Afro-Atlantic Dialogues

Introduction

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One prominent trend in the history of the serious study of the African diaspora in the New World has been a *diachronic* orientation. The central focus of anthropological approaches to this subject—in one way or another, explicitly or implicitly, despite and in some ways because of national and historical variations in anthropological paradigms and practices—has revolved around the question, "What has Africa given America?"—to take the title of a 1935 article by that foremost practitioner Melville J. Herskovits. The answers to this question had to be made with reference to history—what was "inherited" from Africa, what had changed, and why?—and answering it involved not only evoking the culture concept in the search for the origins of practices and ways of being in the world that were termed "cultural," but also invoking not always unproblematic anthropological notions of time and "history."

Another trend has seen the search for the exact mix of Old World cultural origins and New World cultural inventions sidestepped by those who focus instead upon the cultural construction of identity occurring in a *dialectical* relationship with class, nation, region, and language. Here, there are degrees of emphasis between, on the one hand,

the forms and mechanisms of oppression and, on the other, the development of identity under the rubric of "race," "ethnicity," or, more recently, "blackness," which oftentimes is conceived of as an agglomeration of "race" and "ethnicity." In disciplines related to anthropology, one thinks of the classic mid-twentieth-century work of Oliver C. Cox (1948) on "caste, class, and race" and John Dollard's (1937) *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*. Or of the earlier, wide-ranging work of W. E. B. Du Bois, struggling to come to terms with the "race and class" dynamic, beginning with his 1899 *The Philadelphia Negro* and his 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk* up through the mid-twentieth century with his further contributions. Or, within anthropology per se and in the mid-twentieth century still, Davis, Gardner, and Gardner's (1941) *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class*, or Hortense Powdermaker's (1939) *After Freedom*. Similarly, a dialectical approach can be identified where the dialectical relationship is transposed in and through the concept of diaspora and pitched at the level of "The Dialectic between Diasporas and Homelands," as in the title of an influential chapter by anthropologist Elliot P. Skinner (1982). Diachrony enters in this dialectical orientation, too, when social structure and identity are conceived of as occurring in "moments," according to dialectical language. An element of the dialectical approach informs the diachronic, too, in so far as oppression and the agency underlying identity are seen to constitute cultural and historical change.

The present book heralds a new approach, or series of approaches, that might be called *dialogic*. These encompass but do not efface the insights of the diachronic and dialectical research traditions. However, the approaches that might conceivably be termed dialogic represent a departure when applied to the African diaspora in the New World: These approaches entail a critical concern with the historical fashioning of anthropology's categories simultaneous with an insistence on viewing processes of multiparty interaction in the creation and transformation through history of determined material social relationships and myriad symbolic media—that is, an interrogation of the anthropological self as much as the nature of the Other, as well as an acknowledgment of the already-givenness of the anthropological encounter in terms of prior interpretations on everyone's part. Furthermore, in this approach, subjects—be they conceived of as "behavior," "culture," or

"structure," or as individuals enacting some aspect of culture or structure—are seen through the lenses of power inequities, and this vision is combined with an intense attention to the dynamic qualities and the processural emergence of never-finished, open-ended behavioral forms and repertoires via contested interactions over rights and reason.

The contributors to this volume trace the substance of these modalities, both historically and in the present. Suggestions for a dialogical anthropology emerged with the rise of postmodernist perspectives in the 1980s. Tedlock (1979, 1987; Tedlock and Mannheim 1995) was one of the first anthropologists to utilize the work of Russian literary critic M. M. Bakhtin, who developed a distinction between analogism and dialogism, between meaning as fixed and meaning as the expression of heteroglossia, contestation, negotiation, and multiple, diverse contexts and voices. Bakhtin himself was concerned with language and consciousness as evidenced in literary works. He maintained that language had two fundamental aspects, an active creative capacity and the contested and evaluative struggle over meaning, in which knowledge of context and the social hierarchies it involves is central for speakers and outsider analysts alike. Discourse and consciousness are dialogic, that is, inherently interactive, responding to prior context but constantly generating new meanings. This process occurs on a synchronic axis, in a specific historical instantiation, but also on a diachronic axis, as a response to previous utterances and the meanings and significance they contained, but simultaneously providing the basis for future transformations. But "dialogue" does not mean free exchange. Rather, for Bakhtin, it involves socially determined ideological conflicts and social power struggles involving community and class normative dictates.

