AN AFROCENTRIC ANALYSIS OF SCHOLARLY
LITERATURE ON THE CAYMAN ISLANDS:
LOCATION THEORY IN
A CARIBBEAN
CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This work addresses the following question: How has the prominent scholarly literature on the Cayman Islands promoted a discourse that serves to undermine the acknowledgment of African contributions as well as African self-identification in the country?

Utilizing an Afrocentric inquiry, the method of content analysis was employed to interrogate selected texts using location theory.

It was found that the majority of literature on the Cayman Islands, as well as the dominant ideology within the Caribbean has indeed undermined the acknowledgement of African contributions as well as African self-identification in the country.

More scholarship is needed that examines the experiences of African descended people living in the Caribbean from their own perspective, and critically engages dislocated texts.
A dedication to those who came before me

Those who are with me

And those who will come after me..

Ase
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” (Marcus Garvey, *The Philosophies and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*)

While growing up on a Caribbean island, one cannot deny that there is a certain closeness to nature. Amidst the rush of life, one is able to feel the ground under one’s feet, the sun on skin, and the smell of saltwater is in the air. Flora and fauna are vibrant, with their lush colors reflected on buildings, houses and concrete walls. Nature juxtaposed upon man-made buildings abounds. There is a plethora of fresh fruits and vegetables, with local markets bustling with people. Sounds of calypso, soca and reggae provide the backdrop to the lives of many.

It is within this context that I began to understand the unnaturalness of living in a society under colonial rule. Within the African Diaspora, specifically the Caribbean region, this type of political oppression is quite common. Throughout the area, there are many citizens living under false pretenses of ‘democracy’ while their ideological freedoms are being repressed. There is something inherently wrong in a society where the population has no knowledge of self, and where collective self-determination is neither discussed nor encouraged.

The education system in the Cayman Islands, for example, perpetuates a European construction of the Caribbean. Students are expected to regurgitate information on Christopher Columbus as well as other European ‘explorers.’ Information on the local
populations is limited, and based upon the construction and imagination of British authors. It is only in high school that students are introduced to Caribbean literature, after having to mire through William Shakespeare and John Steinbeck. Furthermore, it is only if one attends the local community college that one is able to critically understand and analyze their own society. However, that interrogation is only for one semester out of the student’s entire educational enrollment at that institution, and the course deals mostly with a historical analysis, as well as perspectives on politics, which have adhered to a fundamentally British ‘Westminster’ system. Yet, when the time comes to discuss the culture of the Cayman Islands, and the Africans that were forcibly brought to the islands, that discussion is held to a minimum. There is a strong denial that there were enslaved Africans in the country. However, historical documents prove otherwise.

As I went through these experiences while growing up on the Cayman Islands, I began to wonder about these African people that were living in the Cayman Islands centuries ago. How did they arrive on these shores and what influence did they have on society? What contributions did they make to the Cayman Islands? While there are many nationalities that live and work in the Cayman Islands in the present day, the question remains with regards to how a people can seek to elevate their consciousness when there is a false conception of who they are and where they came from.

It is my hope that this work reflects a commitment to honoring persons of African descent that were brought to my home country of the Cayman Islands. This scholarship seeks to inform the community of their contributions and provide dialogue on self-identification in the society.
Discussion on Colonialism

Colonialism is understood to be an effect of domination. Amilcar Cabral (1966) defines it as direct and indirect domination. Direct domination is “a power made up of people foreign to the dominated people (armed forces police, administrative agents and settlers); this is generally called classic colonialism” (Cabral, 1966, p. 8). Meanwhile, neo-colonialism is defined as indirect domination, where local persons are in power.

In developing a greater understanding of the island as a colonial subject, I began to read more texts about the Cayman Islands and started to interrogate phenomena that seemed to me to be African although not acknowledged as such. There are drum beats of traditional Caymanian “kitchen band” music that have African linkages, additionally there is retention of African understanding of spirit in the belief in ‘duppies’ that are discussed and passed down generationally in Caymanian families. In trying to understand the culture one must query as to why the literature about the Cayman Islands is only from a historical perspective that emphasizes Caymanian people as ‘object’ and not subject.

However, what are the implications of approaching a people as object and not subject of history? There seems to be little understanding on the part of scholars of the dynamic energy the people understand themselves to be a part of.

While trying to understand what it means to be Caymanian, and what the population understands Caymanian culture to be I became aware of the way in which scholarship has been written about the islands, as there is a resistance to acknowledging the African roots and contribution enslaved Africans made to the Cayman Islands.
When symbols in a country (e.g. national flags & money that is stamped with images of the British ‘royal family’) offer little to no reflection of the people who contributed to the society, one starts to recognize a problem. In discussing what it means to be from the Caribbean many scholars engaged in cultural studies tend to overemphasize certain concepts such as Creole, mixed, and the other various European or Indian influences, while failing to see Caribbean people (and these scholars themselves) as African. This ‘Creolization’ process as discussed in the text *In Praise of Creoleness* by Martinican authors Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant, is no doubt an attempt to diminish and disregard African culture as a reality for the population.

There is a current gap in the scholarship when it comes to interrogating culture and social issues of the Cayman Islands. It is imperative that this work be done in terms of elevating consciousness and seeking to combat the complacency of the population. There has been no national discussion of political independence, and it is evident that those who seek to even bring up this topic are quickly dismissed. One must wonder why that is so.

While geographically the Cayman Islands are located in the Western Caribbean, and are separated from the majority of Caribbean islands by the Caribbean Sea, there is also a vast ideological separation as well (Bodden, 2007, p. 2). This work will seek to unify the Cayman population with other Caribbean nations. Many Caymanian persons believe themselves to be “English” and seek to associate themselves with that European lifestyle. This leads to a marginalization of Caymanians that are phenotypically black, even though they make up the majority of the population in the islands. The economy of
the Cayman Islands is also tied to Western countries, with the main sectors being
Tourism and Financial Services that cater to North American and European clienteles.

There is a definite lack of agency for Caymanian people. Within the context of
this thesis, agency is defined as the capacity to act in one’s own best interests (Asante,
2007). Caymanians have no idea of their history and they lack cultural awareness and
understanding, therefore while they may participate in ceremonies and festivals that are
African, they have no concept of its origins or its meaning. This absence of knowing their
true selves affects their ability to act on their own behalf as their entire worldview is from
a foreign perspective. It is quite easy for other cultures to assert themselves over the
local population if there is no grounding in what Caymanian culture is and why it is
necessary. This work hopes to add to the scholarship written on Cayman by Caymanians,
and additionally seeks to add to Caribbean studies.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to assert Caymanian/African agency in terms of how
to study and understand Caymanian society. It is my hope to raise consciousness in terms
of what it means to be from the Caribbean and reduce the ease in which European
centered thought is the norm. By seeking to analyze previous texts this work seeks to
enable the reader to problematize the way in which previous scholars have written on the
Cayman Islands.

This work is essential to ensure that future generations embrace/ acknowledge
their African roots. By reclaiming and giving ‘credit’ to the rightful origin of the culture
of the Cayman Islands, populations will be able to better understand the historical link between the continent and the Cayman Islands.

Additionally, this research seeks to clearly show that such discourse has historically ignored the importance of African people in the Cayman Islands and is stifling the potential for the development of a Pan-African consciousness among these people. In order to achieve political unity, persons will be better able to see similarities with other Caribbean nations and to build towards liberatory practices that are Pan-African. Additionally, this work will seek to combat black self-hate/internalized racism that is still prevalent in Cayman.

Historically there has been a close relationship and association between Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, and with this scholarship it is hoped that a mediation process can be started to mend the friction between the two countries. This work may not be able to dismantle the colonial system that is being carried out today overnight, however it is hoped that it will be a start and a step in the right direction.

Research Question

This thesis seeks to answer this fundamental question: How has the prominent scholarly literature on the Cayman Islands promoted a discourse that serves to undermine the existence of African contributions as well as African self-identification in the country?
Worldview

In seeking to answer this question it is paramount that the position of undertaking this research be constituted within an African worldview. Analysis of content that deals with African people must be based upon their experiences to combat what has historically been a biased, degrading and European opinion of African reality. The definition of worldview “refers to the philosophical assumptions that guide the way people think and perceive and experience the world around them” (McDougal, 2014, p. 203).

