STUDIES	[An] instrument whereby knowledge, consciousness and liberation of the global Africana community can transform and decolonize the Africana mind and liberate the Africana community. Within the academic community, the purpose is to serve as an avenue where new methodologies and new technologies relevant to the proper study of people of African descent can develop socially, politically and intellectually,

³² W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Conservation of Races,” in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays*, ed. Nahum Dimitri Chandler (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 53.

³³ Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 2007, 47.

³⁴ Ifetayo M. Flannery, “African Diaspora: Heuristics and Perspective within the Africana Studies Disciplinary Framework” (paper presented at the National Council for Black Studies Conference, Los Angeles, California, March 11-14, 2015).

after which the transformation of new knowledge into practical social application is administered to and by the community.³⁵

AFRICAN WORLD

(1) A conceptual location identified by the collective body of African people around the world including those settled in both recognized African states and those African communities who are stateless. (2) The geographical scope of the African world includes Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean, and various regions of Asia and the Pacific; wherever people declare themselves African, despite the distance from the continent or the recentness of their out-migration, they are accepted as part of the African world.³⁶

**AFRICAN
WORLDVIEW**

The most comprehensive ideas about order from the African perspective, produced by the African's history, culture, and philosophy. A people's worldview generates their pattern for interpreting reality and is linked to their general design for living.³⁷

AFROCENTRICITY

A consciousness, quality of thought, mode of analysis, and an actionable perspective where Africans seek, from agency, to assert subject place within the context of African history.³⁸

**AFROCENTRIC
PARADIGM**

The cognitive and structural aspects of Afrocentricity that become a normal mode of scientific thought and practice among the community captured by the essence of the concept. This paradigm is most recognized by the "African collective cognitive will to cultural and psychic liberation, while the ultimate objective of Afrocentricity is African development, i.e., African existence on African terms".³⁹

³⁵ Marquita Pellerin, "A Blueprint for Africana Studies: An Overview of African/ African American/ African Caribbean Studies," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 2 (2009): 47.

³⁶ Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990), 15.

³⁷ Daudi Ajani ya Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks: The Fundamental Role of Culture and the African-Centered Worldview," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 528.

³⁸ Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 2007, 16.

³⁹ Ama Mazama, *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 6.

HOMELAND

A reference to the geographic Africa as the place of origin, ancestral grounds, or otherwise aboriginal site for people of African descent.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter 2, *Theoretical and Methodological Considerations*, begins by establishing the intent and impact of the Afrocentric paradigm in this work. I assert that as an Africological study, this dissertation seeks to answer epistemological questions within the Africana Studies disciplinary framework. To answer epistemological questions with specific attention to the African diasporic conceptualization I place the Afrocentric paradigm, the African worldview construct, and my own development of *cultural location* in conversation to orient alternative and culturally relevant ways to approach existing and new questions in the area of African diaspora scholarship. My development of *cultural location* can be applied as both a theory and a method to locate where Africa exists around the world. I argue that ‘Africa’ is both a geo-political and cognitive site in its representation and expansion. The expansion of Africa is identifiable through the collective settlements and cultural expressions of African people throughout the diaspora. From the premises of the Afrocentric paradigm, African worldview, and cultural location construct, my theoretical and methodological perspective is corrective to the desperate fragmentism of Africa and her descendants, which has been the trajectory of many intellectual projects. Conceptually placing African diasporic communities back into Africa across time and space by emphasizing the ties that bind them the relationship

between early diasporic communities such as Haiti and Philadelphia can be better understood. Thus, while each of these communities have rich distinctive qualities, in this project the significance and context for their relationship is grounded in the fact that they mutually exist as African diasporic extensions of Africa and likewise express a cultural and psychological orientation toward Africa as their binding homeland which becomes expressive in their ally-ship.

Chapter 3, *Locating 'Africa' Within the African Diaspora*, discusses the development and theoretical application of the conceptual African diaspora in the academy. I present a definition of 'African diaspora' in conversation with existing scholarship that intentionally does not place emphasis on diasporic communities existing in perpetual alienation, exile, or suffering. In my exploration of the literature I identify how many schools of thought and disciplinary frameworks have offered the non-African study of "blacks". These attempts adopt universal classifications of race, class, and gender to advance analysis. Consequently, it becomes difficult to break from the intellectual norms of assuming people of African descent to always be perceived as black, slaves, exiles, oppressed, dominated, third world, or basically in some inferior relationship to Europeans, who are thus in a fixed position of superiority. The significance and application of the African-centered school of thought is therefore posited. From this framework, the whole of Africa is expressed as one cultural location; this location being enhanced and advanced by the living African diaspora. 'Africa' as a conceptual space or location does not mute the variations of expressions among African people. In concert with the African worldview, the assertion of an African culture simply follows that there is an Africa, with an African people, and thus an African culture.

In addition to the academic impulse, bearing in mind the subjects of this research, I thematically identify what Africa has meant to African people of the diaspora from within their own cultural emblems and practices. The conceptual Africa in diaspora is significant here as a measure of the cognitive location of Africa in the diasporic collective conscious. The construction of *home* away from (H)ome is expressly noteworthy in the symbolism, action, and myth of diaspora. Identifying Africa as the Homeland, where one imagines existing as a ‘true native’, emerges as the conscious recognition of past and present experiences faced by diasporic African communities. I argue the merging of African ethnic groups in diaspora created ‘new African ethnicities’ rather than one homogenous ‘black’ identification. ‘Black’ racial identity positions Africans in diaspora more so in relation to Europeans and the advent of European slavery than in relation to Africa as their ontological source. New African ethnicities with a common Homeland have manifested as African American, Haitian, Jamaican, or Afro-Brazilian for example. This is the composition of the Africa abroad. ‘Africa as the Homeland’ thus functions as the archetype for diasporic communities in identifying the totality of the source, signifier, origin, or domain of their nativism. These same communities, as newly developed ethnicities, identify *home* (lower-case ‘h’) through their unique expressions and collective orientation toward Africa in relationship to their immediate environments. Self-determination through marronage and self-preservation through African spirituality are then explored as examples of cultural practices that sustain *home* constructions in diaspora. Haiti can therefore be identified as a grand marronage; an African *home* construction in diaspora to generate nativism for Africans in diaspora. Consistently so,

African Americans who voluntarily emigrated to Haiti also saw Haiti as a more advantageous *home* than America, particularly in having a shared Homeland.

Chapter 4, *African Diasporic Consciousness: Imagining the New African World*, considers the intangible realities of Africa in the consciousness and practice of Africa in diaspora and supports that an ongoing *African diasporic consciousness* is evident. The *African diasporic consciousness* is strongest in African cultural locations around the world. *African diasporic consciousness* is the awareness and acknowledgement of being an African world person while also embodying a deep structure of cultural orientation toward Africa. The cultural orientation towards Africa binds African diasporic communities through their shared sense of linked fate. The implication is that their sense of linked fate is not just in relation to their immediate communities; their fate is linked to the fate of Africa- particularly as these communities exist as extensions of Africa in diaspora. *African diasporic consciousness* is further explored as a diasporic orientation toward nationalism. This analysis functions to interpret the contemporary relationship between concepts of race, nationalism, and diaspora. In American history for example, ‘race’ has served as a significant indicator for the allocation of citizen rights. Because of aggregated citizenry, nationalism practiced by African Americans and nationalism practiced by the state against African Americans has historically been politicized on the basis of race. Congruently, African Americans have attempted to counterbalance their nation-state exclusion by identifying their diasporic Homeland- Africa, as a location to seek physical, psychological, political, and/or cultural validity. Diasporic consciousness has thus facilitated cross national, intra-diasporic relationships as a means to identify belonging in the world. The global stretching of the African presence in addition to

diasporic communities paying recognition to themselves as a common people linked by Africa has produced a networked African world. *African diasporic consciousness* and the necessity of *home* construction in diaspora lend a particular insight to the interpretation of the desired relationship between Haiti and Free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution.

Chapter 5, *Extending the Presence of Africa: The Significance of the Relationship Between Haiti and Free Africans of Philadelphia Following the Haitian Revolution*, presents a case study that identifies that the triumph of Haiti securing their freedom from the institution of European slavery as a triumph for African people in diaspora. The knowledge of Haiti's Revolution and open border policy to any Africans willing to come and settle as citizens spurred organizing efforts and interest in African American communities, particularly Philadelphia. The Haitian national design for incorporative relations with other African diasporic communities suggests Haiti's intent to not only secure the freedom and longevity of Haitian natives but to secure the African world presence in territory that had long been considered the Western world. Haiti's relationship with free Africans of Philadelphia is also represented as optimal African diasporic consciousness because agency, support, and circumstance aligned to propel the existing consciousness into direct action, which ultimately shifted hegemonic European world domination.

During the Haitian Revolution a vast majority of African American leaders were in support of the Haitian Revolution. Most of these same leaders rejected the mission of the American Colonization Society which was established by white Americans to settle free African Americans in the American colony in Africa, Liberia. One can infer from

these efforts that escape at any cost was not the goal of African Americans. African Americans had a sophisticated and intentional approach to facilitate a relationship with an African diasporic community; a community they had built trust with and had common interest with on their own terms. Significant to the formation of Haiti as the first free African nation in the Western hemisphere was the intentional unification of the people around the preservation of 'freedom' and not nationality. Moreover, becoming a Haitian citizen nested in being a person of African descent who identified with Africa as a unifying principle. Ultimately, African agency, support, and circumstance had aligned to produce optimal African diasporic consciousness, collective action in establishing a multi-ethnic cultural location, and a solid design for cognitive and geo-political *home* design in diaspora.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In [the] effort to imitate...these “educated people” are sincere. They hope to make the Negro conform quickly to the standard of the whites and thus remove the pretext for the barriers between the races. They do not realize, however, that even if the Negroes do successfully imitate the whites, nothing new has thereby been accomplished. You simply have a larger number of persons doing what others have been doing. The unusual gifts of the race have not thereby been developed, and an unwilling world, therefore, continues to wonder what the Negro is good for.

Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, 1933

A race of people is like an individual man; until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood, it can never fulfill itself.

Malcolm X, *Speech at the Founding Rally of the OAAU*, 1964

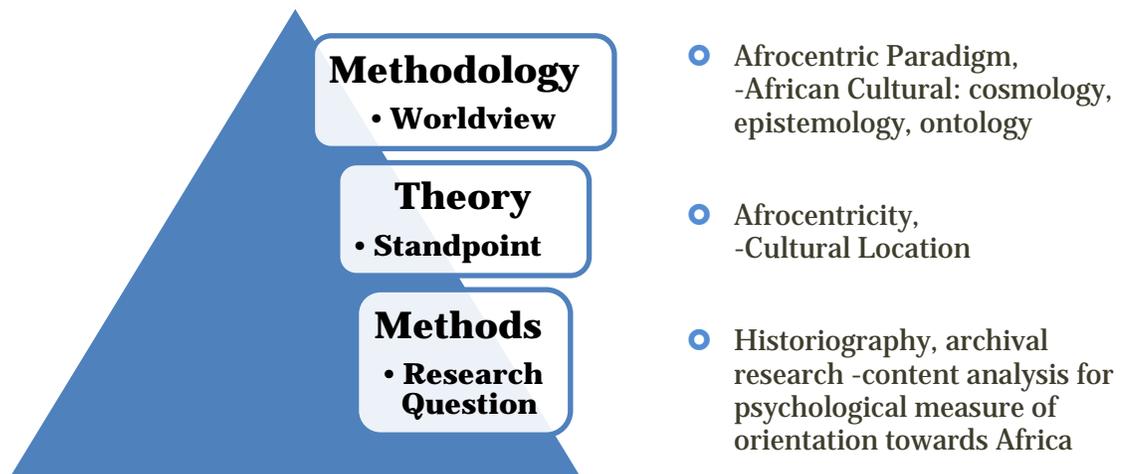


Figure 1. Research Flow Chart

This work is an Africological synthesis of a historic event that holds contemporary relevance to African people. *Africology* is defined as, “...the Afrocentric study of phenomena, events, ideas, and personalities related to Africa”.⁴⁰ As stated by Asante, “...Africology is sustained by a commitment to studying the life narratives, cultures, values, and possibilities of the African people trans-nationally and trans-

⁴⁰Asante, *African Pyramids of Knowledge*, 18.

continentally...it opens the door for interpretations of a reality base in evidence and data secured by reference to the African world voice”.⁴¹ Similarly, it does not emphasize the examination of data from a distance for the purposes of forging ‘objectivity’ nor does it operate solely to predict human behavior like Western social science. “[M]eaning for the Afrocentrist in the contemporary context must be derived from the most centered aspects of the African’s being...We are either existing on our own terms or the terms of others...By “term” I mean position, place or space.”⁴² The Africological researcher is encouraged to utilize several approaches to phenomena that engage Africa and African subjects through the Afrocentric paradigm. The authorization of *several approaches to phenomena* is significantly noted here to distinguish methods from methodology, and discipline from subject (or topic of analysis). Therefore, this is not a historical dissertation simply because I have included archival data as a *method* of inquiry; likewise, works produced by sociologists, anthropologists or historians are not inherently Afrocentric because the *subjects* of their research may be people of African descent.

This is an Africological study that seeks to answer epistemological questions within the Africana Studies discipline. Attention is given to the historical and psychological significance of the African diaspora to African people themselves. In accordance with my disciplinary training, this project will reflect an interrogation of the significance and context for the relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution. To do this, I am applying the Afrocentric paradigm, under which, I will draw from Afrocentricity, the African worldview and my development of *cultural location* as a conceptual framework.

⁴¹ Asante, *African Pyramids of Knowledge*, 15.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

Research Question(s)

1. How have Africans in diaspora extended the presence of Africa?
2. What is the significance of the relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution as African diasporic communities?
 - (a.) What is the significance of the African diaspora to Africans in the diaspora?

Part (a.) of question two is a supplemental question that will have many answers as it is applied to different groups historically, currently, and in the future. I believe it has great heuristic value and will enrich both Africana Studies and general research related to the African diaspora conceptualization.

The unique depth of this work is in *how* I am studying African people. The *how* is answered by the vantage point, theories, and cultural worldview employed by the researcher to interpret the phenomena at hand. James Turner reminds Africana Studies practitioners that for any discipline to qualify as a discipline, it must offer a significantly distinctive approach to the construction of knowledge.⁴³ According to Serie McDougal, “An academic discipline’s epistemic identity is located in its unique concepts, theories, and paradigms. A discipline is distinguished by several key characteristics: its units of analysis, subject matter, approach to inquiry, and purpose”.⁴⁴ The scope and methodology of sound Africana Studies or Africological research is thus consistent across disciplinary grand theory, meta theory, paradigm, conceptual development, and subject foci; ultimately lending people of African descent as primary beneficiaries of the research. “The prioritization of Africana people’s customs, beliefs, motifs, values, and

⁴³ James Turner, “Africana Studies and Epistemology,” in *Out of the Revolution: the Development of Africana Studies*, ed. D.P. Aldridge & C. Young. (Lanham: Lexington, 2000).

⁴⁴ McDougal III, “Africana Studies’ Epistemic Identity,” 236.

conceptualizations is the rubric by which the application of an Afrocentric methodology operates.”⁴⁵ If this seems questionable then we must ask, *who should benefit* from research identified as ‘Black’ or ‘Africana’ Studies?

Afrocentricity is defined as, “...a paradigmatic intellectual perspective that privileges African agency within the context of African history and culture trans-continentially and trans-generationally”.⁴⁶ Afrocentricity has been necessitated in Africana Studies as an intellectual tool to re-orient academic impulses that perpetuate works on African people which only reference them on the margins of history and particularly only as they collide with moments that are deemed significant in European history. As stated by Ama Mazama, in addition to European economic and political colonialism, “...our struggles for emancipation from colonial domination [have been co-opted] by controlling our conceptual/cultural space through the imposition of the European cultural mode as universal”; this has resulted in the “ontological reduction” of African humanity.⁴⁷ By ontological reduction, Mazama explains that within a colonial paradigm, ones’ being or ontology “...is self-evident: only through a careful imitation of Europeans can colonized people hope to improve their lot, and move out of animality and childhood into full humanity and adulthood”.⁴⁸ The European cultural constructions of orientations toward humanity are deeply embedded in the philosophical impulses of traditional disciplines within the Academy. These impulses fail to acknowledge the scope of African life, contribution, and ingenuity. The most common failure of European

⁴⁵ Marquita Pellerin, “Benefits of Afrocentricity in Exploring Social Phenomena: Understanding Afrocentricity as a Social Science Methodology,” *Journal of Pan African Studies* 5, no. 4 (2012): 151.

⁴⁶ Molefi Kete Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 2.

⁴⁷ Ama Mazama, *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 3-4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

trained scholars is due to the tendency of theories and paradigms produced by European thinkers to observe all non-Europeans under the metaphorical microscope. The narrow vision is then followed by a Eurocentric revelation and interpretation of world events through the European cultural worldview. The Eurocentric worldview is characterized by independence, separation of humans from nature, materiality, inherent conflict of opposing forces, imposed order to reduce chaos, mastery of all life, and a “survival of the fittest” cultural ideology.⁴⁹

Diasporic scholar Ruth Simms Hamilton writes,

European cultural ideologies, systems of social thought and reputation, put Europe at the center of the world to reinforce claims of European universality. European ideas, art, representation, and imagery thus followed an imperial framework, a “hierarchical logic,” that “remained basically unaltered into the twentieth century,” in which the “myths of Africa and other continents correlate with a myth of Europe itself.”⁵⁰

Hamilton concludes that the European mode of systematic processing reaches cultural limitations, as we approach Africa, to the extent that they may calcify complete myths about Africa within human history and memory. This is not trustworthy science.

For example, in the American Academy I have been exposed to research “tools”, particularly within the discipline (Cultural) Anthropology, that instruct me to remove myself from the research underway and the subjects of interest in order to best present “objective” results. The “tools” and literatures offered to me to conduct *valid* research had often directly assumed European cultural norms to be the standard of

⁴⁹ Azibo, “Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies”, 529. *See also* Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994).

⁵⁰ Ruth Simms Hamilton, *Routes of Passage: Rethinking the African Diaspora* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007), 21.

communication, schooling, learning, courtesy, political orientation and development, to name a few. Moreover, the researcher is readily assumed to be of European descent and the subject theorized as *the other*.⁵¹ As an African American researcher under these philosophical and epistemological constraints I am conditioned to do one of two things: 1) assume the position of the European in perspective and action by engaging research on African people and their ancestors as *others* in relation to myself, or 2) identify as an “*other*” but devoid my research of any emotional, spiritual, political or otherwise critical position of European hegemony to establish my *validity* and collegiality within the existing order. “To be of African descent and to study anthropology [or any European discipline] is to be struck by the pervasive anti-Africanism of the discipline. And if one then approaches the discipline critically, it emerges as a tradition of Eurocentrism, functioning to satisfy the needs of the European ethos.”⁵²

For these reasons Afrocentricity is best suited for me as a researcher and for the subjects of this historical study. The Afrocentric paradigm is an instrument for human science. As a methodology it anticipates the cultural allegory and presuppositions of my ancestors and it allows me to exist in that space. My ontology has not been compromised nor is my intellectual ability diminished by locating myself within the cultural perspective of the research subjects. In this work, Afrocentricity is not plainly a theory of resistance to oppression or a theory of unity; it is a theory of African affirmation and

⁵¹ See, Kathryn M. Anderson-Levitt, *Local Meanings, Global Schooling: Anthropology and World Culture Theory* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Peggy Reeves Sanday, “The Ethnographic Paradigm(s),” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24 (1979): 527-538; Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2001).

⁵² Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994) 3.

regeneration. Danjuma Modupe concludes, Afrocentricity is the collective continental and diasporic African conscious will to cultural and psychic liberation with the ultimate goal being African existence on African terms.⁵³

Afrocentricity as a theoretical standpoint is corrective to the desperate fragmentism of Africa and her descendants, which has been the trajectory of many intellectual projects including the modernist, post-modernist, Marxist, existentialist, Africanist, historians, anthropologists, and sociologists alike. Asante writes,

Africology rejects the Africanist idea of the separation of African people as being short-sighted, analytically vapid, and philosophically unsound. One cannot study Africans in the United States or Brazil or Jamaica without some appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of Africa as source and origin... Thus, if one concentrates on studying Africans in the inner cities of the Northeast United States, which is reasonable, it must be done with the idea in the back of the mind that one is studying African people, not “made-in-America Negros” without historical depth”.⁵⁴

This Afrocentric analytical position is especially relevant to my dissertation development. The primary subjects of this work are 18th and 19th century Haitians and African Americans native to Philadelphia. While each of these communities have rich distinctive qualities, in this project the significance and context for their relationship is grounded in the fact that they, 1) mutually exist as African diasporic groups and, 2) express a cultural and psychological orientation toward Africa as their binding homeland.