As a "concept-metaphor" (see Moore 2004), dialogue has much to recommend itself, but the challenge remains how to bring dialogue to bear on African diaspora anthropology. In some hands, dialogue could refer to the interplay of historical forces and more concretely, given the subject at hand, the multilayered interaction and self-fashioning of communities throughout the Afro-Atlantic. While not necessarily conceived or named as such, there is a pedigree for this approach across disciplines (e.g., Sarracino 1988; L. D. Turner 1942; Verger [1968] 1976). More recently, the deep historical reciprocal

relationships that give the concept-metaphor substance have been extensively documented by historians and others (e.g., Blyden 2000; Curto and Lovejoy 2004; Gilroy 1993; Mann and Bay 2001; Otero 2002; cf. Lazarus 1995; Piot 2001). Scholars of African American literary theory (e.g., D. Hale 1994; Peterson 1993) and African diaspora cultural studies (e.g., Gilroy 1987; Mercer 1988) and history (e.g., Smolenski 2003) have found dialogic approaches useful, and these seem to have been picked up by contemporary anthropological theorists of the African diaspora (e.g., E. Gordon 1998; Gordon and Anderson 1999; Matory 1999a, 1999b, 1999c; Palmié 2002; Wirtz 2004; cf. Yelvington 1999, 2001a, 2003a, 2004). The dialogic approaches taken by the individual authors in this volume cannot be reduced to Bakhtin's propositions—he is hardly cited here, and my own position, for example, is one of "materializing" and "dialectizing" Bakhtin (Brandist and Tihanov 2000; Roberts 2004; cf. Yelvington 2005), which entails an understanding of the limitations of his theories for understanding social action as much as an understanding of how we might positively apply them—nor certainly can these dialogic approaches be confined to matters of text, language, and communication. I do want to invoke a dialogic principle, however, in order not to present the usual authoritative and defining "Introduction to the Edited Volume." This would be a "monologic" discourse act in Bakhtin's sense, authoritarian and pretending to be the "last word" on the subject. The contributors can certainly speak for themselves, and if you listen, you can hear them in dialogue with one another. The best thing I can do is get out of the way and historicize the project that leads to this collection.

In conceiving of this School of American Research advanced seminar, "From Africa to the Americas: New Directions in Afro-American Anthropology," I was placed in the wonderful (but, ultimately, extremely difficult) position of choosing from an excellent crop of scholars working on various aspects of the African diaspora in the Americas. I wanted established scholars, as well as emerging voices who would renew and hopefully renovate the forms of inquiry, from theory building to theory- and politics-informed rules of ethnographic engagement. Several general considerations emerged. I felt it most important to preclude neither particular avenues of inquiry nor theoretical approaches out of hand, but at the same time I sought some broad common ground among participants in order to facilitate a productive

seminar. At some level, I wanted the participants to engage in a critique of mechanical and essentialized notions of culture—and even question whether we should go on using that concept—where culture is seen as a reified, thing-like entity that may be "possessed," "maintained," or "lost"; may "decay"; or is "resistant" in the face of "cultural contact." Adopting this general critical perspective would force us to reconsider the whole question of cultural origins. This approach meant donning an outlook in which culture is conceived of as a process, a historical process, where culture—again, if that is going to be a useful frame of reference (see Abu-Lughod 1991; Brightman 1995; Trouillot 2003; S. Wright 1998)—is made and remade (and occasionally transformed) under certain conditions characterized by structures of domination, power relations, and inequality.

