

## INTRODUCTION

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**THIS ISSUE OF *CONTOURS*** contains essays produced for a symposium held April 4–5, 2003, at DePaul University in Chicago, entitled “Building Bridges in the African Diaspora: Using Living Culture as New Evidence for Historical Ties.” Here, leading scholars from West Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America discussed recent findings and emerging methodologies. The integration of performance with the scholarly presentations highlighted the importance of performance methodologies in contemporary research. Members of Chicago’s African, Caribbean, and African American communities participated as audience members and community representatives.

Scholars grappled with major theoretical issues in the study of the African Diaspora in the Caribbean and Americas, examining new evidence for cultural transmission from the continent to the Americas from the sixteenth century onward, and the resulting African contributions to emerging “New World” nation states and national cultures (high-brow arts and literatures as well as popular culture and religion). The papers address problems of “tracing ethnicity” from Africa to the Americas as well as related issues of identity among Americans of African descent.

Recent years are marked by the emergence of thinkers such as Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, whose challenges to persistent colonial representations of black people living in the West are vanguard models. As used by Stuart Hall, the term Diaspora counters those colonial representations of “Africa” as frozen in time, rural, and primitive. Hall writes: “The original ‘Africa’ is no longer there. It too has been

transformed. History is, in that sense, irreversible. We must not collude with the West which, precisely, ‘normalizes’ and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the ‘primitive, unchanging past.’”<sup>1</sup> Hall rejects the notion of contemporary blacks as able to achieve functional or viable identities through “recovery” or “return” to an imaginary historical Africa that no longer exists. These ahistorical identities rely upon “the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture,” to quote Homi Bhabha.<sup>2</sup> According to Hall: “There can, therefore, be no simple ‘return’ or ‘recovery’ of the ancestral past which is not reexperienced through the categories of the present.” Or, “diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return. . . . The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity, diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*.”<sup>3</sup>

Instead of identity as “recovery,” Hall projects identity as “production,” one that allows for “ruptures and discontinuities”—in effect, anything but “oneness” and “essence.” Hall dismisses naïve efforts at claiming “African” identities, yet because he seems to frame Africa as a symbol for an unrecoverable past, his arguments are hardly applicable to the practice of an African Diaspora Studies that includes dialogue with contemporary Africans, let alone historically grounded anthropology. In Hall’s work, the term Diaspora speaks to people of African descent *outside* of the continent (“blacks’ of the diasporas of the West”), in this case in Europe or the Americas, and any type of “ethnic” relationship to Africa seems to be conceived of as a desire to “return,” in the Zionist sense.<sup>4</sup> Clearly Hall is responding to “the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora—and the complicity of the West with it.” One cannot responsibly use the example of Israeli Zionism as simply parallel to that of an “African” Diaspora. The modern African Diaspora in the Americas, as historian Colin Palmer has indicated, is really an umbrella term for a myriad of “ethnic” migrations of Igbo, Mandinka, Akan, Yorùbá-speaking peoples, etc., each with distinctive features. Colin Palmer identified “five major African diasporic streams,” or migrations of people within and away from the African continent over the span of human history. The fourth major stream “is associated with the Atlantic trade in African slaves. . . . The fifth major stream began during the nineteenth century particularly after slavery’s demise in the Americas and continues to our own time. . . . These latter two diasporic streams . . . constitute the modern African diaspora.”<sup>5</sup> This broad, inclusive view resists territorializing the field; it is a framework for encouraging diverse foci. These definitions matter because they are enacted in the process of creating

and running Africana Departments, some of which do not include African perspectives, instead limiting themselves to the study of “diasporas of the West.”

The idea of a “Pan-African” Zionism à la Garvey, or “return” as promoted by early Rastafari, is equally as untenable to many Yorùbá-Ékpè-Kongo-based spiritual communities in the Americas as it is to Hall. By using some of the more naïve visions of a literal return to mother Africa as “straw men,” Hall and Gilroy seem to reject the entire notion of ties to Africa as a mooring for conceptualizing the “diaspora.” As Gilroy states: “We have to fight over the concept diaspora to move it away from the obsession with origins, purity and invariant sameness. Very often the concept of diaspora has been used to say, ‘Hooray! We can rewind the tape of history, we can get back to the original moment of our dispersal!’”<sup>6</sup>