It is foundational to this research study to appreciate Haitians and African Americans as a community of African people chiefly and as branches of the African diasporic community secondarily. This project reveals European nation-state boundaries,

⁵³ Danjuma Sinue Modupe, “The Afrocentric Philosophical Perspective: A Narrative Outline,” in *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003), 55-72.

⁵⁴ Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 15.

being French Saint Domingue and British North America, to be minimal in significance to the African people who are the subjects of this work. Therefore, identifying African Americans or other diasporic Africans as “Westerners”, “black” or “black diaspora” or “black Atlantic” will not be a part of this research analysis. These terms generate conclusions from the perspective of the outsiders in this narrative; those who see various African communities as novel discoveries needing redefinition, as slaves, property, Western oysters, and/ or European destinations. Through the Afrocentric paradigm (methodology) the theoretical orientation of this work is however, informed by the African Worldview and *cultural location* concept.

African Worldview

Paralleled with the Afrocentric paradigm, the African worldview commands the idea of an African conceptual universe. This is to say, the first self-evident fact is that there is an *African people*. Making sense of the totality of African people is more of a historical truth than a modern construction. The centrality of the African mode, aesthetic, cosmology, and expression, derive from a shared African cultural perspective. According to Maulana Karenga, culture is the totality of a people’s thought and practice by which they celebrate themselves, and introduce themselves to history and humanity.⁵⁵ What becomes African culture is not a static category because we are always a history in process. However, the shared culture of African people is identifiable and is translated across time, geography, and generation.

⁵⁵ Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Los Angeles: Kawaida Publications, 1982).

As an umbrella term to conceptualize the fundamental diversities between human cultures, African worldview is generally interchangeable in praxis with ‘African cosmology’ or ‘African philosophy’. According to Cheikh Anta Diop, “...African philosophy cannot develop except on the original terrain of...African thought. Otherwise, there is the risk that it will never be”.⁵⁶ Thus, we see the development of the African worldview as an observation and product of, “... African history, culture, and philosophy” throughout space and time.⁵⁷ The purpose of a worldview analysis is to represent a racial-cultural groups’ conceptual orientation or perspective on the construction of their reality. Worldview systems often assert the following assumptions:

1. Every culture generates its own distinct approach to and experience of reality, which we might call its cosmology or worldview. It grows out of their distinct (collective) bio-genetic and geo-historical condition in the world.
2. The worldview system naturally evolves through and reinforces the survival maintenance of the culture; that is, its cumulative-collective approach to survival.⁵⁸

Applying the African worldview as a logical system that orients African people through their own cultural truths and stock in self-preservation gives agency and proper location to the subjects of the African diaspora in my research. The African worldview is characterized by interdependence, spiritual or divine force in all things, rhythmic interchange between opposites, divine law revealed through laws of nature, harmony with nature, and group maintenance, collectiveness, and sharing for survival.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991) 324.

⁵⁷ Azibo, “Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies ,” 528.

⁵⁸ Serie McDougal III, *Research Methods in Africana Studies* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 43.

⁵⁹ Azibo, “Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies ,” 529.

In context Reiland Rabaka continues,

The African worldview theory is essentially a combination of the classical and contemporary, continental and diasporic African overarching outlook on human experience and the natural and phenomenal world... African peoples' beliefs about God, nature, and major life rituals—such as birth, puberty, adulthood, marriage, elderhood, and death—exhibit enough commonalities to warrant being called an African worldview.⁶⁰

As I seek to present Africa, the Homeland, as principal to the investigation of African diasporic communities, it is vital to operate from the more longstanding evidences of African civilization and society. The African worldview provides the framework for interpreting African cultural expressions and orientations to reality based in the historical and philosophical evidence of African world people. In concert, utilizing the African worldview in this research will elicit greater accuracy in locating what Africa looks like in the modern world- in *diaspora*.

Cultural Location as a Theory & Method

In the research on African diaspora, the theme of *location*⁶¹ is of great heuristic importance. Where has one come from? Where are you going? Where are you now? Will you leave again one day? Will you return home? Whole communities within the African diaspora, alongside sincere artist, literary contributors, social activist, spiritual leaders, and academics have approached these very questions. The development of the ‘modern

⁶⁰ Reiland Rabaka, “African Worldview Theory,” in *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, ed. Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 57.

⁶¹ [Note] The concept of *location* has been explored in Afrocentric scholarship as a method for identifying the worldview and cultural perspective of a text and the author of the text. See Ama Mazama, *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003); Molefi Kete Asante, *An Afrocentric Paradigm* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); Molefi Kete Asante, *African Pyramids of Knowledge* (Brooklyn: Universal Write Publications LLC, 2015). However, in this Afrocentric work the concept of *location* is defined and applied differently.

world' was supposed to answer them. The modern world, arbitrarily fixed by nation-state boundaries, attempted to predict the flow, creation, or destruction of space and power.⁶² It is a part of how the world is conceived in the future and in the past, in our minds. Undoubtedly, the mapping of the world was not waterproof and has been colored by the ubiquitous presence of the African diaspora. If not carefully examined, the very idea of a living African diaspora, Africa being in multiple places at once, can aggravate the curious modern thinker and tempt them to again re-organize people and place by geopolitical lines. According to Sandhya Shukla, "Diaspora, by definition, is dispersion, which effectively compresses time and space such that it enables the experiences of many places at what would appear to be one moment...land of settlement, space for travel, all undergo significant reworking through the concept and object of diaspora".⁶³ Thus, the beauty and the battle of the *diaspora* concept then, is that it is reflexive. It is the subject in constant movement while also in constant reflection of oneself. This is why the concept of *location* from an Afrocentric analysis lends so much value in this study and in African diasporic research more generally. As an Africological study, the African is central to the narrative and the perspective in the telling of the narrative. Therefore, the 'reflection of oneself' is just as critical as the observation of the movement of the subject; the latter often being the only approach visible in African diaspora research.

Location in this sense is therefore not married to a longitudinal or latitudinal coordinate. In our contemporary world, fashioned by migration and diasporic African world influence, ones *location* is a constitution of ones' culture. We can make sense of:

⁶² Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

⁶³ Sandhya Shukla, "Locations for South Asian Diasporas," *Annual Review Anthropology* 30 (2001): 551.

relationships, where we feel comfortable, where our language makes sense, and where we feel at home, through shared cultural space. For example, and as demonstrated later in this work, the geographic proximity and national boundaries of Haiti to Philadelphia was not a deterrent to these communities articulating they had a common destiny as a common people. Shared cultural experience transcended geography and national identity. While national identity is a basic marker of legal citizenship in a country, culture is the passport of the African agent, particularly as the privileges of citizenship for many diasporic African communities are in constant dispute. As stated by Ruth Simms Hamilton,

There is no country-specific ‘African homeland’. The nature of the dispersion process and the culture of violence associated with enslavement and colonialism is such that there are multiple diasporic identifications with Africa that do not necessarily coincide with legal/ political boundaries linked to specific nation-states, past or present. As a place, Africa in the diaspora is part of a collective memory, a reference for tradition and heritage.⁶⁴

The cultural location and imaginative space of Africans in diaspora thus becomes a greater tool in mapping the spatial residence of various communities. Communities are identified by their cultural locations all over the world. This is not a rare phenomenon. Jamaica for example, culturally exists in several cities within different nations. There are ‘Jamaica towns’ in New York City, in Berlin, Germany, in Accra, Ghana, and in Limon, Costa Rica; and those are just a few I have personally been acclimated with. Similarly, you can access China in most major cities in the United States. ‘China towns’ are resurrected and maintained by Chinese people to create home and familiarity for those

⁶⁴ Hamilton, *Routes of Passage*, 19.

living abroad and for those Chinese family members who will one day arrive.⁶⁵ These locations are not simply tourist attractions, even if we consume them as such. Jamaica and China can exist in multiple locations at once because the people who claim these spaces as home carry their culture with them and are able to recreate this home as they settle in sizable communities⁶⁶. The same is applicable to Africans in diaspora. The cultural locations of these communities are more real than a measure of whether they exist based on border sovereignty or colonial possession. Identifying the scope and influence of African diasporic communities is thus a project of identifying Africa. As aforementioned by Ruth Simms Hamilton, by the nature of the African diaspora, “there is no country-specific African homeland”. Therefore, accepting Africa as a diverse but singular cultural location to make sense of diasporic iterations is more logical in conclusion than the attempt to fragment Africa because: 1) the African worldview informs us that for the greater portion of human history Africans have dwelled with a distinct collective cultural approach to reality and 2) the African diaspora has existed longer than contemporary African nation-states.

Redefining *location*, as it was experienced by the diasporic African communities of Haiti and Philadelphia during and following the Haitian Revolution, is integral to the interpretation of this research. According to the *Afrocentric Paradigm*, African people’s cultural center is critical to their existence “since [they] exist in borrowed space”.⁶⁷ The idea of borrowed space is consequential to the territorialization of land and human beings

⁶⁵ Gwen Kinkead, *Chinatown: A Portrait of a Closed Society* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

⁶⁶ [Note] “*Communities*” is an intentional descriptor of the subjects undergoing observation. Consistent with base assumptions in diaspora scholarship, *individuals* do not exist in ‘diaspora’-diasporic communities exist. A community can be described as a group of individuals related by blood, heritage, culture, and or common purpose that operate as a unit in one or more capacities.

⁶⁷ Mazama, *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, 41.

by European slavery and colonialism. As it has been decided by some that the land, the power, and the human beings existing on the land are under the ownership of Europe and its' descendants, then one can understand for example, why a European immigrant in America can become a native⁶⁸ while an African American, a Jamaican, or a Haitian would be considered a refugee or a person in perpetual exile.⁶⁹ Abdias Do Nascimento, a renowned Afro-Brazilian scholar, writes,

My position in this interview is the most paradoxical possible. Here I am talking to white intellectuals, children of the elites that have been oppressing people of my color in Brazil for four hundred years. For this reason and others, I have to make it clear from the beginning that my situation is different from yours. My exile is of a different kind. It didn't start in 1968 or 1964, or at any other time in my life. Now, more than ever, I understand that I was born in exile, and my parents and grandparents as well: descendants of African people brought by force to the exile of enslavement in the Americas.⁷⁰

Nascimento goes on to explain the circumstances he faced within 'his country'. He expresses that all Brazilian governments have been openly against Africans and hold contempt toward African cultural tradition. For these reasons he states, "If I have a homeland, it is Africa. Brazilian society tried to refuse me my African roots, tried to cut them off, pull them up by force".⁷¹ This sentiment exhibits the profound splintering that is possible between the physical and the cultural location of an African in diaspora. Based on my analysis I would forward that when a people are subjected to being both culturally

⁶⁸ [Note] "Nativism" refers to persons perceived as most belonging to the nation-state as naturalized citizens; holding the authority to determine outcomes for the populations living within the national borders.

⁶⁹ David Dante Troutt, *After the Storm: Black Intellectuals Explore the Meaning of Hurricane Katrina* (Ann Arbor: New Press, 2007).

⁷⁰ Abdias Do Nascimento and Elisa Larkin Nascimento, *Africans in Brazil: A Pan-African Perspective* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1992), 5.

⁷¹ Nascimento, *Africans in Brazil*, 49.

and physically dislocated then they have truly been exiled. In fact, one of the most popular themes within African diaspora research is exile or dispossession.⁷² However, by description in the literature, Africans in diaspora are all assumed to be a permanently exiled class of people without attention to how Africans perceive themselves. The literature has not paid tribute to potential variance between cultural and physical locations. The grand classification is rooted in the initial premise; that Africans in diaspora are living in the Western world (European territory) and therefore have no claims to the space- being their physical location, regardless of how long they have inhabited the space. Are Africans only allowed to claim nativism within the perimeter of the African continent while Europeans, fewer in number, extend their reach of nativism around the world? A re-examination is long overdue.

The research must consider the question, if Africa is not where African people have settled, then where is Africa? When does a space or a place become an African location? Asante writes,

There is a clear separation of African peoples. Those who remain on the continent and may have been exploited on their own lands and those of us who were brought across the ocean are seen as fundamentally different...Like the literary critics, the historians often dismiss the African elements that survived and developed on the American continents as purely temporal...we are essentially left with a discontinuous history and an uncertain future...Thus, the Afrocentrist expands human history by creating a new path for

⁷² See James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994): ; Emily Raboteau, *Searching for Zion: The Quest for Home in the African Diaspora* (New York: Grove Press, 2013); Michael L. Conniff, & Thomas Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora* (New Jersey: The Blackburn Press, 1994); Frank Andre Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cuban and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

interpretation...African is identified with time, place, and perspective.⁷³

To be consistent within the Afrocentric paradigm and utilize *cultural location* as a method to identify communities across time and space is to reject the Eurocentric ideal that African people can only exist where Europeans decide not to. This ideal rationalizes that Africa exists only on the African continent, which is shrinking due to the attribution of North Africa as Arab territory and South Africa as European. Ironically, just as Europeans have committed to the imperial domination of most of the world, they too have created the construct of simultaneously living in a separate world from everyone else, i.e. the ‘first world’ juxtapose with the ‘third world’. The conceptual space of an existing first and third world was established by European thinkers to draw attention to the differences in material excess and political ally-ship between Europe and the rest of the world.⁷⁴ However, it is also applied to create the feeling of distance in our measure of time and space, ‘development’, memory, and familiarity between groups. In the end, we know we do not live in two worlds; we live in one fractured world. The ‘multi-world’ construction is compelling nonetheless, and has now been embraced by many thinkers in the twenty-first century for a variety of reasons. Scholars have referred to the Arab world, Asian world, and African world for example.⁷⁵ Compared to the theorizing of *cultural*

⁷³ Molefi Kete Asante, “The Afrocentric Idea,” in *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, ed. Ama Mazama (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 43-44.

⁷⁴ See Robert Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (London: Routledge, 2013); John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁷⁵ Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Jonathan Mark Kenoyer & Kimberly Heuston, *The Ancient South Asian World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Daryll Forde & Wendy R. James, *African Worlds:*

location, there is a similar repurposing. The first world framework was established to serve Europeans in locating where it was safe and comfortable for them to settle and flourish. To find the *cultural locations* of African people is to find where Africans have asserted themselves around the world through their cultural presence and other self-determining factors.

To operationalize the *cultural locations* of African people, firstly, one must locate Africa. We find Africa from within through the long term cultural continuities and historical sites on the African homeland. Secondly, we find Africa from without through the *cultural locations* established by African people in diaspora. These sites may be geographically represented (geo-political independence) and/or cognitively represented (Africa in memory and cultural practice). Geo-political and cognitive representation may or may not overlap remembering that while a people can be physically dislocated from their homeland they can still cognitively reconstruct it through cultural transmission and practice; they do not cease to exist just because they adapt to “borrowed space”. This premise is substantiated through Afrocentricity. Asante writes, “...separatist views carry the false assertion that Africans in the Americas are not Africans connected to their spatial origin... [however] African American culture and history represent developments in African culture and history, inseparable from place and time”.⁷⁶ The alternative is to accept how Eurocentric research has fragmented African history the same as it has fragmented African people under its colonial projects. In this way, nothing more is accomplished by Africa after Africa has encountered Europe. Research that does not

Studies in the Cosmological Ideas and Values of African Peoples (Hamburg: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ Asante, “The Afrocentric Idea,” 44.

attribute the African diasporic presence and its accomplishments to Africa minimizes the contributions of African people everywhere. I forward that conceptualizing *cultural location* as a method to measure proximity- where Africa is, will provide a fresh intake on this research project and the terrain of African Diaspora Studies. *Cultural location* is the identification of where a collective people are located geographically and cognitively by their cultural expressions, orientation toward their immediate environment, and orientation toward their place of origin.

In this research I am using *cultural location* as a method to: 1) maintain that while the African continent is the centralized homeland, parts of Africa exist all over the world through cognitive placement and cultural expression in diasporic communities and, 2) identify the relationship between the Africans of Haiti and Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution as a significant and historic case study in revealing the function of the cognitive African cultural location towards securing African survival outside of the homeland. Through the language, intentions, documents, and actions left behind by Haiti and the free Africans of Philadelphia, I will locate their orientations toward their immediate environments and toward Africa- the homeland. The Afrocentric paradigm and the African worldview are the compass to map African cultural locations in this project. The Afrocentric paradigm weights the magnitude of reliable research on Africa and African people through the cultural and historic experiences of African people on their own terms; from their own perspectives. Asante writes, "...the serious reader of writers must work to re-affirm the centrality of cultural experience as the place to begin to create a dynamic multi-cultural literacy because without rootedness in our own cultural

territory, we have no authentic story to tell”.⁷⁷ The uniqueness of this project is my attempt to relay the significance of the African diaspora to African people themselves. How did people of African descent use their diasporic relationships to create cultural links to Africa where they were? To garner answers to this question reasonably it is important in this research to analyze and examine the primary documents left behind by the subjects of this historical moment.

Other Methods

To support this study I also examined archival data, particularly the actual petitions exchanged between Haitian presidents and Free People of Color organizations in Philadelphia. These petitions outline the mutual interest of Free Africans in Philadelphia and the newly independent Haiti to build the first African Republic in the West and to begin open emigration of African Americans to Haiti as citizens of the Republic. The intra-diasporic dialogue based on the petitions also revealed the assumed cultural continuity and racial solidarity between African Americans and Haitians. Together with the theoretical, African cultural and psychological orientation, and historical evidence, I have constructed a body of work that can hopefully operate as a model for current and future works that holistically engage the African diaspora as a conceptual framework.

As aforementioned, this is an Africological study that seeks to answer epistemological questions within the Africana Studies discipline. Attention is given to the historical and psychological significance of the African diaspora to African people

⁷⁷ Molefi Kete Asante, “Locating a Text: Implications of Afrocentric Theory,” in *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, ed. Ama Mazama (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 243.

themselves. Epistemology is concerned with the study of knowledge and how we come to know what we know.⁷⁸ In this study, the current usages and heuristic value of the concept ‘African diaspora’ is evaluated. Questions and answers are afforded to practitioners within the Africana Studies discipline regarding the ‘African diaspora’ to draw links between existing knowledges and potential areas yet to be explored in the field. To complete this task a historiography of important works on the conceptualization and negotiation of the ‘African diaspora’ is conducted.

The investigatory research questions stand: 1) how is Africa represented (culturally located) by Africans in diaspora? And 2) as diasporic African communities, what was the significance of the relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution? To suggest how Africa is represented for African people in diaspora I have executed a descriptive research survey of historical, contemporary, and theoretical works that geographically and cognitively locate Africa and its significance to African diasporic communities. Descriptive research is defined as, “...research that describes phenomena as they exist, as opposed to experimental research in which environments are controlled and manipulated”.⁷⁹ The descriptive survey of these works lays precedence for the interpretation of the significance of the relationship between Africans of Haiti and Philadelphia. The historical and psychological assessment of the significance of African diasporic relationships, specifically following the Haitian Revolution as a landmark case study, is accomplished through the explanatory research design. “Explanatory research seeks to understand phenomena by explaining the

⁷⁸ Jason R. Ambrose and Sabine Broeck, *Black Knowledges/ Black Struggles: Essays in Critical Epistemology* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

⁷⁹ McDougal III, *Research Methods*, 98.

relationship between variables.”⁸⁰ Considering that the variables of this research are African communities, I am positing this project within the Afrocentric paradigm which allows me to advance the agency of the subjects- African people.

Lastly, I have conducted a critical analysis of historically documented records, both primary and secondary sources, as foundational evidence for the intentions and actions carried out between 18th and 19th century Haiti and Philadelphia. These records were retrieved from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Bethel AME Church, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and Temple University Libraries’ Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection. The archival records uncover the first-hand accounts of the major players responsible for characterizing the relationships between the Haitian and Philadelphian diasporic communities. A content analysis of the available historic records is utilized to explore various conceptions and portrayals of Africa within these documents. For example, Africa is conceived through a multitude of dimensions including descriptions by geography, historical events, cultural expression, memory, and through ritual. My analysis asserts how diasporic Africans in Philadelphia and Haiti experienced ‘Africa’ from their vantage points which orients how they experienced each other in diaspora.

The intention of this dissertation is to utilize several approaches in ascertaining the extent of the relationship between Haitians and African Americans. The novelty of this project is in the exploration of what the existence of the African diaspora has meant to Africans within the diaspora.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 98.

CHAPTER 3

LOCATING 'AFRICA' WITHIN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Throughout their sojourn in America, Africans have been taught the separateness of themselves from Africa and Africans. The teaching has been so ingrained that even in those communities which are 'most African' there is the greatest scandal of 'being African'.