I also hoped for a consideration of the differential insertion of communities of blacks into the global political economy and transnational cultural flows, including constructions of diaspora, but at the same time an awareness of the extreme diversity therein. In other words, I hoped for a careful consideration of the varied historical contexts in which New World Africans and their descendants have found themselves, from slavery to the present. This process would include a consideration of ideologies of "race," ethnicity, and nationalism in the construction of blackness, both from within black communities and from without. To do so, I thought, we must analyze not only the importance of these cultural constructions for the people who are the subjects of our studies but also the role of notions of "race," ethnicity, and nationalism in the shaping of the discipline of anthropology itself. This analysis also includes all aspects of cultures, from material cultures to religious and communicative practices, and how they are identified as "black" and might be seen to be appropriated by others.

Relatedly, I thought we should make a distinction between the phenomena that some anthropologists have called African cultural "survivals" and the *discourses*—anthropological, political, and popular—about such survivals, and the efficacy of "survivals," if that is what the behaviors this term denotes are, and discourses about them as ideological forces. What is more, I felt that we should be in a position to take account of the "politics of reception" of academic theories and understand when, where, and why certain perspectives would be positively or negatively evaluated by the academy and by the informed

public. In this holistic view, black cultures will be conceived of as dynamic and interactive, and blacks conceived of as knowing subjects who are active agents in the construction of their own cultural worlds—within limits, of course, to be specified by historical and social science scholarship. They are not, in other words, to be conceived of as passive receptacles of "culture."

If we decided, I thought, to focus on "syncretism" and "creolization"—two dominant concept-metaphors in the history of African diaspora anthropology—we needed to be cautious, because these ideas-cum-theories arose when anthropological theory was dominated by notions of integrated social systems and/or of holistic and bounded cultural units. These positions had been severely questioned for some time by theorists of anthropology's cutting edge. Syncretism and creolization, as the hybridization or amalgamation of two or more cultural traditions or a set of what was referred to as cultural "traits," were (and are) conceived of as occurring under certain conditions of change. The product, called culture, trait, tradition, or whatever, was seen to some degree as novel and, variously, depending on the theorist, to some degree as traditional, retaining essential features that transcended the process of historical change.

I thought that we ought to be aware, too, if we wanted to continue to talk about syncretism and creolization, that creolization and cultural syncretism and synthesis are often camouflaged as such, depicted by participants and outsider analysts as "pure" or "native." Further, we should remember that creolization and syncretism occur not only between colonizer and colonized but also between ex-colonized peoples. This approach would leave room for a consideration of "anti-syncretism" too (Palmié 1995a). A final point on my wish list was the hope that, at whatever level possible, a reconsideration of West and Central African societies could be incorporated, not as simply points of origin but as active in the formation of the African diaspora in the New World.

While my own ethnographic and archival research had focused on the Caribbean and on African American communities and ethnic politics in the US South, by the time of the seminar my interests had turned with those of many others to the history of anthropology—in this case, the history of Afro-American anthropology in an attempt to understand the social history behind received anthropological "ways

of seeing." I asked for papers that would implicitly or explicitly incorporate history into their frameworks, that would either explore the development of anthropological perspectives or inform ethnographies with particular historical processes—or both. As a devotee of solid ethnography, I also wanted papers representing historical contexts from an "up-close" perspective. Finally, in terms of geographic and substantive diversity, I wanted papers on North and South America, the Caribbean, and a variety of subjects, including not only sociocultural anthropology but archaeology and linguistic anthropology as well.

This wish list of scholars who would address "New Directions in Afro-American Anthropology" entailed a further prerequisite of understanding something about the past of Afro-American anthropology. The conventional framing of this history is the debate between Euro-American Boasian anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits (1895–1963) and African American Chicago School sociologist and antiracist activist E. Franklin Frazier (1894–1962). Herskovits developed a culture area, culture traits, and diffusionist approach for his 1923 library Ph.D. dissertation on the "cattle complex" in East Africa under Franz Boas at Columbia University and then moved to physical anthropology with a project on "race-crossing" among African Americans. After briefly taking up an assimilationist perspective on African Americans in the United States by arguing that they had fully acculturated to mainstream "American culture" (e.g., M. Herskovits 1925a, 1925b), starting in the late 1920s (see his early statement in M. Herskovits 1930a), he spent the rest of his career charting what he saw as "Africanisms," African cultural "survivals" in the New World in the context of acculturation (see Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits 1936) in various cultural forms such as speech, family organization, cooperative labor, and, paradigmatically, religion (e.g., M. Herskovits 1937a, 1937b; Herskovits and Herskovits 1947).

