Between a Past and Present Consciousness

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Critiques of the Development of the Caymanian People

By

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INTRODUCTION

THIS PRESENT CONSCIOUSNESS…

What is the difference between the past and the present? How does the past inform the present, if at all? Does the past and its associated traditions, mentalities and moralities represent a "better" period in human history? Where and when, then, did the *better* part of history – in which so many provable atrocities occurred – begin and end? And, if we agree with a better bygone age, just *why* and *where* did contemporary humanity go so horribly, immorally, *irredeemably* wrong? Did humanity *really* go wrong? Or, is any perception of moral decline in general, just that – *perception*, as it is informed, legitimised and emboldened by prejudicial, embittered, envious outlooks and positions? These are questions that I began to ask myself as I prepared to embark on my postgraduate journey. After all, such questions and their reasonable, inferential, thoughtful resolutions had informed my own reality to that point in my life.

I was born in Jamaica in 1977. Two years after my birth my family moved to the Cayman Islands at a time when the economy of this self-sufficient British dependency was undergoing dramatic economic and social development. In time, my ancestral history and the history of my adopted home came into sharp, jarring contrast, each fighting for legitimacy in my mind: could I really come to call myself a Caymanian given my Jamaican ancestry? On the other hand, should I have considered myself Jamaican in socializing terms in light of the fact that I did not grow up there? This battle unfolded in my mind, but it was a part of a larger war raging outside of my dispensable presence. As the Cayman Islands grew more prosperous, people like me – read expatriates – and our original histories and cultures became suspect by those who had the right to call themselves native Caymanians and who felt that their traditional culture was being quickly overrun by foreignness. Yet when we consider the inevitable evolution of human values, biases and convictions from the past through to the present, there is indeed a case to be made for the profoundly *necessary* ways in which a traditionalist Caymanian consciousness has been influenced, affected, altered and/or sullied by the "profane," multicultural, globalised present.

By means of an introduction, the Cayman Islands are a prosperous British Overseas Territory located in the Western Caribbean. The islands of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman are in aggregate known simply as Cayman and boast the highest standard of living in the Caribbean, drawing many expatriates given their high quality of life. In a population of roughly 65,000, nearly half of Cayman is comprised of non-Caymanians. As of 2019, there were over 135 nationalities represented in the self-sufficient Dependency.[1]

I have always questioned my legitimacy as a Caymanian. Growing up in Cayman Brac drew me to the realization that I was different. This was not a difference that I had forced myself to don, as if to say, my insecurities prompted me to elaborate a defence mechanism with which to cope with my perception of my own low self-esteem; perhaps this was a part of it, if I am to be completely transparent, but my self-esteem, or lack thereof, was not the lynchpin for my ultimate difference. I clearly remember two incidents that occurred while I attended my penultimate year at Layman Scott High School in Cayman Brac: first, a native Caymanian student and I were playing quite agreeably in the school yard, when suddenly he got upset with me before crossly referring to me as an "ole black, 'ching-ching' Jamaican." In the other incident, yet another native Caymanian student dropped a rock on my foot, instantaneously injuring two of my toes. My inconsolable cries were to go forever un-consoled when the teacher on duty, a native Caymanian, proceeded to inform me that my pain was my own fault and subjected me to a bizarre, incongruent, embarrassing (for me, anyway) tribunal which hinged on if I would have behaved the way I had been if I were in Jamaica. I was not a perfect child, I will be the first to admit; yet my imperfections, real or perceived, always seemed in these cases, and many others too countless to mention, to return to my foreign-ness, indeed my *black Jamaican-ness*.

I became obsessed with the *-ness* suffix during my undergraduate years. What sort of images and concepts does Caymanianness conjure? In my book, *Defining the Caymanian Identity*, I describe this suffix in essentialist terms: to understand what Caymanianness means is to ask any Caymanian what he or she thinks makes them Caymanian. Some will say their ancestry makes them Caymanian; some have said being born and raised in Cayman makes one a Caymanian; others say it is their Caymanian accent, among many other things. A young lady, a native Caymanian, with whom I attended primary and high school, recently chided me on the radio because of my accent, among other things, which is, I have been informed, patently

[1] See the 'Population Statistics', at www.eso.gov.ky.

Jamaican, with, I have also been told, Caymanian accented undertones peppered throughout; she accused me of teaching propaganda at the local university before informing me, with a dash of mordancy, that I *cannot* be Caymanian because I don't have a Caymanian accent. Needless to say, I was surprised by her outburst…but upon further reflection, I really was not *that* surprised.

Table 1 Number of Persons by citizen and status, 2010 (dual citizenships included)

Country of Citizenship	TOTAL	Caymanian		Non-Caymanian
	% of TOTAL # Population	% of # Caymanian Population		% of Non-# Caymanian Population
Cayman Islands	29,720 55.2	29,260	96.5	460 2.0
Jamaica	11,721 21.8	2,951	9.7	8,770 37.3
United Kingdom	5,076 9.4	2,620	8.6	2,456 10.4
USA	4,331 8.0	2,209	7.3	2,122 9.0
Canada	2,527 4.7	635	2.1	1,892 8.0
Philippines	2,418 4.5	156	0.5	2,262 9.6
Honduras	1,944 3.6	803	2.6	1,141 4.9
Rest of the world[2]	6,863 12.8	1,549	5	5,314 22.5

Courtesy ESO, Cayman Islands

[2] Includes the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, South America, Europe, South Pacific, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Caymanianness – what it means to be Caymanian – is hyper-subjective, relative and reflexive, which is to say, what makes you a Caymanian, in your description, may not make me a Caymanian in my description. For instance, if you think that your Caymanian ancestry makes you a Caymanian, while my ancestry is predominantly of Jamaican stock, then try as I might to convince you that I should be considered Caymanian, I may well discover that I am fighting an uphill, perhaps unwinnable battle. On the other hand, if I counter you with the argument that, yes, I may have shallow Caymanian ancestry, but my Caymanianness is determined by my legality and my dedication to the Cayman Islands, you may well disagree with me on the grounds of my, in your mind, inadequate *Caymanian* criteria. Neither of us is wrong, although we may think of the other in less than respectful, egalitarian terms; and neither of us is right in that Caymanianness is ultimately a larger, more diverse entity than our limiting, ostensibly immutable predilections would have us believe. Caymanianness, in its conception, then, is quite fluid and subjective, and is thus prone to confrontational postures and positions.

