Ontological Blackness: A n Investigation of 18th Century Burial Practices among Captive Africans on the Island of Barbados

Brittany Leigh Brown

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Ontological Blackness:
An Investigation of 18th Century Burial Practices Among Captive Africans on the Island of Barbados

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
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Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Since its beginnings in 1968, African Diaspora archaeology has expanded to include many countries outside of the United States. Historically, mortuary studies of African Diaspora sites, both antebellum and post-emancipation have focused on skeletal pathology, dental analysis, and African cultural retention. African cultural retention remains a thematic preference for contemporary African American and African Caribbean archaeological studies. Some practitioners who specialize in African Diaspora anthropology and historical archaeology have been advocates of developing theoretical and methodological approaches that will enhance the disciplines understanding of the complexity of Black identity and material culture in the New World. This study takes a Black ontological approach to investigating burial practices at Newton Plantation in Barbados. A Black ontological approach as it is defined and utilized in this paper builds on African Diasporic Scholarship (ADS), and uses W.E.B Du Bois' notion of double consciousness to explore how enslaved Africans might have understood themselves and their material culture.
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This thesis is dedicated to the ancestors.

The many Africans held captive in the New World, the hundreds of thousands of enslaved people who lived and died on the island of Barbados as well as their descendents.

My mother and my father, who have sacrificed a great deal for their daughter to have this opportunity.
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Chapter One

Introduction

"Beyond the Black experience lies the human experience"


Anglophone Caribbean chattel slavery was a social and economic institution that denied the humanity of African descended people in order to exploit their labor. African people resisted chattel enslavement simply by existing as human beings within this institution. Archaeological endeavors that investigate the African Diaspora have often missed the idea that Africans and their descendants acted in spite of, not because of, their captivity. Too often historical archaeologists and other social scientists employ theories that concentrate on the gain, loss, and formation of culture among enslaved people, obscuring their humanity and reality (e.g., Mintz and Price 1976; Myrdal et al. 1944; Herskovits 1941; Frazier 1939; Elkins 1959; Fennell 2007; Phillips 1918; Stamp 1989; Vaughn 2005). A more textured understanding of the ways in which “captive communities shaped” their social, cultural, and physical landscapes (Battle-Baptiste 2011:49) can be gained by bringing humanity to the forefront of anthropological studies that focus on African enslavement in the New World.

Humanity, as the term is used here, refers to the multifaceted cultural and social actions and relations through which human beings find meaning, as well as their effort to build on, learn from and remember the past. Because humanity is such a broad term and concept, it is important to note that within this thesis the concept of humanity also refers to the identity of an individual as a human being. By this definition of humanity it is not my intention to imply that all human beings deal with their social, cultural, and physical
environment in ways that are indistinguishable. In fact, I place emphasis on the diversity of humanity, especially among African Diasporic populations. A focus on humanity brings with it the assumption that African people arrived in the New World as complete human beings, whose actions, knowledge, and logic were shaped by their growth and development within their respective social and cultural environments. The constant assault on the humanity of enslaved Africans by the English illuminates assertion, affirmation and reaffirmation of humanity by Africans and their descendants in contrast to their condition. However, historical archaeologists continue to neglect the explicit discussion of humanity in investigations of Anglophone chattel slavery.

Because the social and cultural ramifications of enslavement for African Diasporic groups transcend what can ever be grasped through anthropological study. Still, the anthropological discipline provides unique tools with which to investigate social and cultural interactions among enslaved people that are often missed in the historical record. My objective is to use the archaeological record to better understand the ways in which enslaved Barbadians might have understood themselves. In Barbados, earlier approaches have provided historical archaeologists with useful concepts, data, and theoretical starting points for investigating the enslaved (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Agbe-Davies 2007). However, in order to move forward toward this objective, I have found it necessary to employ a theoretical perspective that places humanity at its center. This thesis demonstrates the need for theoretical approaches within African Diaspora archaeology that are alternatives to the mainstream theoretical approaches that are traditionally employed.
I propose Black ontology as an alternative to traditional archaeological theory and method. Black ontology is an anthropological approach that draws on Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness (Du Bois 1903) and works through the tenants of ADS in order to better understand how enslaved Barbadians understood themselves. I apply this theoretical perspective to a case study at Newton Plantation in Barbados. Newton plantation cemetery is the resting place of over one hundred enslaved men women and children, seventeen of whom were interred with clay pipes (Handler and Lange 1978). I demonstrate that the interpretation of the pipes depends on the theoretical lens through which they are viewed.

By viewing the clay pipes through different theoretical lenses my paper both reveals how clay pipes would be interpreted within each theoretical framework and challenges the underlying assumptions of mainstream archaeological approaches. Rather than offering a definitive interpretation of the pipes, this thesis explores the implications, limitations, and possibilities offered by traditional archaeological theory and Black ontology. I argue, that to understand how the pipes contributed to testimony of the humanity of the enslaved more attention must be paid to Black epistemologies and ontologies. The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One gives the historical context of colonial Barbados during these seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It then situates Newton Plantation within the broader context of chattel slavery in Barbados. Chapter Two considers the role of pipes and smoking in West Africa, the transatlantic, and the New World. This chapter also explores how historical archaeologists have interpreted pipe burials within the African and African Diasporic contexts in the past. Chapter Three sets the stage for theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Four. It
begins with discussion of several mainstream anthropological approaches and ideologies which have prominently influenced archaeological interpretations of African Diasporic sites and material culture: assimilation, acculturation, pluralism, Herskovitsian essentialism, and creolization.

Though Afrocentricism is not commonly employed within historical archaeology, this chapter also addresses this theoretical perspective as it has been developed Molefi Asante. Chapter Four outlines the fundamentals of African Diaspora scholarship (ADS) within the African Diasporic intellectual tradition, which provides the necessary theoretical perspectives for my endeavors. Within this chapter pipes, found in association with burials are interpreted as reciprocal acts of affirmation of humanity within the enslaved community and within the broader social context of colonial Barbados, and as calls for future research to go beyond cultural formation. Chapter five is a brief conclusion that reiterates the main points of the thesis and introduces topics for future research.

Artifacts used in this investigation were obtained from the Barbados Museum and the Historical Society. In order to strengthen the argument that pipe burials are a significant practice and not an anomaly in the African Diaspora, this paper briefly investigates several other locations in the Diaspora known to have pipe burials associated with enslaved Africans as well as some sites in Africa. My interpretation of archaeological material from Newton Plantation is preceded by the numerous publications by Jerome Handler (Handler 1974, 1986, 1989, 2007, 2009; Handler and Lange 1978; Handler and Corruccini 1983; Handler et al. 1986; Handler and Norman 2007; Handler et al. 1989; Handler et al. 2005). The historical archives in Barbados was
the primary source for references to smoking, burial, laws, and religion pertaining to enslaved Barbadians. Burying the dead with pipes may not be unique to the people of the African Diaspora; however, no pipe burials have been uncovered in Barbados except those of people of African descent. There is also evidence of pipes being included in African Diasporic graves in Virginia, Montserrat, Jamaica, New York, Maryland and parts of West Africa (Kelso 1984; Watters 1994; Armstrong and Fleischman 2003; Blakey 1998, 2004a, 2004b; King et al. 1996; DeCourse 1992).
Chapter Two

A History of Barbados, Newton Plantation, and Burials of the Enslaved at Newton

The English arrived in Barbados in 1627 (Beckles 2006: 9; Beckles and Downes 1987: 226; Handler 1974: 7). Barbadian planters grew commodities that were much desired in England and other parts of the Old World (Beckles and Downes 1987: 226; Beckles 2006). English capital financed the island’s first commercial crop, tobacco (Beckles 2006: 10). The popularity of tobacco at the time made it an easy selection to produce for profit. Land for plantations was distributed by the English government to the most financially stable Englishmen with the greatest social ties to the crown (Beckles 2006: 12). In addition to land distribution, the English quickly set up a system of government. The General Assembly, established in 1639, comprised an elected legislature, and governed the island. This legislature was accompanied by an advisory council (Beckles 2006: 14), a Governor, and the Anglican Church.

The first laborers in Barbados were English indentured servants who supported the growth of its territory’s economy (Handler 1974: 7). Initially, European labor was obtained from various parts of Britain. These indentured servants could serve up to seven years and were often gathered from English prisons (Beckles 2006: 18). Soon Barbadians could not compete with their tobacco-growing cousins in the Chesapeake. They experimented with indigo and cotton production, but those crops became unprofitable due to “over-production” (Beckles 2006: 17; Handler 1974: 7). With the introduction of sugar in the 1640s, Barbados became England’s first and premier export colony (Handler and Lange 1978: 16; Williams 1991: 123; Green 1988; Brown
2008:14). English capital financed the islands first commercial sugar crops (Beckles 2006: 10).

The Establishment of Sugar Plantations in Barbados

The Dutch along with the Royal African Company provided Barbadian planters with agricultural knowledge and a stable supply of captive Africans that allowed Barbados to monopolize sugar production in the mid-seventeenth century (Brown 2008:14; Beckles 2006: 21; Handler 1978: 16, 1974:7; Faber 1998:44). Within the next few decades Barbados began a sugar revolution (Higman 2002: 231) so that the island was transformed into a series of plantations and agricultural farmlands. This drastic economic shift brought about new demographic changes that would alter Barbados forever and mould the New World economy.

