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Caribbean “Islands of the Mind”: Reshaping the Ocularity of the Self

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CARIBBEAN “ISLANDS OF THE MIND”:
RESHAPING THE OCULARITY OF THE SELF

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Title: Caribbean “Islands of the Mind”: Reshaping the Ocularity of the Self

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This dissertation applies my coined concept, “the ocularity of the self,” which refers to how individuals constantly reconfigure their “lenses” to the extent that the restructuring of their image results in acceptance of societal ocular dominance. Hence, the privileging of society’s eye over the individual’s skews the acuity and validity of his or her self-image. I examine how the fiction and non-fiction prose narratives of Caribbean women authors Michelle Cliff, Oonya Kempadoo, Patricia Powell, and Kerry Young address sociolinguistics and creolity, the causes and effects of self-commodification, and the unmasking and unsexing of gender and sexuality. I show how these issues are influenced by constructed Caribbean “islands of the mind” that need to be replaced with self-determined mindsets as there is an effort to reshape the “ocularity of the self.”