One’s worldview is important as it shapes how a person views and experiences phenomena in the world. By operating from an African worldview there are four components that must be adhered to. Kambon (1999) states that these are: Cosmology (way of understanding the universe), Ontology (way of being), Axiology (values) and Epistemology (knowledge) (p. 22).

Paradigm

For scholars, paradigms can be understood as the structure for understanding and analyzing observed phenomena, which affects what one sees and how that is interpreted. Additionally Pellerin (2009) states, “In this regard, paradigms serve as a structuring of concepts, theories, and methodologies” (p.46).

In the text, The Afrocentric Paradigm, Ama Mazama (2003) positions that while it has been accepted that there are two fundamental aspects to a paradigm, the cognitive and the structural aspect, there is a third that is critical to an Afrocentric paradigm, and that is the functional aspect (p. 8). It can never be just ‘knowledge for knowledge sake’
for the African scholar, there must be a liberatory function for the work that is being done. It is in that understanding that an Afrocentric paradigm will be the foundation for this scholarship.

_Africana Studies_

My contention with previous writings on the Cayman Islands is that the writers have been located within disciplines of History, Geology and Business. With authors that self-identify as white, male and British, the majority of scholarship has been written ‘about’ the people with little understanding as well as hardly any engagement with those who live there.

James Turner states that there are four requirements for work done in Africana Studies. These are:

1) To defend against racism and intellectual chauvinism the fundamental right and necessity of Africana studies.
2) To disseminate Black studies social theory and analysis, criticism, and historiography and to reference the work of pioneering Black scholars.
3) To generate (new) knowledge and codify existing information and predicate contemporary study upon the truths formulated by our mentors.
4) To preserve the acknowledged value of rare and classical texts in the field, and maintain the scholarly tradition and rich heritage of African peoples and their descendants. (qtd. in Pellerin, 2009, p 50)

This work seeks to situate itself within this structuring of the discipline, and in the process, to generate new knowledge in the African Diaspora, to analyze scholarship about a specific island in the Caribbean. It also serves as a critique to the hegemonic, European analysis about the Cayman Islands that has been previously written.
By seeking to situate African people within the context of their story in the Cayman Islands, this scholarship must be done within Africana studies and not another discipline, as it is understood that other disciplines contribute to a European knowledge base. The liberatory function of Africana studies must be utilized in order to disassociate from European thought. Mazama (2003) states that it is this same destructive European ‘ethos’ that has exploited and weakened the collective power of African people as this epistemological domination has controlled our “conceptual / cultural space” (p. 3). It is therefore illogical to assume that this scholarship could be done in other disciplines, as there are explicit liberatory purposes for this work.

**Theory**

The theory that will be fundamental to the work, and concurrent throughout this project will be Afrocentricity. Molefi Asante (2007) defines Afrocentricity as “a paradigmatic intellectual perspective that privileges African agency within the context of African history and culture trans-continentally and trans-generationally” (p. 2). Asante (2003) further contends that it is this centrality of placing African people in the “center of any analysis of African phenomena” (p. 2). Placing persons of African descent living in the Cayman Islands at the center of the research will be fundamental to combatting the previous European centered analysis of the history of the islands and its inhabitants.
Methodology

Methodology is “the aspect of research that contains the paradigms, theories, concepts and methods that shape approaches to study and social intervention” (McDougal, 2014, p. 30). By adopting a methodology informed by Afrocentricity, I will be able to develop research questions that will improve the “lived realities” (Pellerin, 2012, p. 152) of African people, as well as provide research principles that are grounded in the perspectives and agency of said community.

Method

The tool of data collection for this work will be Content Analysis. It is defined as “a research technique that allows one to systematically analyze the hidden and visible content in messages” (McDougal, 2014, p. 164). By using this method I will be able to study themes within the dominant discourse in relation to African people in the Cayman Islands, as well as some of the ways in which this has undermined their contribution to the society.

Conclusion

This scholarship will seek to add to the discourse of understanding what it means to be African within a small island Caribbean context, as well as interrogate anti-African attitudes that majority black populations face, as well as internalize.
For the population of the Cayman Islands, there is a false sense of collective autonomy that is believed to be true. This fallacy is keeping the population complacent while upholding a colonial regime.

This continual perpetuation of a dislocated understanding of who people of the Cayman Islands are will be continued unless scholarship is produced to challenge the status quo. The lack of identifying as being of African descent results in the acceptance of European identity and ideology. This mass confusion must be resisted, and scholars must conceptualize discourses to liberate Africans as well as place Africa central in everything that is done, and in every thought that is had.

For many persons of African descent, they are foreign in their own understanding of the world. Liberation must first be accomplished by intellectually resisting western domination. There must then be a reconnection and reconstitution of the holistic African worldview.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated in the previous chapter, the problem that this study seeks to address is: How has the prominent scholarly literature on the Cayman Islands promoted a discourse that fails to acknowledge the existence of African contributions as well as undermine African self-identification in the country?

This chapter critically reviews literature regarding the Caribbean, Caribbean culture, and more specifically the Cayman Islands. Many texts in this area (e.g., *The Black Atlantic, Caribbean Cultural Identity*) generally conclude that the Caribbean must be understood as a pluralistic society and one that consists of an identity that is always in a state of formation and synthesis. As Ama Mazama (2003) pointed out, however, these interpretations and opinions fail to address the conceptual domination that Europeans have continually perpetuated on scholars that interrogate the Caribbean and African people that live there. Thus, the conclusions that these authors from the Caribbean arrive at must be analyzed and examined further.

Many scholars of the Caribbean diaspora tend to define the Caribbean experience as being multi-ethnic. Additionally, Cayman Islands historians seek to minimize the role Africans played in the development of the islands. This will be the emphasis of the literature review that follows.
Literature Themes

The sections below discuss the following themes in this order: Concepts of Diaspora in the Caribbean, African Self-Identification and Caymanian Historical Discourse. The literature review ends with a summary and critique of existing literature. An Afrocentric analysis is then offered.

Literature Review

Concepts of Diaspora in the Caribbean.

In chapter one of the text, The Black Atlantic, Paul Gilroy (1993) argues that there is a separate cultural form that is found within this conceptual space that he has termed, “The Black Atlantic.” Gilroy seeks to explain that the idea of nationalism is rather limiting and that, in his opinion, there are conceptual problems within the structure of Cultural Studies. By paying particular attention to this ‘ethnic absolutism’ (1993, p. 5), as he calls nationalism, Gilroy concludes that scholars are not able to focus on the transcultural, international and multiple ways of being within the African Diaspora. The author locates cultural studies as being of European origin, with its formation being inherently racist. He states that he is critiquing the (wrong) assumption that cultures are always bound within the borders of a nation. Due to the ways in which Europeans have approached cultural studies, Gilroy (1993) states that he is writing the text to assert black people as ‘agents’ within the cultural perspective instead of ‘objects’ (p. 6). For him, the nationalist structure is a concept of the past, and one that is out dated. Therefore, scholars need to rethink how relevant it really is. Gilroy also writes that scholars should rather
ground their understanding in the more pluralistic sense of cultural identity. For him, the concept of the ‘Black Atlantic’ is a form of hybridity and exchanges. The Atlantic should be seen as a unit of analysis within the world and be used to further cultural studies. For the author there are only discontinued histories from the continent to those living in the diaspora, and he critiques Pan-Africanism as an ideology that makes reference to an “African essence that could magically connect all blacks together” (Gilroy, 1993, p. 24).

For Gilroy, his understanding of the African diaspora and Caribbean identity is that it is fluid, and is open to movement, which is in contrast to what other scholars, who have formed a relationship with the continent and believe in the unity of African people, engage in. Gilroy (1993) argues against this ‘ethnic absolutism’ because it limits the concept of diaspora. The Black Atlantic world is a vast network, with many differences. Therefore, according to him, there is no ‘unitary idea of black community’ (Gilroy, 1993, p. 32).