The sugar revolution in Barbados demanded a larger labor force, and in order for planters to yield a profit, this force needed to be cost effective. Due to the rising cost of servant labor and the decreasing cost of enslaved labor, the importation of captive Africans expanded rapidly (Beckles 2006: 37). By the 1650s Barbados’ economy had become almost entirely dependent on sugar production and the labor of enslaved African people who were forced to produce large quantities of sugar (Dunn: 1972; Tomlins 2010: 428; Handler 1974:7). Barbados quickly became the wealthiest colony in England’s possession (Williams 1991:123) and by “1680, the sugar planters of Barbados were the wealthiest group of men in British America. Their shipments made up more than half of total annual British sugar imports, and were worth more than the total value of
exports to England from all the American mainland colonies” (Galenson 1982: 492). African Slavery on the Island of Barbados

In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries Barbados served as the economic model for the rest of the New World (Smith and Watson 2009: 64; Roper 2007). Hundreds of thousands of enslaved and free Blacks lived and died on the island of Barbados (Handler 1978:172; 1997: 93). Prior to 1713, the Royal African Company imported an estimated 50,000 Africans from West Africa and the Bight of Benin into Barbados (Curtin 1969:55; Galeson 1982: 492). Demanding labor in sugar cane fields during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries contributed to high mortality rates for enslaved people (Williams 1991: 125, Higman 1984:609). In 1764, there were about 70,706 people enslaved on Barbados. From 1764 to 1771, about half of this population perished under the conditions of Caribbean enslavement (Williams 1991: 125). The short life expectancy of field workers meant that these enslaved populations were not able to sustain themselves through their posterity. This created a need for a constant flow of African born captives to be imported to the island. By the end of the 17th century Africans outnumbered European descended people on the island (Beckles 2006: 39).

The demographic change, socio-economic conditions, and racialization of chattel enslavement in Barbados imposed a new identity upon African captives, so that the diverse various ethnic groups from these regions became collectively known to the English as “Negroes” (Brown 2008:139). Though a collective identity was imposed upon them in law, linguistic and ethnic variation produced social divisions and created various opportunities for social mobility through the labor system. Hilary Beckles speaks to this; he writes:
"The notion of a homogenous slave consciousness was contradicted by deep-seated conceptual differences and political fragmentation. Slave groups were starkly differentiated initially by African-derived ideas about ethnicity, and later by production-based stratification that highlighted occupational status. These differences created a complex identity system among slaves that propelled them to pursue betterment in diverse and oftentimes self-divisive ways...as a result, the slave class generated consistently a stream of self-contested projects of liberation and social alleviation." (Beckles 1998: 108)

The shift in population from a European to an African majority deeply affected the social and cultural dynamics of Barbados. The growing enslaved population became a threat to the planter class (Tomlins 2010: 49). These concerns were codified in law. The legislation stated that "...the former Lawes of this Island conserving the ordering and governing of negroes and so add thereunto such farther Lawes and ordinances at this time wee think absolute needful for the publique safety and may prove to the future behoofefull to the peace and utility of this Island." (Tomlins 2010). Though the governing body had laws in place, white inhabitants found it necessary to modify existing legislation in order to preserve the institution of slavery and their personal security.

Governing Enslaved Africans

In 1661, Barbados passed its first slave code law. The law was created solely for the purpose of controlling the lives of enslaved people through limitation and alienation (Tomlins 2010: 428; Nicholson 1994: 50). *The Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes* (1661) stated that "heretofore many good Lawes and Ordinances have been made for the governing regulating and ordering the Negroes Slaves in this Island..."(Tomlins 2010:428). This slave code provided a legal framework that enslaved Blacks were unable to transcend. As social conditions evolved so did the slave codes. The Barbadian slave code of 1661 was amended in 1676, 1682, and then again in 1688
Laws regarding Barbados’ Black population were constantly amended so that they might achieve a more efficient way of controlling the enslaved population, and later the free Black population, educationally, socially, and politically (Beckles 2006: 33-35). In time, the other slave holding colonies adopted Barbados’ social and political structure (Thomas 1930: 75; Tomlins 2010: 428; Nicholson 1994: 50; Brown 2008: 139).

The amendment that took place in 1688, is of particular significance to this paper because it defined enslaved people as ‘real estate’ and stated that they should be considered and treated as such. Consequently, all enslaved inhabitants would now be legally bound to the plantations on which they were forced to work and could not easily be separated from them. Because they were ‘real estate’ enslaved people could not hold property, leave the plantation without permission, use loud instruments such as drums, and their dwellings were to be searched weekly. As a result, the chances of becoming free were low and enslaved people more often than not died on the plantation (Beckles 2006).

Punishments could be issued to enslaved people for stealing goods, attempting escape, participating in the market of stolen goods, burning sugar cane fields, and assaulting Christians. These punishments were implemented in the form of mutilation, whipping, branding, maiming or death. In Barbados, as punishment for “striking” a Christian, an enslaved person would "bee severely whipped his nose slit and bee burned in the face," where such burning presumably involved some letter signifying the
crime." (Nicholson 1994: 45). These laws remained in place during the eighteenth century and ensured the security of the colony. There was little effort to Christianize enslaved people. In fact, the word Christian was often used synonymously with European (Beckles and Downes 1987: 236; Nicholson 1994: 45). This suggests that the majority of enslaved people were not offered a position in the Christian churches of Barbados and probably were not recognized as Christians (Handler 1978:175-180).

A key way the dynamics of Barbados differed from other Anglophone colonies in the eighteenth century is that there were more women present than men. This demographic change (Beckles 2006: 39), allowed the black population to begin sustaining itself early in comparison to other slave holding territories. By 1817, only a small percent of the enslaved people of Barbados were actually African born; most of the population had been born in Barbados (Handler and Lange1978: 29). Despite the interaction of members from different African cultures, it would be a mistake to assume that African cultural influences faded out of significance for Barbadian people of African ancestry (Brown 2008). Most enslaved people originated from one of three major cultural and linguistic zones: Senegambia, the West African coastal zone, and west-central Africa with many overlapping cultural outlooks, practices, and linguistic features within them (Thornton 1992: 187-192). In contrast to many of the British colonists, many Africans also were also bi- or multilingual as well as familiar with abbreviated trade languages, or pidgins, which facilitated economic relations between groups. Thus many arrived with communication skills which would work to their advantage in the new environment.

Newton Plantation and its Cemetery
The clay smoking pipes and burials which I discuss were excavated at Newton Plantation, which is located in Christ Church Parish on the southernmost part of the Island. This plantation encompassed about 581 acres and operated from about 1646 (Roberts 2006:556) until Emancipation in 1834 (Handler and Lange 1978: 67). Newton Plantation was owned by a wealthy Englishman named Samuel Newton. Samuel Newton possessed roughly 200 to 300 enslaved people (Handler and Lange 1978: 63), which he forced to work in sugar cane production for his profit. The working conditions for enslaved Barbadian people were brutal. Barbadians, like other enslaved Africans in the New World were under fed and overworked (Handler et al. 1983: 68; Shuler 2011). The estimated lifespan for a sugarcane worker was short and infant mortality was high (Brown 2008: 54). According to Beckles and Downes, prior to 1660, the life expectancy of an enslaved African was estimated to be no more than seven years (Beckles and Downes 1987: 9).

Hundreds of enslaved men, women and children died during their enslavement at Newton plantation. The Newton plantation burial ground site is located adjacent to where the communal village once stood. Today the resting place of those individuals is marked by trees and more recently a plaque, and covered in sour grass and surrounded by sugar cane. Death and burial were ever present on the Island. Up to 104 individuals of African descent have been uncovered in Newton Plantation’s cemetery (Handler et al.1986). Several of these individuals were interred with white clay pipes that date to about 1700 to 1740. Interpretations of the reason for placement of pipes in burials has not been examined in depth. The seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were time periods in
Barbados where access to the church was at its lowest among enslaved people of African
descent.

The Anglican church enacted policies that excluded enslaved people from church
membership. Andrew Holt, an Englishman who served as a clergyman in Barbados from
1725 to 1733, hoped to improve the brutal conditions on the sugar plantations and include
the enslaved as members of the church. Holt’s father, a priest on the island had made
prior attempts similar to these, but he was unsuccessful. His son, Andrew also found the
task impossible. The planter elite refused to acknowledge enslaved people as Christians,
regardless of the fact that some of the enslaved had even practiced Christianity in Africa
prior to arriving in the New World (Holt 1946: 446). Because Barbadians were not
allowed to become a part of a Christian church congregation they could not be buried as a
part of the congregation. This meant that Barbadians would rely upon their respective
communities for burials. The subsequent sections discuss the ways in which
archaeologists and historians have interpreted the burials at Newton Plantation and lay
groundwork for my reinvestigation of the pipes in chapter four.

Burial Practices in Barbados

Europeans living in Barbados at the time of slavery were probably accustomed to
burial practices quite different from their African descended counterparts. European
colonists typically buried their dead in church cemeteries and were most often affiliated
with the Anglican denomination (Handler et al. 1989:13). According to documentary
evidence, prominent families tended to occupy lavish vaults and private plots (Handler
1989: 13). It was uncommon for Anglicans to bury enslaved people in their cemeteries.
Although this is documented as having occurred during time periods that are closer to emancipation, it has not been documented for the early 18th century (Handler and Lange 1987: 174-178). Documentary evidence shows that during the 1820s and 30s it remained uncommon for Anglicans to bury enslaved people as a part of the church congregation (Handler and Lange 1987: 175). An early settler who lived during the mid-17th century speaks to this: “Negroes... bury in the ground of the plantation where they die” (Atkins 1676). It was unlikely that an enslaved person, regardless of having been baptized in the church, would have been buried among the European community; instead they would have most likely have been buried on a plantation among other Barbadians who shared their social condition (Handler and Lange 1978: 177).