Even if well intentioned, this reductionism serves to elide the multiple perspectives of a broad array of communities that have struggled to maintain African-derived identities as a means of self-defense, as well as a large number of scholars from the African continent whose knowledge of African lifeways are invaluable to our ability to understand the impact of Africa in the Americas.<sup>7</sup>

Among the many American communities where Africa existed (and in many cases still exists) as a key symbol of ancestral wisdom and self-determination, yet where the idea of “purity” or “return” is not found, were the maroon societies across the Americas where Native Americans, Africans, and some Asians as well as Europeans created independent communities long before American nation-states were formed;<sup>8</sup> many of these became prototypes for the Africanization of the Americas as well as foundations for the emerging societies. Contemporary leaders of African traditions in the Americas, many of whom are descendants of maroon lineages, may desire contact with African counterparts and visits to Africa for study, but one finds little nostalgia here for “return.”

Valuable in their own contexts, these ideas of Hall and Gilroy are not useful as an approach to the historical anthropology of the African Diaspora. Of more use is an approach that considers indigenous African perspectives and contemporary Africans as necessary participants for a dialogue that aims to better understand the contributions of Africans to American history and society. For example, in *Black Rice*, Judith Carney powerfully documents the agency of “Rice Coast” African men and women in recreating “an entire cultural system” in the production of rice from the onset of European colonization of the Americas.<sup>9</sup> Many studies allow us to “see Africa through the Americas,” that is, to better understand aspects of African technologies, in this case the diversity of West African rice producing methods, and the “domestication of a separate species of rice in West Africa,” not fully understood until the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup>

In 1948, Herskovits created an important model in his essay “The Contribution of Afroamerican Studies to Africanist Research.” Herskovits observed that “an understanding of New World Negro culture will reciprocally deepen our comprehension of the relevant African cultures themselves, give unity to a broader field of research, and open the door for an interchange that cannot but be fruitful for Africanists and Afroamericanists alike.”<sup>11</sup> In one stroke he challenged colleagues to transcend the artificial borders created by Cold War Area Studies Programs, as well as to work collaboratively with communities of international scholars to transcend linguistic and ideological borders.

If “essentializing” Africans was one colonial project, so too was erasing African history and presence. By participating in transatlantic dialogues between West Africa and the Americas—as exemplified in the recent *Rethinking the African Diaspora*—scholars can responsibly contribute to dialogues ongoing within communities of African descent, ongoing already for hundreds of years, in the spirit of earlier scholars/participants like Pierre Verger.<sup>12</sup>

Many descendants of Africa throughout the Americas are aware of their ethnic histories—no matter how complex and fictive—and this knowledge remains relevant to grappling with the dynamics of contemporary American societies.<sup>13</sup> There are millions of African Americans living in communities whose cultural orientations, philosophies, music, and ancestral reverence revolve around mythic and historical notions of Africa (a.k.a. “Guinea” or “Ethiopia”). These were largely inherited from their own ancestors, no matter how much adapted or transformed in the new contexts. Many ritual specialists in Brazil, Cuba, and the U.S. with whom I have worked yearn to learn more about African history and cultural traditions. Some, for example, know where their biological ancestors and spiritual ancestors came from; they simply want information about their pasts and cultural traditions that have been denied them because they are poor, and their colonial as well as contemporary governments want to assimilate them into Western models.

In my own work I have encountered eager interaction between leaders of the Cross River Ékpè society and its Cuban derivative Abakuá; no one has suggested “return,” but many are curious to learn about their shared histories. After I published transcriptions of some Abakuá chants, Nigerian Ékpè members contacted me with the news that they understood these chants to be identifying Calabar place names. They invited me to facilitate an exchange between a group of Cuban Abakuá and West African Ékpè in New York in 2001, perhaps the first time that Ékpè and Abakuá members had met in a performance context, and their ability to communicate through movement contrasted with the divisions between them created by Spanish and English, their respective colonial languages. As a result of this and subsequent encounters, plans are in the making for further exchanges in West Af-

rica and Cuba.<sup>14</sup> Mutual recognition between the Èkpè and Abakuá provokes many questions about West African cultural continuities in the Caribbean as well as the implications of this knowledge for present-day West Africans. Both groups are currently struggling to use their traditional practices in responding to contemporary issues.