In the article entitled, *In Praise of Creoleness*, authors Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant (1990) seek to define and articulate the concept of Creoleness. The term emphasizes the diversity of Antillean ancestry and cultural heritage (Chinese, Indian, and European influences etc.) and seeks to understand the diverse identities and histories through literature and language. Edouard Glissant is one of the main influences of the authors and is widely recognized as one of the most influential figures in Caribbean cultural thought. The main philosophical theory that is used is the concept of Rhizome that was developed by French philosophers.
Culture is therefore understood as having ‘multiplicities’ (Bernabe, Chamoiseau & Confiant, 1990). This means that there are many non-hierarchal ways for data to be represented and interpreted, as well as many different ways for entry and exit points in understanding culture. There is therefore no need for an originating point in this theoretical conception.

The authors state that this approach encompasses the diverse nature of those living in the Caribbean, as there were many cultures and ethnicities during the enslavement period. The aim is to search for authenticity within Caribbean societies and not exterior “across shores” (Bernabe et al., 1990, p. 892), or to the continent of Africa as the origin of Caribbean culture. Creoleness, to the authors, is the interaction of European, African and Asian cultural elements that were mixed together within the Caribbean. While the concept is often thought about as a language, they state that it is also a way of looking at the African Diaspora within the Caribbean. For the authors, it is only when Creoleness is used that persons of the Caribbean will be able to re-examine their existence. Within the text, there is a criticism of Negritude, as it is viewed as being a singular ideology that doesn’t take into account other people originating from diverse places (e.g., the American Indian, Chinese, etc.). There is a new human identity being formed, and this diversity will help persons of African descent understand themselves and their culture. For the authors, in fact, the whole world can learn from the Caribbean experience because it is moving into a state of Creoleness and Creole consciousness.

In the text, Cultural Identity and Diaspora, Stuart Hall (1994) seeks to start a conversation on cultural identity and representation. Hall proposes that the concept of
cultural identity can be approached in two ways. The first one is in relation to a people that have a shared history and ancestry. Those of a common historical experience have a static, stable frame of reference that lies beneath the shifting divisions and change of history that actually take place (1994). He likens this first understanding with movements such as Negritude and Pan-Africanism. With this definition, persons of African descent in the Caribbean are able to place Africa in the center of their identity and give it meaning. The second approach assumes that there are not only points of similarity, but also differences that make up one’s identity. Therefore, according to Hall, one cannot talk about the Caribbean without understanding the ruptures and discontinuity that make the Caribbean unique. Cultural identity, according to Hall, is a matter of ‘becoming,’ and this second interpretation is not just ‘essentialising’ nor recovering the past (Hall, 1994, p. 225). Hall argues that it is only from this second, fluid concept that one can understand the trauma of colonization. It is through this positioning that a person can attempt to find out who they are. For Hall, the diasporic identity is constantly moving. Therefore, through this producing and reproducing of themselves, this hybridity is how Caribbean peoples’ come to know their identity.

In the text, *Caribbean Cultural Identity*, Rex Nettleford (2003) argues that the Caribbean is a pluralistic society. However, he states there are disagreements amongst scholars as to whether the society is held together by force, due to conflict amongst groups, or by a cohesive integration and cultural consensus (2003, p. X). Nettleford believes that due to the mixing of different cultures and elements within the Caribbean, new societies are created and concepts of understanding identity are formed. This end
result, he argues, is unmistakably Caribbean. The author describes Caribbean identity as marked by cultural pluralism, as there are numerous persons from Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East living in these spaces. Nettleford states that “an apt description of the typical Caribbean person is that he or she is part Africa, part European, part Asian, part Native American but totally Caribbean” (2003, xii). To be a person of African descent living in the Diaspora is to be in a constant state of becoming. While many persons distinguish the English-speaking Caribbean from the French-speaking, from the Dutch-speaking, etc., Nettleford disagrees with such distinctions as he feels that they add to the narrative of a separate and broken Caribbean identity. According to him, there can be no conversation about origin, as it is more about relation and positioning. “..That the inhabitants must sing goodbye motherland knowing that where one now is, one must call home” (Nettleford, 2003, p. 2). The concept of Creole is akin to a new way of understanding the world, one’s position in the world and new way of expressing one’s identity.

While the term Creole has been used in a derogatory manner in the way that it is positioned against the superiority of Europe and all of the ideology that comes from European scholars, Nettleford (2003) states that it refers to the process of reinvention and reimagining of a community that descends from “old world cultures” (p. 3) - Old world meaning African, European and Asian that crossed the Atlantic and became Creole in this modern context.
African Self-Identification.

In the article, *Cultural Reconfigurations in the African Caribbean*, Maureen Warner-Lewis identifies the African Diaspora as having articulated the concept of Diaspora much more in depth than continental Africans. Additionally, Warner-Lewis (1999) states that such people in the Diaspora are in “exile” (p. 19) and are therefore more engrossed with images about the African continent. However, even though Africans are located in the Caribbean, according to Warner-Lewis, there is a certain cultural continuity that occurs in these communities. While there is an Africanness amongst the Caribbean, the author states there are certain European values that this same community has embraced due to the proximity of European culture and ideology. There is a certain ambivalence of that population that Warner-Lewis discusses as well. However, African languages have continued within the Caribbean, as well as songs, African knowledge systems, herbal remedies and cosmologies (Warner-Lewis, 1999, p. 21).

While there is a coexistence of Africa and Europe in the Caribbean, Warner-Lewis (1999) believes that there are multiple of cultural identities. She gives the examples of names and religion. Persons of African descent have had to compromise in order to survive personally and collectively. For the author, this balancing, restructuring and syncretization contribute to the delicate structure of a diaspora (Warner-Lewis, 1999). While persons in the Diaspora are in a multi-cultural context, Warner-Lewis (1999) asserts that Africans are seeking to forge lasting relationships with the mixed fragments that they have of African cultures on the continent.
Similarly, Elliot P. Skinner (1999), in an article entitled *The Restoration of African Identity for a New Millennium* believes that for African Caribbean people to combat their ‘exilic’ (p. 28) experience, they must restore their civilization. This will not be possible if Africans in the diaspora look at themselves through a European ideology or definition. Due to the contact with Europeans in the Caribbean, which he states was a traumatic experience that caused Africans to question their own humanity, in redefining cultural renaissance, enhancing economies is necessary for equality (Skinner, 1999). It was through the philosophy of Europeans at the time of European contact with Africa, that European religion forced Africans to devalue their own culture and spiritual belief systems according to Skinner (1999). However, many Africans were able to maintain their sense of identity and humanity against Europe. This was not achieved by using the same “lens and analytic tools as detractors” (Skinner, 1999, p. 30). The author states that people of African descent must strive to create their own definitions with their own terms, as well as reconstruct their cultural identity as steps toward emancipation. Afrocentricity, states Skinner (1999), can be used as a theoretical tool against the onslaught of European constructs and terms. By analyzing important figures in the Diaspora, the author seeks to create an ideological framework in which Africans can be guided to action in viewing modern developments through culturally relevant and specific beliefs.
Brian Kieran, in the text *The Lawless Caymanas*, (1992) attempts to share information about the soldiers of the West India Regiment. These black soldiers were raised and trained in various Caribbean islands to assist the British colonizing forces.

However, according to Kieran (1992), there was great opposition to this on the part of plantation owners who feared the backlash of training black soldiers during the enslavement period in the Caribbean. Many plantation owners indeed felt that they would have to send their most valued enslaved Africans to the regiments.

While the author states that there was no military presence in the Cayman Islands and that the colony did not figure much in the history of West India regiments, those specific Islands provide an interesting ‘microcosm’ of the times (Kieran, 1992). Additionally, Kieran (1992) seek to draw parallels with the conditions prevailing in larger communities like Jamaica, following the Proclamation of the Abolition of Slavery. In his text, Kieran makes a comparison between apprentices in the Cayman Islands and the soldiers of the West India regiments who had a right to be manumitted, and freed.