Marimba Ani, *The Implications of African American Spirituality*, 1996

I chose to come to Cuba...One thing that immediately struck me when I arrived was how "African" Cuba really is, in the sense that people here have so much of the traditional African religions, dances, and culture that was preserved in its purest form.

Assata Shakur, *Thoughts on Cuba, Black Liberation, & Hip Hop Today*, 1998

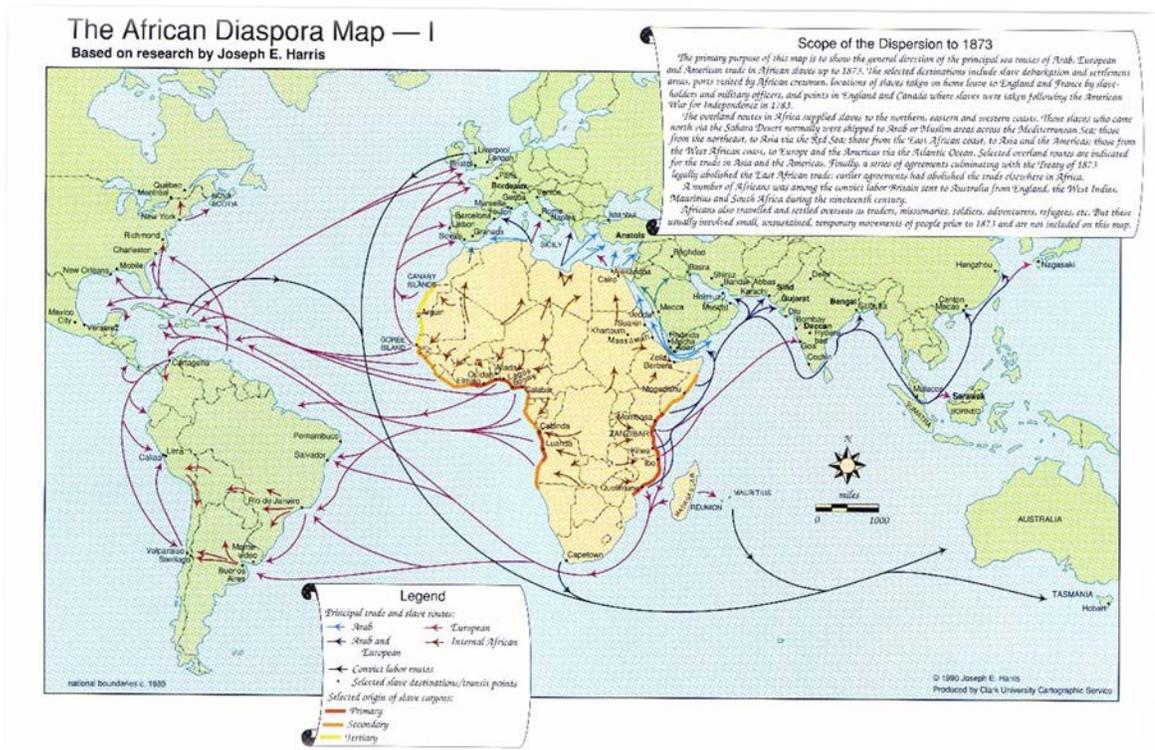


Figure 2. Where is Africa?

This chapter discusses the development and theoretical application of the conceptual African diaspora in the academy. In addition to the academic impulse, bearing in mind the subjects of this research, I thematically identify what Africa has meant to

African people of the diaspora by their cultural emblems and practices. Together with the theoretical and identified practical orientations of the African diaspora, this chapter will lend new insight on how and where Africa is culturally located within the Caribbean and North American diasporas. Afrocentricity is applied to engage the conceptualization and application of the African diaspora framework. A limitation in this schema is that I do not provide a comprehensive lens on how Africa is represented in the worldwide African diaspora. However, the scope of this project identifies the Northeastern region of North America (Philadelphia) and Haiti as my case studies. Therefore I have surveyed the literature of the broader North America and the Caribbean to give breadth to the specific case study locations.

Conceptualizing the African Diaspora

The idea of an existing African Diaspora has been referenced since the late-19th century, although the use of the term does not crystalize until the late 1960s by scholars such as George Shepperson and Joseph Harris.⁸¹ Von Eschen argues that before the emergence of *diaspora* scholarship there were glaring silences around the radical international work of prominent figures including George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Paul Robeson, and Alphaeus Hunton.⁸² “Pan-Africanism” was primarily the framework utilized into late-19th century and early-20th century to advance a sense of a global African community. Conceptually, the emergence of ‘African Diaspora’ has been more contemporarily consumed as an alternative to refereeing the discourse of pan-Africanism;

⁸¹Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of *Diaspora*,” *Social Text* 66 (2001): 45-73.

⁸² Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anti-Colonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 176.

even while pan-Africanism contributed much to the conceptualization of Africa as an entity itself- having geographic boundaries and existing as a location. Popular movements such as Ethiopianism, Negritude, and Garveyism helped solidify the vested sentiment in the idea of a single Africa. In 1946, W.E.B. DuBois writes,

The idea of one Africa to unite the thought and ideals of all native peoples of the dark continent belongs to the twentieth century and stems naturally from the West Indies and the United States. Here various groups of Africans...became so united in experience and so exposed to the impact of new cultures that they began to think of Africa as one idea and one land.⁸³

Absorbing international conversations by African people into “one Africa” was growing out of pan-Africanism; and more or less, the coordination of commonality and political engagement among African descended people around the world. Ideally, African diaspora research will allow for the inclusion of ongoing African cultural productions and historical markers around the world to be catalogued and credited to Africa; extending “one Africa” even farther- beyond the geographic continent.

Most credited for introducing the nomenclature ‘African diaspora’ is George Shepperson in his 1968 piece, “The African Abroad or the African Diaspora”. In this work, an elaboration of the uses of *diaspora* as a re-visioning of African historiography was examined. The intention was to push beyond pan-African(ism) as the only scope of analysis.⁸⁴ In praxis, *diaspora* as an analytical tool has greater empirical significance, lending relevance to the idea and practice of African unity while also acknowledging the

⁸³ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry Into the Part which Africa has Played in World History* (New York: International Publishers, 1946 expanded ed., 1965), 7.

⁸⁴ George Shepperson, “The African Abroad or the African Diaspora,” in *Emerging Themes of African History*, ed. T.O. Ranger (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 152-76.

influence of slavery, trade, modernity, imperialism, transnationalism, Africa itself, and patterns of dispersal, cultures, and African nationalist developments.

For the purposes of this project it is important to note that there is a difference between describing what components make up the African diaspora and how it is actually defined. In defining what the 'African diaspora' is I begin with the definition provided by the late Joseph Harris. He asserts that the African diaspora is constituted by two dimensions, 1) forced migration or involuntary diaspora and, 2) transnational migration or mobilized diaspora.⁸⁵ Considering these categories, the African diaspora is broad conceptually and extends in both time and space. As an extension of this framework I forward that these multiple populations exist in permanent or semi-permanent locations outside of the African continent while still cognizant of Africa being the original homeland, linking the external populations with the internal populations through common ancestry and deep structures of culture. With this definition I intentionally do not place emphasis on diasporic communities existing in perpetual alienation, exile, or suffering such as James Clifford in his 1994, "Diasporas" or the frequently cited Khachig Tololyan who makes the modern nation-state the determinate of the lived experiences of diasporic communities. Definitions by these scholars equate diasporic communities with always being global second-class citizens.⁸⁶ The extension of my definition is a departure from a major theme in contemporary definitions of the African diaspora which focus on the idea

⁸⁵ Joseph Harris, "The Dynamics of the Global African Diaspora," in *The African Diaspora*, ed. Alusine Jalloh (College Station: University of Texas at Arlington, 1996).

⁸⁶ James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994): 302-338; Khachig Tololyan, "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," *Diaspora* 5 (1996): 3-36.

of ‘dispossession’. This is evident among prominent scholars such as Robin D.G. Kelly, Paul Gilroy, Mahmood Mamdani, and Stuart Hall.⁸⁷

Other definitions do emerge in the literature on African diaspora. However, even when these definitions link African people in *diaspora* through culture or origin they fail to link Africans in diaspora with African people currently residing on the Homeland.⁸⁸

As an Africologist, my intentional dissimilarity is to resist placing African people in foreign perpetuity as a necessary characteristic of the African diaspora. Otherwise, and specifically for Africans who are permanently settled outside of the geographic Africa, our contemporaries and future unborn Africans in diaspora are pigeon holed as being interminably framed as disenfranchised, colonized, or isolated in relation to their African identities and lived realities. As a result of this interminable framework, there are great limitations in African diasporic research where attention to the broader African world (outside of the African continent) remains primarily in relationship to slavery or colonialism. According to *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines*,

[D]iaspora is a process of overlapping local, national, and global interest. Unlike the dispersals of the slave era, secondary migrations occurred at a time when travel and communications

⁸⁷ See Robin D. G. Kelly, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990).

⁸⁸ See George Shepperson, “The African Abroad or the African Diaspora” (1968); St. Clair Drake, “The Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective,” *The Black Scholar* 7 (1975): 2-13; William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1 (1991): 83-99; Khachig Tololyan, “Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment,” *Diaspora* 5 (1996): 3-36; Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, (1998); Tiffany Ruby Patterson & Robin Kelly, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” *African Studies Review* 45 (2000): 11-45; and Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

were greatly facilitated. Not only were people legal owners of their bodies, but steamships, newspapers, photography, and telegraphs were allowing communities to become and remain interconnected in unprecedented ways. The question of whether these factors alone may have been enough to engender a diaspora consciousness throughout the global African world speaks to a fundamental debate about diaspora. If diasporas exist based simply on culture and shared history, such opportunities for transnationalism would be sufficient to sustain a vibrant diaspora. However, there is also an intrinsically political aspect of diaspora, a particular type of mobilization utilized to effect a particular activist agenda”.⁸⁹

Hereafter, the author explains how people of African descent were articulating their demands as citizens in the various nations they helped to create which also extended cross nationally through pan-Africanist consciousness and action. The significance of this insight on members within the African diaspora is that it considers the diaspora as a continuous process with internal workings and intentional developments. What then are the social and political blueprints Africans settling in diasporic capitals carried with them? The movement and relationships initiated by people of the African diaspora answer this question and speak directly to this project.

Much of the work on the African diaspora has highlighted the processes of diaspora, often being involuntary migration, reactions to oppression, and identity acculturation. Consequently, defining the African diaspora has been less about the subjects of the African diaspora and more about the locations the subjects of study are accommodated within or how these diasporic Africans assimilate in relation to their most contemporary borderlands. Alternatively, research rarely seeks to ask how Africans in the diaspora see themselves as extensions of Africa. What are they attempting to build for

⁸⁹ Tejumola Olaniyan and James H. Sweet, *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 12, 22-23.

themselves within the locations they have settled? Do diasporic communities share affinities toward other African diasporic communities in relation to their shared homeland? If we divorce Africa from the study of the African diaspora, as done in post-modern studies and black Atlantic scholarship, we may fail to even consider the possibilities of these questions.

The lingering problem that inspires this research chapter on *Locating Africa* is not a dilemma facing the subjects of study. The glaring problem that my research intends to address has to do with the absence of social science and historical *perspective* on the African diaspora which is considered to be flourishing. While many studies claim to explore what is identified as the African Diaspora, little attention has been given to the members of the diaspora as agents in the construction and maintenance of diaspora. This has resulted in macro level analysis which values the subjects of diaspora only in relation to dominating social structures and institutions. The other common observations identify diasporic communities in isolation, premised on the idea that diasporic communities are not connected to an existing African world with contemporary Africa at the center. This academic practice is generated by schools of thought that distort historical periodization, and include modern and post-modernist theory, labor-centric analysis or Marxism, liberal democrats, existentialist and Afro-pessimist orientations to epistemology. Without subject forward narratives on the African diaspora many questions remain unanswered such as: what have communities of the African diaspora been building or attempting to build where they are settled as extensions of the African world, or what do diasporic Africans consider themselves to be besides 'second class citizens', marginalized, third

world, exiled, colonized, or minorities, among other pejorative characterizations that have been readily assumed in academic discourse?

In view of the stretch of disciplinary coverage on diasporic research, the more reflexive and challenging questions arise from *how* scholars approach the African world from their disciplinary perspectives, methods, theories, and institutional formations. Perhaps in the rush toward completing empirical works, methodological diversity in canvassing the African diaspora has been slow in development. Considering such, in this project I apply a methodological perspective that assumes diasporic African communities are members of an existing African world which extends the conceptualized “one Africa” beyond the geographic continent. In focusing on the subjects of diaspora rather than nationalistic identities they may or may not appropriate, I believe it is also necessary to consider that Africa is wherever we witness African communities; hence the existence of the African world.⁹⁰ Finally, in my conceptualization of the African diaspora, I assert that the significant component in understanding African diasporic phenomenon rests in locating Africa (the continent) as the Homeland or place of origin for diasporic communities, and in recognizing that these communities develop in relationship to the Homeland. The dominant research conversely and often subtly asserts that with time and distance, African people who are in diaspora become less genuinely “African”; being tantamount to incurring new identities described as creole, hybrid, multiethnic, or racially black which is not inherently African in social denotation. While literature on

⁹⁰ [Note] “*Communities*” is an intentional descriptor of the subjects undergoing observation. Consistent with base assumptions in Diaspora scholarship, individuals do not exist in ‘diaspora’-diasporic communities exist. A community can be described as a group of individuals related by blood, heritage, culture, and or common purpose that operate as a unit in one or more capacities.

communities of the African diaspora occasionally notes that diasporic Africans have noticeable ‘African retentions’, the broader narratives continue to assume and imply that Africans in diaspora actually become something other than African once they lose physical contact with the geographic location of Africa.

Application of the ‘African Diaspora’

The term ‘African diaspora’ has been an emergent way to think of how Africans throughout the world are comprehensively conceived. Generally speaking, when scholars reference the African diaspora, the following are the base assumptions of what the term encapsulates:

1. Large numbers of people of African descent exist outside of the African continent either by forced or voluntary migration,
2. These people collectively form a transnational community sharing akin cultures, customs, and experiences,
3. They preserve a collective memory of Africa as the homeland, place of origin, or aboriginal site.⁹¹

⁹¹ See, James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994); Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 19 (2001): 45-73; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (New York: Verso, 2006); Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, (London: Verso, 1993); Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Sheila Walker, *African Roots/ American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001); Paul Zeleza, *In Search of African Diasporas: Testimonies and Encounters*, (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2012).

The strengths at minimum in the utility of the African Diaspora are three fold. Firstly, it requires researchers to consciously decide what objects and subjects are constituents in the Africa(n) abroad. Secondly, it allows constructions of histories and contemporary realities that stretch beyond geographic and political boundaries. As in, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*, where James Meriwether writes an extensive history of the overlapping intellectual and political pursuits of African Americans with contemporary Africa during the height of anti-colonialism in Africa and Black freedom movements in America.⁹² Lastly, the application of ‘African diaspora’ gives language to that which is observed but scientifically unaccounted for in terms of cultural continuities, despite barriers of language, time, and geography between African communities. Michael Gomez writes,

Two striking aspects of the first half of the twentieth century concern the large-scale and widespread circumventions of the African-descended throughout the Americas, and their persistent efforts to reconnect in meaningful ways with Africa. The former was in response to economic need and incentive; the latter was motivated by political, philosophical, and religious considerations. Whatever the motive, people were not forgetting their African ancestry, but endeavoring to remember and sustain it. In these ways, they were reversing sail in their minds and hearts, if not with their bodies.⁹³

What Gomez is accounting for in *Reversing Sail* is the intangible quality of Africa that traveled to the Americas with the African diaspora. With this recognition, research on the African diaspora is thus research on the ‘Africa’ that extends beyond the African continent.

Conversely, a weakness in the application of the ‘African Diaspora’ concept is that it holds a fluctuating analytical focus. Herein, it can be applied to either decenter

⁹²Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*, 2002.

⁹³ Michael Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 162.

Africa or make Africa the centralizing and adhesive principle of study. As many scholars have attempted to define what is meant by the African diaspora, the term has been more popularized as an apolitical and culturally voided point of departure to speak on various aspects of African people dwelling outside of the African continent. This can be observed in text like *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*; Darlene Clark Hines begins with,

This volume brings together authors from a range of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds whose study of the global and European African diaspora complicates how we apprehend notions of race, common experiences, identities, and desires relative to ever-evolving notions of blackness...The unsettling and marginalizing responses of European nation-states to Black populations warrant sustained study, as the brilliant papers in this anthology well demonstrate.⁹⁴

Works such as this avoid Africa all together and problematize the existence of “common experiences” or “identities” among African people. I am not clear what a “European African diaspora” is, but it is clear African communities are considered supplanted, redefined by their host nation-state, and most worthy of study because of their racial encounters and experience of being ‘othered’. Likewise, my point here is that the *African diaspora* can be and has been ideologically appropriated.

In thinking about the significance of the African diaspora and why it should be critically engaged I have spent time probing how research projects have been framed and what collegial consensus have been made about diasporic Africans before sprinting to a specific research agenda. My observation finds much of the popular scholarship produced on the African diaspora to be methodologically hostile and reductionist in perspective. Several works have been generated, many by historians and anthropologists, who speak

⁹⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), xvii.

of African people in the Diaspora as existing in isolation from Africa in orientation and in practice. When Africa is noted, it is more readily received as a place of myth in the collective conscious of the dispossessed.⁹⁵ Even if this does not seem to be the intention of some of these works, this scholarship fosters historical inconsistency in observing and contextualizing African peoples of the diaspora. Moreover, isolationist diasporic scholarship enables European slavery and colonialism to be the premier genesis for understanding who African people in the diaspora are and what they are to become.

For example, popular text produced by scholars such as Paul Gilroy completely annex Africa and substitute it with the Atlantic Ocean as the beginnings or origin of what he calls “the Atlantic World”. In his 1987, *There Aint No Black in the Union Jack* and his 1993 *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy posits that ‘black’ people particularly in Europe, are constantly evolving in expression and borrowing from culture in the United States and Caribbean. He states, the *diaspora* is merely one term to describe the “new cultural exchange that is taking place”.⁹⁶ In Gilroy’s work, neither Africa as a geographic location or a cognitive location is a factor in investigating people of African descent who exist in what he terms “the Atlantic World”. What is worse is the creation of false origins.

African people did not emerge from the Atlantic Ocean. The ‘Atlantic World’ is an

⁹⁵ See, James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994); Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 19 (2001): 45-73; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006); Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Paul Zeleza, *In Search of African Diasporas: Testimonies and Encounters* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2012); Emily Raboteau, *Searching for Zion: The Quest for Home in the African Diaspora* (New York: Grove Press, 2013); Michael L. Conniff & Thomas Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora* (New Jersey: The Blackburn Press, 1994); Frank Andre Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cuban and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

⁹⁶ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

erroneous concept and masons an intellectual brick wall for genealogical research among other things. With works such as these, which remove Africa as the adhesive principle of study or Homeland for diasporic Africans, people of African descent are left vulnerable to definitions that bind them only by their social and political status in their current host country. This type of research inevitably becomes a way to de-emphasize the cultural and historical ties of African people, it privileges colonial and racially oppressive systems of identification, and it reduces African people to shifty, accommodating entities. This methodological practice is so dominant that rationalities such as these are explored even by noted scholars in Africana Studies departments such as Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelly. In their article, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World”, Patterson and Kelly write,

Perhaps ‘the’ fundamental and still unresolved question in histories of the African diaspora and the making of the modern world is to what degree are New World black people “African” and what does that mean?...[T]he question of African ethnicities shaping New World black culture has been met with hostility, given the intense “anti-essentialism” that pervades the new generation of scholars concerned with locating hybridity and difference within black cultures. To some degree, the caution against emphasizing cultural survivals, continuities, and commonalities is salutary...Forced labor, racial oppression, colonial conditions, and capitalist exploitation were global processes that incorporated black people through empire building...Were the so-called cultural survivals simply the most effective cultural baggage Africans throughout the world used in their struggle to survive?⁹⁷

In this piece the scholars admit that asserting Africa in the understanding of African diasporic communities has “been met with hostility”, however they avoid negating the

⁹⁷ Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelly, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” *African Studies Review* 43 (2000): 15-18.

dominant argument. In fact, Patterson and Kelly extend the argument and fortify the very premises that Africans in diaspora, or “blacks” as usually posited by scholars of this ideological position, are more digestible in relationship to their encounter with racial oppression and European dominating systems. As I have aforementioned, the identification of Africans in diaspora only as “black” or “slaves” is a project of redefinition by many scholars and decidedly misrepresents African people in diaspora by narrowly interpreting them as productions of Western expansion.