In another Cuban example, as a result of unprecedented contacts between Yorùbá from West Africa who practice Ifá divination and their counterparts in Havana, Cuban *babalawo* Frank Cabrera “Obeché” has guided the reorganization of his spiritual community, named Ilé Tuntun, based on new information about Ifá practice in West Africa.<sup>15</sup> Cabrera hopes to travel to Yorubaland to study, then to return to Cuba; instead of “return,” he envisions “regeneration” based on new information heretofore unavailable. In this sense, he follows the paths of several ancestors who traveled from the Americas to West Africa for study, ultimately settling in the Americas to serve their communities.<sup>16</sup>

The tendency to elide African perspectives from debates about the Diaspora has occurred on several fronts, one of them being the idea that its languages are too complex and distant to translate. An example comes from W. E. B. Du Bois who, in several of his autobiographies, mentioned a “Bantu” song brought from Africa by his great-grandmother (or great-great-grandmother) in the eighteenth century: *Do ba-na co-ba, ge-ne me, ge-ne me! Ben d’nu-li, nu-li, nu-li, nu-li, den d’le*. Du Bois wrote that his ancestor “crooned a heathen melody to the child between her knees . . . The child sang it to his children and they to their children’s children, and so two hundred years it has traveled down to us and we sing it to our children, knowing as little as our fathers what its words may mean, but knowing well the meaning of its music.”<sup>17</sup> In his recent study of the problems of translation in transatlantic black communities—in itself a tremendous achievement—Brent Edwards observes that this song exemplified insurmountable barriers to an African past: “With Du Bois, what makes the music powerful as evidence is precisely that it cannot be translated—that it marks a certain inaccessibility, a space of expression exterior to the colonial system, a certain resistance that ‘no one dares to pass.’”<sup>18</sup> Wondering what a speaker of “Bantu” languages might say, I sent the transcription to my colleague C. Daniel Dawson, who promptly forwarded it to Dr. Fu-Kiau Bunseki, preeminent expert on the influence of KiKongo language and philosophy in the Americas, who easily translated individual words toward an interpretation of the entire text:

Yes I can tell it is a lullaby. It is a very old one kept in a creolized form among slaves. Here are the possible original creolized words:

1. ‘Do’ can be:

a) ndo (=time; second), but here it must be the meaning in b)

- b) 'nda (shortened form of "wenda" in songs and poems).
2. 'Co-ba' can be:
- a) koba (=to be thick or strong) but because of the following context or words in the song co-ba here must definitely be the meaning in b)
- b) kaba (to share, to give away)
3. 'Ben d'nu-li' :
- a) Ben must be bena (are) of verb kala (to be)
- b) d' must be nde (like, alike, syn. bonso)
4. 'Den d'le': is a conjugated verb (denda = to walk proudly/beautifully because one did something good, i.e., in the lullaby, sharing/kaba).
5. 'Gene' (or ghene=vene=veni of vana=to give); 'Nu-li' =nuni (birds)

Having explained creolized words that could prevent the understanding of the lullaby, the text can be rendered as follows:

Nda (=Lwenda) > go  
 Bana > children  
 Kaba > sharing  
 Gene me (ghene=veni/of vana) > gave to me  
 Gene me (ghene=veni me) > gave to me  
 Bena nde > they look like  
 Nuni > birds  
 Nuni > birds  
 Nuni > birds  
 (Ba)dendele > dancing/walking/floating.

This example points once again to the importance of music in cultural transmission in the African Americas; through rhythm and repetition, language is remembered even if the meanings are lost to the present generation. Simply by working with speakers of appropriate African languages, we can decode these. Nostalgia and despair of a "lost past" need not be the dominant tenor of African Diaspora studies. Part of our solution is to reach out across the Atlantic and ask for help. Our challenge is to build networks with scholars from African civilizations. As Dr. Bunseki writes: "It is very true that only when, academically, a true and sincere collaboration between Africa and the West flourishes, the true impact of African cultures in the West will be measured; otherwise we will continue to labor in the dark."<sup>19</sup>

In Euro-centric positivist frames, Africa is always represented as backwards and undesirable. Colonists claimed that Africa had no culture; others claimed that the Middle Passage erased culture from Africans. More recently, the marginalization of Africa within Diaspora studies has been implied by many working within "creolization" and "post-modern" frames in which the search for origins is utopic. Since Africa seems to exist only in the past, or has been effectively made irrelevant through

cultural “creolization” in the Americas, the perspectives or specialized input of African peoples is not even contemplated as integral to the project of grappling with issues of black people in contemporary Western societies.