Moreover, Kieran (1999) states that the West India Regiments had an advantage over other regiments, in that it was comprised of “hardy Negros soldiers” (p. 21) of mainly African descent. However, they encountered difficulties such as violence against them by some white plantation owners and poor living conditions in their military bases.

While there were many transaction records of the buying and selling of enslaved Africans in the Cayman Islands just like any other Caribbean island at the time, Kieran (1999) states that the colony was different as the status of the enslaved Africans caused a
problem due to provisions contained in the Slave Registration Act of 1817. After the importation of enslaved Africans into British colonies was deemed against the law, and freedom granted, the registration of enslaved Africans was a prerequisite for compensation to plantation owners. However, there was no registration in the Cayman Islands, therefore, enslaved Africans had the right to be free after Emancipation on 1st August 1834. This position was not widely known – as the Governor of Jamaica remained silent on this issue. Therefore, according to the author, the position of the enslaved Africans who became Apprentices in the Cayman Islands was peculiar, yet it could be compared to that of the West India Regiments from their inception in 1795 (Kieran, 1999).

Michael Craton’s *Founded Upon the Seas* (2003), is the first detailed history of the Cayman Islands. For Craton evidence suggests that there was no indigenous population on the islands, and that the ‘Amerindians’ who first lived in many islands of the Caribbean probably didn’t settle in the Cayman Islands. It is his opinion that the islands had nothing that migrants or traders were looking for, as geographically they were distant from other islands (at least a hundred miles from the nearest land); and there were insufficient supplies of fresh water and green provisions (Craton, 2003). Additionally, crocodiles were to be found along the beach, and lagoons and swamps. Therefore, according to Craton, the history of the Islands began with Columbus and his men, who were the first Europeans documented to have seen and recorded the islands in 1503 and named them ‘Las Tortugas.’ However, many sailors visited the islands after being stumbled upon by the Spanish.
Craton documents the process that the islands went through from the first settlement to modern day occurrences. When the British captured Jamaica from Spain in 1660, the Cayman Islands were used as stopping points, and a place to get turtle meat and fish (Craton, 2003). However, it was only after 1700 that there were permanent settlement records detailing information about the islands, and by the mid-1700s, persons living in Jamaica began to receive land grant records enabling ownership of land in the Cayman Islands. These settlers moved to the colony with enslaved Africans that were used to clear the land of mahogany trees, make provision grounds and erect houses.

Craton (2003) documents that from the 1730s to the early 1830s (Emancipation), enslaved Africans were used for logging and cotton plantations. The largest immigration of inhabitants and enslaved Africans, according to Craton were to come from the Miskito Coast by British persons that evacuated the region in the 1780s. These were approximately three hundred people – fifty being settlers and their families, the rest enslaved Africans. Cotton production, Craton states, was important. However, in the Cayman Islands it was not on the scale of other Caribbean plantation colonies, as there were fewer than twelve plantations – averaging about one hundred acres. The author states that in the Cayman Islands there was a healthy proportion of young enslaved Africans, with a few being over the age of 70. He deduces that this would occur because many enslaved Africans were imported between 1783 and 1807 to work on the cotton plantations (Craton, 2003). He states that with such recent importations at the time of Emancipation, there would have been a majority of enslaved Africans that were born on the continent, rather than born in the Cayman Islands, or elsewhere in the Caribbean.
Craton asserts that “Indeed African born slaves in Cayman would have been higher than in many other colonies. This is a factor with important cultural implications (2003, p. 72)”.

He assesses whether African cultural identity was still valued by looking at names on the registry for enslaved Africans. Whether a person had an African or non-African name, as well as a surname, was indicative to him about how enslaved Africans viewed their ‘heritage’. In speaking about culture, the author only states:

During the time when isolation and hardship bred invention, the traditional Caymanian songs were narrative ballads, sea shanties and launching songs. Caymanian folk-dance was a local variant of the European quadrille, danced to the music of a small band using locally constructed instruments, in which the fiddle led and an African resonance lingered. (Craton, 2003, p. 413)

In the text, The Cayman Islands in Transition, author Roy Bodden seeks to analyze Caymanian society through its politics and culture. For him, even in today’s society, racism is the “inevitable legacy of empire and colonialism” (Bodden, 2007, p. 52). For Africans living in the Cayman Islands, Emancipation meant that they were able to control their time and labor. Culturally, Bodden (2007) argues, it was the beginning of a combative relationship with Europeans in the colony.

The emancipated Africans reconstructed some aspects of their traditions. However, the ruling class, while recognizing that the rituals were helpful in simmering tensions, realized the power and threat that the practices represented (as they enabled Africans to congregate in groups and reaffirm their own cultural identity). Bodden states that while there were no wide scale rebellions in the Cayman Islands, ‘obeah’ was and still is to this day, a banned practice and a criminal offence (Bodden, 2007, p. 53).
According to him, the population of the Cayman Islands seems steadfast in erasing or forgetting anything associated with, or reminiscent of the enslavement period in the colony. Bodden (2007) states that black people were deliberately encouraged to abandon traditional beliefs and customs in the African diaspora. “In the Cayman Islands, vocabulary and linguistic peculiarities have been abandoned in favor of the colonial language and expressions. In a blatant denial of history, even established Caymanians with obvious black ancestry are reluctant to factor in African influences” (Bodden, 2007, p. 54).

Similarly, he states, certain celebrations – for example Emancipation Day on August 1, which is recognized in other British and former British Colonies have been erased from the Caymanian cultural calendar. Until the late 1950s, Emancipation Day was a public holiday in the Cayman Islands (Bodden, 2007). Additionally, the celebration of ‘Jonkanoo,’ which originated in the African Diaspora, also thrived in certain places on the island. However, similarly to the celebration of Emancipation day, Jonkanoo is no longer acknowledged, although it was organized up to the early 1960s. For Bodden (2007), the disappearance of these two prominent reminders of the African Caribbean cultural experience in the Cayman Islands was the result of two societal changes. The first was a change of employment. As Caymanian men were utilized on ships, it meant they were no longer around to lead and plan the festivities. Secondly, these celebrations held no cultural or historical significance for the Government and, therefore, received no official Government support (Bodden, 2007).
In understanding Caribbean Identity, Bodden (2007) states that, "the term creole is hardly ever used in the Cayman Islands, and yet Caymanian society is a solidly creole society” (p. 62). He defines Creole as people and cultures that originate in Europe or Africa, and who were born in a country under colonial rule. Furthermore, he posits that present Caymanian society is a mixed population, in which many overtly African traditions and customs have been superseded by an “imperialist psychology” (Bodden, 2007, p. 65). Caymanian society is a plural society in which there is a blending of cultural nuances. Bodden (2007) quotes Nettleford, in stating that the inhabitants of the colony are ‘part African, part European and totally Caribbean’ (p. 69).

Summary

For most of the literature examined in this Literature Review, major patterns and themes that are identified deal with the concept of Creoleness, as well as a uniqueness that authors believe can be found in the African Diaspora, specifically the Caribbean. Terms such as multiplicity and plurality of identities and culture dominate the discourse. For many scholars, there is a tendency to criticize attempts to link African origins to the Caribbean, and accusations of essentialism and reductionism are made.

Within the literature that deals more specifically with the Cayman Islands, there is little historical energy spent toward exploring Caymanian culture, or identifying historical documents that were not produced by colonial offices.
This normative orientation in scholarship on the Caribbean has produced a dearth of authors that deal with African cultural retention, and the concept of being ‘African’ within that geographical space.

For the majority of scholarship within Caribbean Culture, there is no mention of African ancestors. For many scholars, to be a person of African descent living in the Diaspora is to be in a constant state of becoming, which must be mentally exhausting.

The main weakness of the Creole/becoming cultural identities stems from the fact that it is rooted within a European framework. Ironically, scholars who claim to be doing the work to assert Africans identity are grounded within an anti-African worldview. This scholarship is invariably limited, just as there is no origin of any type of Caribbean identity, there is no theoretical grounding as well. It is a European, existentialist approach to living and being from the Caribbean. Having a multiplicity of identities is confusing and ambiguous at best.