For Herskovits, these Africanisms (see Holloway 1990) endured des-pite the enslavement process, albeit in transfigured forms existing below the surface of the cultural styles that characterized New World blacks, and they could be traced to particular ethnic points of origin on the African continent (M. Herskovits 1933a, 1936a). He deployed a number of concept-metaphors—such as "retentions," "reinterpretations," "syncretisms," "cultural focus," and "cultural tenacity," resulting here in "mosaics" and there in "amalgams" of cultures (see Baron

2003)—to describe the existence of Africanisms under acculturative conditions. Even these adaptations, he argued, could be seen as originating in Africa: "On the most comprehensive level, the manner in which New World Negroes have syncretized African and European custom into a functioning culture different from either of its ancestral types points to *psychological resilience as a deep-rooted African tradition of adaptation*" (M. Herskovits 1948a:10).

A champion of cultural relativism and a positivist-scientistic approach to anthropology, Herskovits may be conveniently classified as a "culture and personality school" adherent and one who has earned praise for his courage in daring to study African Americans seriously and attack racism in the context of a palpable upsurge in white racism and nativism in the United States of the 1920s and 1930s. He sought to make a political point with the publication of *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), in which he aimed to combat anti-black prejudice by showing that rather than a deficit (of) culture, African Americans had a past in the ancestral cultures of Africa, extending back beyond slavery sand manifested in Africanisms, of which they could be proud. Furthermore, African culture—and therefore African Americans—could be shown to have contributed to contemporary American culture. He felt that once this fact was made known to the general public, racism would diminish. Through institution building and gatekeeping, Herskovits became an important figure in American anthropology (see Baron 1994; Bourguignon 2000; Gershenhorn 2004; Hatch 1997; W. Jackson 1986; Rossbach de Olmos 1998; Simpson 1973; cf. Dillard 1964; Mintz 1964; Szwed 1972; Whitten and Szwed 1970a).

Frazier, following his mentor, Robert Park, emphasized the traumatic effects of slavery and racism on Afro-American culture (see Figueiredo 2002; Platt 1991). Positioning himself in opposition to Herskovits, Frazier argued that this structural situation in the United States made the maintenance of Africanisms impossible. In oft-cited lines from his book *The Negro Family in the United States*, Frazier (1939:12) wrote that "as regards the Negro family, there is no reliable evidence that African culture has had any influence on its development." For Frazier, "probably never before in history has a people been so nearly completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." They had "through force of circumstances" to "acquire a new language, adopt new habits of labor, and take over,

however imperfectly, the folkways of the American environment." Therefore, "of the habits and customs as well as the hopes and fears that characterized the life of their forebears in Africa, nothing remains" (21–22). But disorganization gave way to reorganization, and there was a positive result in that African Americans had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture" (479).

There are at least five caveats to this framing. One is the still largely untold history of the intellectual workers who preceded Herskovits or were his contemporaries, many of whom were African American and focused on the African diaspora but were marginalized from the anthropological canon (see L. Baker 1998; Drake 1980; Fluehr-Lobban 2000; I. Harrison and F. Harrison 1999; D. Lewis 2000; Liss 1998; Willis 1972) or were women, such as Ruth Landes (see Cole 1994, 1995, 2003; Corrêa 2000, 2003; Healey 1998; Matory 2003; Park and Park 1989; Landes 1970) or Hortense Powdermaker (Fraser 1991; Williams and Woodson 1993; cf. Adams and Gorton 2004), and were also elided from consideration as leading theorists of the anthropology of the African diaspora.