I raise this issue because one cannot escape the politics of African presence in the Americas. Powers in the academic and literary worlds of the West have always favored those who envision the assimilation of blacks and the rejection of indigenous African values. For example, V. S. Naipaul writes: “Twenty million Africans made the middle passage, and scarcely an African name remains in the New World . . . In the pursuit of the Christian-Hellenic tradition, which some might see as a paraphrase for whiteness, the past has to be denied, the self despised. Black will be made white.”<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, Lydia Cabrera writes: “The weight of African influence in the population said to be white is incalculable, even though at a glance, it cannot be appreciated. One will not comprehend our people without knowing the blacks. This influence is today more evident than in the days of the colony. One cannot enter Cuban society very far without encountering this African presence, which is not manifested exclusively in the color of the skin.”<sup>21</sup>

The polarities between the ideas of these two observers, each from the Caribbean, indicates two phenomena: the impact of African influence is not equally shared throughout the Caribbean archipelago; how we perceive and interpret cultural history is shaped by what we are prepared, and what we are determined to see.

Naipaul writes about his birth land Trinidad but then generalizes to speak of the entire New World. This common device among Caribbeanists has led to grave confusion. Cabrera, on the other hand, speaks very specifically of Cuba. Further, she does not focus only on black people but on a legacy of African sensibilities that have become part of the society, transcending ethnic and economic boundaries.

It is one thing to speak of African influence in the past and quite another to speak of African identities and practices in the present. National ideologies in most of the Americas and Caribbean insist that their contemporary populations are the product of harmonious mixture, biologically and culturally, and many view identities related to the Old World as threatening, especially if the region is African. Naipaul and Cabrera both published widely, and both write with great skill, but while Naipaul won a Nobel Prize for literature, Cabrera died in relative obscurity, in exile from her homeland where most of her books are unavailable.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE**

The emergence of Performance Studies in the past decade has broadly influenced many academic disciplines, particularly anthropology, communications, English,

and theater, as “performance-centered methodologies” have proven apt tools for examining human behavior.

Africanist scholars have long recognized the centrality of cultural performance as key sources to the study of West and Central African communities.<sup>22</sup> Because until the 1960s it was generally accepted that the Middle Passage was a historical discontinuity, one in which Africans lost their identities and lifeways, few scholars regarded performance as a source of information for transcontinental continuities. For example, while general principles in African American cultures, like signifying and improvisation, were perceived of as “formal manifestations of African traditions,” rarely did scholars know where particular traditions had originated in Africa.<sup>23</sup> Recent work—often based on long-term oral history projects—has successfully identified living connections between African, Caribbean, and African-American communities.<sup>24</sup> In many cases, performance-based methodologies have been used to produce new evidence for the African continuities in the Americas.<sup>25</sup> Because of limitations inherent in the traditional source material of historians—documents created about Africans by Europeans, replete with errors in language, ethnic identity, and meaning in cultural traditions, what Manfredi identifies as “errorism” in this volume—contemporary scholars have devised methodologies to assess information from performed activities such as oral narratives, chants, oracle poetry, movement, and visual symbolism.<sup>26</sup> Margaret Drewal’s insights into “the openness of Yoruba ritual, the power of performers to improvise, and the willingness of participants to entertain alternate possibilities” have direct implications for African-influence in the Americas because these devices were key to adaptation in new environments, foundations for what Stuart Hall has called a “diaspora aesthetic,” described by Dick Hebdige’s phrase “cut and mix.”<sup>27</sup>

Long-term studies conducted in collaboration with African-derived communities in the Caribbean have led to a more profound understanding of the migration experience, the cultural traditions recreated and transformed in the Americas, the collective resistance to slavery, as well as the formation of collective identities. In themselves, these studies are a refutation of the all-encompassing destructiveness of the Middle Passage. Several of these studies have also succeeded in “building bridges” with Africans on the continent by demonstrating not only cultural links from the past but also common interests based on contemporary political and economic realities. New studies demonstrating continuous narratives have been assembled through years of field work and document study on both sides of the Atlantic and through subsequent collaboration between academic and traditional intellectuals.<sup>28</sup> Our symposium gathered leading academic scholars in the field to meet and exchange ideas; it also brought in leading traditional intellectuals who performed key Diaspora traditions that demonstrated living ties between Africa, the Caribbean, and the U.S.