**Funerary Freedom in Early 18th Century**

Quaker, Catholic, and Jewish faiths may have had influence on burials of enslaved people (Handler et al. 1989: 14), however their influence was certainly minor in comparison to the Church of England, which dominated the island during this time period (Handler and Lange 1978). The archaeological signatures of African descended peoples are well affiliated with pipe burials (King et al. 1996: 116). Even though the pipes may have been European in manufacture, Barbadians were burying their dead according to their own manners and customs (Handler 1997: 93). Alienation created circumstances that allowed enslaved people to continue and develop their funerary customs separate from their oppressors (Brown 2008: 63). During the 17th and 18th centuries, Barbadian communities of African descent maintained control over how members of their community would be buried.
Enslavers “probably dictated the general location of these cemeteries” (Handler 1997: 93) but the enslaved buried their dead “according to their own customs” (Handler 1997: 93; Jamieson 1995: 41, 46-47). There were not many laws related to religion and burials of enslaved people during the early 18th century; however, documentary evidence suggests that enslaved Barbadians were buried on the plantation where they worked. Later as baptism became more frequent among the enslaved population, enslaved people were buried in church cemeteries and by Christian customs (Handler 1989: 14). The Slave Act of 1826 was the beginning of this attempt to more strictly control the funerary practices of enslaved. Clause 9 of this act was a legislative attempt to regulate the funerary customs of enslaved people. It states “the funeral of any slave within such plantation...after the hour of seven 'o clock at night or any heathenish or idolatrous music, singing, or ceremonies on any such occasion” was forbidden (Handler et al. 1989:14)

Previous Archaeological and Historical Interpretation of the Newton Plantation Burials

During the 1970s, Handler and Lange rediscovered the burial of an enslaved man on Newton plantation. This individual, referred to as Burial 72, was absent a coffin and included grave goods such as copper bracelets, an iron knife, finger rings, a necklace comprised of dog teeth and beads, and an African elbow-bend (or reed and stem) clay pipe bowl. Handler interprets this individual as an older Barbadian man of African descent, around the age of 50 and estimates that his body was interred sometime during the late 1600s or early 1700s. According to Handler, Burial 72’s origin of birth is unclear, but given dental modification and other osteological indicators, Handler interprets this person as most likely of African descent (Handler 1997: 98-10; Handler and Norman
2007:3). This case is perhaps the most in depth account of a pipe burial investigation for a person of African descent.

Handler asserts that pipe bowl and pipe stem fragments are commonly found in association with this site as well as many other New World sites. However he notes that whole pipes, such as the one found in association with Burial 72, are fairly uncommon. Twenty-one whole pipes were found in direct association with burials at Newton Cemetery (Handler 2007: 1). Handler acknowledges that during this period many of the African descended people on the island were African born. He asserts that various places (e.g., the Gold Coast and Bight of Benin) in “Western Africa” served as “regional” sources for the enslaved of the “British West Indies during the period of the Newton cemetery” (Handler and Norman 2007: 6). Handler also notes that because pipes were used among the living, the inclusion of pipes in burials would symbolize this and its continuation by the dead person “to [sustain the deceased] in his journey” (Handler and Lange 1978: 199). After sifting through documentary evidence from some sixty to seventy West African cultures Handler connects this funerary practice to the “Ashanti and related Gold Coast peoples” (Handler and Lange 1978: 200).

Handler’s conclusion that the funerary practices exhibited in Burial 72 had a Gold Coast antecedent is understandable because the Royal African Company and the British traders who succeeded it were very active in this area. However, it is important to point out that these traders also operated over a much larger area (Law 1998). Although evidence is strong that the burial practices had an African antecedent, a West African antecedent from the Gold Coast cannot be shown conclusively. Handler therefore ignores the possibility of cultural influences of other Africans who did not originate from the
Gold Coast. Handler himself acknowledges and documented that Newton plantation was inhabited by a multiethnic enslaved population. For example, in an earlier study, Handler states that during the "late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries an indeterminate number of Barbadian slaves originated in southeast Africa, primarily Madagascar" (Handler and Lange 1978:293).

Handler also asserts that from the 1670s until 1698 and from 1716 to 1721 the Malagasy and Southeastern Africans made up a significant portion of the enslaved population in Barbados (Handler and Lange 1978: 293-294), and he reiterates this point in a 2007 study (Handler and Norman 2007: 6). Given the estimation of the time of interment for Burial 72 (late 1600’s to early 1700’s) and the short life expectancy of an enslaved Barbadian during this time period, it is possible, though probably not likely, that this man was one of the Malagasy or Southeastern Africans. It is also possible that that he was of West African origin, or that he was born on the island with one or more ethnic affiliations. In addition to these concerns, no definitive conclusions can be reached about the degree of dominance of particular cultural contributions among the surviving community who actually placed these objects. From a Black ontological perspective, these cultural contributions are of equal importance to the funerary practices of the enslaved because what matters far more than origins here is that the enslaved themselves carried them out. Further, Handler’s focus on the origins of the deceased in Burial 72 ignores the fact that surviving members of the community, not the deceased, performed the burial so their contributions need not reflect the ethnic/cultural origins of the deceased.
Using burial goods to reflect the ethnic affiliation of the deceased and providing goods for use in the afterlife are not exclusive to Gold Coast Africans. For example, while studying the relationship between the cultures of Ile-Ife and Benin in what is now Nigeria, Ogundiran excavated the grave of a decapitated man which contained snail shell, quartz slabs, a sheep skull, grinding stones, fragments of ceramic vessels, and food remains (Ogundrian 2002: 47). Burials found in Congo-Angola also contain objects used by the deceased in life, which were both buried and placed on top of the grave for use in death (Thompson 1983: 132-142). Cemeteries ranging over three centuries in the African Diaspora also contain comparable materials. I will discuss African burial practices further when I suggest in chapter four how Newton pipe burials can be reinterpreted.

Anthropologist Gundaker has documented over 40 African American cemeteries with surface grave goods spanning from Connecticut in the North to Louisiana in the South. This suggests that while specific African knowledge systems can help us better understand African and descendant perspectives on burials, such widespread burial practices cannot have a single point of origin. “The African Diaspora is an open-ended cultural and historical complex that involves European and Native American as well as African currents” (Gundaker 2001: 26). Newton plantation’s labor force, like that of many other New World plantations, and most other sites across the Diaspora, consisted of a multiethnic enslaved community whose members made cultural contributions to funerary practices, and aspects of daily life. Whether Burial 72 was a Gold Coast African born captive, or a first generation Creole born enslaved Barbadian does not alter the possibility that the grave inclusions displayed in the burial could have drawn on the knowledge contributions of other members of the mosaic ethnic landscape present on
Newton plantation. Thus, rather than specific African correlates, the resources which the enslaved drew upon in any given situation/context would be those which asserted humanity most strongly. This does not exclude their own appropriations from Europeans; nor does it rule out mixtures of resources from diverse African knowledge systems, or multivalent meanings of artifacts and actions.

In addition to essentialist interpretations of the origins of pipe burials, many archaeological investigations have even failed to recognize the pipe as a significant grave inclusion at all. Kingsmill Plantation in Virginia was in use from 1619 until 1800. In 1989, Kelso uncovered the remains of an enslaved African American woman. This woman was estimated to be about twenty-five years of age at the time of her interment. The woman was buried in a coffin with an 18th century white clay pipe beneath her left arm. However, because this archaeological endeavor was intended to be a study of rural plantation life, the focus was not on the enslaved themselves. Thus, there is no interpretation for this burial or the pipe as a grave good (Kelso 1984: 108-109).

In 1979, on the island of Montserrat, construction workers rediscovered a cemetery site (Watters 1994: 56). The Harney site cemetery posed many limitations for the interpretation of data yielded from this site due to construction (Watters 1994 :57). However, researchers determined that the human remains belonged to people African descent who had been enslaved on the island during the eighteenth century. The author posits that this burial ground contained the remains of a number of individuals with mixed ancestry. Through skeletal analysis and archaeological investigation Watters was able to determine that there were 10 graves, seventeen skeletons, and one-hundred and forty-three associated artifacts.
From osteological data, age, sex, and “race” was determined (Watters 1994: 57-58). Pipe stem fragments were found in association with both Skeleton #4 and Skeleton #1(#9). Bones from Skeleton #9 predate the interment of Skeleton #1, thus making Skeleton #1 intrusive to Skeleton #9’s burial. Thus artifact association must be attributed to both in this case. Skeleton #1 was a partial skeleton identified to be a woman of mixed African ancestry about fifty years of age, while Skeleton #9 was identified to be a man of mixed African ancestry about forty years of age. Skeleton #4 was the only complete skeleton found in the cemetery and was determined to be a female of African descent of about sixty years of age. She was found in association with a pipe stem fragment. Skeleton #7 was identified the partial skeleton of a man of African descent who was about twenty-five to thirty-five years of age by the time of his death. This particular individual was not found in association with any artifacts (Watters 1994: 60-61).

According to the author, he had limited time and poor conditions for interpretation of the burials and associated artifacts (Watters 1994: 61), and he acknowledges that this study does not meet the “standards advocated for plantation archaeology” in general (Watters 1994: 70). Osteological analysis dominates the study. If a Black ontological perspective had been possible here, it would strive to construct meaningful, coherent interpretations of the African Diasporic artifacts and archaeological sites within the plantation context.