Why have representations of Caymanianness become so confrontational and verbally violent? How we understand our Caymanian selves seems a microcosm of our larger neighbours to the north, the Americans. There is the case to be made that Donald Trump's America seems to function, *dysfunctionally* so, on an insidious us/them binary, that is, Trump's largely white support base versus the rest of America which may be white, but which is largely *non-white*, different and foreign—Mexicans, African-Americans, members of the LBGTQ community, etc. Why do many *native* Caymanians, like many *white* Americans rail against difference in its variety of forms? Perhaps because they feel that their prosperous way of life is being threatened or stolen? Or maybe they perceive that their traditional values are under siege by incoming, profane difference? It is very likely that native Caymanians, those who can trace their ancestry throughout three previous, continuous generations are underrepresented in their society; I have offered the suggestion elsewhere that one in three residents in Cayman is likely to be native.[3]

My utilization of race talk a while ago was not inadvertent, for there is the case to be made that racial-ethnic considerations, *inter alia*, have influenced our social interactions since the dawn of modern history, if not before. So, too, is the influence of economics and the social disparities it generates assured, not to mention the practical manifestations of liberal

[3] *Defining the Caymanian Identity: The Effects of Globalization, Economics, and Xenophobia on Caymanian Culture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

philosophy which, in its push to usher in universal equality, has, in my mind, largely achieved the opposite effect in many quarters of the globe. Unlike its few competitors in the works of J.A. Roy Bodden's *The Cayman Islands in Transition*[4] and Michael Craton's *Founded Upon the Seas*,[5] *Between a Past and Present Consciousness* hinges on forwarding a conceivable chronological theory on which to map the development of the Caymanian people, both from the vantage point of a wider Caribbean social history, a distinct Caymanian traditionalism and a multicultural globalised present. Broadly speaking, this present offering serves as an intellectual history of social development in the Cayman Islands.

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Back to my questions posed two paragraphs ago: It should be somewhat clearer now why some native Caymanians do not view new Caymanians like me in legitimate terms. The commencement point for this antagonism is best captured in historical and economic terms and, as such, I provide a brief economic history of the modern Cayman Islands.

Cayman's phenomenal economic rise can be traced back to the early 1970s, at a time when the great industrialized nations, especially the United States, had feverishly commenced with deregulating their domestic financial sectors. After all, the private investor on Wall Street or Sussex knew how to create and maximize profits more effectively than governments that had to that point in time demonstrated, if nothing else, their proclivity to over-interfere in, and *over-tax* the so-called free financial market. Proceeding to free up local economies in hopes of ushering in a true global economy fuelled essentially by free market forces, western governments relinquished much of their regulatory hold on the financial sector and increasingly sophisticated, savvy, even bloodthirsty, investors and service providers stepped in to fill the breach, offering all sorts of "wonderful" investment options and instruments to maximise returns on investment. Cayman was to find its special place as a tax haven in the rather libertarian context of global economic deregulation. Rigid and regimented tax treaties between Britain and the United States were withdrawn beginning in 1969, an act bound to positively affect Cayman as the jurisdiction's lawmakers crafted legislation bent on attracting wealthy foreign investors of various moral hues. "This in reality meant", argues Sir Vassel Johnson, perhaps Cayman's most progressive

[4]J.A. Roy Bodden, *The Cayman Islands in Transition: The Politics, History, and Sociology of a Changing Society* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publisher, 2007).
[5] Michael Craton, *Founded Upon the Seas: A History of the Cayman Islands and Their People* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003).

Financial Secretary, "that the US tax treaties would no longer apply to Cayman", a rescindment which contributed in earnest to Cayman's natural tax haven status.[6] Influenced by these developments in the Core West, Cayman's burgeoning status as an offshore financial centre also benefited from the independence of the Bahamas in 1973, an achievement that resulted in a massive flight of capital from that jurisdiction – to, among other jurisdictions, Cayman and Bermuda – on the sole basis of the increasing lack of confidence of offshore investors in a largely [black?] political directorate no longer controlled by the stabilizing hand of "mother Britain."

Yet Cayman's leap from sun-bathed backwater to offshore financial powerhouse had its own internal logic independently of the current one-sided western rationalization that the former's tax haven status can be indirectly traced back to the 1960s when various businessmen and multi-national corporations were in the process of perfecting their tax avoidance techniques. In 1959, adult suffrage based on limited internal self-rule had been granted to all Caymanians over the age of 21 by Great Britain (the voting age was lowered to 18 in 1972). This led to the introduction of a reduced 15-member Legislative Assembly – 12 elected, 3 nominated, and 3 appointed – and a new constitution that largely exempted Cayman from the control of a British-Jamaica – Cayman's apathetic overlord since 1655 – whose independence at that point was three years off. Although a British Commissioner – later referred to as governor in 1971 – remained in control, elected Caymanian leaders were in a far more advantageous position to influence any internal legislation which Great Britain would have likely supported at a time when deregulation was in vogue.[7]

Thus, by 1972, at which time Cayman's constitution was drastically amended to allow Caymanian officials greater autonomy in their quest to modernize in a truly Caymanian way, off-shore financiers were keen to invest in Cayman's economy due in large part to the absence of direct taxation and the dependency's stabilizing British connection. Caymanians like Sir Vassel Johnson, a Jamaican by birth, and national heroes William Warren Connolly and James Bodden are largely credited as the men who developed the legal and financial frameworks for Cayman's economic success. As Financial Secretary from 1965 to 1982, Sir Vassel, often in

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[6] Sir Vassel Johnson, *As I See It: How Cayman Became a Leading Financial Centre* (Sussex: Book Guild, Ltd., 2001), 111-2.