The cultural impact of Africa in the Americas came in at least two distinct periods: the slave trade diaspora and the post abolition diaspora. When the trade in bonded Africans ended in the late nineteenth century with the last cargos into Cuba and Brazil, the ongoing diaspora began with the resettlement of Africans in various societies. During the symposium we examined not only cultural bonds between the descendants of both diasporas but also their common experiences of colonization on each side of the Atlantic. We also explored the significance of “ethnicity” and “nationhood.” While many anthropologists have built careers studying “fast dying traditions,” some of these papers argue that, on the contrary, many traditions are expanding geographically as well as demographically. What symbolic roles do African traditions have in the Americas? What do they serve to counter? Why are they enduring without proselytization? We noted the responses of several West African ethnic groups who, upon learning of their own diasporas, find sources of legitimacy in these traditions.

Historian Colin Palmer asks: “Can we speak of an African diaspora before the late nineteenth or twentieth century since the subjects of our study did not define themselves as African but as Yoruba, Wolof, Igbo, or other?”<sup>29</sup> For example, in Cuba, Africans and their descendants were able to reconstruct the models of their material and spiritual cultures with new features, while using the fundamental concepts and elements of their original model. Just as we can speak of Anglo-American, Iberian-American, or Franco-American culture—instead of speaking of a monolithic black or an African American culture, or of an abstract Afro-Cuban culture—we can discuss Kongo-American, Calabarí-American, or Yorùbá-American cultures. This idea makes us aware that at the dawn of the twenty-first century there is not one Afro-Cuban religion or culture, but many.

### **¡LARÓYE ELEGBÁRA!**

George Brandon opens this issue by retelling a key Yorùbá narrative of Elegba, a divine messenger evoked to open communications with other divinities, ensuring the success of the endeavor at hand. Brandon tells how Elegba, the mortal, first encountered a divine presence at the crossroads deep in the forest. The story is not about his birth or death as a mortal but about his rebirth as an *orishá* who enables humans to maintain contact with the world beyond death, which through ritual becomes continuous with our own. Brandon points out that because mythology is embedded within ritual, and because ritual uses performance, “ritual is not the telling of a text but the performance of a world.” Brandon’s analysis illuminates strategies for memory encoding in Yorùbá and Santería religious traditions using repetition and performance. Even while “the performance of ritual allows human

beings to traverse all the cosmological categories of the Yorùbá world,” the mythology of Cuban Santería “often exhibits the imprint of Cuban history, particularly in references to central African ethnic groups that Yorùbá descendants only encountered in Cuba, the inclusion of Catholic or spiritist symbolism, and references to other Afro-Cuban religious traditions.” Thus fundamental elements that tie them to a Yorùbá world view remain constant in the Caribbean, even while traditions are creatively interpreted within new contexts.

Joseph Inikori examines the proportion of women among the captives transported from southeastern Nigeria to the Americas in the second half of the eighteenth century, a period when this region “became the most important center of transatlantic shipment, by volume, in all of Western Africa.” He contextualizes this discussion by demonstrating how the early trade (1680s) with Europeans brought currency to West Africa, suggesting that “imports of these early decades were intended to serve the interregional trade that had been growing in the pre-European period,” as well as “the prevalence of relatively peaceful conditions in the pre-European period.” The increasing “violent procurement of captives for export” was fueled by rising European imports of firearms while the subsequent decrease in “interregional trade linking the coastal communities to the hinterland . . . provoked unending socio-political conflicts.”

Inikori then examines the socioeconomic consequences and “the historical significance of the proportion of women among the captives transported from Southeastern Nigeria to the Americas”; from 1750 and 1807 “the ports of Southeastern Nigeria exported on the average about 20,000 captives a year.” He concludes by asserting that “employers of enslaved Africans in the Americas believed women from Southeastern Nigeria, the bulk of whom they believed to be Igbo, were exceptionally good workers,” thus explaining the high proportion of female captives from this region.