Conclusion

Within the Caribbean, and more specifically the Cayman Islands, there is a constant need for African agency to be asserted. There has been an adoption of racist views, attitudes and behaviors about Caribbean people by Caribbean people themselves. This is a manifestation of a Eurocentric view, which is also visible in the consumption and regurgitation of western ideology. Additionally, with many ethnic groups in the region, the concept of ‘Creoleness’ and a unique ‘Caribbeanness’ not only affords persons an opportunity to deny racism, but also to deny their Black /Africannesss. This
propagation of a dislocated ideology such as Creoleness informed by an attempt to deny African agency will lead to perpetual chaos and disunity among African people within the Caribbean and the African Diaspora at large.
CHAPTER 3
THEORY AND METHOD

What does it mean when one reads a text about their history from someone else’s point of view? How accurate is an analysis of phenomena when findings are interpreted from a foreign understanding? In seeking to understand and answer these questions, worldview (the way one sees and views phenomena occurring in the world) becomes a critical factor. As previously stated by Kambon (1999), an African worldview has four components: Cosmology, Ontology, Axiology and Epistemology. The African way of understanding the universe (Cosmology) sees reality as being based upon unity and community. Ontologically (way of being) speaking, the African worldview understands that there is a spiritual foundation to the world. Values (axiology) that are at the forefront of this worldview are “person-to-person/human-to-human relations” (Kambon, 1999, p. 122). The African ways of understanding knowledge (epistemology), rest on the notion that knowledge can be obtained through both emotion and thinking capabilities. By approaching the selected texts within this worldview, one is already positioned to not misinterpret and misrepresent Africans lived realities.

Furthermore, by additionally structuring the way that one understands and analyzes observed phenomena (paradigm), and operating from one that has been utilized for and by people of African descent, one is protected against infiltration of other foreign norms and values to influence one’s scholarship. As previously stated in Chapter 1, for Asante (2007), a person endowed with agency is defined as “a human being who is
capable of acting independently in his or her own best interest. Agency itself is the ability to provide the psychological and cultural resources necessary for the advancement of human freedom” (Asante, 2007, p. 40). By having an African worldview as a foundation, as well as utilizing an Afrocentric paradigm, agency is recognized in whatever geographic region or historical time period African persons may be.

Having a methodology is important due to the overarching way that it guides the researcher’s approach to the research question. By understanding that there is a ‘functional aspect’ to an Afrocentric paradigm (Mazama, 2003, p. 8) the work is therefore inclined to affect the lived realities of African people and is not just a pursuit of intellectual posturing. It is for that reason that an Afrocentric methodology is of the utmost importance in the discipline of Africana studies.

A theory seeks to explain the relations between concepts. An Afrocentric Theory, “establishes two fundamental realities in situating a text: location and dislocation” (Mazama, 2003, p. 235). By using the theory one can situate a text by analyzing symbols and signs that the author has placed in their work. Within the discipline, theory allows the scholar to hypothesize, analyze phenomena, and examine results.

Methods provide the function of collecting data within an academic project. For McDougal (2014), “methods allow the researcher to collect data, but methodology combines methods with the paradigms, assumptions, theories, concepts and ideas that give life, interpretation and meaning to data” (p. 31).
Methodology

Therefore, by seeking to analyze literature on the Cayman Islands, I will be utilizing a methodology that seeks to encompass an approach that understands Africans as being central and integral to analysis of their history, experiences and realities.

Due to the role that methodology plays in terms of shaping how one actually conducts research and analyzes phenomena it is important that it seeks to establish the agency of African people. For many scholars that are in Africana Studies, and also those that ‘study black people’ in the traditional European disciplines there is a sense of defeat and an inclination to study the problems they believe that African people experience. It is essential that one employ a ‘victorious consciousness’ that Modupe defines as being one of seven basic components of Afrocentric theory (Mazama, 2003, p. 55). There is a false, racist, European imagining of African people that informs the defeatist attitude of many that engage in scholarship which Modupe understands as “the white supremacist construction of African denigration normalized throughout the world culture” (Mazama, 2003, p. 70). However, for those that seek to approach the analysis from a centered position, and gain the knowledge of African contributions and perspective, Modupe is in agreement with Asante that one is able to attain victorious consciousness. In approaching and employing methods, theories and paradigms that speak to this victory, the scholar is able to have a grounding and local perspective that seeks to let African people who are at the center of analysis speak for themselves.
Theory

The theory that will be used in this work is Location Theory. This theory stems from an Afrocentric reading and analysis of texts. It is a form of examining scholarly literature of both authors of African descent and those of non-African descent from an Afrocentric viewpoint (McDougal, 2014, p. 66). For Asante, through their writings, authors leave identifications as to how to interpret a text being located or not. Location in this instance and for the purpose of this thesis can be understood as the “cultural address” (Mazama, 2003, p. 29) of the author. The elements involved in locating a text include language, attitude and direction.

Language: Since language/use of words is the most prominent in a body of work, it should be the easiest way in which to locate the cultural address, when utilizing the author’s text. Many times, authors are operating within a white supremacist framework, and their language represents that (Mazama, 2003).

Attitude according to Asante, “refers to a predisposition to respond in a characteristic manner to some situation, value, idea, object, person, or group of persons” (Mazama, 2003, p. 239). Therefore how an author feels, or tends to approach a subject about Africana people/culture/subject can inform the location of said writer.

Direction: Asante’s definition of direction is “the tendency or inclination present in the literary work with regard to the author’s objective” (Mazama, 2003, p. 240). This concept can be interpreted to mean the way in which the author conveys their worldview and opinion on a subject.
Location Theory will be specifically employed in this work as it will be used to establish, (through an analysis of scholarly literature on the Cayman Islands and select text on the Caribbean) that said discourse undermines the existence of African contributions as well as African self-identification in the country. Specific attention will be paid to themes and terms, that have been classified as fitting those descriptions.

Asante, in seeking to identify the cultural location of an author makes a distinction between ‘decapitated’ or ‘lynched’ texts.

Decapitated texts are defined as those whose author has no African cultural element within the writings. The author, in fact, aims to distance themselves from this component. The author is “fundamentally committed to a style of writing that places him/her outside their own historical experiences” (Mazama, 2003, p. 239).

A lynched text however refers to one whose author is highly efficient in applying and using literary techniques, but lacks African historical and cultural knowledge. Therefore there is a tendency to interpret “Eurocentric perspectives” (McDougal, 2014, p. 66). According to Asante (2003) an example of this can be seen when terms such as ‘warlike natives’ (p. 239) etc. are used.

Both of these texts have authors that seek to place Africanness outside of the text or make no mention of cultural concepts. These characteristics are not dependent on the ethnicity of the author.

It is important that the theories that Africana scholars use originate within the discipline and come from a centering of African people within their analyses due to the confusion and illogicalness that results in applying European theories to an African lived
experience. In doing so, scholars eliminate the function of liberatory scholarship by complying and adding to European scholarship, masked as Africana studies.

In seeking to analyze and produce scholarship that specifically locates writings that discuss African people in the Cayman Islands (and by virtue the Caribbean), location theory was selected.

Utilizing this theory will enable me to identify and critique the European way of thinking, which has been thought of as the norm and the standard by which African people of the Cayman Islands understand themselves and their history.

**Method**

The method that will be used in this work is Content Analysis. This tool of collecting data is defined as “a research technique that allows one to systematically analyze the hidden and visible content in messages” (McDougal, 2014, p. 164). This method will allow me to study themes within the dominant discourse in relation to African self-identification and contribution to the Cayman Islands. This method has a strong relationship to my theoretical framework as I am seeking to interrogate the texts by placing Africans in the center, and analyzing the authors by their limitations or strengths using location theory.

The advantages of Content Analysis for this thesis is that it can be used over an extensive time period, follow up studies can be conducted using the same method, and data may be less susceptible to bias seeing as how it is already produced (McDougal, 2014). While I will be analyzing visible content in terms of language that is utilized by
authors, there will also be hidden content that will be inferred due to omission of certain
terms and themes that are not discussed.