Again, the temptation toward methodological hostility and reductionist scholarship in the application of the African diaspora framework is confirmed by an even less sophisticated work, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*. Not surprisingly, in the chapter titled, “The Slave Sector”, the authors write,

We would contend, then, that the institutions created by the slaves to deal with what are at once the most ordinary and most important aspects of life took on their characteristic shape ‘within’ the parameters of the masters’ monopoly of power, but ‘separate’ from the masters institutions.⁹⁸

In this analysis the agency of the Africans is completely usurped. The genesis of African American culture is “slave” culture and even this derivative is framed within the “masters’ monopoly of power”. If we accept that the totality of the human imagination is inextricably linked to the structures and social realities immediately facing communities then we also accept that revolutions, evolution, and resistance are immaculately conceived and irrational. To state the problem simply, it is a dangerous exercise and empirically irresponsible to quantify African realities only through European frames of

⁹⁸ Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 39.

reference. The implications emerging from this epistemological source present people of African descent, particularly in diaspora, in a myopic state of inferiority. They have no way out and we are even unable to conceive of any alternative narrative.

Notwithstanding, the links to their historical legacy and contribution to civilization are forfeited. In my opinion, this is actually the more *essentialist* argument. A revisionist history has occurred.

Within the literature the ‘African diaspora’ also often implies a necessary dialectic relationship. People of African descent are described as simultaneously holding positive and negative feelings toward their existence outside of the African continent; positive feelings towards being a part of world history and negative feelings toward being forced and torn away from their homeland. Diaspora is dialectically characterized in its’ application by its assumed relationship with a shared history of displacement, suffering, and resistance.⁹⁹ While elements of this conclusion are relevant, this analysis can also be inconsistent in affording African people agency whether by striving towards geographic sovereignty or autonomy through consciousness. Michael Gomez warns scholars against the practice of assuming ‘double-consciousness’ among African diasporic peoples.

Gomez writes,

Of course, the great conundrum has been the unattainable nature of the polarities: Africa, once lost, has yet to be recovered; whereas America, as an ideal, has yet to become home. This is the essence of the African Diaspora, of Du Bois’ “twoness,” this inability to achieve wholeness of spirit and vision, a psychic exile... Even so, one wonders if there was something of the southern Black experience that escaped his attention or ability to comprehend or articulate. When one turns to the writings of Zora Neal Hurston (1891-1960), for example, one does not see

⁹⁹ Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, *The New African Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

pervasive self-doubt and the internalization of pathos as suggested in 'Souls'.... Stated differently, there was never a time in African American history that those living in the North American continent were not meaningfully connected with persons and events originating elsewhere in the world. Individuals like Russwurm and Walker clearly grasped this fact and boldly made the claim that 19th-century Blacks were connected to the ancient histories and cultures of pharaonic Egypt and Nubia in ways that qualified the latter as the ancestors of Africans in the so-called New World.¹⁰⁰

Gomez makes a robust statement that calls attention to the internal narrative among diasporic African Americans who plainly recount their lives and cultural memory as whole people and people with the ability to connect their existence with realities beyond slavery and other inferior proclivities.

The application of Afrocentricity in the discussion of African diasporic cultural location and consciousness brings rewarding scholarship to the forefront. The critical mass of applied scholarship has emerged from schools of thought that accept the objectivity of African people. Schools of thought that emanate from Eurocentric epistemologies are many, including the modernist, post-modernist, Marxist, existentialist, Africanist, historians, and anthropologists, to name a few. I have explored how these schools of thought and disciplinary frameworks provide a non -African study of 'blacks'. Disciplines rooted in Eurocentrism will never reject 'whiteness' as a viable source of knowing and existence. The liberal elements of the Eurocentric schools of thought (Marxism, existentialism, feminism, liberal democracy, etc.) attempt to interrogate 'the black experience' with some critique of 'whiteness' but are limited by the tools that explore the African as an object and not a subject. These attempts adopt universal

¹⁰⁰ Michael Gomez, "Of Du Bois and Diaspora: The Challenge of African American Studies," *Journal of Black Studies* 35 (2004): 177, 181, 183.

classifications of race, class, and gender to advance analysis. Consequently, it becomes difficult to break from the intellectual norms of assuming people of African descent to always be perceived as black, slaves, exiles, oppressed, dominated, third world, or basically in some inferior relationship to Europeans, who are thus in a fixed position of superiority. The Afrocentric paradigm and African worldview confronts African objectivity. It requires researchers to enter into conversation with the histories and present realities of African people as subjects in their experience; as thinking, reasoning, questioning, answering, creative, optimistic, and philosophical beings. Studies that disable the ability to extract how and what African people interpret from their own perspectives without the imposition of foreign identities is to study Africans as ‘the others’.

Within the African-centered¹⁰¹ school of thought there are a number of scholars who reflect African people and culture as an expansive entity with vibrant subjective realities; exemplar scholarship from this model is what I build upon in this project. The African-centered school of thought produces a body of work that posits Africa as the center of analysis for the experiences, history, and culture of people of African descent. For example, in 1990 Molefi Kete Asante and Kariamuw Welsh edited an anthology, *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity*, which pulls together scholars of various

¹⁰¹ [Note] *African-centered* is defined as a term representing the “quality of thought and practice rooted in the cultural image and interest of people of African ancestry and which represents and reflects the life experiences, history and traditions of people of African ancestry as the center of analysis”. See Oba T’Shaka, “Africana Studies Department History: San Francisco State University,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5 (2012): 28.

specialties to speak to the expressions of African culture from the cultural interpretations of Africans themselves.¹⁰² Asante writes,

The unity of this book is based upon its philosophical foundations, the belief that people of African descent share a common experience, struggle, and origin... One argument given by those of the anti-African culture school is that the African culture cannot exist because Africa encompasses too many ethnic groups... None of our writers would say that Yoruba is not different from Afro-Brazilian, Ibo, Edo, Ga, or Ashanti; they recognize those distinctions as they recognize the distinctions between the Welsh, Scots, Bretons, and Anglo-Saxons. Their cultural histories are somewhat different, but they share the same culture.¹⁰³

In this regard, the whole of Africa is expressed as one cultural location; this location being enhanced and advanced by the living African diaspora. 'Africa' as a conceptual space or location does not mute the variations of expressions among African people. In concert with the African worldview, the assertion of an African culture simply follows that there is an Africa, with an African people, and thus an African culture.

Within this school of thought scholar Wole Soyinka states that contributors to Africa should resist a "saline consciousness". A "saline consciousness" is one that insists Africa stops at its salt water shores or conversely, all that is bound by the African continent is African.¹⁰⁴ John Henrik Clarke continues, "*African-consciousness*, in varying degrees, good and bad, has always been a part of the psyche of the African people, in forced exile in South America, the Caribbean Islands, and in the United States."¹⁰⁵

Another scholar, Mwizenge S. Tembo states, "The [African personality] concept generally refers to the manifestations of cultural uniqueness among Africans as reflected

¹⁰² Molefi Kete Asante and Kariamuwelsh Asante, *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

in their behavior, social norms, customs, values, beliefs, religious zeal, attitudes, explanations of the cosmos and the supernatural, social and political systems historically or in contemporary times”.¹⁰⁶ With philosophical consensus Dona Richards, also known as Marimba Ani adds, “I shall maintain that Africa survived the middle passage, the slave experience, and other trials in America because of the depth and strength of African spirituality and humanism...The fact that a people’s experiences and historical circumstances are shared over long periods of time in the setting of the culture makes them one, and their oneness creates a common spirit [or ethos]”.¹⁰⁷ Scholars extending the African-centered school of thought create an alternative chronological authenticity for the advancement of research on the African diaspora among other things. The intellectual starting point, theory of existence, and scope of African realities is fundamentally premised in the constant of Africa. Africa is neither static nor deteriorating. More importantly, as an intellectual orientation, the intangible ‘Africa’ is not merely a political project which can expire at the onset of dynamic power shifts in the national or international community. In the African-centered school of thought, Africa and people of African descent remain present and alive and continue to encounter the world from a distinctive standpoint. To a fault, Eurocentric schools of thought have asserted the authority to align global power shifts with presupposed shifts in the identities, histories, and determined futures of those considered ‘powerless’ within the Eurocentric structure of reality. In the interest of the human project, it is the presence of the contributions and

¹⁰⁶ Asante and Welsh Asante, *African Culture*, 193.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 207-208.

diversities among world peoples that allows true human civilization to thrive.¹⁰⁸ It is therefore important to critically evaluate the historical interest and position of people of African descent as collective contributors in world affairs.

Molefi Kete Asante surmises in *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, our location, consciousness, and will for agency equips the Africologist with the proper perspective from which we can interpret all world phenomenon.¹⁰⁹ In an era where the African diaspora is quantifiably becoming more expansive it will be important to identify Africa as the Homeland, center, core, or otherwise ancestral ground of the African diasporic community. It is not scientifically sound to orphan or culturally displace African communities who are not physical located on the geographic 'Africa'. If Africa may only exist in a singular space then the nomenclature itself, 'African Diaspora', is deceptive at best.

¹⁰⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers* 2 (1897).

¹⁰⁹ Molefi Kete Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

How the African Diaspora 'Locates' Africa

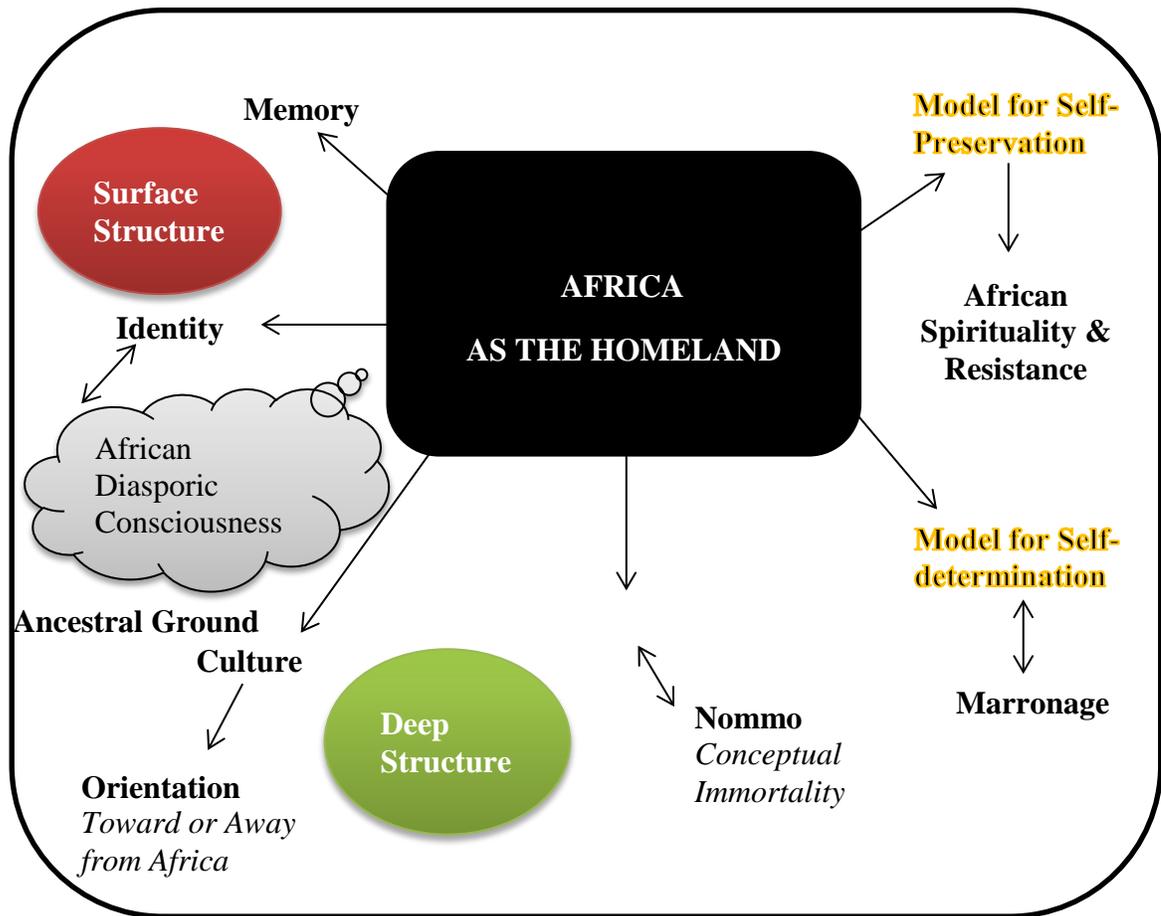


Figure 3. African Diasporic Cognitive Location Map

African people have conceived of God, other spiritual entities, the earth, humanity, and their function in relation to these forms from their own cosmological and cultural realities, since the beginning of time. Following ancient Kemet (Egypt), the Dogon people are most noted for their meticulous mapping of the universe and philosophical orientations of human reality and ritual. The Dogon people are located in contemporary Mali, south of Timbuktu and east of the Niger River. I will refer to the Dogon in reference to major life elements which continue to be significant to people of African descent on the homeland and in the diaspora.

In (Figure 3) I conceive of 'Africa' as a living concept rather than a geographic location. The conceptual Africa in diaspora is significant here as a measure of the cognitive location of Africa in the diasporic collective conscious. In Dogon cosmology, also reflected in the African worldview, the major elements that constitute what is "living" include: the essence of God or spirit, divine speech known as Nommo, water (which is life force), and ancestral linkages.¹¹⁰ 'Living elements' are those that contain vital force or spiritual potency and dramatically affect the day to day lives of a people. In the same way that the ancestors are considered 'living', our Nommo (speech) is also an intangible life force. Likewise, conceptual Africa in the conscious minds of African diasporic communities is an intangible vital force that manifest in day to day life and decision making. Consistent with my theoretical perspective, (Figure 3.) conceptually centers Africa in the spatial mapping of the African diasporic cognitive location. Africa is a living concept in the minds of those in diaspora because those in diaspora continue to nurture her through ritual, memory, Nommo, ancestor veneration, festival, spiritual practice and other cultural forms of recognition. This is also why Africologist refer to the African diaspora as an extension of Africa rather than a reorganization of our understanding of what is African.

There has never been a memorial service for the life and memory of 'Africa' in the conscious minds or culture of diasporic African communities. Therefore, Africologist do not see it necessary to repackage our identification of Africa in diaspora as: blackness,

¹¹⁰ Marcel Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmel: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

black Atlantic, Negro, slave culture, creole, or hybrid for example. Africa is alive and well; we just have to know her when we see her. Marimba Ani writes,

The argument of the Europeans is all too easy for us to accept. We look around us and, while in the Caribbean and in the black communities of South America, African retentions are often quite visible, black existence in North America is problematic. "How are we African?" we blacks ask. We do not know where to look for likeness? Not knowing ourselves, we have not known how to recognize manifestations of our heritage.¹¹¹

Ani reminds readers that our moments of cultural amnesia do not extinguish the realities of our African existence. More importantly, Africa continues to live in our deep and surface structure cultural practices. Deep structures of culture are identified by the philosophical assumptions of a culture (i.e. ontology, epistemology, axiology, and cosmology) which are reflected in a culture's worldview, ethos, and ideology. Deep structures of culture are longstanding and inherited more so at the subconscious levels of social development. Surface structure cultural practices are represented in the physical manifestations of culture and its artifacts including features such as specific languages, customs, and rituals.¹¹² Regardless of whether we consciously recognize ourselves at the surface, we still participate in deep cultural ritual as African people in motion, in diaspora. Ani continues,

African life is replete with ritual. It depicts interrelationships among beings in the universe...It is through ritual that the unexplainable is understood, that chaos is made to be ordered within the logic of tradition. It is through ritual that trauma is avoided, crisis dealt with and overcome, and difficult transitions

¹¹¹ Dona Richards (Marimba Ani), "The Implications of African American Spirituality," in *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity*, ed. Molefi Kete Asante and Kariamu Welsh Asante (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990), 207.

¹¹² Wade Nobles, "African Philosophy: Foundations for Black Psychology," in *Black Psychology*, ed. Reginald Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 23-26.

perceived as passages between stages of normal growth and development.¹¹³

Through cultural ritual and memory, Africa is just as much a living cognitive location as it is a geo-political location for Africans in diaspora. Communities of the African diaspora are in constant dialogue with Africa; they grow and change with her, construct dreams and memories of her, they may even decide to turn their backs on her, but it is all because she continues to live with them.

The emblematic relationship of the African diaspora with the living elements of African cosmology poignantly intersects. Often when scholars note the remarkable presence of the African diaspora they highlight the practice and influence of African spirituality, language patterns, literature, the magnitude of the Middle Passage (Maafa), and the ancestral linkages of diasporic Africans to the homeland.¹¹⁴ No intentional link has been made in contemporary scholarship about the stark association between the sacred elements in African philosophical cosmology (Spirit, Nommo, Water, Ancestors) and the African diasporic manifestation. However, it is because these most notable African diasporic characteristics represent the most important living elements in the

¹¹³ Ani, "The Implications of African American Spirituality," 213.

¹¹⁴ See Leslie G. Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); George Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Katrina Hazzard-Donald, *Mojo Workin': The Old African American Hoodoo System* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Kwasi Konadu, *The Akan Diaspora in the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Linda M Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Karla Gottlieb, *A History of Queen Nanny: The Mother of Us All* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2000); John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Joseph E. Harris, *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1993); Sidney Lemelle and Robin D.G. Kelly, *Imagining Home: Class, Culture, and Nationalism in the African Diaspora* (London: Verso, 1994).

African cosmology that they remain markers of how we identify Africa abroad, consciously or unconsciously.

Scholarship, or scripted speech, has conceptual immortality. Similar to the notion of giving 'life' to a concept through heuristic evaluation and reification through repetition, we have the power to immortalize the concepts we wish to use to describe our realities and hopefully we pay homage to our ancestors through this scholarship. To cite certain people in your scholarship whether they are mortem or post-mortem is to keep them relevant and alive. The academy has long abandoned many of the academic and historical scripts that Africana scholars illuminate as relevant truths. As I am consciously mapping the significance of the African diaspora as a concept and a people, it concerned me as to what orientation to Africa the surge in African diaspora scholarship had taken. In the Dogon creation story, "Nommo" is said to be a spirit that is a product of God; this spirit becomes the symbol for speech. Ogotemmeli teaches, "Its [speech] function was organization, and therefore it was good; nevertheless from the start it let loose disorder".¹¹⁵ From my interpretation this is an indictment on scholarship that is done irresponsibly on matters of Africa. My cultural location identifies Speech as a spirit with free will. However, my speech is expected to reduce chaos, to create order and logic, if it is "good" speech. As an Africologist, this lends a particular obligation. Holistic and culturally grounded works developed to orient the perceived realities of Africa and her diaspora must validate the subjects themselves as whole people with a cultural context for living and their orientation toward existence; their cognitive location. Absent of the cognitive location, scholarship continues to orient African diasporic communities by their

¹¹⁵ Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmeli*, 21.

immediate physical realities which are plagued by global white supremacist structures of violence. For this reason I have designed a Cognitive Location Map (Figure. 3) that stands as a guide for the intangible realities of Africa in the consciousness and practice of Africa in diaspora. The following section provides a thematic discussion on the textual evidence displaying diasporic communities' *cognitive locations* of 'Africa' which serve as a resource for the Cognitive Location Map.

Locating Africa as Home

Africans in diaspora have cognitively located 'Africa' as their Home both figuratively and literally.¹¹⁶ Through symbolism, action, and myth, the identification with a distant land where one imagines existing as a 'true native' emerges as the conscious recognition of past and present experiences faced by a group. The feeling of nativism or indigeneity speaks to a groups' proximity to their cultural location and agency within that location- being their ability to exist on their own terms collectively. Diasporic Africans

¹¹⁶ See Lorraine A. Williams, *Africa and the Afro-American Experience* (Washington D.C: Howard University Press, 1981); Joao Jose Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993); Michael L. Conniff and Thomas J. Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora* (Caldwell: The Blackburn Press, 1994); Moira Ferguson, *Jamaica Kincaid: Where the Land Meets the Body* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994); Wilson Jerimiah Moses, *Liberian Dreams: Back-to-Africa Narratives from the 1850s* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998); James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006); Sylviane A. Diouf, *Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship Clotilda and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Carlos Andujar, *The African Presence in Santo Domingo* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012); Emily Raboteau, *Searching for Zion: The Quest for Home in the African Diaspora* (New York: Grove Press, 2013).

disrupt their nation-state exclusion by identifying their homeland, Africa, as the location to seek physical, psychological, political, and/or cultural validity.¹¹⁷

The significance of a *home* may be interpreted in a variety of ways. For groups intended to be exiled by diaspora, *home*, is constructed in relationship to that which is not home- the experience of a cultural wilderness. bell hooks writes an anecdotal narrative about her experience of surviving the terrorist boundaries of a segregated South but arriving at her grandmother's house with relief and the feeling of security. She called this place a "homeplace".¹¹⁸ She notes, "Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist".¹¹⁹ hooks' describes "homeplace" as "that space where we return for renewal and self-recovery, where we can heal our wounds and become whole".¹²⁰ The ideal of a constructed "homeplace" which functions as a microcosm of an entire community is valuable in understanding the repurposing of *home* in diasporic locations whereby nativism is not assumed. In a research study on diasporic African people who repatriated to Ghana, Obiagele Lake explains,

While European suzerainty over Africans, in what became known as the Americas and the Caribbean mandated the removal of Africans from their cultural roots, these processes did not erase African's sense of belonging to a broader African people... While this treasured past, in certain instances, produces the effect of

¹¹⁷ James Baldwin, "Princes and Powers," in *Baldwin Collected Essays*, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, INC., 1998).