[7] England gained the Cayman Islands from Spain, in addition to Spanish Jamaica in 1655, and did not recognize these new English possessions until 1670, via the Treaty of Madrid. Regardless, Cayman was administratively neglected by British Jamaica up to 1863, at which time Cayman was recognized as an official dependency via an Imperial Act of Parliament.

collaboration with Mr. Desmond Watler, Cayman's first Chief Secretary, was responsible for the authorization of financial legislation that was to focus on encouraging offshore investors without the worry of having to pay any taxes on their investments and profits.[8] It was also under his leadership and foresight that the Banks and Trust Regulation Law of 1966 was authorized. Although ultimately responsible for licensing and regulating local and incoming offshore businesses, this statute was envisaged to encourage the latter business type, making it exceedingly easier and smoother for offshore investors to set up "'[s]uitcase' companies which required less office space and fewer local employees."[9] The Insurance Law of 1979 was also implemented under Sir Johnson's leadership at a time when it had become necessary to regulate Cayman's growing insurance industry.

So too are the contributions of William Warren Connolly beyond doubt. Between 1962 and 1976, Mr. Connolly played a vital role in Cayman's development. In addition to setting in motion key pieces of legislation that revolved around banking, land registration and mosquito research it was Mr. Connolly who helped both to establish the Tourism Department in 1974 and pave the way for the introduction of Cayman's first currency in 1972, which would replace the Jamaican dollar. As such, Mr. Connolly was made a national hero in 2012.[10]

Elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1972, James Manoah Bodden is also widely regarded as a "visionary who helped to politically lead [the] Cayman [Islands] into an era of progress through modernization."[11] He became Cayman's first national hero in 1994, six years following his death from a heart attack. Additionally, Mr. Bodden oversaw the creation of Cayman Airways, the national flag carrier of the Cayman Islands, and the major terminal extension of Grand Cayman's Owen Roberts International Airport in the 1970s, originally built in 1953 under the guidance of former Royal Airforce wingman, Owen "Bobby" George Endicott Roberts. Mr. Bodden's desire for a prosperous and successful Cayman Islands was indeed strongly felt and compellingly acted upon during his double term as Tourism Minister from 1976 to 1984.[12]

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[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Craton, *Founded*, 353.
[10] For information on Cayman's national heroes, see 'National Heroes', at http://www.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/cighome/cayman/thepeople/heroes
[11] Craton, *Founded*, 410.
[12] See especially Bodden, *The Cayman Islands*, chapter three. For more information on James Bodden, see, Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture, *National Heroes Day 2008*,

Despite Cayman's economic and financial successes, the Dependency was dubbed the fourth most secretive financial jurisdiction by the OECD in 2013. Although taken off the OECD's blacklist in 2015, that organization is continually considering whether to place Cayman on an updated non-cooperative list, one would suspect, because of Cayman's zero tax base, and not because of the Dependency's unwillingness to be transparent.[13] Unlike its counterparts in Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands, Cayman's government was able to breathe a sigh of relief in March of 2019 when its jurisdiction managed to remain off of a recently updated European Union Tax Haven Blacklist. Yet dismay belies euphoria, given that Cayman must amend its legislation in line with European Union standards if it wishes to remain unlisted; accordingly, the government is working feverishly to update local legislation that comes in line with international standards, this despite a recently damning influential report that found that "Cayman has serious shortcomings in addressing its vulnerability to financial crime, despite years of claim to the contrary."[14]

The wheel has come full circle, so to speak, and the statism which had all but been defeated by the Reaganomics and Thatcherism of the 1980s seems once again to nourish the "integrated" financial sector. There is definite anxious talk in certain hallowed social, political, intellectual and media circles in the Core West that the deregulation of the financial sector has wreaked havoc on their nations' revenue streams, streams substantively dependent on the collection of taxes. Rampant deregulation, for them, has encouraged *rampant* tax evasion. As per a growing cross-section of influential thinkers, jurisdictions like Greece, Italy and Spain teeter on the brink of bankruptcy, not because of overspending, mismanagement, and the natural, perhaps cyclical order of things, but because "tax havens" like Cayman, Bermuda, Guernsey, Switzerland, among others, derive their very *raison d'tere* from aiding and abetting western-derived multinational corporations, businesses, companies and individuals. In substantiation of this "immoral" state of affairs, the OECD recently declared that "40 percent of all foreign direct investment positions globally is completely artificial: it

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http://www.brighterfutures.gov.ky/portal/page?_pageid=1408,1866195&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL, 2008; April 27, 2009.

[13] See Tax Justice Network, Financial Secrecy Index- 2013 results, http://www.financialsecrecyindex.com/introduction/fsi-2013-results, 2013.