The coding manual is a reflection of my theoretical disposition and objectives as I
will be locating texts based upon certain terms that are deemed crucial in attempting to
locate the African subject on the margins of their history and experiences. As Asante
states, “When agency does not exist we have the condition of marginality, and the worst
form of marginality is to be marginal within your own story” (Asante, 2007, p. 41).

The texts that were selected can be categorized as follows:

- **Concepts of Diaspora in the Caribbean**

  Works chosen are: *The Black Atlantic* by Paul Gilroy; *In Praise of Creoleness*, by
Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant; *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*
by Stuart Hall, and *Caribbean Cultural Identity* by Rex Nettleford. These texts were
chosen as they represent the dominant discourse on how people of the Caribbean perceive
themselves to be. Notions of Creoleness and fluidity, as introduced in Chapter 1 and 2, in
addition to using European philosophy to explain how persons of African descent see
themselves in the Diaspora have been heavily encouraged when analyzing the
geographical region.

- **African Self-Identification**

  Works chosen are: *Cultural Reconfigurations in the African Caribbean* by
Maureen Warner Lewis and *The Restoration of African Identity for a New Millennium* by
Elliot P. Skinner. These texts were chosen due to their positioning that Africans in the
Caribbean have continued to identify with the continent, and there is a level of cultural continuity that is present. Skinner articulates that Africans in the Caribbean need to use their own philosophical and theoretical ideologies.

- **Caymanian Historical Discourse**

  Texts chosen are: *The Lawless Caymanas: A story of Slavery, Freedom and the West India* by Brian Kieran; *The Cayman Islands in Transition: The Politics, History and Sociology of Changing Society* by Roy Bodden, and *Founded Upon the Seas: A History of the Cayman Islands and Their People* by Michael Craton. These texts are the most widely known in terms of scholarly work done on the Cayman Islands from a historical and sociological point of view. These are the most encompassing descriptions of the history and present political situation within the colony.

  Other sources were not included for the purposes of time as well as relevance to the study.

**Coding**

For this part of content analysis text will be formatted into data categories. Therefore this coding system will allow for observations within the text to be organized and categorized in a methodical way (McDougal, 2014, p. 166). Data that is recorded will be input onto a coding schedule form, which will be attached with a manual that contains instructions for coding. As specified before, manifest (apparent content) and latent
(deeper meaning) coding will be utilized in this tool of data collection. The Coding Manual and Coding Schedule can be found in the Appendix.

Conclusion

In trying to analyze the subjects and themes in scholarly literature written on the Cayman Islands, it is imperative that African people in the Caribbean become aware of the effects of regurgitating and celebrating a European worldview. The understanding and recognition of their own history and identity are critical to the conversations that need to be had on colonialism and political independence within the country of the Cayman Islands. These discussions will forever be lost if there is a continuation of texts written about the colony from a foreign point of view, and a dissociation with anything African.

Within the discipline of Africana studies, it is important to address the dislocation of many Caribbean scholars who tend to use ideologies that offer them a way of escaping their Africanness. These European concepts must be addressed and critiqued so as to push the discipline into developing more theories to address the lived realities of persons of African descent living in the Caribbean and all that it entails. The history of the Caribbean is fraught with African cultural continuity and Africans that were/are located there have pushed to assert themselves in a myriad of ways. It is the duty of scholars within this discipline to analyze and synthesize these experiences without distraction.

These issues will be addressed in my findings as I seek to place the Africans in the Cayman Islands back into the center of their story while simultaneously identifying and critiquing the imperialist way in which this information has been told thus far.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND SUMMARY

Results & Findings

The majority of the nine texts that were analyzed were books, as there were five books and four articles used during the course of the research. The titles of the texts ranged greatly, from origins of a bible verse in “Founded upon the Seas” to a theoretical concept of understanding the African diaspora in “The Black Atlantic.” Three text titles had the term “Culture” in them, as well as three that had “Identity” in the title as well. Most of the texts were published in the 1990s. However, the range was over thirty years, with the earliest text being published in 1978 and the most recent text published in 2007.

The dominant area of analysis was within the Caribbean, with the three central texts emphasizing the Cayman Islands, and others on the larger western African Diaspora.

The dominant area of focus was Cultural Studies, with four of the texts emphasizing cultural identity, two dealing with historical events, while the rest included the African Diaspora and Literature.

These academic areas were not necessarily related to the discipline in which the scholar was trained in, as the majority of the scholars were in the discipline of History. Two received degrees in Political Science, as well as academic areas of Cultural Studies, English, Anthropology and Sociology.
There were two authors who were born in Jamaica, two born in Trinidad & Tobago, two in the United Kingdom (England), one in the Cayman Islands, two born in Martinique and New Zealand.

The majority of the authors lived/resided where they were born. However, some had emigrated from the Caribbean to the US/UK. Additionally, most of the authors are of African descent, with only two ethnically identified as European.

The sub-theme that emerged the most from the research was that the authors used language that is NOT culturally grounded when discussing African people. While the text was being analyzed for language that was culturally grounded, there were only two texts that displayed evidence of such. The overwhelming majority, seven of the nine texts, used language that was derogatory and that sought to disempower and not place Africans at the center of their experience. The three specific texts that dealt with the Cayman Islands were consistent in that they did not use culturally grounded language.

The second most consistent sub-themes were ‘Agency and African people’ and ‘Positioning of Caribbean/Creole Identity.’ The majority of the texts (seven out of nine) addressed this sub-theme. Like previously, although the majority of the texts addressed agency, five out of the seven texts sought to reduce African agency or discuss them as non-central figures to the text. The texts that dealt specifically with the Cayman Islands were consistent in that two of the texts dealing with the sub-theme did not ascribe agency to African people.

However, for the sub-theme ‘Positioning of Caribbean/Creole Identity’, the results showed that six out of the seven relevant texts conceptualized a Caribbean identity
that had no grounding/origin in the continent of Africa. The texts that were about the Cayman Islands were consistent in that two of the relevant texts put forward a ‘Caymanian/Creole’ identity.

Occurring with the least level of propensity across all nine texts was the sub-theme ‘Discussion on the development of country that omits labor produced by enslaved Africans.’ However, in the texts that dealt specifically with the Cayman Islands, it consistently showed up in all three, occurring with a high level of propensity among those works. The other sub-themes occurred within the range of four to six of the texts and will be discussed in depth further in the chapter.

Based upon the analysis of the texts, the results validate the assertion implicit in the research question as it was found that the prominent scholarly literature on the Cayman Islands promoted a discourse that serves to undermine the existence of African contributions as well as African self-identification in the country.

Analysis

In seeking to understand the lived realities of African people by having through an African worldview, it is imperative that there not to be a misinterpretation and false representation of phenomena that occur among African people. It is through this approach that Africans are placed in the center of their history and experiences. Establishing the agency of African people was foremost in analyzing the selected texts. In seeking to identify agency through location theory, the texts could be analyzed and findings could be recorded.
Applying the themes of ‘Treatment of African Contribution, Discussion of African Self-Identification and Location of Text’, led to the conclusion that this discourse undermined African contributions to the country as well as it sought to identify the population as being something other than African.

Treatment of African Contributions

In the texts specific to the Cayman Islands, it was found that within the discussion of the development of the country, for the majority there was an omission in terms of the labor that was produced by the Africans who were enslaved during that time period. While authors historically stated the jobs that Africans would do, for example, cutting mahogany trees or working on cotton plantations, there were hardly any linkages made to the actual economy or development of the country. There was little recognition given to the labor that was used to create infrastructures such as roads or agriculture that enabled a population to live in the country. Other times, there would be a description of how things were built, but no mention of the Africans that built them. However, only the author who was born in the Cayman Islands outright stated that the institution of slavery was fundamental to the islands’ economy. An example found in the texts is: “During these years the islands were transformed from settlement colonies to exploitation colonies. In each instance, slavery was the fundamental institution which drove the economy” (Bodden, 2007, p. 6).
In other texts, buildings were attributed to being built by the Europeans who enslaved Africans, as shown in the example below:

The project centered on the scrupulous restoration and presentation of the only surviving stone “great house” in the Islands, popularly known as Pedro Castle. The house was built in 1870 by the English settler William Eden, on a low bluff overlooking the southern approaches to Grand Cayman (Craton, 2003, p. 411).