Kenneth Bilby examines the phenomenon of two Jamaican groups known as the “Bongo Nation” or “Kongo Nation,” and the “Maroon Nation”; both groups—while fundamental to the emergence of a Jamaican national identity—have maintained distinct identities based on their African origin groups, languages, and cultural styles. Bilby examines how since the nineteenth century, both groups “have developed a sense of kinship and common identity based on a long history of contact and cultural exchange . . . they were able to recognize in each other certain cultural similarities that could provide a basis for harmonious interaction. Music and dance played a particularly important part in this process.”

Bilby articulates the phenomenon of “a new zone of musical and cultural overlap developed in the eastern part of Jamaica,” whose music is “sung in the Jamaican creole language known as Patwa rather the African-derived ritual languages of

the two nations.” He reveals that a new “lighter” style, removed from the esoteric ritual music of both groups, was created in the process of establishing social bonds between the members of both groups, and is another case of “music and its spiritual power in building cultural bridges in the African diaspora.”

The intermingling between distinct groups is part of a phenomenon of musical creativity that led early generations of Rastafarians to play Kumina music of the “Bongo Nation” in their “attempts to re-create Africa in Jamaica. Among later generations of Rastas, Kumina gave way to the new musical fusion called Nyabingihi.”

Ivor Miller ponders the legacy of African “ethnic” influence in the Americas. On the one hand, historians have detailed the demographics of ethnic Africans brought to the Americas in various periods. On the other, there are many errors in the historical record, and in some cases, there seems to be little correspondence between ethnic groups thought to have arrived in the Americas and their cultural imprints in contemporary societies. Because African influence is found most prominently in religious traditions, Miller examines key traditions of Kongo, Cross River (Abakuá), and Yorùbá (Candomblé and Santería), finding not only that African descendants have maintained ritual lineages based on family inheritance but that people of all backgrounds and economic classes have become devotees. Instead of being diminished with time, African-based spiritual traditions have become foundational to “New World” identities.

Bruce Connell, a specialist in Èfik-Ibibio languages, presents linguistic evidence for the little-known Èfik Diaspora in Cuba in the guise of the Ékpè or leopard society, known in Cuba as the Abakuá. He demonstrates clear ties between many Èfik and Abakuá terms, and by comparing grades (or categories) of the Èfik Ékpè and Abakuá society, identifies those absent in Cuba. With this evidence, he offers various narratives that would explain the particular formation of the Abakuá society and language in Cuba. One is that Africans enslaved by the Èfik from surrounding regions, who became assimilated by learning Èfik and becoming low-level members of Ékpè, were likely important to the re-creation of Abakuá in Cuba. He hypothesizes that Èfik influence in the Caribbean was promoted by non-Èfik peoples from the Cross River region. A theme in the papers of Connell, Manfredi, and Miller is that common assumptions about ethnic demographics and cultural transfers do not explain the cultural terrain of the Americas in all its complexity and richness.

Victor Manfredi tackles the problem of how “existing patterns of linguistic Africanisms in the Americas—as well as of diaspora consciousness—depend . . . less on raw demography than widely believed and more on pre-existing political institutions.” Manfredi argues that these Africanisms are the result of “ritual *lingue franche* in diaspora.” Many scholars have pondered the incongruity between the great number of Ìgbo captives in the Americas and the lack of cultural evidence for

them. Manfredi considers “the case of captive Ìgbo-speakers, who—like other Middle Passage populations—have left almost no lexical impact” on languages in the Western Hemisphere. “The most straightforward explanation of the Ìgbo-specific outcome is that the *lingua franca* relevant to this population, tied to the Èkpè institution, is lexically non-Ìgbo, and at least a circumstantial case can be made from standard historical literature that Ìgbo-speakers were the main actors responsible for the massive presence of “Èfik-derived Èkpè ritual terminology in Cuban Abakuá.”

Given the dynamics of performance that contributed to our symposium, significant aspects of the event are not documented in this journal. For example, the stirring and vibrant performances by Omi Odara of Abakuá, Lukumí, Kongo, and Rumba traditions of Cuba that at several points had the audience on their feet dancing. Or the wonderful presentation by George Brandon accompanied by Omí Odara. Or the provocative talk by Victor Manfredi in English, Ìgbo, and Yorùbá that prompted several debates among Ìgbo leaders in the audience. Or the breaking of kola nut by leaders of the Ìgbo community. Or the drumming and language lesson by artists in the Yorùbá community. Or the slide presentation/lecture by C. Daniel Dawson on Kongo inheritance in the Americas. Or the powerful oratory by Leslie Balang-Gaubert on African-derived identity in Haiti and his own family line. Through the presentations, performances, and audience responses, this symposium became a communal event. To all who participated, my heartfelt thanks! ;Modupe! È ṣé púpò! Obrigado! ;Gracias! Grazie! Merci! Shokran! ùnù éméé!á!, sosongò!<sup>30</sup>

#### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**KENNETH BILBY** is a Rockefeller Fellow at the Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College, Chicago. Trained as both an anthropologist and an ethnomusicologist, he has worked as an ethnographer in various Maroon communities in Jamaica, French Guiana, and Suriname and has also carried out research on a wide variety of musical traditions (both Maroon and non-Maroon) in Jamaica, including Kromanti, Kumina, Convince, Gumbay, Revival, and Mento. He has published extensively on Caribbean music, folklore, and ethnohistory and produced several albums from his own field recordings.

**GEORGE BRANDON** is Associate Professor and Director of the Program in Sociomedical Sciences at the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education of the City University of New York. He is the author of articles in the *Journal of Caribbean Studies*, the *Journal of Black Studies*, *Oral History Review*, and *Griot*. His book *Santería*

*from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993) is a vanguard contribution to scholarship of the African Diaspora.

**BRUCE CONNELL** teaches linguistics at York University in Toronto. A specialist in the Lower Cross and Mambiloid of the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland, he has published numerous articles about the history of these languages, language contact, and cultural traditions in the Cross River region of Nigeria.

**JILL CUTLER** has been a writer and editor for thirty-five years, beginning with a stint at Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Her work has been published in *Race and Class*, *Oral History Review*, *Icarus*, and the *Buffalo Review*, and she was poetry editor for the literary journal *A Woman's Pen*. She is coeditor of *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order*, published by South End Press in 1993, and has edited the work of Jeremy Brecher, Roya Hakakian, Ivor Miller, and Michael Pertschuk, among others. Currently she is an Assistant Dean in the Yale College Dean's Office and teaches composition in the Yale English Department.

**JOSEPH E. INIKORI** is Professor of History in the Department of History, University of Rochester. His most recent book, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), won the African Studies Association Herskovits Award, and the American Historical Association Leo Gershey Award for the most outstanding work in English on any aspect of the field of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western European history, in 2003.

**VICTOR MANFREDI** is a research fellow at the African Studies Center of Boston University. Since 1980 he has taught linguistics, Igbo, and Yorùbá in a dozen universities in Nigeria, Western Europe, and Atlantic North America, and remains a scholar-activist in the global Nigerian community. His twenty-five publications cover syntax, phonology, oral literature, and language teaching.

**IVOR L. MILLER** teaches in the African Diaspora Program at DePaul University, Chicago. He is the author of *Aerosol Kingdom: Subway Painters of New York City* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002) as well as numerous articles about the transmission of African cultural practices in the Americas.

#### A NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Many authors in this issue have tried to represent different languages as accurately as possible. For standardized languages, this means adopting the official orthography. From the 1850s and continuing today, most Nigerian languages use a subdot

to indicate a vowel difference. So, for example, Yorùbá distinguishes ọwọ́ (MH) “hand” from owó (MH) “money”, and Ìgbo distinguishes ùkó (LH) “marimba” from ụkọ “scarcity.” The Yorùbá language as spoken in West Africa has three lexical tones: high (written with an acute accent), low (written with a grave accent), and mid (unmarked). Without tone marks, the written versions of Yorùbá words would be either meaningless or ambiguous (out of context). For example, ìlú (LH) “town” is different from ìlù (LL) “drum.” Cuban and Brazilian Yorùbá are spoken with stress rather than tone, but the African tones are preserved in the musical melodies of song texts. Ìgbo and Èfik, like most Bantu languages, have two lexical tones, high and low, plus an accentual juncture called downstep. Some consonants also differ across the Atlantic: Changó in Cuba is Şàngó (pronounced Shangó) in West Africa (cf. Abímbólá & Miller).