[14] See CFATF, 'Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing measures, Cayman Islands: Mutual Evaluation Report', March 2019, https://cnslibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/CFATF-Anti-money-laundering-and-counter-terrorist-financing-measures-report-Cayman-Islands-March-2019.pdf.

consists of financial investment passing through empty corporate shells with no real activity"; thus Cayman's need to create new economic substance laws for domiciled off-shore companies.[15] Despite the merits of its arguments, the OECD, it seems, is very deliberate in its agenda to conceal the fact that in many cases income and capital gains generated in some of these jurisdictions are not necessarily eligible for taxation abroad.[16] To counter this, the OECD would perhaps maintain the view that because tax havens are so deceptive it may not be possible to say which investor using Cayman's offshore instruments is actually abiding by the rules or simply hiding eligible capital gains from his original jurisdiction. These views achieved profound consolidation in Britain's overseas territories when the British parliament decided in 2018 to take unilateral action, stipulating that these territories must provide public registers of beneficial ownership by 2023.[17]

Yet the OECD's declaration also confuses and illegitimates to the point of seamlessness the necessary distinction between illegal tax evasion and a very-much-legal desire to invest in places like Cayman because returns on capital generated therein are likely to be higher; this distinction was once, and, indeed, is still supported and legally exploited by certain Multinational Corporations (MNCs) coming from the countries on whose behalf the OECD speaks. (Think for instance about the ongoing feud between Warren Buffett and Hedge Fund magnate Dan Loeb. Loeb especially takes Buffet to task when it comes to taxes: "He [Buffett] thinks we should all pay more taxes, but he loves avoiding them himself."[18] Here is the tacit understanding that tax avoidance and tax evasion are not necessarily one and the same although they can be blurred and confused for the sake of strengthening one's argument against a less felonious tax avoidance.) The irony could not be any more piercing: the "legitimate" Western-led development which

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[15] Jannick Damgaard, *et al., International Monetary Fund*, 'Finance and Development', June 2018, vol. 55, no. 22,
https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2018/06/inside-the-world-of-global-tax-havens-and-offshore-banking/damgaard.htm.

[16] British citizens living abroad, for instance, don't have to pay any taxes on their income if they fulfil certain criteria. See the Expat tax network,
http://www.expatnetwork.com/Money/Expat-Tax/UK-Tax-Rates.cfm, 2014.

[17] See, for instance, Rob Byrne, 'Can MPs enforce laws on the Crown Dependencies?', *BBC News Online*, April 3, 2019,
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-guernsey-47525455.

[18] Julia La Roche, 'Dan Loeb just threw shade at Warren Buffet at a big hedge fund conference and everyone clapped', in the *UK Business Insider*, May 6, 2015, at http://uk.businessinsider.com/dan-loeb-on-warren-buffetts-letters-2015-5

brought offshore financial centres into windfall is now threatening their very collapse.

Although Cayman was removed from the OECD'S grey list of non-compliant off-shore financial countries in 2009, and although former British Prime Minister David Cameron proclaimed with a suspicious air of overconfidence in September of 2013 that Cayman and other compliant offshore financial sectors should no longer be derogatorily regarded as tax havens, Cayman's reputation as a *tax haven* intractably remains, as a recent Netherlands tax haven blacklist confirms, it seems, without rigorous rhyme or reason.[19] One need not wonder too long or hard on why this damning global impression has followed on from the garish days of the Pelican Brief and strange banking secrecy laws once countenanced by the jurisdiction's ruling elite. They say that old habits die hard, but this is equally true of certain omnipotent western mentalities keen to perpetuate the tax-haven nomenclature, as well. Much against the remonstrations of the local class of economic specialists and technocrats who realize that Cayman's continued financial success depends on critical distinctions between financial irregularity and financial transparency, Cayman's government has, perhaps to Cayman's detriment this class would argue, demonstrated its pandering resolve to be as transparent as possible where tax evasion is concerned. The government has, to date, signed 35 tax information exchange agreements (TIEAs) with various western and industrialized countries and has expressed its commitment, in accordance with the G5's so-called pilot transparency program, to adhere to the OECD's ongoing tax and transparency issues initiative.[20] Yet, according to many trust lawyers, TIEA's do not work, and ill-gotten gains can be more thoroughly hidden and/or transferred before the appealing country becomes any the wiser.[21] Cayman's government has also confirmed that it will abide by the US' Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) which "forces financial institutions globally to report American taxpayers' accounts and account balances to US authorities or face a 30 percent withholding tax on

[19] See https://www.oxfam.org/en/tags/tax-havens

[20] Staff, 'Cayman Islands, Brazil sign Tax Information Exchange Agreement.' *Caribbean Journal*. Available at http://www.caribjournal.com/2013/03/20/cayman-islands-brazil-sign-tax-information-exchange-agreement/ (accessed 23 April 2013) March 20, 2013.

[21] See Sean O'Hare, 'Tax Information Exchange Agreements "don't work,"' at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/expat-money/8836321/Tax-Information-Exchange-Agreements-dont-work.html (assessed 20 April 2014), October 19, 2011.

transactions involving the United States." [22] However, the greater punishment may lie in the fact that anyone guilty of breaking FATCA can be prosecuted by the IRS to the fullest extent of American law. FATCA is poised to affect some 6,000 Caymanian-Americans-slash-expatriate Americans living in Cayman and the act's detractors have accused the IRS of the grossest of overreach.[23] Britain has also implemented its own less-rigid FATCA-like injunction and Cayman's government has nodded, all too eagerly Bermuda would quip, its willingness to comply. [24] From the foregoing, it may be construed that the world's rich western nations continue to demonstrate a one-sided, totalitarian-esque attitude towards globalization, and all in the name of egalitarianism, no less. Paul Gilroy's profound indictment of westernity rushes to mind:

> These days, much of what passes for radical and critical thought rests on the notion that the very aspiration towards translocal solidarity, community, and interconnection is tainted. This is because it is a symptom of imperial arrogance and the mainspring of a [militant] ethnocentrism, which wants to make everybody the same and in so doing, make them all "western."[25]

Brief chapter outline

The chapters that follow were written over the course of the last thirteen years at different points in my postgraduate career. These stand-alone-yet-interrelated writings and critiques do not represent a rant against the polarizing, overpowering, one-sided economic, social and political effects of globalization. In addition to introducing Cayman from its indispensable economic standpoint, in the preceding section I have attempted to plant the seed that because Cayman is very much a globalized jurisdiction, it is especially laid open to globalization and the panoramic gamut of its effects. On the contrary, the issues I wish to engage in this book provide an

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[22] Only those American-Caymanians, Expatriate Americans who make more than $80,000 KYD per annum will be affected. See the FATCA website at http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Corporations/Foreign-Account-Tax-Compliance-Act-(FATCA)

[23] Cayman News Service, 'FATCA could affect 6,000 people living in Cayman, at http://caymannewsservice.com/2013/09/06/fatca-could-affect-6000-people-living-cayman, September 6, 2013.