Additionally, numerous cultural references highlighting European influences and minimizing African influences were found in the texts. There was an over-emphasis on Europe in discussions of the culture of the country & the Caribbean, and in many instances, it could be inferred by the propagation and promotion of western ideology. An example of this can be clearly seen when the authors stated, “Only Frenchness (the adoption of both French language and French values) expressed Man in a society totally alienated” (Bernabe et al, 1990, p. 895). This elevation of European language and values exemplifies the European worldview that these scholars of African descent have interpreted and taken on for themselves. Even within the discourse of Cultural Studies, Paul Gilroy credits European thought with being the originator of black thinkers as he states, “Marked by its European origins, modern black political culture has always been more interested in the relationship of identity to roots and rootedness than in seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation…” (Gilroy, 1993, p.19). It can be interpreted that European imperialism and propaganda are alive and well in the minds of African descended scholars.

In the texts that dealt primarily with the Cayman Islands, there was hardly any mention of African influences apart from discussing Caymanian folk dances described as
a “local variant of the European quadrille...and an African resonance lingered...” (Craton, 2003, p. 413).

**Discussion of African Self-Identification**

Within the theme of African Self-Identification, for the majority of the texts, there was a strong thrust of a Caribbean identity that was not tied to Africa, and therefore sought to isolate Caribbean and Caymanian people from an African self-identification. The term Creolization occurred in the majority of the texts as a way of understanding the identity of one born in the Caribbean as a mixture of the many ethnicities located there, however resulting in a singular Creole understanding.

An example found in the text is: “The term creole is hardly ever used in the Cayman Islands, and yet Caymanian society is a solidly creole society” (Bodden, 2007, p. 62). Additionally, Stuart Hall (1994) states:

> The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite difference, by hybridity.

(p.235)

The proud statement is made that, “Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles” (Bernabe et. al, 1990, p. 886). As discussed previously, this imagined of identity relies solely on European constructions and therefore there cannot be any reclamation of an African past or African identity based upon the anti-African stance that European thought facilitates.
During analysis of the texts it was also noted that authors that concentrated on the Cayman Islands promoted the idea that having a close association with a European country (specifically England) was seen as beneficial in terms of political, economic and cultural stability. This can be seen when the author states: “For bankers and investors, the Cayman Islands enjoyed many advantages…They offered the stability and security of British institutions” (Craton, 2003, p. 331). Craton (2003) also states:

The Caymanian approach in the second half of the century was generally to buck the regional trend. In 1962 the Cayman Islands chose to separate from Jamaica and remain a British Crown Colony. This crucial decision proved both astute and profitable. (p.305)

This type of reasoning and positive view of dependence on Europe seeks to dissuade inhabitants to think about other ways of knowing and understanding their own experiences and history. It is in this same vein that colonialism is normalized and there is a false sense of autonomy that the population has while dissuading national conversations on actual political independence and self-sufficiency.

An example found of this normalcy of colonialism in the text is:

Caymanians had learned over the previous century or more that they could enjoy a large measure of control over their own internal affairs, partly because of their reputation among the higher authorities for not creating problems or demanding attention…The Cayman Islands and its people entered the twenty-first century without organized political parties and apparently content with their status as an Overseas Territory. Caymanians were loyal to the British crown. (Craton, 1990, p. 305)

Roy Bodden (2007) calls this mentality “voluntary colonialism” (p. 22) and is critical of the political influence of the UK.
For Bodden it is obvious that within Caymanian society there is minimal discussion of enslaved Africans and their descendants today, as he states there is a “jettisoning of anything associated with or reminiscent of the slaveholding era” (2007, p. 54). He further explains:

It is as if the black people were deliberately encouraged to abandon the traditional beliefs, customs and mores originating in the African diaspora. Vocabulary and linguistic peculiarities have been abandoned in favor of the colonial language and expressions. In a blatant denial of history, even established Caymanians with obvious black ancestry are reluctant to factor in African influences. (Bodden, 2007, p. 54)

**Location of Text**

By using location theory, people who are identified as having African ancestry are able to speak through their own experiences and be a central role in the text. However, it was found that there was little to no evidence of this in the nine selected texts. In fact, to the contrary, there were many instances in the texts where the authors positioned persons of African descent to the periphery of their understanding of life. Examples found in the text are as follows:

“We are fundamentally stricken with exteriority… This determined a writing for the other” (Bernabe et al, 1990, p. 886). Additionally, Stuart Hall states that, “We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the “other”…do not stand in same relation of the ‘otherness’ to the metropolitan centers” (Hall, 1994, p. 228). Terminology such as *exteriority, marginal, underdeveloped, periphery, other*, seeks to place Europeans at the center and as the primary example of development. Its use by African descended
scholars must therefore be problematized. These terms are clear examples of lynched texts in which authors have assimilated European perspectives.

What the analysis of the texts rendered most evident was the use of words that are no longer accepted as ways of describing Africans from an Afrocentric lens. The term ‘slave’ disempowers agency and does not do justice to the integrality of the lived experiences of Africans, as opposed to ‘enslaved African.’ However, for the majority of the texts that dealt with Africans in the Cayman Islands, there was a deep undertone of disregard and objectification. The term ‘slave’ was identified numerous occasions, and over the course of a single chapter in the text by Brian Kieran, it was used no less than twenty times. Also, terms such as ‘tribe’ (Kieran, 1992, p.1), “countries of the third world” (Bernabe et al., 1990, p. 904) and “savage customs” (Craton, 2003, p. 110) were identified.

There were many instances in the texts when there was a relative apologist attitude regarding the violent and inhumane way that Europeans treated Africans. An example found in the text was: “Slavery was indigenous in West Africa as with many other parts of the world. The original slaves were often sold by the Chiefs of coastal tribes.” (Kieran, 1992, p.1)

Also, in addressing African cultures, authors often displayed dislocated attitudes. Gilroy (1993) states:

Britain’s black citizens. I have argued elsewhere that the cultures of this group have been produced in syncretic pattern in which the styles and forms of the Caribbean, the United States, and Africa have been reworked and re-inscribed…Rather than make the invigorating flux of those mongrel cultural forms my focal concern here..(p. 3)
In describing African culture as a “mongrel” form, Gilroy makes it clear that his approach to understanding the African Diaspora sees a pure European culture as the standard.

Lastly, the sub theme of the relationship with the Cayman Islands, Jamaica and other Caribbean countries was analyzed. Words, either positive or conveying tension/animosity, were identified. For the texts that concentrated on the Caribbean, there were instances of division and an example found which stated that for those countries that are not yet Independent, “none of them willing to risk the agony of choice in becoming Independent at this time. None wishes to be “oil-poor” or “debt-rich”, as some would deem post-Independence Trinidad and Jamaica respectively to be” (Nettleford, 2003, p. xii).

However, what was interesting to note is that the government / leaders of the Cayman Islands only wished to be associated with Jamaica when it was deemed to be in their best interest. This can be seen when the Kieran (1992) stated:

The governor wished the possibility of the union of the Caymanas with Jamaica to be considered by the House of Assembly in Jamaica. The proposition for the Union of the Caymanas with Jamaica was considered nothing more but a contemptible plot of the Governor and the British Government to get the House to assent to that Island sharing the Compensation of slaves. (p. 88)

Additionally it was found in the texts that, “For their part, Caymanian settlers resented their administrative association with Jamaica and seized every opportunity to undermine and frustrate the authorities” (Bodden, 2007, p. 8). Throughout the history of the Cayman Islands, it has been documented that there was little interference on the part
of Jamaica and England during its developmental phases in the 1800’s to early 1920’s. Bodden (2007) is of the belief that due to the influx of European settlers who were the primary owners of land, there is an elite class that “represents the quintessential colonial mentality and, as is obvious in Caymanian society, is limited to Caymanians who think of themselves as pure whites, along with some white expatriates” (p. 57). It is this belief that has encouraged a denial of African ancestry and even African presence in the island, despite the fact that the majority of the population phenotypically are of African descent.