In 1989, Douglas H. Ubelaker of the Smithsonian Institution excavated Patuxent Point for the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. The site was part of a tobacco plantation occupied from about 1658 through the 1690s in Calvert County, Maryland. Under his direction, the remains of nineteen individuals were examined. Four of these
were buried with smoking pipes: burials 1, 2, 10, and 18. Burial 18 was identified to be an African American sub-adult between the ages of fifteen and seventeen at the time of his interment. He was interred without a coffin and with a pipe placed in his hands, which were folded over his pelvic area (King et al. 1996: 42). Dental analysis of the young man revealed evidence of tobacco usage. However, the dental analysis of burial 18 indicated no pipe-wear on his teeth, suggesting that the young man may have consumed tobacco, but not by smoking.

This evidence is particularly relevant to this study because it suggests that the man was not a habitual pipe smoker; however, he was found with a pipe in his hands. The apparent conflict in evidence in this case is a valuable reminder that although use of an artifact by the deceased during life is one possible explanation for the placement of specific items in burials, it often is not a sufficient explanation. If we place humanity at the forefront, we must assume that human actions make sense to those who perform them even when they do not make sense to us now. Further, because burials are serious and important occasions involving commemoration and respect for the dead, we must also assume that from the survivors’ point of view, placing this pipe in the young man’s grave was a logical action. Even though we cannot always reconstruct the survivors’ intentions, discrepancies in data are important reminders of the need for more investigation of broader epistemological and ontological contexts. Also interesting is that burials 1, 2, and 10 all displayed pipe-wear in their mandibles, but these individuals were not found with pipes or any other artifacts. Although the authors note that burial 1’s ancestry is debatable because skeleton shows evidence of both African and European
ancestry, Burial 2 and 10 appeared to be of European ancestry (King et al. 1996: 137-180).

King et al. (1996) offers some interpretation for Burial 18 based on Handler’s 1978 study. They assert that the placement of the pipe in Burial 18’s hands is probably a Gold Coast custom, presumably “to sustain [the deceased] in his journey...” (King et al. 1996: 116). The authors usefully acknowledge that the pipe follows an African Diasporic pattern and also note that enslaved people “of African ancestry appear to have buried their deceased...with tobacco pipes” (King et al. 1996: 116). In addition they state that, “A number of instances in which individuals of African ancestry were buried with clay tobacco pipes are known from the 17th and 18th centuries.”(King et al. 1996: 116). Although King et al focused their project on the colonial frontier not the African Diaspora, they deserve credit for conducting one of few archaeological studies that acknowledges pipe inclusions as an African Diasporic burial practice.

In 1990, Douglass Armstrong and Mark Fleischman excavated four eighteenth century house-yard burials on Seville plantation in Jamaica. Armstrong and Fleischman were interested in examining the burial practices and physical conditions of the Jamaican community that had been enslaved during this century. Each individual uncovered during this excavation was interred in their own house yard and possessed grave goods that differed greatly from one another. One out of the four burials contained an unused pipe. Armstrong and Fleischman identified Burial SAJ-B2. SAJ-B2, a male of African descent and about twenty years of age at the time of his death. This man was interred sometime during the mid-eighteenth century. In addition to the pipe, his grave included several other including buttons, and a knife (Armstrong and Fleischman 2003:45).
Survivors placed the pipe on the right side of the man’s chest. Its manufacture dates to sometime between the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth century. Of these artifacts, Armstrong and Fleischman only give an interpretation for the knife, which the authors conclude is the man’s community's open acknowledgement of his “left-handedness” (Armstrong and Fleischman 2003:55). They offer no interpretation for the other artifacts present, including the unused tobacco pipe (Armstrong and Fleischman 2003: 47). Instead, the focus of this study is an osteological analysis of the bodies. Most of what is known about the man with the pipe and the other three individuals stems from the observations of the bones, including the interpretation of left-handedness as a reason for placement of the knife. According to the authors,

“Burial practices at Seville, and those from other sites in the Caribbean and North America, cannot be tied directly to a specific West African ethnic group or to "whole" pan-African practices, nor should we expect them to be. However, they do reflect generalized West African cultural influences including burial in the house-yard compound, orientation, and burial with specific sets of grave goods that establish relationships between the living and the dead” (Armstrong and Fleischman 2003: 39).

I agree with Armstrong and Fleischman, no correlations can be made between burial practices at Seville plantation and specific West African ethnic groups. However, the authors fail to recognize that this conclusion does not mean, therefore, that African burial practices are irrelevant or that a recurring pattern should not be noted because it is not limited to one specific group or region. As we have seen similar burial practices like grave offerings span wide geographic areas, and can have many features in common as well as differences.

By ignoring the possible contributions of other or many African ethnic groups to the history of this site, this study fits the pattern of disenfranchising the cultural influence
of West Africans from other regions or non-West Africans who were present on this plantation. Historical archaeologists usually cannot quantify or separate out various African cultural contributions to the archaeological record in a plantation context.

This chapter has summarized the historical contexts of chattel slavery on Barbados, the archaeology of burials on Newton plantation, particularly with respect to burial practices and clay pipes, and shown some of the problems of archaeological interpretations of the burials and associated goods. The next chapter will lay out comparative information on pipes and pipe smoking in African and transatlantic contexts as a basis for pointing out limitations in dominant theories of the African Diaspora in chapter three, and to suggests grounds for a reconsideration of the meanings of the pipes from the perspectives of Black ontologies and African Diaspora scholarship in chapter four.
Chapter Three

The Clay Pipe in African and Transatlantic Context

"As to religion, the natives believe that there is one Creator of all things, and that he lives in the sun, and is girted round with a belt that he may never eat or drink; but, according to some, he smokes a pipe, which is our own favourite luxury. They believe he governs events, especially our deaths or captivity..." Gustavus Vassa "The Life of Gustavus Vassa", 1789

Examining the social relationship between enslaved people and their oppressors is a key means of understanding how enslaved peoples acquired their material culture during their enslavement. The complicated history of pipes and tobacco smoking involved relations among Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans that predate English settlement in Barbados or the establishment of chattel slavery on the island.

The origin of smoking is a mystery to the social sciences. It also has been, and remains, a highly debated subject. Smoking does not require a pipe; thus inhaling smoke from burning leaves or other substances should also be considered as a form of smoking. This form of smoking was probably present in Africa before the introduction of tobacco (Handler 2007:1). Consequently, various African groups do not need to have used smoking pipes in order to have smoked tobacco after it was introduced to the continent from the Americas. Further, methods of smoking without using a pipe would not be present in the archaeological record.

The exact date for the arrival of smoking pipes in Africa is unknown. Two types of smoking pipes are typically found in archaeological contexts on the continent of Africa: barrel pipes and elbow-bend pipes. Barrel pipes are tube-like, and have a shape similar to cigars. Barrel pipes are typically found in the Southern and Eastern parts of Africa. Elbow-bend pipes are the second form of pipe. Elbow-bend pipes have an angle
located between the bowl and the stem. This form closely resembles English smoking pipes. This type of pipe is associated with tobacco smoking and found archaeologically in West Africa and throughout the African continent (Phillips 1983:303).

Comparative studies on the style of pipes in West African and American Indian societies suggest that the types of pipes made in West Africa heavily reflect the origins of its practical use in Eastern North America. Historical and ethnological evidence suggests that Europeans were responsible for introducing smoking pipes to West Africa. However, because several European powers transferred cultural influences between Africa and the New World, it is not possible to know which one was responsible for the earliest African use of tobacco pipes (Phillips 1983:319).

Africans made tobacco pipes from indigenous African clays in “the same fashion, and used in the same manner” as did Europeans (Vassa 1789: 15). Although pipes were being manufactured by African people, they were also being obtained through trade (Handler 2008:1). Documentary evidence reveals that European manufactured smoking pipes were often traded in return for enslaved labor (Handler 2008:1-3). Other well-known African uses of tobacco include chewing and snuff.

Tobacco and its use played a larger role in the middle passage than is often recognized. Much of the tobacco brought into Africa by way of Europeans was intended to be used to purchase enslaved people. Documents reveal the use of tobacco on board slaving ships (Handler 2008:1, 6-7). Enslaved peoples were occasionally given tobacco to smoke during the middle passage (Handler 2007:1). This was a practice carried out by many slave ships belonging to several of the European powers including the English,
Danish, and French (Handler 2008:6-7). It is clear that the many African captives were familiar with the use of pipe smoking and tobacco prior to their captivity in the New World. In Barbados, smoking pipes were fairly inexpensive and readily available for anyone who could afford the purchase. It was common for enslaved people to obtain smoking pipes from their enslavers as incentives for labor (Handler 1989: 134-145). This helps indicate the value pipe smoking had in Barbadian society (Handler 1989: 134).