Second, this narrative is US-centered; there is an equally long if not longer tradition of Afro-American ethnology in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in Brazil (see, e.g., Azeredo 1986; Birman 1997; Corrêa 1987a 1988, 2003; Fernandes 1958; Grimson et al. 2004; Massi (Peixoto) 1989; Motta 1978; Peirano 1991; Peixoto 2000; Peixoto, Pontes, and Schwarcz 2004; Pontes 1995; Ribeiro 2000; Rubino 1995), Cuba (e.g., Bronfman 2002a, 2002b, 2004; Civil 1999; Dianteill 1995, 2000, 2002a; Díaz 2003; Font and Quiroz 2005; Ortiz García 2001; Palmié 2002; Puig-Samper and Naranjo Orovio 1999; Rodríguez-Mangual 2004), and Haiti (e.g., Antoine 1981; Célius 2005; Fluehr-Lobban 2000; Magloire 2005; Magloire and Yelvington 2005; Price-Mars 1978; Ramsey 2002, 2005, n.d.; Shannon 1996).

Relatedly, the third caveat is that Herskovits and other North American anthropologists interacted with and were influenced by Latin American and Caribbean anthropologists (see my chapter in this volume and some of the references therein). Fourth, the differences between Herskovits and Frazier have been overdrawn. Frazier and Herskovits sparred in print, for example, in a debate over the form of the family in Bahia, Brazil, where both did fieldwork in the early 1940s

(Frazier 1942, 1943; M. Herskovits 1943; cf. M. Herskovits 1948a:4). Also, Frazier is reported to have made a speech before the Harlem Council of Social Agencies, chiding Herskovits by saying, "[I]f whites came to believe that the Negro's social behavior was rooted in African culture, they would lose whatever sense of guilt they had for keeping the Negro down. Negro crime, for example, could be explained away as an 'Africanism' rather than as due to inadequate police and court protection" (Myrdal 1944:1242, quoted in L. Baker 1998:179).

But these apparent oppositions obscured areas of convergence. Frazier accepted the Herskovitsian view of acculturation (Frazier 1957:243–246), and he cited Herskovits favorably to the effect that African survivals existed in the Caribbean and Latin America especially in religion (1939:5–6), arguing that the differing experiences of enslavement had enabled Africanisms to survive outside the United States, where as they could not in the United States (Frazier 1939:7–8, 1957:336). For his part, Herskovits never dismissed the effects of the enslavement process on Afro-Americans, writing in Frazierian language about the "stripping from the aboriginal African culture" their "larger institutions, leaving the more intimate elements in the organization of living" (Herskovits and Herskovits 1947:7).

The fifth and final caveat is that this convenient framing cannot account for the plethora of research traditions and substantive scholarship on the Afro-Americas that makes no reference to these debates, nor feels a need to. For many scholars (including contributors to this volume), these questions were (and are) not the relevant or interesting ones, and many others sought (and seek) to go beyond them (see D. Scott 2004, especially 105–112, for anthropology; for anthropology and black studies, see Cerroni-Long 1987; cf. R. Kelley 1999).

The anthropologist R. T. Smith (1992:279–280) is impatient with the implications of this framing, writing that "the day is long past when scholars could seriously assert that African slaves were stripped of their culture in the passage to the New World, and the repeated invocation of the opposition between Frazier and Herskovits on this question merely gets in the way of serious study." Yet this framing is perhaps understandable in that it comes out of mid-twentieth-century American cultural anthropology, with its emphasis on tracing cultural traits driven by a kind of "culturalism." Here I mean *culturalism* not

necessarily in the sense that Appadurai (1996:15) uses the term when he defines it as "the conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of a larger national or transnational politics," although the kind of culturalism I mean, in which culture is viewed as a bounded whole and made to be both the explanandum and the explanans, can become the basis of this kind of mobilization. Thus, it came to be that mutually exclusive camps were formed, as complex and nuanced positions were reduced to a simple bifurcation: Herskovits / Africanisms versus Frazier / cultural stripping. And scholars often found themselves other-identified and boxed in by implication or association. There was, of course, a politics of reception. As Orlando Patterson (1971) shows, there were and are both radical and conservative manifestations of "survivalism" and "catastrophism," and the reception of each scholar's work since the 1920s has changed with historical currents.