¹¹⁸ bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990) 41.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

“imagined communities” it also compels many diaspora Africans to experience their actual lives in homeland communities.¹²¹

The significance of Lake’s findings is the projection that cultural location, or the recreated experiences outside of homeland origins, exists on a continuum for displaced people groups. Therefore, diasporic “homeplace[s]”, which allow displaced groups to identify themselves as natives in their immediate environment, is not a mythical space. The collective consciousness and action of diasporic Africans is grounded in real and actualized phenomenon.

In *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, Michael Gomez discusses how the kinship between varying ethnic groups of African descent in the Americas during the antebellum period was achieved because of a “common objective” of the people. He surmises that the experience of diaspora facilitated the decision of various African ethnic groups to diminish their cultural specificities in order to emphasize their common origin- Africa, and achieve their common objective of freedom.¹²² I argue the merging of African ethnic groups in diaspora thus created ‘new African ethnicities’ with a common Homeland (i.e. African American, Haitian, Jamaican, Afro-Brazilian, etc.). This is the composition of the Africa abroad. It is important to note here that I am asserting African people in diaspora did not lose a sense of ethnic identity altogether to become “black”, which is what Gomez ultimately argues. ‘Black’ racial identity positions Africans in diaspora more so in relation to Europeans and the advent of European slavery than in relation to Africa as their ontological source. Racial identity was imposed on African people in diaspora and on the Homeland. Aligned with African cultural practice , I rationalize African people

¹²¹ Obiagele Lake, “Toward a Pan-African Identity: Diaspora African Repatriates in Ghana,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 (1995): 21-22.

¹²² Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 1-16.

molded their broader cultural similarities to create new ethnicities regionally, which could function as cohesive communities or *homes* away from Home, to replace foreign imposed identities of exile.

Gomez describes ethnicity as, "...refer[ing] to the same network of sociocultural communications and so at times can be used interchangeably with *community*, but it lacks the elasticity of the latter term...Implicit in the concept of ethnicity is the determination of that which is unique about a group of people; it is an attempt to understand the essence of what distinguishes various collections of individuals".¹²³ Even when applying the working definition Gomez offers for 'ethnicity', it becomes easier to make sense of African diasporic communities as new African ethnicities rather than one massive group homogenized and operating as 'black' in the 'New World'. In the process of diasporic communities creating *home* abroad to support sustainable living and recovery from foreign hostilities, new African ethnicities developed and reflect the unique differences among Africans in diaspora. 'Africa as the Homeland' thus functions as the archetype for diasporic communities in identifying the totality of the source, signifier, origin, or domain of their nativism. These same communities, as newly developed ethnicities, identify *home* (lower-case 'h') through their unique expressions and collective orientation toward Africa in relationship to their immediate environments.

The experience of *exile* is therefore more meticulously examined through my research which identifies that Africa is not lost in diaspora; it is relocated and reconstructed through the cognition and culture of African people. In this way, *exile* is not an inevitable characteristic of the African diaspora. The feeling of *exile* can be

¹²³ Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 6.

explained as the result of destabilized locations of *home* through persistent racial oppression and white supremacist structures of violence. Racism forces African people into dispossession. Persistent domination and non-democratic distributions of power and resources in African diasporic communities ‘reduces the agency’¹²⁴ of African people to the extent that they are unable to exist on their own terms; thus they have not achieved freedom- they are unable to experience the security of *home*.

In *Ah Come Back Home*, Kimani Nehusi discusses the significance of home in the Caribbean. He writes,

Home is not merely the dwelling place of our physical selves. It is also the location of those other invisible, but not intangible selves. Our dominant idea of home inevitably embraces a nurturing place, a space of spiritual, psychological, social, and physical comfort, freedom, security, satisfaction, and ultimately confidence, because we know we will be understood there...Home is the location of experiences that many of us recount and retell with pleasure...It is the location of the sharing of experiences and perceptions of the world and a formative place in the life of all of us, individually and collectively...It is here that we learn the basis of social behavior, the basic values of our culture, and the distinctive ways of doing things and seeing the world; those fundamentals of ourselves...which tell us where we came from and who we are.¹²⁵

As identified by the African worldview, *home* in Caribbean diasporic communities carries both the tangible and intangible life force elements to be complete, particularly the spirit of the ancestors. The *homes* that new ethnic communities construct as extensions of Africa are highly sophisticated in structure and purpose. They create the invisible boundaries of who belongs and who does not. Nehusi explores how *home* is a location

¹²⁴ Michael Tillotson, *Invisible Jim Crow: Contemporary Ideological Threats to the Internal Security of African Americans* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011).

¹²⁵ Kimani S. K. Nehusi, “Going Back Home to the Carnival,” in *Ah Come Back Home: Perspectives on the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival*, ed. Ian Isidore Smart and Kimani S. K. Nehusi (Washington D.C: Original World Press, 2000), 1-2.

that is negotiated by culture. The *cultural location* of a *home* is its most identifiable characteristic which cultivates the well-being of those secured by *home*, and those trying to get home. African cultural hot spots, such as the one described, are stabilizing forces for the humanization of Africans in diaspora. They soften the encounter of exile and dispossession. In *home* away from Home cultural locations do not only serve as comfortable and familiar enclaves. They also strive to fill the ruptures African diasporic communities experience in Western territories. Nehusi describes these negative counter forces as “anonymity and alienation, racism, materialism, classism, sexism, and the subversion of spirituality”.¹²⁶ Our *homes* in diaspora must function to both sustain existence and to resist because to experience diaspora is to already have left home once. Very often those in diasporic communities experience the loss of home more than once as they migrate to afford themselves better opportunities. Hence, befriending an unknown person in many Africans communities is represented in practice by ‘extending ones home’ to another.

Because *homes* are cultural locations and do not always require permanent material structures we can reason that these *homes* can be experienced in long or short periods of time. For example, diasporic cultural festivals and ‘homecomings’ are designed to attract families and extended communities to celebrate, remember, and experience Home (or *home*) in robust ways. As stated by Nehusi, “[Carnival in the Caribbean] ...resolves so many contradictions and delivers the ultimate feelings of joy and peace...the Carnivals are relatively short periods of transported existence, yet their

¹²⁶ Nehusi, “Going Back Home,” 7.

effects last for far longer than these actual moments...”.¹²⁷ These *cultural locations* extend Africa across time and space to fertilize the life force of Africa which thrives at both the tangible and intangible levels, and in the conscious and subconscious transmission of those in diaspora. Therefore in locating Africa, the characterization of African diasporic constructions of *home* must never be fatally reduced to ‘Africanisms’ or ‘African retentions’.

Locating Africa as Home is more so about what new African ethnicities agree upon as Africa rather than the identification of specific historical details or surface structure traditions. When anthropologists or historians are looking for ‘African retentions’ in diasporic communities to validate whether or not Africa continues to exist in diaspora they have already diminished their research possibilities. The diasporic orientation toward Africa as the Homeland allows Africa to occupy many spaces. Africa is Home, thus Africa is the representation of ideal freedom in the diasporic consciousness. Africa is our mother; linking all diasporic communities in a sacred and timeless capacity. Africa is within us through our consciousness, memory, and imagination. The cognitive mapping of Africa as the Homeland therefore continues to be the adhesive principle of study in the psychological and cultural assessment of African diasporic communities. The centralizing principle of Africa lends great understanding to the unfolding of interrelationships between diasporic communities near and abroad.

¹²⁷ Nehusi, “Going Back Home,” 8.

Locating Africa as Collective Self-Determination

From the perspective of the African in diaspora, making sense of the possibility to construct *home* and achieve collective freedom within it allows for a re-interrogation of the practice of marronage. Marronage is significant in gauging what collective freedom has meant to Africans in diaspora. It is a measure of hyper self-determination and in practice represents the establishment of a new society.¹²⁸ In fact, the establishment of Haiti can be argued to have been one large maroon community. Haiti became an independent African society that existed amidst the central operations of Western slavery. Marronage is explored here as extending Africa both cognitively and geo-politically as a self-determined method to secure *homes* in diaspora.

Marronage is not about escape; it is about constructing freedom on African terms. Some scholarship has confused the term and practice by over dignifying the viability of European slavery. Once formally enslaved Africans established maroon communities they were no longer slaves and it becomes a misrepresentation to refer to these constructions of *home* away from Home as “rebel slave communities” for example.¹²⁹ In Sylviane A. Diouf’s text on maroons of North America, she emphasizes that maroons were neither truant slaves nor were they runaways. An African person considered a ‘runaway’ is more descriptive of the act of refusing slavery but still deciding to settle in a

¹²⁸ Glen Allan Cheney, *Quilombo dos Palmares: Brazil’s Lost Nation of Fugitive Slaves* (Hanover: New London Librarium, 2014).

¹²⁹ See Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996); Herbert S. Klein and Ben Vinson III, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Daniel O. Sayers, *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People: The Archeology of Maroons, Indigenous Americans, and Enslaved Laborers in the Dismal Swamp* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014).

slave society even if it would push them to the periphery.¹³⁰ From this line of reasoning, we understand why it was largely African people who were considered ‘free’ in the American slave society who perused emigration to Haiti nevertheless. These large groups of African Americans were not enslaved but from their own cultural context they still had not asserted collective freedom on their own terms, hence the motivation to join Haiti as permanent citizens. Likewise, maroons often left for the woods to stay; they had permanent residency outside of the slave paradigm. They were not on the periphery of society from their cognitive or cultural location. Only by geography that locates European slave developments as the centers of society would maroon communities be considered alienated settlements. The characteristics of maroon communities are typically: 1) they settled in environmental exteriors away from European settlements, 2) they lived there in secret, and 3) they were not under any form of direct control by outsiders.¹³¹ The landscape of maroon communities varied. They could touch other communities, completely overlap, or be completely separate from outsiders. Sovereign domain, not distance, was the most important factor in establishing maroon communities.

Individuals ‘escaped’ slavery; maroon communities constructed free societies. In the African worldview, *freedom* is a collective experience. An individual does not experience freedom even if they have escaped slavery. Escaping slavery without a community to bind to is analogous to exile from the African cultural perspective.¹³² The experience of the collective community is so important in African cosmology that some

¹³⁰ Sylviane A. Diouf, *Slavery’s Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

¹³¹ Diouf, *Slavery’s Exiles*, 1-17.

¹³² Wade Nobles, “African Consciousness as Cultural Continuity,” in *The Sage Encyclopedia of African Cultural Heritage in North America*, ed. Mwalimu J. Shujaa and Kenya J. Shujaa (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015).

Africans chose to remain enslaved with their communities rather than escaping as individuals because their cultural orientation to existence was intrinsically linked to the collective group. For example, in *Two Thousand Seasons* by Ayi Kwei Armah, the lead character Abena was a member of a group of friends who were seeking to escape Arab slave traders. All of Abena's friends were captured so she decided to return to join them instead of escaping alone. When her friends inquired why she would return when she could have escaped she responded, "Save myself? There is no self to save without the rest of us".¹³³

Unless an individual is escaping slavery to arrive or 'return' *home* by establishing a free community or joining a community of free Africans¹³⁴, that individual remains in the Wilderness. More appropriately, the Wilderness from the perspective of an African is not the location where maroons have established community. The Wilderness is the dark and violent locations of slavery that Africans seek to deliver themselves from.¹³⁵

Because freedom is collective in its meaning and function in African culture, diasporic clustering across ethnicities to re-build *home* away from Home was not unusual. In *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, Gomez discusses the confluence of culture between the majority groups, Igbo and Akan, within the Virginia and Maryland region of North America during the antebellum period. "Both groups were largely rural, their diets equally dependent upon root crops. Both had established a high regard for women,

¹³³ Ayi Kwei Armah, *Two Thousand Seasons* (London: Heinemann, 1973), 174.

¹³⁴ [Note] *Community*: A community can be described as a group of individuals related by blood, heritage, culture, and or common purpose that operate as a unit in one or more capacities.

¹³⁵ [Note] For a description of territory that is violently dominated by Europeans referred to as a *Wilderness* from an African perspective, See Molefi Kete Asante, "The Wilderness of Racial Discontent," in *Erasing Racism: The Survival of the American Nation* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2009), 117-134.

reflected by such evidence as the veneration and popularity of the earth mothers Asase Yaa and Ala...land was central to both the Igbo and the Akan...In order to adjudicate cases and resolve disputes, they would have necessarily drawn from the wealth of their experiences in Africa.”¹³⁶ Herein is an example of how African ethnicity in diaspora did not generate clash and chaos. Various ethnicities corroborated on their own terms to create the security and necessity of collective freedom. It is also important to note that while external forces identified the most significant similarities between these groups as ‘racial blackness’, the Igbo and the Akan, for example, pursued their similarities through culture.

Comparably, the formation of Haiti with the invitation of African Americans following the Haitian Revolution is an example of a multi-ethnic African *home* construction. The solid foundation of this construction does not rest squarely on the quantifiable similarities between these new African ethnicities but rather on the cultural reality that both groups are oriented toward Africa as the Homeland; their common mother or place of origin; the signifier of freedom. The literal and symbolic magnitude of a multi-ethnic *home* design in diaspora is evident by its demonstration of Africans retuning (H)ome just as they had arrived. The growth of multi-ethnic *cultural locations* for Africans in diaspora may in time be understood as new regions of Africa.

Africans arriving to the ‘New World’ was not only a negotiation of what they had left but a negotiation with the African communities they had reached. Complicated choices about old and new self-identities and collective identities were leveled. As anticipated, even under enslavement, African people developing new ethnicities were

¹³⁶ Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 151-152.

self-determining in identifying their unfamiliar environments and what constituted a proper response to these environments. For some Africans the Wilderness of slavery was equated to spiritual death. Thus, marronage was the only alternative. As demonstrated by the Haitian Revolution, marronage at all cost did not just undermine slavery, it defeated slavery. The Enlightenment period, which is 18th century European thought, was an expansion of “universal values”. During this period slavery was considered a universal principle. Thus, the Haitian Revolution is often characterized as “unthinkable” by Eurocentric historians.¹³⁷ A longstanding significance of the Haitian Revolution for both Africans and Europeans is that it completely emasculates the confidence of European domination.

Marronage by historical account or contemporary symbolism is African agency plus potential. The successful actualizing of a maroon community is just the manifestation of marronage at its highest point of activity. Haiti is the robust example of marronage because it represents a peak point of self-determining activity for Africans in diaspora. However, many African diasporic communities continue to assert agency and potential in their ongoing freedom efforts. Haiti becomes an ideal model for African self-determination in the Africa abroad because it was powerful enough to transform modern tradition. Prior to the Haitian Revolution the largest scale maroon communities were referred to as “grand marronage”. These were large scale maroon communities with the purpose of autonomy. However, these grand maroon communities did not have territorial recognition; they did not have geo-political sovereignty. A sovereign marronage is

¹³⁷ Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 89-94.

described as a non-fleeting social structure that rejects isolation and establishes a top-down governance of freedom.¹³⁸ The Haitian Revolution defied tradition and instituted a radical marronage with sovereign agency. This is a completely different from the assimilation or even the abolitionist project.

¹³⁸ Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*, 96-112.

CHAPTER 4

DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS: IMAGINING THE NEW *AFRICAN* WORLD



Figure 4. African Expansion

I'm going back home where I was born
First I planned to stay but I can't live this way
I'm going back home where I was born

Nina Simone, *I'm Going Back Home*, 1967

We are Africans not because we were born in
Africa, but because Africa is born in us. Look around you and behold us in our greatness.

Chester Higgins Jr., *Feeling the Spirit*, 1994

The formation of Haiti's complex consciousness and identity can serve as a case study and an explanatory template for African people throughout the African world, both continental and Diaspora.

Wade W. Nobles, *The Island of Memes: Haiti's Unfinished Revolution*, 2015

The intangible realities of Africa in the consciousness and practice of Africa in diaspora support an ongoing diasporic consciousness. I anticipate the *African diasporic consciousness* is strongest in African cultural locations around the world. I define African diasporic consciousness as persons of the African diaspora having the awareness and acknowledgement of being an African world person while also embodying a deep structure of cultural orientation toward Africa. The cultural orientation towards Africa binds African diasporic communities through their shared sense of linked fate. African diasporic consciousness is building and expanding what Wade Nobles develops as "collective consciousness". Collective consciousness is described as an individual's sense

of self and fate being linked to the fate of their collective community.¹³⁹ What I am developing as African diasporic consciousness is a result of the vast stretch of ones' community, experience, and linked fate with other diasporic communities that have left (H)ome. And thus, the implication is that the African diasporic sense of linked fate is not just in relation to their immediate community; their fate is linked to the fate of Africa, particularly as these communities exist as extensions of Africa in diaspora. However, what one does with this consciousness is a result of agency, support, and circumstance. In my theoretical and conceptual development, African diasporic consciousness is not an identity; it is a tool, frame of reference, and/or an orientation for coding research. Amos Wilson discusses African consciousness as "an instrument of power".¹⁴⁰ He writes,

Without power there is no life... You need power to act, to behave in the world, to deal with the world. Consequently, we must interpret what we are about in terms of power... We should not look at consciousness as some abstraction. As I often tell people, the most practical thing we could have is a good theory, a good concept to guide our behavior, to be used as an instrument to measure reality, as an instrument to test reality... In other words, the kind of world you exist in reflects the kind of consciousness you have.¹⁴¹

When applying this interpretation of the function and characteristic of consciousness to African diasporic consciousness, scholars can identify how Africans in diaspora construct their realities through their own cultural worldview and self-measurement of collective power. This offers a different lens into the interpretation of contemporary behavior and

¹³⁹ Wade Nobles, "Extended Self Model," in *The Handbook of African American Psychology*, ed. Hellen A. Neville, Brendesha M. Tynes, and Shawn O. Utsey (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 62.

¹⁴⁰ Amos Wilson, *African-Centered Consciousness Versus the New World Order: Garveyism in the Age of Globalism* (New York: Afrikan World InfoSystem, 1999), 87.

¹⁴¹ Wilson, *African-Centered Consciousness*, 87-88.

historical narrative. For example, the Haitian Revolution was just one of many African organized resistance movements against European slavery. Because of the dominant narrative around the power and inescapable reality of enslavement for African people between the 17th and 19th centuries, it has been difficult for research to identify other historical truths from a different cultural consciousness, or cultural reality. The framework of the African diasporic conscious lends a tool to identify why or how diasporic relationships are forged and around what issues from the subjective reality of the communities under study.

It is important to approach ‘consciousness’ in this work distinctly from ones’ personal identity or political education. For example, diasporic consciousness does not replace pan-Africanism, it precedes it. Pan-Africanism is a broad sense of African consciousness plus a will towards political action.¹⁴² African diasporic consciousness is the intangible and culturally inherited awareness of oneself and location in the world in relation to the Homeland. It does not require political action to exist although it can be activated to achieve diasporic collective goals. While pan-Africanism may be seen as a more aggressive form of African agency, I would argue that structures of dominance and oppression are more likely to suppress the collective will and action of a people through the creation of atmospheres of apathy around African success or by placing immediate forms of terrorism in the face of revolutionary direct action. Alternatively, African diasporic consciousness is less likely to be suppressed by external trauma and hegemonic force because it is associated with the intangible and deep structures of cultural replications in African diasporic people.

¹⁴² Tony Martin, *The Pan-African Connection: From Slavery to Garvey and Beyond* (Dover: The Majority Press, 1983).