Tobacco Smoking Pipes in Burial Contexts

Traveler Arthur Ffoulkes observed burial practices among Gold Coast Africans, writing that, “...a few personal articles are placed near the head, such as a comb, a towel, and pipe, together with gold dust, according to his wealth, and finally his best cloths, of velvet, silk, or cotton, are piled on top of the body” (Ffoulkes 1909:156). Similarly, a former captive African and author, Olaudah Equiano, later re-named Gustavus Vassa by the Royal Navy lieutenant who purchased him, explained the placement of pipes in graves as an Igbo native custom, in what is now eastern Nigeria:

“...we had priests and magicians, or wise men... they were held in great reverence by the people. They calculated our time, and foretold events, as their name imported, for we called them Ah-affoe-way-cah, which signifies calculators or yearly men, our year being called Ah-affoe. They wore their beards, and when they died they were succeeded by their sons. Most of their implements and things of value were interred along with them. Pipes and tobacco were also put into the grave with the corpse, which was always perfumed and ornamented, and animals were offered in sacrifice to them. None accompanied their funerals but those of the same profession or tribe. These buried them after sunset, and always returned from the grave by a different way from that which they went.” (Vassa 1789:20).

Equiano recognized similar burial practices in Jamaica, which bore social, cultural, and social similarities to other Anglophone New World colonies, writing that “Here each
different nation of Africa meet and dance after the manner of their own country. They still retain most of their native customs: they bury their dead, and put victuals, pipes and tobacco, and other things, in the grave with the corpse, in the same manner as in Africa.” (Vassa 1789: 114) Burials like these are scattered across the African Diaspora (Handler 2008:1).

It is not surprising to see similar burial practices among Caribbean and North American African Diasporic groups and in other places that had dense enslaved populations from Africa. Because of the scarcity of undisturbed burials that were recovered from Barbadian cemetery sites, it is necessary to look beyond the Island of Barbados to illustrate this pattern of pipe burials within the African Diaspora. In doing so, several other similar sites in the Caribbean, North America and Africa were briefly examined. For ease of comparison, the charts below summarize reports of burials which include pipes in the Caribbean and North America during the eighteenth century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pipe Date</th>
<th>Placement of Pipe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seville Plantation</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Unknown (young)</td>
<td>1700-1799</td>
<td>Right side of Chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harney Slave Cemetery</td>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>1700-1799 (raised leaf design)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harney Slave Cemetery</td>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>1700-1799 (raised leaf design)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Plantation</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Abt. 50</td>
<td>60-1740 (West African Elbow-bend)</td>
<td>Right side pelvic area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Caribbean Pipe Burials*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pipe Date</th>
<th>Placement of Pipe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingsmill Plantation</td>
<td>United States (VA)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>1700-1730 (initial's IW)</td>
<td>Beneath left arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patuxent</td>
<td>United States (MD)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>Late 17th century (broken stem)</td>
<td>In hand (unspecifed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*North American Pipe Burials*

*Note: all pipes are English style imported smoking pipes with the exception of those marked by "*" indicating other possible origin.*

This chart illustrates the burials described previously; it demonstrates trends among pipe burials in North America and the Caribbean. Other than being of the African Diaspora, these burials are virtually contemporaneous dating from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century; most occurring during the eighteenth century. Aside from the Patuxent and Seville Plantation burials, pipes seem to be associated with community elders. Archaeological evidence from several other sites in the Caribbean, North America, and Africa are constant.
Chapter Four

Theoretical Frameworks and Their Implications

In her article 'Anthropology as an Agent of Transformation: Introductory Comments and Queries,” anthropologist Faye V. Harrison asserts: “In spite of varying attempts at revision and reform, anthropology remains overwhelmingly a Western intellectual—and ideological—project that is embedded in relations of power which favor class sections and historical blocs belonging to or with allegiances to the world’s White minority” (Harrison 1991:1). As Harrison and Harrison suggest, the theoretical and methodological approaches of mainstream anthropology are limited in their ability to investigate the African Diaspora (Harrison and Harrison 1999: 1). This chapter addresses some of anthropology’s most prominent mainstream theoretical approaches to the African Diaspora: assimilation, acculturation, Herskovitsian essentialism, and creolization. Although it has not been influential in anthropology, I also review the Afrocentrist position popularized by Molefi Asante as it offers a useful contrast to the premises of African Diaspora scholarship in chapter four. In each instance I also turn back to pipe burials and ask how they appear through the lens of each theory.

Assimilation and Acculturation

Contemporarily within the discipline of anthropology assimilation and acculturation are often used interchangeably. These approaches emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century as useful ways of describing the process of European immigrant integration in to American society. Although both models were employed extensively in early anthropological studies as tools for measuring the success of African Americans
amalgamation into American society (Myrdal et al. 1944), assimilation failed to acknowledge race as a social fact (Durkheim 1895).

Ideally for assimilation to be rendered successful, an individual or group must become invisible in relation to the appearance of the dominant group physically, culturally, and socially. Harrison asserts “...the focus on ethnicity [and immigration] euphemized if not denied race by not specifying the conditions under which those social categories and groups historically subordinated as “racially” distinct emerged and persist” (Harrison 1995:48). A Black racial identity did not allow most members of the African Diaspora to blend into the dominate society no matter how closely their linguistic and cultural patterns resembled it. Intellectual Marcus Garvey stated,

“...The white man of America will not, to any organized extent, assimilate the Negro, because in so doing, he feels that he will be committing racial suicide. This he is not prepared to do. It is true he illegitimately carries on a system of assimilation; but such assimilation, as practiced, is one that he is not prepared to support...” (Garvey 1923: 26).

While acculturation surpassed assimilation in terms of relevance to anthropological study because of its focus on culture and language, “both models employ a reductive, unilinear direction of change” (Grey Gundaker, personal communication, April 8, 2013) from marginalized by, to fully integrated within, the dominant society through adoption of language and culture.

These reductionist approaches ignore context, diversity, and variation in behavioral practices which are essential to the human experience. Applied to African Diasporic groups in the New World, acculturation hypothesized these subjugated peoples suffered the loss of native customs, language, and culture as a result of contact with their oppressors. In one of his most infamous works “The Negro Family in the United States”, 32
sociologist E. Franklin Frazier writes, "...probably never before in history has a people been so nearly stripped of its social heritage as were the Negroes who were brought to America" (Frazier 1939:625). Although both of these models have been widely rejected by the anthropological discipline their ideological influence is persistent.

Due to the European manufacture of the pipes, within an assimilation framework the pipe burials from Newtown plantation could be interpreted as Africans attempting to imitate their European counterparts. Assimilationists have often argued that African Diasporic culture is pathological, but for this argument to hold practitioners must first assume that African descended people have not developed cultures and knowledge systems that are equally sophisticated as those developed by Europeans. Once this assumption that African Diasporic people do not have logical cultural practices is accepted, the argument that African Diasporic culture is pathological makes sense.

The acculturation model would posit that these pipes were archaeological evidence that enslaved Africans at Newton plantation were socially and culturally becoming less African and more European. This conclusion would be drawn from their use of European manufactured pipes in their funerary practices. Acculturation draws on the same underlying assumptions as the assimilation model. Both the acculturation and assimilation perspectives underline the idea that Africans and their descendants are intellectually, socially, and culturally inferior. Neither of these theories allows the artifacts to be investigated within an African Diasporic context. All human beings have cultures and knowledge systems that inform their actions, Africans should not be an exception.
The acculturation model dominated the social sciences in the first half of the twentieth century (Herskovits 1941:3). Both written by members of the African Diasporic Scholarship tradition, Carter G. Woodson’s work *The African Background Outlined* (1936) and Du Bois’s *Black Folk, Then and Now* (1939) were the initial responses to the acculturation model. Later, Herskovits’ *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), came as an additional challenge to the ideology behind Frazier’s theoretical stance Herskovits writes,

“The myth of the Negro past is one of the principle supports of race prejudice in this country. Unrecognized in its efficacy, it rationalizes discrimination in everyday contact between Negroes and whites, influences the shaping of policy where Negroes are concerned, and affects the trends of research by scholars whose theoretical approach, methods, and systems of thought presented to students are in harmony with it…no conflict ensues even when, as popular belief, certain tenets run contrary to some of its component parts, since its acceptance is so little subject to question that contradictions are not likely to be scrutinized too closely.” (Herskovits 1941: 1)

Operating and elaborating on many of the same ideas as his predecessors, Herskovits successfully demonstrates Africa’s connection to the African Diaspora using anthropological observation. The acculturation model, Herskovits argues is built on the assumption that African descended people are culturally, socially, and intellectually inferior. According to Herskovits the underlying assumption that African descended people were inferior was reflected in the questions that mainstream anthropologists chose to ask about the African Diaspora; consequently, this ideology also influenced what they were able to observe in Black life and culture.

Common observations of Black life and culture within anthropology were that African descended people were primitive, childlike, and adjusted “easily to the most
unsatisfactory social situations, which they accept readily and even happily” (Herskovits 1941:1); captive Africans in America were of lower intelligence than those that remained in Africa; African descended people lost their native languages and customs as a result of the middle passage; contact with superior customs of Europeans caused Africans to give up their own native customs and adopt that of their master’s; and or enslaved Africans had no past (Herskovits 1941: 2). To negate these fallacies, Herskovits posited that African culture should be the focus of African Diasporic studies.

Furthermore, he argued that African culture could be observed through anthropological study and material culture in secular life, language and arts, and religion. Yet he posits that some places yield higher concentrations of Africanisms than others. By situating these manifestations of African culture along a linear continuum, Herskovits played in to the acculturation model (Herskovits 1941:52), as illustrated within his conclusions about the formation of African Diasporic culture:

“Coming from the relatively complex and sophisticated cultures, the Negroes, it has been seen, met the acculturative situation in its various manifestations over the New World far differently than is customarily envisaged. Instead of representing isolated cultures, their endowments, however different in detail, possessed least common denominators that permitted a consensus of experience to be drawn on in fashioning new, though still Africanlike customs.” (Herskovits 1941: 297).