In anthropological circles, Herskovits's thought has been and continues to be the subject of positive evaluations, as well as critical appraisals. The challenge to the Herskovitsian program now comes from those who self-consciously identify as creolization theorists and define the subject of their inquiry as creolization (Buisseret and Reinhardt 2000). The word *creole* comes from the Latin root meaning "to raise" or "give birth to" and "of local origin" (*crioulo* in Portuguese, *criollo* in Spanish) and was apparently first applied, depending on the time and place, to people born in the New World of varying social statuses and ethnic identities; since then it has been applied to any number of things, from language to food to domesticated animals. According to Fleischmann (2003:xv–xvi), the first known use of *creole* was recorded in a letter of April 2, 1567, from the Batchelor García de Castro in the vice-kingdom of Peru, referring to those of Spanish origin though born locally. The term became expanded to encompass other groupings and began to structure identity politics. An ideology of "creolism," of extolling the creole, combined with notions of *mestizaje* ("race" and culture mixing), is traceable to the early colonial period and continues to be part of nationalist imagining throughout the Americas (for recent discussions, see Bennett 2003; C. Hale 1996; L. Lewis 2003; Miller 2004; Wade 2001, 2004; Yelvington 2001b).

The notion of creolization comes to anthropology from linguistics, where it is not unproblematic (see, e.g., Jourdan 1991; cf. Drummond

1980). The most acclaimed and widely cited work on African diaspora anthropology is that of Mintz and Price (1992), influential since its first publication in 1976 (Mintz and Price 1976). They begin with the premise of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity among the enslaved Africans, but that this heterogeneity was what made inter-African creolization, as well as African-European creolization, vitally necessary. They deny that such encounters—and they varied fairly widely, depending on historical period, world and local economic context, local demographics, national tradition of the enslavers, and other factors—can be adequately captured by a view of culture as some sort of undifferentiated whole: "Given the social setting of early New World colonies, the encounters between Africans from a score or more different societies with each other, and with their European overlords, cannot be interpreted in terms of two (or even many different) 'bodies' of belief and value, each coherent, functioning, and intact. The Africans who reached the New World did not compose, at the outset, *groups*. In fact, in most cases, it might even be more accurate to view them as *crowds*, and very heterogeneous crowds at that" (Mintz and Price 1992:18). The enslaved could become communities only "by processes of cultural change": "What the slaves undeniably shared at the outset was their enslavement; all—or nearly all—else had to be *created by them*" (1992:18).

In taking up the questions posed by Herskovits, who again drew on the work of others before him, Mintz and Price (1992:9–10) argue that "it is less the *unity* of West (and Central) Africa as a broad culture area," a position associated with survivalism, than "the *levels* at which one would have to seek confirmation of this postulated unity," adding that "an African cultural heritage, widely shared by the people imported into any new colony, will have to be defined in less concrete terms, by focusing more on values, and less on sociocultural forms, and even by attempting to identify unconscious 'grammatical' principles, which may underlie and shape behavioral response." Here, "grammatical principles" refer to "basic assumptions about social relations" and "basic assumptions and expectations about the way the world functions phenomenologically." Taking the point of focus to another level, Mintz and Price (1992:10)propose that "certain common orientations to reality may tend to focus the attention of individuals from West and Central African cultures upon similar kinds of events, even though the

ways for handling these events may seen quite diverse in formal terms," and if this is so, then "the comparative study of people's attitudes and expectations about sociocultural change…might reveal interesting underlying consistencies." Acknowledging that the "underlying principles will prove difficult to uncover," Mintz and Price affirm attempts to "define the perceived similarities in African (and African-American) song style, graphic art, motor habits, and so forth," reasoning that "if the perceived similarities are real, there must exist underlying principles (which will often be unconscious) that are amenable to identification, description, and confirmation." In the end, "in considering African-American cultural continuities, it may well be that the more formal elements stressed by Herskovits exerted less influence on the nascent institutions of newly enslaved and transported Africans than did their common basic assumptions about social relations or the workings of the universe" (1992:11). They take up a Herskovitsian position when they say that they "recognize that many aspects of African-American adaptiveness may themselves be in some important sense African in origin" (1992:95; cf. Apter 2002).