Pan-Africanism can be interpreted as an ideological strategy for African world people to assert collective power against the pressing force of global white supremacy, particularly following the development of the European slave trade and the European colonization of Africa in modern history. African diasporic consciousness, however, is explored here as a development from the African worldview in response to the ever expanding African diaspora as a phenomena. African diasporic consciousness does not center European atrocity as a rationality to exist nor is it dependent on a myopic vision for Africa to perpetuate itself. Nobles writes,

Within the context of the African worldview, consciousness at the human level is always a collective experience and passes from one collective generation or one being to the next...In the African worldview, therefore, consciousness is the essence, energy, expression, and experience of spirit, or being, existing in the form of awareness, knowing, and comprehension. It allows African people to reflect, respond, project, and create from, before, and beyond the time of one's experience. Hence, consciousness, existing as or driven by an eternal living spirit, is not bound by time, space, or place.¹⁴³

Accordingly, from an African cultural perspective, it is consciousness that is critical to cultural continuity. Cultural continuity is thus not lucid or inevitably fractured by the experience of slavery or transcontinental migration. Therefore, it can be argued that the experience of diaspora has not necessitated a double-consciousness or disconnect from Africa as a necessary formation. Africans in diaspora have actually expanded Africa's reach across time, space, and place through their cultural consciousness.

¹⁴³ Wade Nobles, "African Consciousness as Cultural Continuity," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of African Cultural Heritage in North America*, ed. Mwalimu Shujaa and Kenya J. Shujaa (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015), 46.

Wilson continues,

The kind of consciousness that inhabits us largely reflects the nature of culture we live in, the nature of the culture we are apart of...History and culture can only exist in the minds and bodies of people. If there were no people in the world, there would be no history in the world, no culture in the world...[Culture] is a means by which a group of people organizes the way they think, organizes the way they believe, organizes the way they see the world so as to create a consciousness by which they can cooperate in achieving certain ends such that they can mutually aid each other and gain ends they cannot gain as separate individuals. Thus, culture is an instrument of power.¹⁴⁴

Consciousness as derived from the African worldview is thus a collective experience that operates from within the paradigm of African culture to aid African collective efforts.

African consciousness in the present is also evidence of the African cultural past. Culture as an organizing body carries the memories and beliefs of a people to explain their world location and purpose.¹⁴⁵ This cultural evidence is succinct with my advancement that African communities in diaspora expand the presence of Africa as they migrate, develop, and settle other parts of the world. Their cultural location and orientation towards Africa heightens the function for their cultural consciousness, particularly as they encounter hostile environments or cultural dissonance with other groups. African diasporic consciousness becomes multifaceted as an approach to engage the African cultural response to *home* creation, nativism, nationality, and cooperative networking to achieve certain goals in diaspora.

¹⁴⁴ Wilson, *African-Centered Consciousness*, 111-112.

¹⁴⁵ See also Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, *The Ties that Bind: African-American Consciousness of Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1987); Wade W. Nobles, *Seeking the Sakh: Foundational Writings for an African Psychology* (Chicago: Third World Press, 2006).

Diasporic Consciousness as an Orientation to Nationality

With consideration to trans-nationalism, country markers of nativism¹⁴⁶ for Africans in the diaspora are often defined in laws drawn by foreign dominant populations occupying the geopolitical space in which they reside. Self-defined nativism may arguably then become the political project of diasporic Africans who are settled in nation-states that fail to recognize African indigeneity. Within nation-states whose boundaries become systematically exclusionary toward “multi-locale” African people and cultures, diasporic Africans have rationale to connect to an alternative nationalistic “home place”.¹⁴⁷ Symbolically, the identification with a distant land where one imagines existing as a ‘true native’ emerges as the conscious recognition of past and present experiences faced by a diasporic people group. Similar to the global project of racialization which gives credence to a singular identity representation for a multi-locale people group, diasporic identities serve related interest by organizing nationalistic loyalties in a migratory world.

‘Nationality’ as a source of consciousness and orientation allows for examination of the historical meaning of citizenship and nationhood, particularly as it relates to African Americans who have consistently been deemed nationless in diaspora. This analysis functions to interpret the contemporary relationship between concepts of race, nationalism, and diaspora. In American history, ‘race’ has served as a significant indicator for the allocation of citizen rights. Because of aggregated citizenry, nationalism practiced by African Americans and nationalism practiced by the state against African

¹⁴⁶ “Nativism” will refer to persons perceived as most belonging to the nation-state as a naturalized citizens; holding the authority to determine outcomes for the populations living within the national borders.

¹⁴⁷ bell hooks, *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

Americans has historically been politicized on the basis of race. Congruently, African Americans have attempted to counterbalance their nation-state exclusion by identifying their diasporic origin- Africa, as a location to seek physical, psychological, political, and/or cultural validity.¹⁴⁸ Longstanding Black Nationalist organizations and pan African allegiances between American Africans, Caribbean Africans, and Homeland African people groups are exemplars of merging cites between race, nationalism, and diasporic identity.¹⁴⁹

A second theme, family, materializes in this project from the investigation of racialized experiences, nationhood, and diasporic discourses. Analogues of autobiographical narratives, cultural memories, and affirmations of a collective consciousness among African descended people are often understood in relation to the networks found within the institution of family. For example, similar to a family, the logic behind a network of individuals constituting a body of 'one people' has also represented nationhood. Family is comparatively a symbolic microcosm of a nation, wherein, the retention of this institution depends on cultural repetitions of insignias such as religion, language, ideology, and territorial boundaries.

The African Americans diasporic community and consciousness has special interest for decoding nationalism and indigeneity because these constructs emerged artificially through law and racialization in American society. Therefore, within a global and historical context, American nativism, associated primarily with American

¹⁴⁸ James Baldwin, "Princes and Powers," in *Baldwin Collected Essays*, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, INC., 1998).

¹⁴⁹ Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, *Pan-Africanism: Politics, Economy and Social Change in the 21st Century*, (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1996).

Europeans, is actually more 'mythical' than the identification of Africa as a Homeland of indigeneity for African Americans. This community and model for diasporic consciousness allows room for comparative studies within the diaspora to be adapted. I suggest that American citizenship and by extension the American national identity, is constructed by categorizing people of color into racial groups who become recognized as non-native to the nation-state, particularly as it pertains to African Americans. As such, one can deduce that congruent with state exclusionary practices, many African Americans, among other diasporic Africans, construct their own framework of nationalism by ideologically repatriating themselves to Africa as a location of indigeneity; a location understood to be Home.

Judith Shklar examines American citizenship as democratic in principle although, most marked by denial of equality and political rights to women and non-Whites. American citizenship is defined as, "...the equality of political rights...the vote, the opportunity to earn [and] legal recognition, both domestic and international, that a person is a member, native born, or naturalized, of a state".¹⁵⁰ Moreover, she notes that slavery, racism, nativism, and sexism have been institutionalized in exclusionary laws and practices which have augmented the way Americans perceive citizenship. Citizenship in America has therefore been overwhelmingly recognized by demands for political inclusion and recognition rather than deep investments in civic participation. According to Shklar, in order to understand American citizenship one must investigate what citizenship has meant to those "...who have been denied all or some of its attributes".¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Judith N. Shklar, *Justice and Injustice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 306-307.

¹⁵¹ Shklar, *Justice and Injustice*, 309.

Patricia Hill Collins supports this observation and provides an investigation of American citizenship through lenses of social intersections of race, ethnicity, and national identity. She posits that American Africans hold second-class citizenship due to internal racism within the American national identity. Internal racism is described as the subjugation of one racial group by another powerful racial group when the subjugated race is needed to maintain the standard of living for the powerful racial group.¹⁵² The racial hierarchy of the nation-state is then sustained through practices such as “...colonialism, apartheid and racial segregation; internal racisms include and control less powerful racial groups within what is seen as privileged home space”.¹⁵³ Creating this foundational racial structure allows American law to,

...collapse multiple ethnicities within each racial category to create the very racial categories themselves... As markers of citizenship rights, racial categories frame different ways of belonging to the nation-state itself, namely, variations of first-class citizenship for white Americans of varying class status, an ambiguous and contested citizenship status for indigenous peoples, and permanent second-class citizenship for people of African descent.¹⁵⁴

Collins reiterates the general constitutional promise of equality for all American citizens regardless of race, national origin, former condition of servitude or color, because all citizens are said to be equal under the law. However, she suggests that the American national identity is actually associated with assumptions of “ethnic nationalism”, wherein, “...a nation consist[s] of a group of people who share a common ethnicity grounded in

¹⁵² Patricia Hill Collins, “Like One of the Family: Race, Ethnicity, and the Paradox of US National Identity,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24 (2001): 6.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3-7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

blood ties. In the case of the United States, whites constitute a nation with whiteness itself grounded in blood ties of racial purity”.¹⁵⁵ Herein, the paradox of the national identity is apparent by the democratic freedoms associated with individual rights juxtaposed with the reality of differential group treatment relegated to people groups who are not of the European diaspora. According to Collins, “In forming a settler society that privileged whiteness, European American settlers saw their search for land and resources as their right as a new people or nation”.¹⁵⁶

Legal analyst, Cheryl Harris, argues that in addition to ‘whiteness’ defining the legal status of a person as slave or free before emancipation, “...white identity conferred tangible and economically valuable benefits... [and was] central to national identity and to the republican project”.¹⁵⁷ She analyzes the changing definitions of citizenship introduced in the Naturalization Act of 1790; whereby, “The franchise, for example, was broadened to extend voting rights to unpropertied white men at the same time that black voters were specifically disenfranchised, arguably shifting the property required for voting from land to whiteness”.¹⁵⁸ The legal reservation of American citizenship for European descendants has hence been replicated at various points after 1790. The Asian Exclusion Act of 1882 barred immigrants from citizenship and ownership of property through a sequence of laws passed in 1882, 1917, 1924, and 1934. The enactment specifically excluded immigrants from China, Japan, India, and the Philippines which eventually lead to the construction of ‘Asian’ as a racial category. This embargo depended on the consistency of racializing each trans-national diasporic group as non-

¹⁵⁵ Collins, “Like One of the Family,” 10.

¹⁵⁶ Collins, “Like One of the Family,” 7.

¹⁵⁷ Cheryl I. Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106 (1993): 1743.

¹⁵⁸ Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” 1744.

White. Identifying 'whiteness' for citizenry was so imperative that the Immigration Act of 1917 placed a geographic ban on Asian Indians because, "...their racial or ethnic status was unclear".¹⁵⁹ Arguably, the long-term conflation of the national identity into a racial project has become a doctrine to secure North America as a *home* for diasporic European groups.

The artificial and hostile construction of *home* for Euro-Americans has historically disrupted the integration of other diasporic peoples into the American nation-state. Scholar W.E.B Du Bois records how citizenship posed a specific dilemma in the race attitudes of American Africans by stating, "The fruitless hope of Negroes...lies in being able to lose our race identity in the commingling of races within the nation to reduce the friction and race prejudice we have fought against for so long".¹⁶⁰ This analysis arises from the contradictions perceivable in being black (African) and American based on the historical discontinuity of these identities. In the article, "On Being Ashamed of Oneself", Du Bois expresses, "We are by birth and training American citizens and believe we are going to escape into the mass of Americans like the Irish".¹⁶¹ This belief, according to Du Bois, is a flawed philosophy of many American Africans who have attempted assimilation with the expectation of being treated as an American (European) citizen.

Despite the long legacy of American transgression against the validity of the African American presence, many continue to exhibit deliberate attempts at

¹⁵⁹ Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 1-36.

¹⁶⁰ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Conservation of the Races," *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers, No.2*, 1897.

¹⁶¹ W.E.B. Du Bois, "On Being Ashamed of Oneself," *The Crisis*, September 1933, 199.

reconstructing their own race consciousness and nationalistic agendas. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King is cited as, "...the chief symbol of U.S. racial-national integration, [while still] consciously deconstructing the term- United States citizen- emphasizing that Negroes had a separate existence within, and a tortured relationship to, the United States as a nation"¹⁶². Diasporic African communities often enter or are forced into nation states where their racial/ethnic identity is threatened and possibly conflated. Nonetheless, the survival of African people is commonly attributed to their ability to create familial communities or *home*, wherever they settle.¹⁶³ Familial communities offer a nuclear home in domestic contexts while the extended diasporic *home* may primarily exist within the collective conscious of a people. In both cases, *home* destinations function to reinforce culture, ideology, methods of communication, and other signifying rituals that solidify networks of individuals as one body or family.

Modernity has privileged 'westerners' to assume that powerful nation hoods are defined by prominent geo-political borders. Paradoxically, African people, African culture, and collectives of African resistance are multi-locale, grounded within a host of nation-states; unbound by arbitrary parameters. Therefore, an African expression of nationalism, or diasporic consciousness, has already ballooned into a pandemic phenomenon. Through diasporic collective *home* settlements, nation-state indigeneity is constantly pressured to evolve from the inside out. Because African people are capable of creating *home* cross-nationally, the strength of *African diasporic consciousness* is through its' impending global impact.

¹⁶² Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁶³ Ronald Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 14-38.

While diasporic consciousness has been linked to overlaps in race, nationality, and diasporic settlement, the undergirding element is akin to black nationalism; with black nationalism being defined as "...a counter-movement away from subordination to independence, from alienation through refutation, to self-affirmation".¹⁶⁴ Black nationalism has historically developed in opposition to oppressive European structures. Nazneen Kane argues that an outcome of European colonization and imperialism, currently appropriated as globalization, situates racial categories as "organizing principles" which have infected the social apparatuses of many countries around the world.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, racialization, which diminishes ethnic diversity, becomes a common experience and cultural language for a mass of oppressed groups. In the end, the recognition of familiar cultural realities may service the oppressed more than the colonizer. Mahmood Mamdani notes that, "The colonial state made a distinction in law between *race* and *ethnicity*...non-natives were identified racially, not ethnically".¹⁶⁶ In correlation to the American model of nationalism and racialized citizenry, similar racial hierarchies have been adapted to other nation-states through imperialism. The significance here is the applicability of cultural *home* constructions to other diasporic groups who have been driven to utilize their communal spaces as sites of resistance and liberation like that of African Americans. While *home* may exist singularly for cultural transmission, it is also viable for political and ideological advancement. At the pan-

¹⁶⁴ James Turner, "The Sociology of Black Nationalism," in *The Death of White Sociology: Essays on Race and Culture*, ed. Joyce Ladner (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1973), 235.

¹⁶⁵ Nazneen Kane, "Fanon's Theory of Racialization," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self Knowledge* 5 (2007) 353-355.

¹⁶⁶ Mahmood Mamdani, "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43 (2001): 654.

African conference of 1958 W.E.B. Du Bois stated, “Your bond is not mere color of skin but the deeper experience of wage slavery and contempt”.¹⁶⁷

How diasporic African people have historically negotiated their social designation as peripheral or even antagonistic to the nation-states in which they reside has not been homogeneous. However, the deliberate attempts of African people to confront national antagonisms can be highlighted. With the activation of *African diasporic consciousness*, pan-Africanism may additionally be utilized as an identifiable ideological strategy employed by African Americans, among other members of the diaspora, to defy geopolitical alienation and legitimize African sovereignty trans-nationally.

Imagining the New African World

African diasporic consciousness is not simply the naming of a phenomenon that already exists. It is an orientation for interpreting the interconnected movement of African diasporic cultural and ideological rhythms. African diasporic people who do not express an African diasporic consciousness are not absent of consciousness. They are likely to be in possession of a different cultural consciousness which determines their norms, orientations, desires and so on. All human beings adopt a cultural reality even if they are socialized into a culture that is antagonistic to the individuals’ best interest or their collective conscious interest. Some Africans do inherit a cultural consciousness and orientation away from Africa. Afrocentricity refers to this orientation as “dislocation”. Dislocation is explained as a result of the colonial process that has led to conceptual and psychological distortion, or no less than confusion, in the exportation of the African

¹⁶⁷ Paul-Marc Henry, “Pan-Africanism: A Dream Come True,” *Foreign Affairs* 37 (1959): 443.

experience and reality. With over 500 years of colonial chaos, the Africana scholar is obligated to consciously be located and is accountable for the direction of the African legacy at hand.¹⁶⁸ When African people adopt an outside culture they split themselves from the benefits of the African collective consciousness and are driven to make decisions that benefit another cultural group. Even if African people do not make decisions in their own best interest they are still making decisions. There may even be collective dislocation. Where there exist collective dislocation we can infer the population has assumed a foreign cultural location as their own and therefore are likely to participate in their own subjugation. Africans in diaspora are likely to adopt the European cultural worldview if they replace their own as a result of cultural imperialism and aggressive overexposure to European culture as a universal human norm in tandem with the despise of Africa and inferiorization of everything African during and post European new world development.

The interest of this study however, is in the example of how Africans in diaspora have collectively negotiated African diasporic consciousness to secure their survival and future in their own cultural best interest. Diasporic consciousness has facilitated cross national, intra-diasporic relationships as a means to identify belonging in the world. The global stretching of the African presence in addition to diasporic communities paying recognition to themselves as a common people linked by Africa has produced a networked African world. *African diasporic consciousness* and the necessity of *home* construction in diaspora foster a particular insight to the interpretation of the desired relationship between Haiti and Free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian

¹⁶⁸ Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 25-28.

Revolution. As stated by Nobles, “[T]he Haitian Revolution as a case study exemplar...examines Haiti at a critical period in time to discuss the role consciousness and identity played in its liberation struggle and the formation of nationhood”.¹⁶⁹ Further Wilson adds,

Consciousness, then, in the fact that it determines how we are going to deal with reality, how we change reality, is a power. Categorically, power is about enabling something to take place, the ability to do something...the ability to defend one’s self...And therefore consciousness must be measured in terms of the degree to which it maintains our survival, advances our interests, puts us at the center of our concerns and at the center of our purposes.¹⁷⁰

The mutual interest of Haitians and African Americans to develop a new African republic reflects the power of their intra-diasporic relationship and their cultural imagination of a new African world formation.

¹⁶⁹ Nobles, *The Island of Memes*, 23.

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, *African-Centered Consciousness*, 117-118.

CHAPTER 5

EXTENDING THE PRESENCE OF AFRICA: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAITI AND FREE AFRICANS OF PHILADELPHIA FOLLOWING THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION



Citizen,

You are not ignorant that there exist in the United States of America, several hundred thousand individuals of African blood, who, on account of the dark hue of their complexions, are objects of all the prejudice and prepossession that can arise from difference in colour...I have replied in a favourable manner, explaining all the advantages that our constitution has taken care to assure to those of our brothers who come from other parts of the globe and establish themselves among us...Already have we seen arrive in our ports, several of these children of Africa, who have come from the United States, and have fixed themselves here...happy at being delivered from the degrading yoke of prejudice.

President Boyer of Hayti, *Instructions to the Citizen*, 1824

Figure 5. Haitian Revolution

The triumph of Haiti securing their freedom from the institution of European slavery was felt as a triumph for African people throughout the diaspora. This relatively small island generated a wave of dialogue across the diaspora and particularly among African Americans. African Americans had already been in constant siege against enslavement and oppression in America through a series of reactions and pro-actions for over a century. The knowledge of Haiti's Revolution and open border policy to any Africans willing to come and settle as citizens spurred organizing efforts and interest in African American communities. Prior to the revolution, African Americans, particularly in the port cities of Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, had an established circuit of information and contact with Haiti by way of African American sailors,

enslaved Africans who arrived with their masters during the revolution, and wealthy independent African Americans who visited and worked abroad in trade and mercantilism.¹⁷¹ In fact, sailors of African descent constituted almost twenty percent of seamen, including Africans who had escaped slavery as “runaways”. These sailors “were well traveled and multilingual- a skill useful for fostering links between otherwise discrete black communities”.¹⁷² Haiti’s emigration project represented an enormous power and potential for relationships between African diasporic communities. The significance of this intra-diasporic initiative has perhaps been undervalued or under-researched because it implies such a potent self-determining capacity through international connections that enslaved or oppressed groups are not assumed to readily exercise. Moreover, the extension of citizenship by Haiti to any and all Africans desiring to withdraw from European domination exhibits an unfamiliar level of African agency to world observers both then and now.

Nonetheless, this chapter is not intended to function as a historiography of the Haitian Revolution. I support an Afrocentric analysis of the significance and impact of the Haitian Revolution to Haiti and to African Americans, particularly located in Philadelphia, as a model of optimal African diasporic consciousness and African world expansion. ‘Africa’ is located cognitively and geo-politically in early diasporic world history through the successful Haitian Revolution. The Haitian national design for incorporative relations with other African diasporic communities suggests Haiti’s intent to not only secure the freedom and longevity of Haitian natives but to secure the African

¹⁷¹ Jeffery W. Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seaman in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Roi Ottley and William J. Weatherby, *The Negro in New York: An Informal Social History* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1967).

¹⁷² Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 40, 114, 155.

world presence in territory that had long been considered the Western world. I offer an alternative reading and analysis of the Haitian Revolutions' significance for the benefit of cultural, historical, and psychological African restoration.