[24] See, https://www.out-law.com/topics/tax/tax-for-entrepreneurs/uk-fatca---the-disclosure-to-hmrc-of-information-about-reportable-accounts-held-by-uk-taxpayers-in-the-crown-dependencies-and-overseas-territories-/

[25] Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbian University Press, 2005), 63.

ideological roadmap of sorts for the development of Cayman and its people(s) before and during globalization. The realities of the bare, financially-hard Caymanian past and its lavish, prosperous present are very much at ideological odds, as they ought to be. Nonetheless, the leitmotif that has remained throughout Cayman's fairly rapid development is best represented in the native Caymanian's tenacity to fight; just as she had to fight to survive in the materially-bare, economically-hard past, today many of her progeny find themselves fighting not to become irrelevant in the land of their ancestors. Yet what complicates this fight at present is the diversification of the Caymanian race to now include other external groups that have become just as invested in the "Caymanian" way of life as their native counterparts, who, by matter of course, remain ever suspicious of them. With the foregoing in mind, together with the unique development of the Caymanian people since the seventeenth century, chapter one, which I wrote during the first year of my doctoral studies in 2006 but did not publish, introduces, philosophises and critiques important identity-shaping concepts utilized throughout this book. By tracing the establishment, development and evolution of racial, national and social identities in the Caribbean, this chapter theoretically affirms the development and expansion of the Caymanian people as a distinctly Caribbean phenomenon.

Chapters two[26] and four[27] have appeared in journals in earlier editions in 2011 and 2012, respectively. In these writings, I apply the concepts explored in chapter one to the development of distinct Caymanian life- and thought-ways before the globalization of the 1960s and 70s was to alter, if not obliterate, these ways. Chapter two analyzes the importance of slavery to an inchoate, Caymanian way of life bound by ethnocentrism, racism and colonialism, while chapter four, in its anticipation of globalization, examines how a certain strain of traditionalist Caymanian sentiment can be utilized to ensure that past socio-cultural sensibilities are indefinitely perpetuated in the diluting present. My other book, *Defining the Caymanian Identity* does touch on these ideas, but these two chapters devote more concentrated, systematic critiques to the beginnings of a traditionalist Caymanian consciousness (chapter four) and fractious inchoate Caymanian identities indebted to the creolizing forces that accompanied chattel slavery (chapter two).

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[26] 'Did Slavery Really Matter in the Cayman Islands?', in the *Journal of Caribbean History*, edited by Swithin Wilmot, vol.45, no. 2, December 2011, 159-89.

[27] 'Perpetuation, imagination, and subjectivity: Investigating the effects of expressed traditionalist Caymanian memories', in the *Journal of Memory Studies*, edited by Andrew Hoskins, vol.6, issue 4, October 1, 2013, 457-73.

It is likely, in the absence of direct, precise evidence, that native Caymanians – those who can in some way trace their ancestry in Cayman back at least three generations – only number around 19,600. This means that in a population of just under 65,000, about 1 in 2 Caymanians can be considered native and is thus demographically underrepresented in the land of his or her ancestry.[28] Many native Caymanians would argue that their under-representation comes as the result of globalization. Chapter three thus sets the groundwork for the arrival of globalization in Cayman by examining how the first major incomers, Jamaicans, were eventually demoted in a maturing, collective Caymanian consciousness beginning to be driven by new xenophobic doctrines premised on prosperity. Representing an edited version of my Master's thesis which I successfully submitted in 2006, this is the book's pivotal and liminal chapter as it compares changing, *orchestrated*, nationalist-tinged Caymanian perceptions of Jamaicans and Jamaican culture at a time when Jamaica, Cayman's official British-appointed overlord from 1863 to 1959, was all many Caymanians knew in their pre-globalized, impoverished state. This chapter continues to assess the period following Jamaica's independence in August of 1962 toward the twenty-first century, a period in which the Caymanian lifestyle was elevated and the *inundating* Jamaican in Cayman especially became the inevitable other. Yet, beyond this often acrid us/them dynamic, I explore the very contradictory, controversial thing of popular Caymanian culture via the confirmation that an existential disconnect between traditional Caymanian culture and its modern dispensation locates its genesis in an earlier Jamaican/Caymanian dynamic that only expanded when more foreign-nationals decided to call an increasingly prosperous Cayman home.

Chapter five, taken from my doctoral thesis, critiques the importance of Pirates Week, one of Cayman's enduring national carnivals, both in terms of the economic reasons for its creation in 1977, and the perception, or lack thereof, that it represents a bona-fide index of popular Caymanian culture.[29] The argument is tempered on both sides by those Caymanians who have come to realize that foreign presence is needed in Cayman if we are to maintain our prosperous lifestyles and their more traditional counterparts

[28] *Defining the Caymanian Identity*, xv.