Here, Herskovits hypothesizes that ethnically and linguistically diverse captive Africans form Senegal, Congo and West Africa had enough cultural overlap to transcend cultural boundaries and construct a homogenous African Diasporic culture from their shared fundamental cultural traits.

While Herskovits’s work is useful in many ways, he has not completely abandoned the acculturation model and has provided the starting point for essentialist
theoretical perspectives to develop further in the future. His use of the term
"Africanlike" suggests that Africans and their descendents are moving away from their
African customs, and presumably, towards those of the dominant Euro-American society.
However, Herskovits' book provided a point of divergence in the mainstream
anthropology of his time for the investigating and tracing these African connections.

Herskovits's perspective has become embedded within African Diaspora
archaeology. Within historical archaeology Herskovits's theory is foundational for the
practice of attempting to make one-to-one correlations between material culture found on
African Diaspora sites and a supposed single African antecedent. Patricia Samford (2007)
and Christopher Fennell (2007) exemplify this theoretical influence in their work.
Through this lens "Africanisms" became an emblem of resistance and culture. The
smaller the amount of "Africanisms" that could be found the more docile and
acculturated some archaeologists enslaved perceived African descended people to be.
Furthermore, Herskovitsian essentialism has led archaeologists to privilege the cultural
contributions of one African ethnic group above another any African contribution and
over those from a non-African source.

However, on any given New World site, especially those within the plantation
context, multiple African ethnic groups were present and actively contributed to the
archaeological signature of the site. To recognize the cultural contributions of only one or
a few African groups is to discredit the cultural contributions of all other groups that were
present. Many cultural groups influenced African American culture. In other words, the
humanity of the enslaved was reduced to a quantitative analysis. Theoretical perspectives
that focus on demonstrating the African-ness of African people reveal little about how
enslaved people asserted, affirmed and reaffirmed their humanity. Historian Vincent Brown states that solely investigating “…African-ness and ethnicity do not tell us enough about how human beings struggled to remake their worlds (Brown 2008: 8).

Essentialism in African Diaspora studies encompasses a plethora of theoretical approaches and implications, all of which do not acknowledge cultural transformation and mixture as inevitable.

My analysis of Handler’s interpretation of pipe burials at Newton Plantation suggests that his approach was essentialist in nature. His choice to assert “Gold Coast” origins for the burial practices at Newton follows Herskovits’s lead. Documentary and archaeological evidence has demonstrated that including a tobacco pipe in the burial has an African antecedent. Yet Handler attempts to make a one-to-one correlation between Burial 72 and the Gold Coast, despite that cultural practices of multiethnic societies were permanently entangled (Brown 2008: 7). Thus, there is little value in attributing “cultural traits to distinct “ethnic groups” or “places of origin,” nor should these acts be described “in terms of linear progress” toward “New World patterns (Brown 2008 :7). Not only does Handler attribute a specific pipe burial to the Gold Coast region, he neglects to analyze the other sixteen individuals that were directly associated with pipes.

Essentialist Perspectives: Afrocentrism

Bio-cultural anthropologist Michael Blakey defines Afrocentrism, as a “consciously ethnocentric approach to understanding the cultures and social issues of the African Diaspora.” (Blakey 1995: 213). Afrocentrism, like any other intellectual tradition, is inherently political and has various contexts in which it is employed (Blakey 1995: 213). A distinguished intellectual as well as a major force in the development of
This intellectual tradition, Molefe Asante posits that to be Afrocentric means "...literally, placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (Asante 1987:6) According to Molefe Asante, Afrocentrism is a critical theoretical perspective that was created to critique the Eurocentric ideology that dominates American society (Asante 1987:4-6). Afrocentrism is a tradition that developed out of the need to defend, heal, and protect African Diasporic groups against White supremacy (Blakey 1995:228).

Some fundamental aspects of a Afrocentric perspective include but are not limited to the acceptance of race as a biological fact, invalidating the scholarship and perspectives produced by "non-African peoples," and the tendency to promote Black supremacy and place Nile Valley societies at the center of pan-African culture (Blakey 1995:214). This tradition also includes the works of scholars such as Ivan Van Sertima and Cheikh Anta Diop. Through the lens of Afrocentrism, the pipe burials at Newton might be recognized as part of a larger landscape of oppression and survival, a site of Black struggle, but Afrocentrism is also very concerned with origins. Because tobacco pipes do not appear to have originated in ancient Egypt, thus they might been dismissed the evidence of acculturation. Unlike the Black ontological perspective, Afrocentrism is an ethnocentric perspective aimed at correcting Eurocentric projections of black life, history culture and experience (Blakey 1995: 214).

As I will discuss further in chapter four, ADS is a tradition that openly utilizes and values the work of European scholars and other non-African peoples across disciplines. ADS is not ethnocentric; rather, it politically favors African Diasporic and minority groups. ADS rejects notion that biological race exists in nature and seeks to
understand race as it has be socially constructed. Lastly, ADS does not endorse or perpetuate racial superiority of any kind.

Creolization

The Mintz and Price creolization model developed in the 1970s and aimed to move beyond Herskotitsian essentialism by stressing the diversity of Africans enslaved on plantations. Indeed Mintz and Price argued that the enslaved were so diverse that they could not hold onto any significant aspects of their past. This is because they claimed that all cultural significance derived from social institutions which could not survive the Middle Passage intact (Mintz and Price 1992:19, 57-59). The term “creolization” has been used in many ways (Gundaker 2001), as Mintz and Price use it, is a theoretical perspective that posits that new African American cultures were created in the New World as a result of contact with European and Native peoples due to chattel slavery. For enslaved Africans this meant the abandonment of a purely African identity for the sake of forging an African-American identity (Mintz and Price 1992). This model assumes that the cultures among African people prior to European contact were static, making it inappropriate for use as a theoretical framework for investigating the lives of enslaved people. Contrary to this assumption, African people have interacted with and been knowledgeable about neighboring African societies and cultures. Various African societies have traveled both outside and within the African continent for thousands of years (Van Sertima 1976).
Chapter Five

A Black Ontological Framework

Having reviewed other anthropological theories and their limitations for study of the African Diaspora in the previous chapter, I argue that anthropologists and historical archaeologists that work within an African Diasporic Intellectual framework are more effective in producing work that is coherent and meaningful to contemporary African Diasporic populations. This chapter explains how the literary work of W.E.B. Du Bois is a foundational contribution to the Black intellectual tradition. It then discusses the ways this tradition has shaped African Diaspora Scholarship (ADS), an effort to replace the problems which persist in mainstream anthropological approaches to the African Diaspora. Black Ontology, with its emphasis on empathy and lived experience is the philosophical center of ADS. It offers alternatives to the ways that historical archaeologists usually interpret African Diasporic sites. In order to demonstrate this, I use Black ontological approach to suggests ways in which pipe burials at Newton Plantation can be re-interpreted. I cannot offer a full re-interpretation here, but hope to show directions such a project could take.

W.E.B. Du Bois and the Black Intellectual Tradition

Historically Black intellectuals have used literature to address social and political issues, confront mainstream misconceptions of Black life and culture, express philosophical perspectives and illustrate the Black experience. A fuller account than I can provide here would include such thinkers as Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, René Despestre, Kamau Brathwaite, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, Toni
Morrison, Leopold Senghor, and many others. However, for the present W.E.B Du Bois's notion of double consciousness will serve as an introduction to the African Diasporic theoretical framework that allows for an enhanced investigation the lives of enslaved people.

Du Bois wrote during the period of Jim Crow, a time when Blackness was presumably the most dominant facet of one's identity. In a famous passage from his work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois describes a dualism in Black existence in America he writes,

"...the Negro is a sort of seventh son born with a veil, and gifted with a second sight in this American world,---a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a particular sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness - an American, a negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, and two warning ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder"

Du Bois is referring to the "two-ness" of being Black, or having a "negro" identity and at the same time being American or having a national identity. In this same publication, Du Bois also talks about merging the two identities into a greater truer self. He writes, "---this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost" (Du Bois 1903: 9). Here Du Bois is illustrating that Black people rejected Blackness as whites had defined and constructed it, and refused to subscribe to the justifications for their treatment based on that Blackness, while simultaneously appropriating a Black identity, in order to exist in Anglophone society as Black people with full human rights.
Du Bois gives insight to the ways in which enslaved Barbadians’ perceptions of a Black identity contrasted with that of Whites. For the enslaved Barbadians, Blackness and humanity were not mutually exclusive identities, and they constantly fought for Anglophone society to recognize this fact. For the purpose of this paper, Du Bois’s notion of double consciousness is expanded beyond the duality of being Black in a society dominated by Euro-Americans to refer to the duality of being of African ancestry and human. Humanity and African ancestry were perceived to be mutually exclusive by New World Anglophone societies that depended on enslaved labor. The socio-historical context of Du Bois’ writing is different from that of colonial Barbados. However, Du Bois’ provides a theoretical position that transcends his time and place.