Bodden (2007) also states:

Subsequent to the events of the late eighteenth century, the Cayman Islands – although attached to Jamaica as a dependency for colonial administration purposes- were left almost entirely to fend for themselves. This benign neglect had far-reaching implications, one of which was that many Caymanians came to view themselves as being apart and distinct from the rest of the Caribbean. (p. 2)

In analyzing the separate texts it was clear that the emergent pattern was one that supported the hypothesis in the research question. While the majority of the authors are of African descent, it was clear that a Eurocentric worldview was the underlying unifying denominator. Through an analysis of the language, attitude and direction, the texts could be culturally located. It is apparent that the scholarly literature written on the Cayman Islands is one that is not culturally grounded in the lived realities of the population. There is also a need for local, Caymanian scholars to interrogate the history, culture and ideologies of the people. Thus, one may reasonably assert that the findings and summary presented in this chapter support the claim that the prominent scholarly literature on the Cayman Islands promotes a discourse that serves to undermine the existence of African contributions as well as African self-identification in the country.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Implications

From analyzing the research it was found that the majority of the nine texts were not culturally located within the lives of Africans located in the Cayman Islands. There were many texts that used derogatory and disempowering language when speaking about Africans. These authors were not operating from any type of analysis of what African people of the time were doing, nor how they understood their experiences. Scholarship on the broader Caribbean as well seeks to position an identity that places Africa as a static geographic continent with no continuing influence or identification on how African descended people see themselves or their relation with the world.

It is my position that these findings are a result of a European worldview that is dominating the way in which scholarship on the Caribbean is being produced.

Many of the scholars that have written about their experiences have been educated within the United Kingdom and the United States and therefore have assumed that worldview without even realizing as such. Or there are those scholars who are cognizant of worldview but have been duly influenced by white supremacist notions that they believe a European ideology to be the standard.

The implications of the results for Africana Studies future research and scholarship are that this will push the discipline in analyzing the diaspora located in the Caribbean, from a centered understanding. It is therefore my assertion that there is a need
for generating new knowledge in the African Diaspora, especially in the Caribbean that posits an African worldview while critiquing European analysis of African experiences.

The implications of the results for Caribbean people are that this will assist in recovering and reasserting the African continuity that is found within the islands and within the cultural memory of the people. It is essential to inform the population as to their African ancestry, and dissemination of this thesis to statutory institutes in the Cayman Islands such as the Cayman Islands National Archive (CINA) and Cayman National Cultural Foundation (CNCF) as well as made available to the population will be one of the possible future orientations of this work.

Limitations & Shortcomings

The limitations of the research were the small number of text analyzed due to time constraints. Additionally, I was not able to use a text whose author was located / trained within the discipline of Africana Studies for the study.

The shortcomings of the research were the amount of texts used. There are limited amounts of scholarship on the Cayman Islands, and of that small amount, there are no scholarly journal articles. Even though all of the books on the Cayman Islands were used, there is a lack of scholarship that engages Caymanian ideologies or point of view. The majority of the texts are written by European historians who do not allow for a critical engagement of issues that relate to the country now.

Furthermore, additional research is needed in terms of comparing the Caymanian experience to similar British colonized territories within the Caribbean. It is my
estimation that the uniqueness that is felt within the islands, are not specific and rather shared sentiments between a people that have been separated by water, but still dominated by European political rule and thought.

Conclusion

Therefore for the ultimate ideological and political liberation of African people located in the Caribbean, there needs to be a rupture within the European worldview continuum. For the health and mental well-being of African people a return to the true origin and understanding of self on their own terms, and not borrowed and destructive tendencies (of Europeans) is of the utmost importance.

By utilizing an Afrocentric methodology and paradigm, there is much scholarship that needs to be written on the phenomena that African people experience by virtue of their location in the Caribbean. There is an extensive and important history that is present; however more analysis is needed from a centered perspective.

A reconnection and reconstitution of the holistic African worldview is the first step towards liberation by intellectually resisting western domination and critiquing it when and where it occurs.

Maulana Karenga states that obtaining self-understanding and self-assertion are critical to how African people see themselves in the world, as “how we understand ourselves in the world determines how we assert ourselves in the world” (Karenga, 2003, p.160).
Seeking to situate African people within the context of their story in the Cayman Islands and the larger Caribbean, adds to the liberatory project and ultimately assists in the assertion of African agency for the freedom of Africans who came before and Africans to come after.
REFERENCES CITED


### APPENDIX A

#### CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING MANUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Type of Text:</strong></td>
<td>Book or Article; medium through which the author produces the work</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Title of Text:</strong></td>
<td>What the author names the work.</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Date of Publication:</strong></td>
<td>Date when the work is published</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Geographical Area of Analysis:</strong></td>
<td>Location in which the work is focused on.</td>
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<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Author Name:</strong></td>
<td>Name of Author</td>
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<td>6. <strong>Area of Focus:</strong></td>
<td>Subject area that the work is located in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Discipline:</strong></td>
<td>Academic area that the author is trained in, received academic credentials from.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Country of Birth:</strong></td>
<td>Country that the author was born in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Country of Residence:</strong></td>
<td>Country that the author currently resides in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. <strong>Racial/Ethnic Identification:</strong></td>
<td>The sociocultural: Ancestral, Cultural, Geographic, and Phenotypic (Bankole-Medina) reality that the author identifies with. The worldview that they are operating from.</td>
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<th>THEMES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>[TREATMENT OF AFRICAN CONTRIBUTION]</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Discussion on the development of country that omits labor produced by enslaved Africans:</td>
<td>Within the historical analysis of the (progression) of a country, there is little or no recognition given to enslaved Africans labor that were used to create infrastructure (roads, buildings, agriculture) that assisted the living conditions of persons in the country.</td>
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<td>12. Cultural references that highlight European influences and minimize African influences:</td>
<td>When discussing how culture of the country/region has been formed, there is an overemphasis that is placed on how the culture (music, festivals, language, and religion) was brought to being through the impact of Europe, while African influences are underemphasized and not discussed in the same length and manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>[DISCUSSION OF AFRICAN (SELF) IDENTIFICATION]</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Positioning of Caribbean/Creole Identity:</td>
<td>The concept of a ‘Caribbean’ identity that has no grounding/origin in the continent of Africa is stated as the way to understand the identity of one who is born in the Caribbean. Creole is understood to be a mixture of many ethnicities from which a singular Caribbean identity is the result.</td>
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<td>14. Political understanding that privileges being a United Kingdom (UK) Colony:</td>
<td>Having a close association with a European country in terms of others viewing political, economic and cultural stability. This encourages the type of dependence on the UK and seeks to dissuade inhabitants to think about other ways of knowing and understanding their history and experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Normative discussion of Colonialism:</td>
<td>The concept of being dependent on another country and looking to that country to regulate the laws, financial budgets and political arena is seen as normal. Additionally concepts of political independence and colonial oppression and inequality are deemed to be unacceptable for national discussion.</td>
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<td>16. Minimal discussion of enslaved Africans and their descendants today:</td>
<td>There is little mentioned in the text on those who have descended from enslaved Africans such as what life for them is like today</td>
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<td>[LOCATION OF TEXT]</td>
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<td>17. Agency and African people:</td>
<td>People who are identified as having African ancestry are able to speak in the text through their own experiences, and words, and not have authors speak for them, and discuss them as non-central figures to the text.</td>
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<td>18. Language that is culturally grounded when discussing African people:</td>
<td>Words are used that are not derogatory to the African (no longer accepted as ways of describing Africans), that do not seek to disempower and not place Africans at center of their experience. For example ‘slave’ versus ‘enslaved African.’</td>
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<td>19. Relationship with Jamaica and other Caribbean countries is discussed:</td>
<td>When country relationships are discussed there are either positive words used to describe their dynamics terms. Or the theme of animosity is used when discussing countries who have achieved political dependence and those who are still colonized.</td>
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