[29] Cayman's other major Carnival is Batabano, which I explore in *Defining the Caymanian Identity,* chapter eight. My doctoral thesis is entitled, 'Caymanianness, History, Culture, Tradition, and Globalisation: Assessing the Dynamic Interplay Between Modern and Traditional(ist) Thought in the Cayman Islands', unpublished PhD thesis, the University of Warwick, submitted September 2010. An online version of this thesis can be found at,
http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/38543/1/WRAP_THESIS_Williams_2010.pdf

who seem to condemn anything modern, including Pirates Week, as anti-Caymanian and thus anti-cultural. A caveat must be offered here. It is true that as human beings we are prone to hypocritical postures and quite often the worldly modern soul stands guilty of indulging in moments of xenophobic aplomb; or, the unquestionably conservative ideologue may find himself a spirited participant in a modern lifestyle, while lamenting, with xenophobic bravado, no less, the ills that globalisation and modernity have wrought on his jurisdiction. Although I compare traditionalism and modernism as diametrically opposed ideologies, I am ever mindful of their complementary dynamic, indeed the linkages that can fuse them into an uneasy yet functional alliance; which is to say that anyone can assume any of these ideologies and their corresponding identities when the *zeitgeist* proves right.

This book's sixth and final chapter is my most recently written essay, written in the latter part of 2018. Utilizing classical philosophical argumentation, it anticipates the human divide and argues for the sincere introduction and subsequent entrenchment of hope across Cayman's multi-ethnic, multicultural landscape. Beyond the usually flimsy rhetorical encouragement of "hope for all" amidst ethnocentric, nativist and xenophobic hostilities, this chapter forwards a solution for Cayman's ethnic antagonisms that both promotes the Caymanian past and safeguards the legal rights of *all* Caymanians and expatriates, all while affording a deep-rooted, genuine respect for incoming difference.

CHAPTER ONE

BETWEEN A PAST AND PRESENT CONSCIOUSNESS: A THEORETICAL SURVEY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF IDENTITY-SHAPING CONCEPTS RELATIVE TO CARIBBEAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Introduction

David Baronov and Kevin Yelvington have attempted to define historical Caribbean identities in terms of ethnicity and social class. Ethnicity, they assert, "may best be conceived as a set of ideas concerning a group's real or imagined cultural links with an ancestral past"; while social class is understood to reflect 'social power relations and is a critical determinant of access to social resources, social mobility, social status and acceptance and social identity.'[1] When these terms and their conditioned European meanings and practicalities coalesced in the Caribbean theatre of the New World, the social concept of *race* – and by association skin colour – was made especially practical. Warnings have repeatedly been sounded by a number of social and cultural theorists that the racism concept was a nineteenth-century creation and thus cannot epistemologically apply to the preceding centuries, notwithstanding the fact that in 1662 the Port Royal logicians applied some formal logic to the practical idea of dualism in which was implicated the human hierarchy enacted by modern imperialism, by then in

[1] David Baronov and Kevin A. Yelvington, 'Ethnicity, Race, Class, and Nationality' in *Understanding the Contemporary Caribbean* edited by Richard S. Hillman and Thomas J D'Agostino (Boulder: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003) p.209.

its second full century.[2] On the contrary, the author is of the view that polarising racial considerations, and thus racism, *did* exist prior to the nineteenth century, if not in those precise descriptions, and very much constituted European ideas duly acted upon towards the creation and sustenance of a very real imperial reality.[3] The enactment of black code legislation throughout the Caribbean from the fifteenth- into the twentieth-century should alert us to the continuous legal fact of discrimination on racial grounds. Although the influential eighteenth-century thinker Immanuel Kant confirmed a single human race, he further forced the race concept into the burgeoning epistemological correctness of the day by extending a race consciousness which stressed that racial and biological disparities and inferiorities were based primarily, although not entirely, on skin colour, ethnicity and phenotype;[4] in other words, Kant might have believed in a single, *singular* human race, but, by his own admission, this race was not comprised of equal *sub-races*.[5] Therefore, and despite the relatively different interfaces and interrelations of ethnicity, economics and social class throughout historical New World societies especially, their common denominator inevitably boiled down to race, precisely or imprecisely defined and/or perceived.

The same inter-relational dynamic underwrote the condition of developing modern Caribbean identities given that a preceding, rigorous, paradoxical European discourse-cum-development project constructed and constantly renegotiated the concept of race to fit with its understandings of the western self and its "inferior" subset. Although the *raison d'etre* for such understandings reserved the right both to create and impose codes of legitimacy through which racial discrimination could be deemed socially just, these very codes nonetheless provided the impetus for generating rich and nuanced identification and civilizing processes throughout the Caribbean. With the foregoing in mind, this chapter provides a historical, theoretical and philosophical overview of the process of identity formation in the Caribbean. A blueprint is herein provided by which to especially

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[2] Thomas Spencer Baynes, *The Port Royal Logic* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1861, 5th edition).

[3] Cf. Paul Gilroy, *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* (London: Routledge, 2004, 2nd edition), chapter 1.

[4] For a richer understanding of Kant's philosophy and the ways in which it strengthened sociological investigations at the time with respect to societal/racial differentiation, see, for instance, Robert Bernasconi, 'Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism', in *Philosophers o Race: Critical Essays*, edited by Julie Ward and Tommy Lott (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 145-66.

[5] *Ibid*.

understand chapter two, which assesses the significance of slavery in the formation of Caymanian society and its associated identities. Additionally, the ideas explored in the current chapter serve to establish a historical paradigm from which to make sense of the creation and sustenance of modern Caymanian nationalist thought in chapter three.