## NOTES

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1. Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” in Houston Baker, Manthia Diawara, and Ruth Lindeborg, eds., *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 217.
2. Interview with Homi Bhabha, “The Third Space,” in Jonathan Rutherford, ed., *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p. 211.
3. Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” pp. 170, 220. See also Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in Jonathan Rutherford, ed., *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p. 235.
4. Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” p. 222.
5. Colin Palmer, “Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora,” *Perspectives: American Historical Association Newsletter*, 36, 6 (September 1998): 22.
6. Tommy Lot, “Black Cultural Politics: An Interview with Paul Gilroy,” *Found Object* (Spring 1994): 57.
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11. Melville J. Herskovits, "The Contribution of Afroamerican Studies to Africanist Research," *American Anthropologist*, 50, 1, part 1 (January-March 1948): 1.
12. Kristin Mann and Edna Bay, eds., *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: Frank Cass, 2001). Peter F. Cohen, "Pierre Fatumbi Verger as Social Scientist," *Cahiers de Brésil Contemporain*, 38/39 (1999): 127–51.
13. See Michael A. Gomez, "African Identity and Slavery in the Americas," *Radical History Review* 75 (1999), 111–20.
14. See Ivor Miller, "Cuban Abakuá Chants: Examining New Evidence for the African Diaspora," *African Studies Review*, 47, 2 (September 2004).
15. This process was sparked by the visit of the Oòni of Ifè, a spiritual leader of the Yorùbá people, to Cuba in 1987. See Ivor Miller, "Religious Symbolism in Cuban Political Performance," *TDR: A Journal of Performance Studies*, 44, 2 (2000): 30–55.
16. J. Lorand Matory, "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yorùbá Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41, 1 (1999): 80.
17. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* [1903] (Greenwich, Conn: Fawcett, 1968), pp. 183–84. See also *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (International Publishers, 1968), p. 62; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* [1920] (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2003), pp. 35–36; W. E. B. Du Bois, "Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept," *Writings* [1940] (New York: Library of America, 1986), pp. 636, 638. Du Bois's biographer reported earlier attempts by scholars to trace this song to the Senegambia region, despite Du Bois's family tradition of its Bantu origins. David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York: H. Holt, 1993), pp. 14; 585, n. 7. Thanks to Brent Edwards for alerting me to this citation.
18. Edwards, Brent Hayes, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 56.
19. Kia Bunseki Kimbwandende Fu-Kiau. Email message to the author March 3, 2004.
20. V. S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage* [1962] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 72–73.
21. "... el peso de la influencia africana en la misma población que se tiene por blanca, es incalculable, aunque a simple vista no pueda apreciarse. No se comprenderá a nuestro pueblo sin conocer al negro. Esta influencia es hoy más evidente que en los días de la colonia. No nos adentraremos mucho en la vida cubana, sin dejar de encontrarnos con esta presencia africana que no se manifiesta exclusivamente en la coloración de la piel." Lydia Cabrera, *El Monte* [1954] (Miami: Colección del Chicherekú, 1992), p. 9.
22. Margaret Thompson Drewal, "Social Science Research Council Paper: The State of Research on Performance in Africa," *African Studies Review*, 34, 3 (December 1991): 1–64; Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Press, 1986).
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24. Kenneth Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (forthcoming); Miller, "Cuban Abakuá Chants"; Armin Schwegler, "Chi ma nkongo"; *lengua y rito ancestrales en El Palenque de San Basilio (Colombia)* (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1996).
25. Silvia W. de Groot, *Surinaamse Granmans in Afrika: Vier Grootopperhoofden Bezoeken het Land van hun Voorouders* (Utrecht/Antwerp: Uitgeverij Het Spectrum, 1974). [Translation of the title: "Surinamese Granmans in Africa: Four Paramount Chiefs Visit the Land of their Ancestors."] Miller, "Cuban Abakuá Chants"; Luis Nicolau Parés, "The Jeje in the Tambor de Mina of Maranhão and in the Candomblé of Bahia," *Rethinking the African Diaspora* (2001): 91–115.
26. 'Wande Abimbólá and I. Miller, *Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World: Thoughts on Yorùbá Culture in West Africa and the Diaspora* (Roxbury, Mass.: AIM, 1997); Drewal, *Yoruba Ritual*; Maureen Warner-Lewis, *Yoruba Songs of Trinidad* (London: Karnak House, 1994).

27. Drewal, *Yoruba Ritual*, p. 5; Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," p. 236.

28. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy*. (New York: Vintage, 1984); John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

29. Palmer, "Defining and Studying," p. 23.

30. Thanks in Cuban Lukumí, standard Yorùbá, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, Arabic, Ìgbo, and Èfík.