It is hard to underestimate the number of anthropologists and historians who work on the Afro-Americas based in and outside North America that orient themselves toward some aspect of the above-mentioned scholarly traditions (and against others). This situation is evident in historical inquiry (see R. Price's chapter in this volume), archaeology (see Singleton's chapter in this volume), ethnohistory (e.g., Bilby 2005), bioarchaeology (e.g., Blakey 2001), medical anthropology (e.g., Benoît 2000), and linguistics and linguistic anthropology in which the creolization of languages has been a prominent preoccupation (for a recent review, see Mufwene 2004 and Sengova's chapter in this volume; cf. M. Morgan 1994a, 1994b, 2002). In cultural studies, "diaspora" as a kind of identity is defined quite closely with notions of "hybridity, fluidity, creolization and syncretism" (Brubaker 2005:6). Leading cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall (1990:235) famously writes that the "diaspora experience…is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*" (cf. Bennett et al. 2003; Mercer 1994; Puri 2004).

It is not possible to begin citing even a fraction of this work in a

meaningful way, even when restricted to anthropology, and particularly in the space marked out as "religion" or "performance" or music or dance; these have been some of the predominant spaces of investigation in African diaspora anthropology, a fact that is, itself, revealing of anthropological motivations but cannot be pursued here. Indeed, it is really not possible to offer the sometimes expected comprehensive "review of the literature" anywhere in this introduction. This literature includes recent work within anthropology and archaeology on the "genealogies of religion" (pace Asad 1993) in the diaspora, emphasizing dynamism and invention (e.g., Ayorinde 2004; Bilby and Handler 2004; D. Brown 2003; Burdick 1998; Clarke 2004; Fennell 2000; Ferretti 2002; cf. Goldschmidt and McAlister 2004; Greenfield and Droogers 2001; Handler and Bilby 2001; Hess 1991; McAlister 2002; Motta 1994, 2002; C. Price 2003; Selka 2005; Zane 1999; for overviews and typologies, see Glazier 2001; Murphy 1994; and Pollak-Eltz 1994).

Newer work includes religious idioms studied linguistically (e.g., Álvarez López 2004), how diasporic religion interacts with commercial (e.g., Hearn 2004; Long 2001; Motta 1988; Romberg 2003), intellectual (e.g., Hess 1991; Palmié 2002; Ramsey 2002, 2005; Román 2002; Sansone 2002; Seeber-Tegethoff 1998; Wirtz 2004), and state (Edmunds 2003; Henry 2003) spheres, where "Africa" becomes a contested sign in symbolic politics (Chude-Sokei 1997; Sansone 2002; Segato 1998), and that demonstrates an awareness of the constructedness of religious traditions in Africa itself (e.g., Doortmont 1990; Farias 1990; Peel 2000; cf. Barnes 1997; Murphy and Sanford 2001). This work also includes anthropological studies of dance that place dance within larger frames (Browning 1995; Daniel 1995; Gottschild 1996; cf. Browning 1998), as well as grapple with history (e.g., Gerstin 2004) and the history of the anthropology of dance (Daniel 2004).

Some anthropologists, some archaeologists, and those in allied pursuits conceptualize and define the African diaspora in and through the history of the "race" concept (Blakey 1999; Brace 2005; Gregory and Sanjek 1994; Orser 2004; Smedley 1993; cf. Brace 1995; Brodwin 2002; MacEachern 2000; Santos and Maio 2004) and in histories of interactions with other peoples in crossings of the "color line" (e.g., Bourgois 1989; Brooks 2002a, 2002b; Duany 1999; Forbes 1993). This work is usually located within nationalism, and anthropologies of myriad kinds of identity politics, such as "racial democracy" in Brazil

(e.g., Goldstein 2003; McCallum 2005; Sansone 2003; Sheriff 2001; Twine 1998), gender and blackness (J. Brown 1998; Phillips 2003; Sunderland 1997), ethnogenesis (Bilby 1996; Whitten 1996; B. F. Williams 1992), or representations of slavery in museum settings (e.g., Handler and Gable 1997; A. Jackson 2003; Silpa 2003; Yelvington, Goslin, and Arriaga 2002).