The term identity formation, at least on national and historical scales, has often been explained essentially in terms of homogeneity. To briefly revisit Baronov and Yelvington's conception of ethnicity, we ask, would certain home-grown West Indian "ideas concerning a group's real or imagined cultural links with an ancestral past" best represent a theoretically singular Caribbean existence-cum-ethnicity? And would this translate, in practical terms, to contemporary Caribbean identities that are more so bound by their historical, cultural and social sameness than anything else? If we are to answer these interrelated questions to a somewhat satisfactory degree, we must first attempt to unravel the historical settings which underpin otherwise discrete current national Caribbean cultures and identities. A philosophical wrestle with these questions should present us with a vibrant dynamic historical scenario in which two possible outcomes were to be eventually yielded: that of the cultural assimilation of the "weaker" incoming culture/s, or else, the interpenetration of all interacting incoming cultures – syncretism – which led to the formation of a new culture complex; what Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz referred to as transculturation, and Kamau Brathwaite, as creolization.[6] Both applied to identity formations throughout the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Caribbean. On the one hand, imported non-white cultures to the Caribbean, together with the region's indigenous approximations, were marshalled by a white, European hegemony, and given the traumatic nature of their geographical and ontological separation from their ancestral vibrancy, these cultures substantively buckled to deep-rooted, ethno-centric, cultural domination. On the very same hand, but expressed in more redemptive terms, "[incoming non-white] cultures [especially,] would take on [heuristically new] forms under the social and physical conditions in which [subjugated practitioners] themselves had to deal."[7] Both outcomes return to a broad contingent truth as this affected the socio-psychological conditions under which racial and social identities were forged in the British West Indies: both disconnected

[6] See, respectively, Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publisher, 2005).

[7] Roxanne Burton, 'Globalisation and Cultural Identity in Caribbean Society: The Jamaican Case', in the *Caribbean Journal of Philosophy*, vol.1, no.9, 2009, at http://ojs.mona.uwi.edu/index.php/cjp/article/viewFile/285/185

and subjugated, people of colour especially, proved, by their racial and social condemnation, the unlikely lynchpins of a new culture complex, whose ideological foundation unassailably depended on the will, control and terror of the imperial master. This paradoxical dynamic revealed profoundly interpenetrating cultural elements premised on *us* and *them*, on homogeneity and its heterogeneity foil. The resultant social classes, by the very extent of their access to power, would serve to reflect existential, cultural and internal contradictions of an already messy, tensely organic acculturative process, effectively perpetuating these contradictions into the present in the form of racialist-slash-ethnic considerations and obsessions cogently masquerading as active or passive classist offensives.[8]

This chapter's concern with identity-formation in the Caribbean therefore calls, firstly, for the interrogation between what Peter Sahlins has phrased the "collective self and its implicit negation, the other";[9] and, secondly, rigorous scrutiny must be applied to that acculturating space between old, trans-local, indigenous Caribbean social forms and new, incoming, pluralist-turned-creole equivalents, throughout which "peoples of very different pasts but fairly similar presents jostled together in new social settings." [10] When these two acculturative features achieved interlock beneath the social and political pressures of history, a liminality of identification was created, in which competing, contested notions of homogeneity and heterogeneity – of *us* and *them*, and then a tentative *us* again – would fight for homogenous pre-eminence.

Ethnic identity has often been defined as a set of characteristics serving to set a person or a group of people apart from the rest. Put another way, if enough people bound by geography eventually come to realize that they share certain traditions, similarities (physical and otherwise), values, privileges, beliefs, disfranchisements, and so on, then they will also realize that their needs and desires are indeed similar. The enduring existential condition of this sharing, the very notions and practicalities that it generates, is especially illuminated in the social presence of other coexisting encroaching, subjugated, and/or competing social groups.

Let us here briefly consider the shaping notions of an official British identification throughout the early eighteenth-, mid-nineteenth century. Linda Colley speaks of the "invention of Britishness" as directly related to France's contestation with Britain for global supremacy at a time when

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[8] See note 1.

[9] Quoted in Linda Colley, *Forging the Nation: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003), pp. 5-6.

[10] Sidney Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009, 3rd edition), 25.

imperialism and revolutionary fervour were at their height. Factoring in the pervasive (though by that time, diminished) forces of Jacobinism[11] in Britain by the mid-eighteenth century, and, by virtue of France's continual "[challenge to] the political and/or religious foundations on which Great Britain was based", mass-scale notions of Britishness were effectively created from already internal, coexisting English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh identities. As to be expected, developing notions of inward Britishness, as represented in nationalist ideological defence mechanisms, were created because of the various geo-political tensions that threatened to spill over into distinct-enough, contiguous, ethnic spaces. In defining themselves, therefore, British "men and women [had to negotiate] …who they were and what they were not, that is, French."[12] Such conscious and unconscious liminal efforts towards national identification, whether driven by half-truths, coded shibboleths, and/or deception, have as their cornerstone a cultural notion of ethnic and cultural similarity. However, the explicit flip side to this dynamic, which is equally applicable to its historical Caribbean approximations, rested on the multiple constructiveness of national identity within what would become a single sovereign space; put another way, with time and change, autochthonous and creolised ideological structures and the discrete-cum-interacting identities these initially represented, will, from the perspective of hindsight, appear to have developed wholly inherently, when in fact many of these representations underwent drastic ideological reconstruction indebted to a fluidity in line (or opposition) with the pervading mood of the historical period in question.[13]

Moving squarely into the Caribbean region, a similar constructivist dynamic had been on the rise since at least the mid-eighteenth century, the result of which, while obviously not as ethnically-integrating as in the case of Britain, nonetheless served to explain the eventual nationalist overlaps of converging cultures in the region. Yet, given the unequal, undemocratic power relations that existed between nonetheless converging ethnicities in the Caribbean, we should be quick to ask whether the historical phenomenon of creolised identification seamlessly gave birth to the so-

[11] Jacobinism was a radical, terroristic liberalist ideological movement created during the French Revolution of the late 18th century; in time, the ideological underpinnings of the movement spread throughout Europe, becoming especially entrenched in England; see Gregory Claeys, *The Politics of English Jacobinism: Writings of John Thelwall* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1995).

[12] Colley, *Forging the Nation*, p.6.

