

## ABSTRACT

Discursive Strategies in the Autobiography  
of the Caribbean Prime Minister, 1962-2012

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This study analyzes the discursive strategies used in the autobiographical narratives of five Caribbean prime ministers from 1962 to 2012: Eric Williams; A.N.R. Robinson; Edward Seaga; James Mitchell and Ralph Gonsalves. The narratives provide insight into the political, social and economic challenges involved in the process of nation-building from the perspective of the leader. How these leaders record their development and growth is analysed through Gronn and Ribbins' four-stage axis comprising formation, accession, incumbency and divestiture taken as essential aspects of a leader's autobiography. The study reveals that the personal philosophy of each protagonist is represented through a conceptual metaphor. Positioning is an important strategy for establishing the significance of the protagonist in his environment. Thus, leadership is cognitively represented in its relation to managing an enterprise, captaincy, camaraderie and teaching. Common discursive strategies include active sentences to foreground initiative and passives which foreground a national rather than individual perspective. Generic sentences also undergird the authority of the speaker. Shifts in focalization chart the growing confidence of the protagonist as he gains prominence on the national scene. The political autobiography in the Caribbean is an appropriation of an inherited form that legitimizes a re-interpretation of the past and a projection of a new, independent future of the nation.

Keywords: Karen Sanderson Cole; Eric Williams; ANR Robinson; Edward Seaga, James Mitchell; Ralph Gonsalves; political autobiography; discursive strategies; concept metaphor