This chapter evaluates the significance of the relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution. In evaluating this historical moment and cross national exchange, I intend to service the underlying inquiry of what the significance of the African diaspora is to Africans in the diaspora from an Afrocentric perspective. This case study supports the foundational work of the dissertation by highlighting the following three points:

1. There is evidence of an existing sense of linked fate between Africans in the diaspora, particularly expressed as African diasporic consciousness.
2. Haitian and African American diasporic communities were aiming to design a large scale, multi-ethnic cultural location that would extend the presence of Africa in the diaspora through African leadership and legal autonomy.
3. The Haitian emigration project represents an advanced model of *home* construction in diaspora, having established both cognitive and geo-political sovereignty.

Haiti's relationship with free Africans of Philadelphia is also represented as optimal African diasporic consciousness because agency, support, and circumstance aligned to propel the existing consciousness into direct action, which ultimately shifted hegemonic European world domination.

African Foundations

Proper orientation and perspective resolves philosophical inconsistencies. Hence, orientation and perspective are fundamental to scholarship in Africology. To understand my contribution to the utility of the African diaspora framework and this chapter development specifically, one must first consider that I am working from the perspective that Africans in diaspora have not gone from being slaves to being free; we have gone from being free to enslaved and thus have been fighting to return (H)ome ever since. Before Africans in diaspora were permanently linked to the history of slavery they were the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Fon, for example.¹⁷³ As stated by Michael Tillotson, “Africana scholars must establish chronological authenticity”.¹⁷⁴ How do we understand what we know and where do we begin our own narratives? My research establishes a reorientation to a historic world event that holds contemporary cultural and psychological value to African communities.

Firstly, it is understood that ‘free Blacks’ existed in slave societies during the antebellum period and prominently so in Saint Domingue and Philadelphia. However, as history has substantiated, these ‘free Blacks’ never held the free status of whites. ‘Free Blacks’ often functioned as slaves on probationary good behavior. In many slave societies, the behavior of ‘free Blacks’ was constantly regulated and re-negotiated by state authorities.¹⁷⁵ From this perspective the rationale for the protracted struggle of

¹⁷³ Keto C. Tsehloane, *The African Centered Perspective of History and Social Sciences in the Twenty-first Century* (London: Research Associates School Times Publications, 1994).

¹⁷⁴ Michael Tillotson, “Terminal Degree: Institutional Realities and Response” (lecture presented at Temple University Department of Africology & African American Studies Lecture Series, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 18, 2016).

¹⁷⁵ Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Richard S. Newman, *Freedoms’s Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church,*

Haitians and ‘free’ Africans of Philadelphia to establish independence is better understood. There is a necessary critique of Eurocentric definitions and identity constructions of African people that negate their historical and contemporary responses to the endemic Wilderness. Persistent in the deep structure of Africa culture is the communal orientation to identity and survival. It was not uncommon for African people during the antebellum period to recognize that there was no such thing as a ‘free’ African living in an African slave community.¹⁷⁶ Therefore the clash of social organization between displaced Africans and European colonizers was established well before the Haitian Revolution erupted.

The Haitian Revolution is said to have begun on August 22, 1791 when thousands of slaves crudely armed with stolen weapons, various tools and torches, overran and destroyed most of the plantations and besieged the towns of Northern Saint Dominique, the most prosperous European colony in the world at that time. Actually, this well planned, sustained offensive was the culmination of nearly three centuries of periodic Black rebellions against the European settlers who imported kidnapped Africans to supply their labor needs.¹⁷⁷

Prior to the revolution and even before France took the western part of the island from Spain in the 17th century, the only free Africans who lived in great numbers were the maroons. The maroons lived outside of the colonial slave structure and because of their position they endured the most consistent struggle with European settlers in Haiti beginning as early as 1522. “[Their] social structure was organized to reflect the same

and the Black Founding Fathers (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Michael Moon and Cathy N. Davidson, *Subjects and Citizens: Nation, Race, and Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

¹⁷⁶ Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti’s Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

¹⁷⁷ Jacob H. Carruthers, *The Irritated Genie: An Essay on the Haitian Revolution* (Chicago: The Kemet Institute, 1985), 9.

type of divisions common to indigenous African civilization. Thus, generations of free Africans were born and died in these communities never having been enslaved.”¹⁷⁸ At the foundation of the Haitian Revolution, which is regarded as a unique phenomenon, was the conventional African quality of Haiti that preceded its’ revolution.

Even among the unfree population of Haiti’s Africans there existed subversion to the slave order for generations. Enslaved Africans were known to play sick, steal valuables, and kill their masters. Most importantly, many of the enslaved Africans were in constant communication with the maroons to practice their religion- Vodun, have meetings, and participate in cultural celebrations. According to Jacob Carruthers, “The defection of the slaves individually and in groups was so common that a full labor force was the exception on most plantations”.¹⁷⁹ We know rebellion and revolt were frequent in Haiti for an extended period prior to the culminating revolution because the Black Codes of Louis XIV were established in 1685 to temper African revolt through provisionary manumission for certain Africans. By the first quarter of the 18th century repressive and brutal attacks by whites on maroon communities had intensified. With some acknowledgement of retreat in 1786, the colony offered a treaty recognizing the freedom and territory of one of the Bahoruco maroon communities. This was just five years before the revolution swelled. Following 1786, however, conflicts between different classes of Africans and European settlers continued in correlation to the American independence movement from Britain and the French Revolution of 1789.¹⁸⁰ African Americans were

¹⁷⁸ Carruthers, *The Irritated Genie*, 11.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸⁰ C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

likewise facing stark contradictions in the newly liberated America; which continued to exile them. Instability was shaking the Western world order everywhere.

Agency, Support, & Circumstance

There existed a high level of overlapping agency, support, and circumstance for African people during 18th century American and Caribbean life which facilitated direct collective action. In Philadelphia, the Free Society of Africans was developed by formally enslaved Africans who had purchased their manumission. Richard Allen was a founder of this organization and later purchased land where he would found the first African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, Mother Bethel. Richard Allen had frequently experienced being asked to leave worship services by white patrons while renting a white space known as St. George's. He soon after vowed to establish an autonomous space for African American services and communing. With the African American community of Philadelphia, Richard Allen raised enough funds to establish Mother Bethel with intentional support and agency from the community to exist on their own terms. The opening of the church as an organized body under the leadership of Richard Allen is marked the year the Haitian Revolution formally began in 1791. In Philadelphia, Mother Bethel was the only autonomous African worship center at the time and within a few years the congregation served nearly 90 percent of the African population in Philadelphia, both enslaved and 'free'. Richard Allen became a notable fixture in the Philadelphian African community. Mother Bethel supported its community in many postures, especially being politically active in the neighboring African residences. Leaders of the church were also founders of the Freed Black Society which

became the primary source of outreach for the Philadelphian community during the 1793 yellow fever outbreak in the city.¹⁸¹

Philadelphia was a popular port city designation for people of African descent. Between 1780 and 1820 the size of the African community of Philadelphia grew twelve times its initial population to 12,110 from 1,100. This population inflation was due to many factors, some including the arrival of Saint Domingue refugees, formally enslaved Africans traveling North through the underground railroad, the prominent African American leadership in Philadelphia, and the movement of free Africans to Philadelphia to access better job placement.¹⁸² Mother Bethel was the centralized venue for affairs to accommodate the growing population. Lectures, speeches, abolition meetings, organizational social committees, and other agency enhancing activities frequently met at Mother Bethel with the support of Richard Allen and the congregation. Among the most famous were Philadelphia's African elite, James Forten, Paul Cuffe, and Haitian representative for African American emigration- Prince Saunders.¹⁸³ As a major port city and destination for African Americans escaping slavery, Philadelphia was growing in size, representation, and impact for African people near and abroad.

¹⁸¹ Matthew Carey, *A Short Account of the Malignant Fever, Lately Prevalent in Philadelphia: With a Statement of the Proceedings that Took Place on the Subject in Different Parts of the United States* (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1793).

¹⁸² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899, reprint 1996).

¹⁸³ Richard S. Newman, *Freedoms's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787-1848* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Anthony Jones, "The History of Mother Bethel AME Church" (lecture and tour provided at Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 20, 2016).

Simultaneously, the significance of Philadelphia in the context of the broader American national and international political lends irony to the agency, support, and consequence aiding African diasporic direct action. The American Declaration of Independence from Great Britain was signed on July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia represented both then and now the cornerstone for European American revolution, constitution writing, Bill of Rights, and a philosophy of liberty which held some influenced on the French Revolution.¹⁸⁴

The international connection of Philadelphia to France and to Haiti is revealed in more ways than one. In early America, the residency of the president of the United States was located in the area of Philadelphia currently known as “Old City”; the same district of Philadelphia that was considered the ‘black’ side of town and home to Mother Bethel AME church. During the American struggle for independence, Benjamin Franklin was dispatched from Philadelphia to Paris by Congress as a representative of the American government. He was instrumental in persuading the French government to send 1,500 men from Saint Domingue to the immediate assistance of the American mainland. Franklin’s impression of the French facilitated the alliance of the French to America during its’ defeat of British colonial rule. However, the French Revolution, beginning in 1789, affected all three segments of the Saint Domingue society; the whites, mulattos, and Africans. The conflict in France and between segments of Saint Domingue was of great consequence to Africans in Saint Domingue who took direct action during this European state of chaos to incite what became the Haitian Revolution.

¹⁸⁴ Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans: And the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

Before European Americans could swallow their own liberty anthem they became critically concerned about the security of slavery for themselves and their French allies. Not surprisingly, soon after in 1793 president George Washington, a devout slave owner who lived in Philadelphia, signed the Fugitive Slave Act. The Fugitive Slave Act completely destabilized the veneer of a “free North” for African Americans. The law provided “legal return of runaway slaves to their owners”.¹⁸⁵ As stated earlier, the status of ‘free Africans’ in slave societies would always remain negotiated to protect the greater interest of slavery. African Americans who would have been considered ‘free’ in Philadelphia and other Northern territories were now subject to slavery if they fit the description of a ‘runaway’ or were simply kidnapped twice over into slavery by bounty hunters. In fact, in 1805, one year after the Haitian Revolution, Richard Allen was kidnapped by white bounty hunters in front of his church and was accused of being a runaway slave. This was at a time when Richard Allen could be considered the most famous and influential African American in Philadelphia. As the story is remembered, Richard Allen was only saved from a return to slavery because the mayor of the city happen to be walking by the church during the kidnapping and ordered the bounty hunters to release Richard Allen.¹⁸⁶ While the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 strengthened the protection of slavery in America constitutionally it simultaneously prevented Haitian refugees from entering and settling in northern American communities. Neither free nor

¹⁸⁵ United States, *The Constitution of the United States, with the Acts of Congress, Relating to Slavery, Embracing, The Constitution, The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, the Missouri Compromise Act of 1820, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, and the Nebraska and Kansas Bill* (Miami: HardPress Publishing, 1923, 2013).

¹⁸⁶ Jones, “The History of Mother Bethel”, 2016.

enslaved Africans could be safe in the northern American territories under the Fugitive Slave Act, particularly entering from a foreign community and network.

African revolution was to be annihilated everywhere. When the Haitian Revolution erupted in 1791 president Washington urged the United States to render every possible aid to France to help “crush the insurrection of the Negros”. The Euro-American interest in the demise of the Haitian Revolution resulted in the \$15 million dollar deal of 1803 between America and France known as the Louisiana Purchase. With the Louisiana Purchase, Napoleon attempted to recapture Haiti but was weakened when his armies in Europe were defeated by the British; the neighboring colonial power who France had betrayed by assisting American Independence.¹⁸⁷ The diasporic influence of the Haitian Revolution could not be quarantined from African Americans. In the back yard of the president estates, African Americans in Philadelphia and down the east coast were ardently engaged in abolition campaigns and ‘slave rebellion’.¹⁸⁸

For example, in 1800, just nine years after the onslaught of the Haitian Revolution, Gabriel Prosser, an enslaved African in Virginia, led one of America’s most remembered and feared ‘slave revolts’. He had been inspired by the Haitian Revolution and used their slogan of “Liberty or Death” to encourage over 1,000 enslaved African Americans to take up arms against white slavers in Virginia.¹⁸⁹ The stretch of African agency crossed states and oceans alike. African diasporic consciousness was peaking as a result of the alignment of African agency, support, and circumstance. African agency was asserted in the immediate will to act and organize by both African Americans and

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003).

¹⁸⁸ Laurent Du Bois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012).

¹⁸⁹ Sujan Dass, *Black Rebellion: Eyewitness Accounts of Major Slave Revolts* (Atlanta: Two Horizons Press, 2010).

Haitians on their own behalf toward freedom on their own terms. Also considering the maroon communities of Haiti and the significance of the AME church in Philadelphia, African agency to direct action was employed without the aid and oversight of Europeans. Africans in diaspora were the leaders of their own pursuits during this radical era of world history. The support of these communities was driven internally as well and these communities would soon support each other cross nationally to build one large free African Republic. The circumstance was the weakness and limitation of European philosophical hypocrisy and free labor dependency which ultimately led to the hemorrhaging of British, French, and European American power networks. Everything at the surface was beginning to reveal what was underneath. Under the pressure of the 19th century was the presence of Africa in diaspora bubbling over and stretching its arms beyond the capacity of the impeding and unforgivable Western Wilderness.

The Relationship

As a case study, the relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia following the Haitian Revolution in tandem with the most significant aspect of this relationship, the cultural interpretation of it, surrender evidence to the expansion of Africa in diaspora. The end of the Haitian Revolution in 1804 marked the beginning of new development and planning for Haiti and the African communities abroad who were curious of the face of freedom. The Haitian Revolution was bloody and necessary but left the African population in Haiti sizably less dense and fatigued. Meanwhile, African Americans were still under hostile oppression in the United States and were running out of alternatives and optimism in multicultural relationships. The leaders of Haiti and the

African community of Philadelphia had urgent mutual interests. With a series of ‘slave’ insurrections spurring all over the country the American media propaganda about Haiti was dark and discouraging. Nonetheless, the Philadelphian community in particular had already established communication with Haiti and their contact and relationship with Haiti intensified. Because of their sense of linked fate through African diasporic consciousness, African Americans would form an Auxiliary Society for Promoting the Emigration of Free People of Color to Haiti by June of 1824.¹⁹⁰ The vast majority of African American leaders were in support of the Haitian Revolution; most of these same leaders rejected the mission of the American Colonization Society (ACS).¹⁹¹ One can infer from these efforts that escape at any cost was not the goal of African Americans. They had a sophisticated and intentional approach to facilitate a relationship with an African diasporic community; a community they had built trust with and had common interest with on their own terms. African Americans were uncertain of their fate in Liberia, being the location of interest for the American Colonization Society (ACS). The ACS was primarily composed of conservative and untrustworthy Europeans who expressed willingness to pay for ‘free’ Africans in the North to relocate to the Homeland. With the initial proposition some African Americans left. However, it is estimated that while the ACS had many more years of existence and more resources than the Haitian emigration project, between 1820-1831 they were only able to emigrate about 3,000 African Americans. By the mid-1830s negative reports from African American emigrants on the economic conditions of Liberia led to the decline of new recruits for emigration

¹⁹⁰ Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁹¹ Wilson J. Moses, *Classical Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

through the ACS.¹⁹² Comparatively, in less than one year, between 1824 and 1825 as many as 6,000 African Americans pursued emigration to Haiti.¹⁹³

What Haiti had to offer was something different. Unlike European revolutions that sought ‘individual liberties and freedom’, Haiti was seeking to build a Black nation, an independent African Republic that would defend the collective identity of their people. This type of public consciousness and sovereignty was unparalleled even among many maroon communities. Haiti had defeated the dominant European powers including the French, Spanish, and American armies, and was prepared to open its borders to all African people in diaspora who sought refuge. This was an attractive force to African Americans who identified with the struggle of Haitians, who desired a free and safe community among other people of African descent, and who had yet to experience belonging to a nation and land.

At the end of the successful Haitian Revolution Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared “Liberty or Death!” as he tore the white from the French tricolor flag.¹⁹⁴ In 1804 Dessalines determined the act of independence should be written and the first order of restoring the island to a new state should be to change its name to the name recognized by its first inhabitants; the new nation would be Haiti. In African cultural tradition

¹⁹² Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

¹⁹³ Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti: Made During Residence in that Republic*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830); Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Coloured People of the United States* (Philadelphia: M. R. Delany, 1852); Haytien Emigration Society of Philadelphia, *Information for the Free People of Colour, Who are Inclined to Emigrate to Hayti* (Philadelphia: J.H. Cunningham, 1825); Benjamin Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for African Americans; and on the Mulatto as a Race for the Tropics* (Philadelphia: T.B. Pugh, 1860); Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

¹⁹⁴ Beaubrun Ardouin, “Dessalines, the Flag, and Independence,” *Etudes sur l’Histoire d’Haiti* 6 (1853).

naming is an act of self-determination and destiny. Naming is held in high regard and identifies the legacy of a person or place.¹⁹⁵ The first order of business for Haiti was thus to strip away the tarnish of being colonized under another country's identity and to institute a new cultural memory that would make the African inhabitants the natives rather than slaves.

The second order of business was to draft a declaration of independence. The grievance of the African natives against France was considered important as was the emphasis of triumph. On January 1, 1804 Dessalines delivered the Independence Day speech to the newly liberated Haiti. He began,

Citizens, it isn't enough to have expelled from your country the barbarians who have bloodied it for two centuries... We must finally live independently or die!... What do we have in common with this people of executioners? We dare to be free; dare to be so by and for ourselves... Natives of Haiti... in fighting for your liberty I worked for my own happiness... Take the vow to live free and independent and to prefer death to anyone who wants to place you again under the yoke.¹⁹⁶

The independence declaration identified the enemy of the nation and the natives. The enslavers were barbarians and had nothing in common with the African natives now instituting freedom forever. Dessalines underscores the agency of the people by declaring that the nation reached freedom for itself by itself. Significant to the formation of the first free African nation in the Western hemisphere was the intentional unification of the people around the preservation of 'freedom' and not nationality. This remained relevant later when Haiti decided to open its borders to other African diasporic communities who held a common ideal and common enemy. Moreover, becoming a Haitian citizen nested

¹⁹⁵ Uche Lynn-Teresa Ugwueze, *African Culture, Identity, and Aesthetics: The Igbo Example* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2011).

¹⁹⁶ Ardouin, "Dessalines, the Flag, and Independence," 5-8.

in being a person of African descent who identified with Africa as a unifying principle. Following the independence declaration the men and women of Haiti took a vow that connected them as a race of African people with a destined future and distinct motherland.¹⁹⁷ This vow embodied African diasporic consciousness in its awareness of the African self, collective consciousness, and orientation to the Homeland. Furthermore, Haiti represented the first African state in the diaspora that independently evoked cognitive and geo-political sovereignty.

In the first draft of the Haitian constitution written in 1801, article three states, “There cannot exist slaves on this territory, servitude is therein forever abolished”.¹⁹⁸ This constitution was already more advanced and progressive than the British, French or American constitutions. Freedom would no longer have to be a negotiated status; it was an inevitable right in the new African Republic. When it was revised in 1805, a preliminary declaration was added. Of specific interest were the following:

1. The people inhabiting the island formally called St. Domingo, hereby agree to form themselves into a free state sovereign and independent of any other power in the universe, under the name of the empire of Hayti.
2. Slavery is forever abolished.
3. The citizens of Hayti are brothers at home; equality in the eyes of the law is incontestably acknowledged, and there cannot exist any titles, advantages, or privileges, other than those necessarily resulting from the consideration and reward of services rendered to liberty and independence.

¹⁹⁷ Ardouin, “Dessalines, the Flag, and Independence,” 9.

¹⁹⁸ “Constitution of 1801 by Haiti,” Marxists Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/history/haiti/1801/constitution.htm>.

10. Fathers and mothers are not permitted to disinherit their children.
12. No whiteman of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he in the future acquire any property therein.
14. All acception of colour among the children of one and the same family, of whom the chief magistrate is the father, being necessarily to cease, the Haytians shall hence forward be known only by the generic appellation of Blacks.¹⁹⁹

The morals and intent of the Haitian government demonstrate the ultimate type of marronage , collective consciousness, orientation to Africa by linked fate to the progeny of Africa, and a commitment to community sustainability through family and principles of democratic rule. The national identity does not rest in conflict with African ethnic difference. Instead it openly distinguishes difference as that between whites (Europeans) and Blacks (Africans). All persons identifying as “Black” are thus naturalized, familiar, and welcomed. This was the most liberatory and self-determined construction of *home* for diasporic African people who had entered the ‘New World’; the world which publically denied their existence and utility as an African world person. No longer did African people have to stand idle to European acknowledgement and happiness. The significance of the Haitian Revolution to Haitians and African Americans was its construction of *home* through a broad orientation to all Africans in diaspora without prejudice for being children of Africa; as children who can always be natively at *home*.