[13] For comprehensive discussions on identity processes and formations See Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline* (London: Routledge, 1993), 154-71.

called homogenous present. What, for instance, is the empirical basis for determining why certain ethnic identities have always owed their historicized sense to demonstrative re-affirmations of ethnicity and the hardships accompanying this sense, as with the case of the proponents of the Black Power movement in Jamaica during the 1960s that sought to salvage blackness from a supreme, totalizing disfranchisement? And why is it that certain privileged social groups find themselves still stubbornly tied to the preservation of a particular social class, its values, color-coding and prejudices, as these are ultimately directed against a lower social class by virtue of the latter's socio-economic standing, ethnicity, and so on? Nationalist Caribbean identities were created from the dynamic inherent in both cases, although motivations in the latter case still blatantly persist in countries like the Dominican Republic and Haiti, where hierarchical racialist projections and implementations fortify social class orientations and blackness has ultimately come to reflect the unfavourable other.[14] Admittedly, the remainder of the Caribbean is in no holier a place for many of its peoples seemed to have reified the myth of white, near-white superiority and black inferiority, although we are witnessing in this period the powerful resurgence of a positive black aesthetic.[15] Nonetheless, as an attestation to their ironic tenacity, so-called inferior ethnic identities did survive and indeed created vital avenues of cultural sustenance under trenchant racialist colonial regimes; these avenues, in turn, were channelled towards a hopeful, progressive future, to the point where many scholars at present view Caribbean existence as homogenous because of the palpable African-cum-creolized style that typifies our cultures.[16]

Although there are many more permutations of national group identities that can be discussed, in the effort to theoretically locate that *overarching* ideological source for identity formation in the Caribbean, we may say that without that existential calculus of difference, of opposing individualities and cultural groups, an eventual collective-*enough* consciousness would not have been achieved in the British West Indies. The process toward identity-formation, together with its ideological source, was indeed very much essentialised, but not outrightly determined by a distinct European modus;

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[14] For a brief, accessible understanding of the role racism played in the history of these Spanish-speaking countries, see *African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide* edited by Alan West-Duran (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), pp. 73-86; 157-170.

[15] See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 5.

[16] See for instance, Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (editors), *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1993).

herein lies the dialectical, dichotomous drive behind the West Indian collective consciousness. Being the writer, interpreter and controller of the history of others do not inevitably confirm a subsequent identity fully fashioned from the ideological viewpoint of the "winner." No, the pervasive ideological source proposed here was more so determined by the way in which everyone valued him or herself in relation to a ubiquitous racialised, essentialised and binarised ideology spawned of creolization as it was *initiated* by European-ness, but largely controlled and negotiated by *blackness*. The ideological source hinted at, then, need not, given its binarised essence, be considered by everyone, slave and master alike, in the same way to be deemed singular.

In the initial analysis, the white individual in the frontier-stage of Caribbean existence automatically defined himself in relation to those like him, in appearance, in religion, in cultural suasion. More importantly, his creolizing self-cum-collective definitions would come to locate their validity in his imposed "superior" understandings on his other counterparts. In this sense, the elements of identity-formation in the Caribbean coalesced more effortlessly for whites than non-whites as the traditional life-ways of the latter groups were suddenly disrupted and violently subjected to constant white regulation and dogma, and who thus inescapably found themselves locked in an epic struggle between cultural recuperation and assimilation to a new culture largely of their tortured, traumatised making. It was in the midst of such struggles that a creolised ideological awareness was organically forged—here was a unique awareness that developed naturally given its *shared, psychic connection* between disparate bodies put to the - then unknown task of creating a new culture context. To take this a step further, that both the earlier colonial white elite and its subsequent creolized progeny realized that they could shape the beliefs and values of the "powerless," numerical, non-white majority to varying degrees of force and manipulation, highlights a particular historical understanding hinged on the indispensable relationship between social class and race, the very bedrocks of evolving Caribbean identities. To unravel this understanding, inchoate Caribbean identities and the legitimate societies these would beget were generated from a social space that constantly housed individuals both in bondage and freedom; this, in turn, would lead to an ideological dynamic responsible for the perpetuation of pluralism, the introduction and entrenchment of creolization, and the onset and subsequent hardening of various colour-coded nationalisms throughout the region. At the heart of this identification process was always to be found a privileged awareness that influenced the consciousness, as well as the perception of ideological distinctness among each pre-existing-yet-altering ethnic-racial identity,

including its *own* often contradictory awareness. Ideological in its yield, privilege, by its very character, automatically provisioned coded ideological cues for the "subordinate group[s] [which were constantly] hounded underground, deprived of legitimacy and devalued."[17] The superordinate white group, with the witting and unwitting support of its associated non-white identities, was thus destined to achieve a perennial and recalcitrant hegemony in socially- and culturally-altering ways throughout the identity formation process in the British West Indies. The disparate *inclusiveness* inherent in such a dynamic, its very singular nature, if you will, speaks both to the essential "importance of *structures* [that is,] the social forces beyond [any particular group's control,] which [in large measure] shape [its] identity…agency, [and] the degree of control which [it] can exert over [who it is]".[18] To sum up the foregoing from a self-reflective philosophical standpoint, although the privileged colonial group profoundly and inescapably shaped the cultural direction of the ethnic groups under its control, *natural* privilege itself was not nearly enough to disrupt the *natural* agency that a pervasive syncretism afforded to *all* represented coexisting ethnic groups as they jostled uncomfortably around a guiding alterity. Accordingly, identity formation in the historical Caribbean revolved around:

- A psycho-cultural link between potentially collective and social groups.
- Ample active engagement by those who took on new identities.
- Expressions of sameness and difference, via symbols and representations.
- "A tension between how much legal control [people had over] constructing [their] identities and how much control or constraint was legally exercised over [them]".[19]

[17] Rex Nettleford, *Caribbean Cultural Identity: The Case of Jamaica* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publisher, 2003), 3.
[18] Kath Woodward, *Questioning Identity*: *Gender*, *Class*, *Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 2000), 6.
[19] *Ibid.*, 8.