Above all, chattel slavery provided Whites with a justification to assault the humanity of African Diasporic groups. Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness suggests that African Diasporic groups rejected European social and cultural understandings of Black identity within their communities. Barbadian African descended people operated within their society based on the understanding of both their position as Black people in a European dominated society and their own cultural and social understanding of Black identity. Therefore, the notion of double consciousness helps researchers to realize that enslaved people were aware of their prescribed racial identity, and that they felt deeply the effects of social assault done unto them based on this identity. The social condition of Blackness was not an “unconscious” one. Enslaved people and their descendants constantly acted in ways that defied the justification for their treatment. Understanding Blackness beyond its physical connotations and as a socio-political alienating concept is critical to understanding the Diaspora because it allows for an understanding of the
cultural and psychological impact of the social, political, and cultural landscapes in which Blacks were operating. This is an important step in attempting to understand how the enslaved endured enslavement. This approach also assists anthropologists in understanding how an imposed racial identity was transformed by the enslaved through the creation of alternative social and cultural understandings of a Black identity.

**African Diasporic Scholarship**

African Diasporic Scholarship (ADS) encompasses the theories and methodologies employed by anthropologists to understand the “historical particularities” (Winsett 2011) and processes of African Diasporic experiences. Since its emergence in the late nineteenth century, ADS has stood as the antithesis to mainstream anthropological thought (Harrison and Nonini 1992:229-237). Although ADS has been employed by scholars for many years, it continues to remain on the periphery of the discipline. Practitioners of ADS employ theoretical and methodological approaches that are activist, reflexive, critical, interdisciplinary and empathetic in nature which distinguish them from their mainstream counterparts. ADS is an academic tradition that is represented in disciplines such as sociology, history, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy.

During the first half of the twentieth century, there was an increase in Black scholars pursuing anthropology degrees, including, William Montague Cobb, Caroline Bond Day, Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham, Allison Davis, Irene Diggs, and St. Clair Drake. These scholars sought to use anthropological research to begin the process of changing the landscape of anthropological inquiry by challenging the underlying
assumptions and methodological tools which mainstream anthropologists employed (Hymes 1999, Drake 1980). During the 1960s a paradigm shift took place in anthropology in which the tenets of ADS began to be incorporated into mainstream anthropology one at a time, particularly efforts to be reflexive and critical. Today, most anthropological work can be considered critical and reflexive.

The difference between ADS and mainstream anthropological thought is that ADS employs all five tenants in each endeavor. The incorporation of critical theoretical perspectives into anthropological endeavors is rooted in the understanding that “knowledge is embedded in ideology, that it is 'political'” (Potter 1991). In anthropology, critical thought recognizes that anthropological knowledge is “produced and reproduced in a wider order of power that hierarchically positions multiple knowledges by valorizing some and subjugating others” (Harrison & Harrison 1999:4).

Stemming from critical thought is the notion of reflexivity. Reflexivity within the anthropological context allows anthropologists to question the purpose and possible implications of their work, as well as the ways in which their position within society effects and influences anthropological research. In recognizing the relationships between community, site, and artifacts, practitioners can become critical of how these relationships and all the variables surrounding them influence their anthropological data. Furthermore, reflexivity “increases our civic capacity…” (Cress et al. 2005: 8-13).

Reflexivity and critical thought within ADS, is strengthened by interdisciplinary and empathetic aspects of the framework. Empathy is “the glue that effectively binds our knowledge and skills” (Cress et al. 2005: 8-13). Within anthropology, empathy allows for an understanding of how communities of African descent analyze their own history,
culture and society. Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo illustrates the discipline’s need for empathy, stating “[anthropology] only stands to lose by ignoring how the oppressed analyze their own situation” (Rosaldo 1993:189). Historical archaeology, like any other social science, affects living communities.

Historically, African Diasporic intellectuals have avoided using anthropology as a tool and outlet to investigate their social conditions because of the disciplines exploitative relationship with the African Diaspora. Instead, these scholars and intellectuals have primarily utilized other disciplines such as, literature, art, politics, sociology, and history. Thus, practitioners of ADS draw theoretical influence from these alternative disciplines to produce scholarship that gives insight into how African Descended people conceived of their lives, histories, and cultures: information not readily found within anthropology, even at present. Science and history must be approached in a way that accounts for the social biases that influence both.

Contemporarily, African Diasporic Scholarship encompasses theoretical approaches such as Black-feminist anthropology, Black-feminist archaeology, vindicationist scholarship, Cobbian scholarship, and Black ontology (Battle-Baptiste 2011: 45; Baber 1999:193; Blakey and Rankin-Hill 1998:119; Harrison 1991: 7). The marginalization of ADS within anthropology has resulted in the promotion and primary use of theories and methodologies that perpetuate traditional anthropological ideologies, limiting the depth and scope of interpretation for African Diasporic sites and material culture.
Insight into the lives of the enslaved is limited for archaeologists that focus on the African Diaspora. Yet by working through a Black ontological perspective, archaeologists can choose to aspire to reconstruct historical narratives that will push society towards reconciliation and equality. A Black ontological approach to African Diaspora archaeology seeks to move beyond superficial understandings by drawing on theoretical concepts and philosophies that are more relevant to cultural transformation and cultural continuity among African Diasporic groups.

**A Black Ontological Perspective and Archaeology**

The anthropological concept of ontology is the theoretical study of the nature of being, existence, development, and or reality. Thus ontological blackness or Black ontology is formally defined as the theoretical study of the development of a Black consciousness, the Black experience, existence, and or social reality. The focus of a Black ontological perspective is to understand the ways in which Black people understand themselves within a racialized context. There has also been advocacy for the further development of methods and theories that are not only alternative to mainstream anthropological perspectives, but that also build on the neglected works of African Diasporic scholars such as Zora Neale Hurston, St. Clair Drake, Frantz Fanon, Antenor Firmin, Alexander Crumwell, Montauge Cobb, Frederick Douglass, Elliot Skinner, Ellen Irene Diggs, Jacques Roumain and Allison Davis (Harrison 1997: 4).

When double consciousness is employed as a theoretical framework which begins on the Black side of the veil, it allows practitioners of historical archaeology to “think about the African past” (Battle- Baptiste 2011: 50) in the context of the complexities in
which it existed. Within a Black ontological framework historical archaeologists "
...assume that specific African cultural forms and systems of thought survived intact" (Sweet 2003:229). This is consistent with the underlying assumption that Africans were complete human beings. This assumption leads to different questions about the lives of enslaved and produces different interpretations of African Diasporic material culture in the plantation context. This is key to the interpretation of the archaeological signatures of subjugated peoples.

Archaeologically, alienation would have affected the kinds of materials Barbadians were able to obtain in order to assert both their Black identity and their humanity. African Diasporic archaeological signatures are made up of material culture that has been is influenced by the restrictions and limitations placed on blacks socially, politically and economically. More importantly, they have been informed by a community’s cultural and social understanding of Black identity, as illustrated by Du Bois. Aficans and their descendents maintained their epistemologies despite these limitations.

The Black ontological perspective also provides archaeologists with a point of departure for the conceptualization of Barbadian burial practices. In order to create meaningful coherent interpretations of African Diasporic artifacts and archaeological sites, it is necessary to establish an understanding of Black identity as it has been socially constructed by Black people. Black ontology is constantly working toward a better understanding of this process. Understanding the significance of Black as a socially constructed racial category meant to control a particular group of people, economically, politically, physically, socially is only one half of what Black identity encompassed.
Practitioners must couple this with an understanding of Blackness as it was created and utilized by people “who knew who they were” despite what they were perceived to be (Michael Blakey, personal communication, January 30, 2013). Only then can practitioners begin to understand the material lives and culture of such subjugated peoples. This alternative lens suggests that plantation sites have more to contribute to anthropological understandings than previously shown. A reinvestigation of Newton Plantation’s cemetery site will help deconstruct the marginalization of plantation sites, their histories and scope.

Reinvestigating the Pipe

Drawing on ethnographic accounts, archaeology, travelers’ accounts, and historical documentation I make the assumption that Africans arrived in the New World with their ontologies and epistemologies intact. Captive Africans did not need to create culture, they already had it (Sweet 2003: 229). This perspective underlies Black ontology. Over time burial practices among African Diasporic populations, like those of Africans who remained in Africa, would change. African interaction with Europeans in the early eighteenth century did not make their epistemologies, or the epistemologies that they passed on to their descendants any less African. Furthermore, each archaeological site and study has its own historical and cultural contexts. Enslaved Africans and their descendants understood themselves to be people, and they recognized and honored the humanity within themselves and each other. While reinforcing and asserting humanity occurred through countless strategies, including merely continuing to survive, each archaeological site and piece of documentary evidence can point toward different strategies that contribute to the same goal, in this case proper burial.
Mainstream anthropological approaches do not explore the various systems of knowledge in which African Diasporic epistemologies and ontologies are rooted (Brown 2008, Gundaker 2001). In historical archaeology, smoking pipes and other objects of European manufacture that are found within the context of an African Diasporic cemetery cites are often ignored or superficially discussed within theoretical frameworks previously mentioned Newton plantation provides a platform for this discussion of theory and method within historical archaeology. A Black ontological perspective assumes that objects used in burial practices at Newton plantation were meant to evoke virtually the same meanings as they did in Africa. Working through a Du Boisian theoretical framework allows my investigation can diverge from the Black side of the veil. While pipes as commodities and incentives within a plantation context have been discussed in historical archaeology, how the enslaved might have used and thought of them have not received the same attention. Archaeologists in recent years have approached African Diasporic studies in the same manner that Handler has approached Newton plantation. Herskovitsian efforts to link findings to one place obscures other possibilities, furthermore, definitive evidence such as this is rare. For example, Handler argued that the pipes at Newton were placed by people of Gold Coast ancestry. Although this might be true, or true in part, it ignores the ways that symbolic aspects of the burials span wide geographic areas and therefore could be understood in similar ways by people from any of these areas (Thornton 1992).
Though New World captives made use of foreign materials in their daily lives, their actions were still informed by African ontologies and epistemologies. No single origin for can be teased out for practices of pipe use, tobacco, and smoking because they were so widespread that they overlapped among African cultures both close and distant. However, these groups also maintained their own cultural practices and continued to draw from specific knowledges which were sometimes similar and sometimes divergent, even within geographic regions.