¹⁹⁹ Emperor Jacques Dessilines, “The 1805 Constitution of Haiti”, *New York Evening Post*, July 15, 1805.

In the earlier part of the year 1818, Haitian diplomat, Prince Saunders wrote and delivered a “proclamation” to the kingdom of Haiti. Following in the late footsteps of Dessalines he begins by asserting that Haitians proclaim to be free or die. Secondly he offers a critique of France. He wrote,

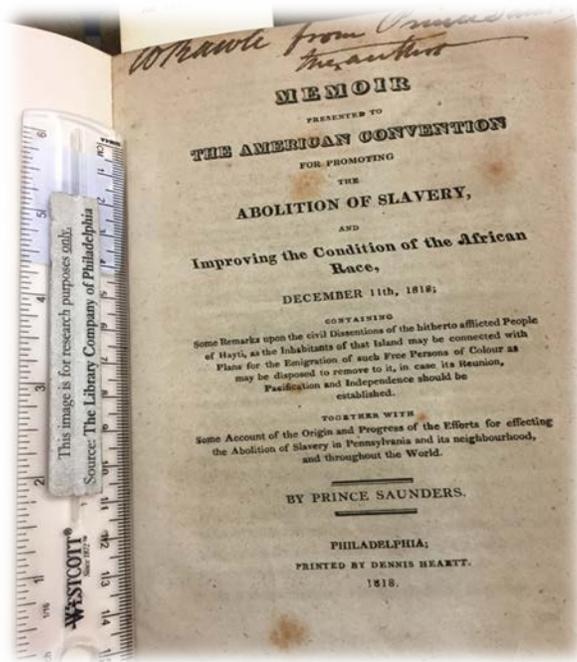
[I]n 1814 we were menaced with an unjust aggression; the French, instead of enjoying like other nations the advantages and sweets of that peace which they had just obtained of the High Allies, instead of applying themselves like them to healing the evils of war, instead of making some amends for their cruelties and injuries to us, by a conduct more humane and diametrically opposite...[they] disturb us in the peaceful enjoyments of our rights... We have replied to their new outrages with the firmness and energy that characterizes us, and thus we will ever repel all unjust pretensions.²⁰⁰

The critique of France and continued acknowledgement of the French as a present enemy, even fourteen years after the independence victory, laid the foundation for the Haitian people to prepare for the proposed emigration plan. Saunders continued by stating that the plan for Haitian progress would profit from African American emigration which was said to bring population increase, happiness, and commerce. Prince Saunders expressed that African Americans were skillful artists and professors. He proclaimed, “...they will experience the utmost toleration: difference of nation and religion will be no ground of exclusion: we shall pay respect to merit and talents alone”.²⁰¹ This portion of the proclamation prepared the palate of the Haitians to receive the national plan that was underway for the emigration of African Americans. The latter part of this most important speech would encourage Haitians to recognize they had made world history and to be in

²⁰⁰ Prince Saunders, “Kingdom of Haiti: Proclamation,” in *Haitian Papers: Collection of Proclamations and Official Documents* ed. Prince Saunders (Boston: Caleb Bingham & Co. Booksellers, 1818), 141.

²⁰¹ Saunders, “Kingdom of Haiti,” 144.

celebration of their great accomplishments. This message was necessary considering the continued pestering of European infiltration and the laborious rebuilding of the nation. A few months later on December 11, 1818, Prince Saunders would visit Philadelphia and deliver a speech with an alternative approach to massage the interest of aspiring African American emigrants.



Prince Saunders was an African American scholar and diplomat who devoted his life to serving the interest of African Americans in Haiti under the direction of Emperor Henri Christophe of independent Haiti. In 1818, Prince Saunders writes “Memoir Presented to the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the African Race”.

Figure 6. Memoir by Prince Saunders, 1818

This historical document written by Prince Saunders was used to appeal to the African American community by making a gentle persuasion focusing on how beautiful Haiti could be to potential emigrants and what Haiti has to offer interested families. Saunders suggested that African Americans would be “blessed” for serving the island and that Philadelphians would be most appropriate as representatives of the first city to establish the abolition of slavery. Prince Saunders is most skillful in his empathy for African Americans subjection to slavery and to their religious Christian piety. He writes,

And if those who consider the poor...are authorized to look for the favour of providence; with how much more full an assurance may those who have delivered their fellow beings from the inhuman grasp of the unprincipled kidnapper, or saved them from dragging out a miserable existence, amidst the thraldoms of the most abject slavery; with what confident expectation of becoming the recipients of that inconceivably glorious recompense of reward, which God has prepared for those who love and obey him, may such persons anticipate the period when Christ shall reappear, to make up his jewels.²⁰²

Saunders ends his benevolent appeal to African Americans of Philadelphia by exploring the potential for a great international relationship between free people of color in America, Haiti, and English philanthropist who were financial supporters of abolition.²⁰³ Prince Saunders was a genius diplomat who carefully studied his audiences and delivered eloquently in anticipation of the successful transformation of two ethnic communities into one nation. He appealed to the cultural sensibilities and experiences of the African Americans to ensure that Haiti was a deliverer for African people and that both parties would be in the highest favor of God if they worked together. His appeal to the African Americans in Philadelphia and to the Haitian citizens at home reflected the mutual desire of both Haiti and African Americans to pursue a growing relationship for the benefit of both parties.

In a few years' time after some organizing and planning in both Philadelphia and Haiti, president Jean-Pierre Boyer made a more aggressive attempt within the districts of Haiti to secure land and agricultural profit for emigrating African Americans. In 1824 president Boyer wrote, "Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Haiti, of the Free

²⁰² Prince Saunders, *Memoir Presented to the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the African Race* (Philadelphia: Dennis Heart, 1818), 7-8.

²⁰³ Saunders, *Memoir Presented to the American Convention*, 1818.

People of Colour in the United States Together with the Instructions to the Agent”. The agent to receive this notice and organize efforts for emigration had been a falsified parishioner, Loring D. Dewey. Dewey was a white man who held membership in the American Colonization Society. Without consent from his organization he wrote president Boyer inquiring about what detailed plan would be employed to emigrate African Americans. He presented himself as a deep sympathizer for the African people in America who had experienced such discrimination and would be happier in their relocation to Haiti.²⁰⁴ Loring Dewey had expressed his intent to contact the president of Haiti regarding emigration to his organization. Not surprisingly the ACS responded that it “would have nothing to do with the proposition of President Boyer”.²⁰⁵ The Euro-Americans within the ACS had no interest in Haiti because they had no control or ability to own anything in Haiti. Moreover, for France and the United States of America, Haiti represented an enemy and thus would always represent a lack of common interest. Dewey’s break with the ACS draws attention to the fact that the end goal for Haiti and the ACS was actually the same. Both wanted to facilitate the emigration of ‘free’ African Americans to a new nation for perceived benefit. What is of greater significance then is the identification of what relationships represented communal linked fate and orientation to Africa. The ACS did not recognize Haiti as a community that would ensure their fate nor did they align with a cultural responsibility to Africa. Dewey had become withdrawn

²⁰⁴ Jean-Pierre Boyer, *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour, in the United States, Together with the Agent* (New York: Mahlon Day, 1824).

²⁰⁵ PADA, “Colonization Society,” in *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, June 17, 1874.

from the political nuance of the ACS and joined the Society for the Emigration of Free People of Color to Haiti as a board of directors' member.²⁰⁶

Unsuspecting of any foul play president Boyer responds to Dewey's inquiries. Dewey had outlined a series of questions regarding Haiti's coverage of the expense to transport African Americans, their access to land and animals, tolerance of religion, and if the emigrants could exist as a United States colony with its own laws. Dewey closes with,

There are many whites who truly lament their [African American] unhappy lot, mourn over their wrongs, and would gladly do anything to redress them; but they find that such is their degradation, and public opinion towards toward the coloured people, that it is next to impossible to elevate them...and to benefit them in this country...I speak of the mass...These benevolent men, therefore, are looking for an asylum for these injured sons of Africa, in some other country...²⁰⁷

Dewey reflected his ideological positioning in his attempt to faux concern while expressing interest in African Americans remaining colonial property to the United States. He did not believe African Americans could assimilate into the American fabric, they would be "next to impossible to elevate"; this is white liberal talk for the belief that African Americans can never reach a quality of citizenry and equality in America. Furthermore, his affiliation with African Americans only allowed him to see them as property, hence their inability to live alongside Euro-Americans and inability to live without the supervisions of the United States from abroad. Ultimately, Dewey's

²⁰⁶ Library Company of Philadelphia, "Colonization and Emigration," copyright 2011, <http://www.librarycompany.org/blackfounders/section10.htm>.

²⁰⁷ Loring D. Dewey, "Correspondence," in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour, in the United States, Together with the Agent*, ed. President Boyer (New York: Mahlon Day, 1824), 5.

emigration plan looked vastly different from African American organizers and Haitian leadership.

President Boyer responds to Dewey immediately on May 24, 1824. He writes,

[I]n reply to that you addressed tome of the 4th of March, preceding, on the subject of emigration to Hayit of a portion of the children of Africa who are in the United States, I now announce to you that I send to you...the agent, the citizen Granville...He is the bearer of my particular instructions, and will communicate them to you...I shall then, Sir, only entreat you to make every effort to forward the success of the great object, we both have in view. You cannot better serve the cause of humanity, since those of our brethren , who drag out in the United States a painful and degrading existence, will become, on arriving to Hayti, citizens of the Republic, and can there labour with security and advantage to themselves and children.²⁰⁸

President Boyer sends his agent, J. Granville, to handle further emigration plans directly with the leadership of African Americans in Philadelphia. He rejects Dewey's interest in holding a colony in Haiti by responding that upon entrance into Haiti, all "being children of Africa, shall be Haytians".²⁰⁹ The emigrants would no longer be American and thus will not be regarded under different legal applications; the emigrants will immediately become Haitians and function accordingly. He outlines instructions for African Americans which are sent personally through Granville. The instructions offer a detailed contract containing fourteen separate articles to address the expectations, land allocations, laws, process and procedure for emigration, and notice of immediate citizenship as a Haitian upon entering the country. President Boyer also accepts the responsibility to

²⁰⁸ Jean-Pierre Boyer, "Emigration to Hayti of the Free People of Colour," in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour, in the United States, Together with the Agent*, ed. President Boyer (New York: Mahlon Day, 1824), 13-14.

²⁰⁹ Jean-Pierre Boyer, "Correspondence on May 25 1824," in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour, in the United States, Together with the Agent*, ed. President Boyer (New York: Mahlon Day, 1824), 15.

financially cover the expenses of emigrating African Americans. In May of 1824 he sent 50 thousand pounds of coffee in addition to monetary funds to aid the emigration of African Americans to Haiti. His correspondence with Dewey diminished greatly and his agent, Granville, became the primary point of contact between Richard Allen and president Boyer on emigration affairs.²¹⁰

On June 17, 1824 agent J. Granville arrives in Philadelphia and is welcomed into Richard Allen's church, Mother Bethel, to report on the instructions and facilitation of the voluntary emigration of all African Americans expressing interest in relocation to Haiti. Agent Granville addresses the African American contingent as "citizens" and reports,

You are not ignorant that there exist in the United States of America, several hundred thousand individuals of African blood, who, on account of the dark hue of their complexion, are objects of all the prejudice...numerous communications were addressed to me [Boyer]...To these inquiries...I have replied in a favourable manner, explaining the advantages that our constitution has taken care to assure to those of our brothers who come from other parts of the globe and establish themselves among us. Already we have seen arrive in our ports, several of these children of Africa, who have come from the United States...happy at being delivered from the degrading yoke of prejudice...In consequence of this, and the knowledge that I have your patriotism...and your devotion to the great cause that we have constantly defend, and will always maintain with the same energy, I have chosen and appointed you, agent of the Government of the Republic, so that you...will be permitted to travel...²¹¹

The concerns and assurances of president Boyer were met with great reception within the African American communities near and far. Richard Allen and Mother Bethel AME

²¹⁰ Boyer, "Correspondence on May 25 1824," 15.

²¹¹ Jean-Pierre Boyer, "Instructions to the Citizen," in *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour, in the United States, Together with the Agent*, ed. President Boyer (New York: Mahlon Day, 1824), 18-20.

church was respected for being the first independent African institution in Philadelphia. The common pursuit of self-determination and agency for African people strengthened the trust between these diasporic communities and led to rapid direct action.

On June 29, 1824 Richard Allen hosted a convention at his home of for a number of African Americans to discuss the emigration plan to Haiti. Richard Allen was chosen as chair of the governing body.²¹² On July 6, the secretary of the Auxiliary Committee for the Emigration of People of Color to the Island of Haiti issued a press statement on the planned meeting at Mother Bethel African Episcopal Church. Allen chaired the meeting and the correspondence between Dewey and president Boyer of Haiti was discussed. The emigration plan was unanimously resolved and approved.²¹³ In less than two years following, more than 6,000 African Americans emigrated to Haiti. African agency, support, and circumstance had aligned to produce optimal African diasporic consciousness, collective action in establishing a multi-ethnic cultural location, and solidify a design for cognitive and geo-political *home* design in diaspora.

There are four key indicators of the unique significance of this case study in the context of African diaspora history and relations. Firstly, the self-sustained intra-diasporic relationship between free and enslaved African populations in Haiti and in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries was so endemic that it led to the reorganizing of the European ‘New World’ order. Slavery was not just abolished, it was defeated. The Haitian Revolution marked the beginning of the end of European slavery and this was partially due to the spreading of information and influence of African

²¹² PADA, “Immigration of free people of colour to the island of Hayti,” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, July 5, 1824.

²¹³ PADA, “Immigration to Hayti,” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, July 9, 1824.

diasporic communities on each other. Three years after the Haitian revolution both Britain and America abolished African slave trading. By 1860, the last of the European capitalist, in Brazil and Cuba, would legally forfeit slave trading.²¹⁴ In addition to defeating the sustainability of slavery in the Western world, these African diasporic communities re-organized the principles of freedom, citizenry, nationality, and nativism on their own terms and with their own resources. Haiti constructed their constitution to unify African diasporic communities around freedom rather than nationality. In this way they expanded the presence of Africa in diaspora through international connections and mutual support.

Secondly, Haiti's naturalization process for emigrating African Americans identifies a special relationship between diasporic communities. Haiti representatives consistently addressed African Americans as "citizens". Throughout the entire emigration project African Americans were referred to as the "brethren" of Haitians, wherein the relationship was predicated on both communities having the same mother; being the "children of Africa". African Americans were never referred to as refugees, exiles, or as a displaced community by Haitians. These labels have been applied to African diasporic groups by outsiders or culturally distant insiders. Most importantly for these African diasporic groups, one's place of origin was the determining factor of their unity, not their conditional birthplace.

Thirdly, Haiti identified itself as the 'nation for Blacks' in service to the diaspora. As stated in the national constitution, Haiti proclaimed that it would be the haven for African people around the world. Haiti embraced its own independence by sharing it with

²¹⁴ Hugh Thomas, *Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

the larger African community. This is culturally consistent with the African worldview and diasporic consciousness in the expression of collective linked fate in orientation to the fate of Africa as the Homeland. This same sentiment would be pronounced years later through influential African world leaders such as David Walker, Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah.²¹⁵

Lastly, the overwhelming attraction to Haiti by African Americans should be marked for further study. Little is recorded about this migration which remains one of the largest voluntary migrations in modern history. The African American emigration to Haiti was ten times larger than that of Liberia, Nova Scotia, or Canada even though in Eurocentric historic record the latter are most referenced. The appeal of Haiti requires attention to settle on the fact that African Americans were doing more than escaping slavery. They had long term plans to build, expand, and develop as a nation worthy people. The perimeter of slavery in the European mind hinders investigation into the culture and psychology of African potentiality. Haitians and African Americans were engaging the idea of nation building; nation building as a multi-ethnic grand marronage.

²¹⁵ David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles: Together With a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular: and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America* (Boston: D. Walker, 1830); John Henrik Clarke and Amy Jacques Garvey, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1974); Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (New York: International Publishers, 1970).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this work [Africana Studies] we discover ourselves; we do not discover someone else.

Sonja Sanchez, *NCBS Conference Speech*, Charlotte, NC 2016

Haiti's significance in world history is not simply that, as a nation of 'slaves', they had the audacity to defeat European powers. Haiti's significance to the African world is in its representation of the survival of Africa abroad; in its charge to return Africans in diaspora Home through the security of freedom and cultural posterity. To African Americans and other diasporic onlookers, Haiti was real and symbolic in transforming the probable future of African people in their cognitive and geo-political cultural locations. The Haitian Revolution represented the beginning of the end of European slavery. A new era emerged for all those who had looked toward Africa, with different eyes nonetheless.

The relationship between Haiti and free Africans of Philadelphia presents the opportunity to approach the study of diaspora from its internal workings. The intra-diasporic relationship that was nurtured cross-nationally during the 18th and 19th centuries by Africans abroad is fruitful for analysis of other intra-diasporic relations characterized by global movement, identity, culture, and the centralizing of Africa as a location in diasporic research.²¹⁶ One limitation in contemporary diasporic analysis is the extent to which the 'present' is the only thing that matters. For example, it is not uncommon to

²¹⁶ See David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering, *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

underestimate the significance of the Haitian Revolution and its impact in the diaspora by only measuring it next to the contemporary crisis or political issues in Haiti today.²¹⁷ The overall development of Haiti after the Haitian Revolution was met with a great dilemma. Haiti intended to establish itself as a “Black” country where slavery was abolished forever, even while it was positioned in the middle of a transnational economy dependent on the enslavement and exploitation of African people. The direction of Haiti to transition from ‘freedom’ at any cost to becoming a recognizable ‘nation-state’ in the world market led to decisions by its leadership to engage France as an authority and contender for allyship again not long after the African American emigration project. Sovereignty and independence have different future implications. Sovereignty requires the recognition and participation of other ‘sovereign’ states to maintain international discretion and economic trade.²¹⁸ Modernist thinkers that perceive nation-state borders to be the only measure of where communities are able to assert themselves should consider the erroneous borders created by European colonist across the entire African continent. The geo-political borders in diaspora have often resulted from the same consequence. For example, the Ghanaian state is observed as an authentic African location. However, Ghana just became a state in 1957; African Americans have had a collective identity as African people since the 18th century.²¹⁹ African Americans are not investigated as having the same connection or authenticity in relation to Africa as identified African states with geo-political border recognition.

²¹⁷ See Matthew J. Smith, *Red & Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change, 1934-1957* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

²¹⁸ See Julia Garfield, *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World: Recognition After Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

²¹⁹ Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*, 2002.

The beauty of this study is my connection of diasporic communities to the expansion of Africa conceptually. Africa was explored as a geo-political and cognitive location that could be expanded and located by African people around the world through their collective cultural expression and consciousness. Africa is not bound by the boundaries of the African continent. African world expansion and contribution to global development is enhanced when contextualized from the cultural framework I offer in this study through the Afrocentric paradigm, African worldview, and my concept of cultural location.

My work asserted the question of how Africa has been extended through diaspora and to what level of importance is this presence regarded by Africans in diaspora. The rigorous analysis, theorizing, and cultural interpretation to support this study required a cross synthesis between the Afrocentric paradigm, Afrocentric historical references, and Afrocentric psychology. It will be important to continue to glean contemporary relevance from such a historic African landmark, such as the Haitian Revolution. Reinterpretations of the structure for established African diaspora epistemological beginnings and attenuated endings were developed in this work with close attention to locating the African perspective and cultural reality. I encourage sincere scholarship on the influence of the African diaspora to first identify Africa as the centralizing and adhesive principle of study to understand the cultural expansion of Africa in diaspora. And secondly, to identify the reach of Africa by the evident deep structures of cultural expression and African diasporic consciousness in African people at Home and abroad.

As the African diaspora is continually cemented as a global African community, research invested in African advancement may ask:

1. What linkages persist across various African communities that aid collective African forward progress?
2. As African people continue to migrate and develop unique communities, how might our definition of 'who is African' evolve?
3. What technologies assist African independence and internal operatives on the continent and abroad?
4. Who are the African allies and what should Africa be developing for African generations to come?

These questions can service the ever expanding African communities, particularly as African people continue to press international political and cultural landscapes. The boundaries of study on the African diaspora within Africana Studies are few. Our intellectual turf is the world. The task at hand however, is not a simple one. I would suggest that as Africana Studies matures we should consider the incorporation of mastering multiple languages to better interpret African histories from an African cultural lens. This will allow our scholars entry into primary documents and dialogues that exist transnationally. What information might be lost due to translation difficulties or academic research in the Western Academy that often determines many African experiences unworthy of scientific documentation? In remembering francophone scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop and Frantz Fanon, how might trained Africana Studies scholars have translated their original and seminal texts differently? Herein, more is available to the discipline than is limited.

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