Cultural Knowledges: Smoking and Pipes

In and of itself, pipe smoking is widespread in Africa. It is heavily associated with rituals, special knowledge, status, gender, communal activities, and is used both for recreational purposes and in association with ancestral spirits. Documentary evidence and art from these regions supports these claims. East, West, and South African groups such as the Yoruba in West Africa, Zulu in South Africa, the Baganda in Uganda, and the Luo in Kenya are a few of the groups that associate smoking with ritual and special knowledge. Thus smoking pipes became associated with the specialists who perform the rituals and pipes became a sign of their status.

The Luo believe,

“...that the spirits watched over the growing tobacco plants and followed the crop after harvest. Elders of both sexes smoked as a way of contacting spirits in times of
trouble. They found smoking gave them extraordinary powers of memory: ancestors from
the distant past with whom the smoker was not acquainted would appear to him or her,
just as they could during a sleeping dream. Informants say the ancestors often appeared
smoking pipes themselves. Evoking spirits by smoking was something of a gamble: the
smoker had no choice of what spirit might appear, and the appearance of an unwelcome
one could drive him or her insane. It was the spirits, too, who caused tobacco addiction
and urged an elder to plant more of the crop” (Shipton 1989: 32)

Similarly, when a Baganda medium sought possession by ancestral spirits to give
guidance, “he would smoke a sacred pipe, using in most instances the ordinary tobacco
of the country. Sometimes a cup of beer was also given him before the pipe was handed to him to
smoke” (Roscoe 1911:274) Pipes and pipe smoking have also been used to delineate status
marked by gender identity, age, and power. The Gusii in West Kenya, the Gisu in Uganda,
associate smoking with women. According to Gusii burial customs,

“the deceased’s personal possessions were displayed on the grave. For a man it be his
wooden stool, his walking stick, the ankle rings his wife had removed the previous day,
and (in 1956–1957) articles of Western clothing (suit jacket, trousers, hat). At some
men’s funerals their Western-style beds were put on the grave too. For a woman it would
be her cooking pots, her stool, her smoking pipe (Gusii women smoked tobacco in
pipes), some iron bracelets, and necklaces.”
(LeVine 1982: 36-37). Among groups such as the Zulu and the Ovimbundu in Angola smoking is associated with males. Within cultural groups such as the Massai in East Africa, the Igbo in West Africa, the Baganda, and Tanala in Madagascar, smoking is associated with age, where in only adult or elderly men and women smoke. Age distinction is echoed by the depiction of the child reaching for the mothers smoking pipe in figure 2. These status markers often overlap within societies. For example, according to Zulu custom, men and boys smoke, while according to Ovimbundu customs only men smoke. For the Banyoro in Central Africa smoking is associated with men and married women, while the Baganda associate smoking with women and elderly men. These examples are representative of only a small number of African culture groups, yet they show that there is much more for archaeologists to think about than the pipe as an appropriation from Europeans or a simple “grave good” for use in an afterlife. Smoking and pipe use are not limited to the categories in which archaeologists discussed within this thesis have placed them. Connections between pipes and status seem especially important. Pipes can imply that the person with whom they were buried was a specialist or a respected elder or leader, for many African peoples associate pipe smoking

Figure 3. Mask depicting child reaching for pipe. Early 20th century mask, Yaka culture in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ARTstor)
with these statuses. In figure 2, from Central Africa, a boy who is about to be initiated tries to take his mother’s pipe—in this way showing he is eager to take on adult responsibilities. Thus, speculatively, the pipe burial of a young man with no pipe marks on his teeth (King et al. 1996) may show that he had reached full adulthood. The 17 pipe burials at Newton were interesting in that many of the pipes interred were unbroken. Thus these pipes were probably not used by any of the deceased during their lives. New, rather than used pipes, demonstrates that enslaved Africans at Newton likely upheld these funerary traditions. These patterns have not yet been interpreted. In addition to cultural similarities, the tangible properties of a smoking pipe allows it to fit a multitude of purposes. For example kaolin Gilbert (1989), the color white and broken objects could be intended to evoke all of which would meanings other than smoke, tobacco, and pipe use. Africans in groups from the Gold Coast, Bight of Biafra, and West-Central Africa associate whiteness and white clay with the ancestors, spirits, death, and the afterlife. Anthropologist Michelle Gilbert describes an annual Akan ritual, of washing clay heads on an ancestral altar with kaolin in an annual ritual (Gilbert 1989:42). Igbo, Kongo, and a multitude of other African groups paint masks with kaolin to indicate ancestral beings. In the US, Gundaker and McWillie (2005) have described the dominance of whiteness in grave offerings and

![Sculpture depicting a woman holding a baby and smoking a pipe, 19th century Yoruba culture](ARTstor)
ancestral memorials. In the restrictive conditions of the plantation, the pipes may have been a means of incorporating whiteness and kaolin into burials.

These points are by no means conclusive but they do support my argument that African descended people continued to draw African understandings to make use of this material culture, and that deeper philosophical logic informed their actions (Gundaker and McWillie 2005). What the surviving community chooses to place in the burial reflects the way that they viewed the dead individual, perhaps in terms of how they perceived the person in life, but also the way that they viewed themselves. By this I mean, their choice to place a pipe in the burial is reflective of what the community thought was appropriate to place in the burial, and what they felt their responsibilities to the dead were. Enslaved people asserted their humanity by acknowledging and honoring the humanity within another individual, these specific aspects of humanity, culture and burial practices, are illuminated in the Anglophone Caribbean because they occur and exist in a place where they, according to the broader colonial society, are not supposed to exist; within chattel slavery. However, Africans and their descendants would have buried their dead and passed on these epistemologies whether they were enslaved or not.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

The African Diaspora has become the focus of many historic studies done in the New World. As a result of the nature of the middle passage, and the institution of slavery, ethnic identification and cultural retention are topics that dominate African Diaspora studies. Many complex issues surround ethnic identification within historical archaeological projects. African Diasporic culture is not disconnected from its African birth. At no point did Africans stop being African, yet we recognize that there are distinct features that are specific to contemporary African Diasporic groups. Mainstream anthropology is limited in providing the tools necessary to understand the complex social, historical and cultural contexts of the African Diasporic experience. It is an issue of comprehending the complexity of the African Diaspora, not an issue of whether or not these African cultural practices persisted among the members of the Diaspora. Anthropologists must reinvent themselves in terms of their theoretical approaches in order to adequately address how social life and culture has been facilitated and perpetuated among African Diasporic groups.

This paper situates the pipe burials uncovered on Barbados in its relation to the history of Anglophone chattel slavery, and critically investigates mainstream anthropological theory. This paper explores the limitations and implications of these mainstream anthropological theories when applied to the African Diaspora. I have proposed an ADS approach as an alternative approach to mainstream anthropological theory. This paper argues that ADS is more efficient in investigating the complexities of African Diasporic history and culture in ways that are meaningful to African Diasporic
communities. ADS has developed out of the Black intellectual tradition, building on the ideologies of scholars such as Zora Neale Hurston, Caroline Bond Day, W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Frederick Douglass, and Anténor Firmin.

Black ontology is a theoretical perspective that builds on the fundamental principles of ADS. This paper contributes to the critique of mainstream anthropology and argues that African Diaspora Scholarship (ADS) is more capable of providing the necessary methodologies and theoretical frameworks for investigating the lives, histories, and cultures of Black communities. The goals and aims of African Diasporic Intellectual thought should be at the forefront African Diasporic archaeology. The advancement of the field relies on the development and expansion of theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches that are alternative to mainstream anthropological approaches. ADS, as an interdisciplinary, reflexive, political, empathetic, and activist intellectual tradition that allows African Diaspora research to be critical, dialogical and non-authoritative. ADS incorporates literatures, narratives, histories, philosophies, political texts, writings of the African Diaspora and other minority scholars.

Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness as theoretical framework allows the investigation use the Black side of the “veil” as the point of divergence for this study, in an attempt to understand the material culture of the enslaved in a manner in which the enslaved may have understood it. Double consciousness, when applied as a theoretical framework allows historical archaeologists to acknowledge the duality of the existence of Africans and their descendents within chattel enslavement, an institution that posited humanity and African descent were mutually exclusive categories. In bringing humanity to the forefront of this study, Black ontology assumes that African culture and knowledge
arrived intact in the New World. This underlying assumption has led to the exploration of the knowledge base that enslaved people at Newtown had to draw on. This study is only able to discuss a small part of that knowledge base. This thesis uses pipes as a platform for this discussion. This paper demonstrates that these cultural knowledges informed captive Africans’ responsibilities to the dead. The placement of these grave goods are the remnants of these responsibilities.

This reinvestigation opens up an alternative approach to how historical archaeologists can investigate the material culture of the African Diaspora. Although we cannot read the minds of those who performed the burials; their human engagement with each other, the deceased and the materials they used is the most important focus in any archaeological project. Once historical archaeologists diverge from the assumption that enslaved people had culture which informed their actions, the discipline can begin to better understand the complexities of the African Diaspora, thus gaining a better understanding of the ways in which enslaved people might have understood themselves.
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