Newer work on the generation of diasporic spaces (J. Brown 2000; cf. Byfield 2000; Lemelle and R. Kelley 1994) is tied to political movements, such as the identification of pan-Africanism within those spaces (Carnegie 1999), including anthropological and archaeological takes on Afrocentricity (Haslip-Viera, Ortiz de Montellano, and Barbour 1997; cf. D. Kelley 1995). Anthropologists and other scholars of the diaspora using anthropological theory are renewing their examination of the role of the state (Crichlow 2005; Guss 2000; Martínez 1995, 1999, 2003; Maurer 1997; cf. Derby 1994; Turtis 2003), and newer urban anthropology is reworking the "culture of poverty" critique (Leacock 1971; Stack 1974; Valentine 1968) in new, multiclass, neoliberal contexts (Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Gregory 1998; J. Jackson 2001; R. Kelley 1997; Prince 2004; B. Williams 1999). In terms of methodology, and to general questions having to do with the politics of how anthropology constructs its object (Keane 2003), anthropologists and others are interested in how diasporic spaces are generated in cyberspace (Ebeling 2003; Eshun 2003; Everett 2002; Nelson 2002; Petty 2004; Ronkin and Karn 1999; cf. Axel 2004) and are taking up debates on "native anthropology" (Bolles 1985; Carnegie 1996; Haniff 1985; Jacobs-Huey 2002; Rodríguez 2001; Ulysse 2002; Whitehead 1986; cf. McClaurin 2001; Trouillot 1991), not to mention debates on globalization versus area studies (Guyer 2004; Maurer 2004; Slocum and Thomas 2003) and the production of "diaspora" as an academic object of study (Anthias 1998; Axel 1996) and political pursuit, to name only a few important topics and to cite even fewer important authors.

Let me relay a personal anecdote in this regard. In 1999 I was commissioned to write an article for the *Annual Review of Anthropology* on the anthropology of Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean (Yelvington 2001a). The geographical field had been narrowed for me to exclude North America (although I did review some works on Afro-Caribbean migration to the United States), and I narrowed the focus

thematically myself to those works that explicitly spoke to questions of defining diaspora. Furthermore, I thought it most useful to concentrate on more recent work. The target I was given by the editors at the *Annual Review of Anthropology* was an article of 7,000 words and no more than 150 references. For a year I reviewed books and articles in English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese; developed an outline; and started writing. When I was about what I thought was halfway through, I decided to do a word check to see how I was doing. It turned out that I had more than 8,500 words and more than 450 citations. Needless to say, I had to cut text and references even as I continued to write and cover what I saw as necessary ground (and I ended up exceeding the limits on both counts anyway). The point is that, for a number of reasons, attempting to discuss rather than just document the literature *en toto* would not necessarily be useful, even if it were possible. And a full discussion would take much more space than allotted here and would further divert us from the following original works, which, in any event, see to the appropriate contextualization in the literature.

Criticisms of creolization models tend to come from neo-Herskovitsian positions (for only some of the latest, see Chambers 2001; Eltis 2000; Falola and Childs 2004; Gomez 1998, 1999; G. Hall 1992; Heywood 2002; Lovejoy 2000, 2003; Lovejoy and Trotman 2003; Palmer 1995; Sweet 2003; Thornton 1998a; Walker 2001; Walsh 1997; Warner-Lewis 2003; cf. Chambers 1997, 2002; Fennell 2003; Lohse 2002; Northrup 2000), and so in a sense the creolization theorists have come to take the place of the Frazierian catastrophistic model in the eyes of many (although theorists such as Mintz and Price are hardly identifiable with Chicago School sociology). These historian critics who emphasize the relative endurance of African ethnicities outside the continent are inspired by new work on the Atlantic slave trade. The remarkable resource *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (Eltis et al. 1999) charts 27,233 transatlantic slave ship voyages made between 1595 and 1866. This work augmented Curtin's (1969) standard-setting census (see table 1.1), and historical documentation in this vein not only revises Curtin's numbers (see Eltis 2001; cf. Geggus 1990) but also permits a finer-grained understanding of where enslaved Africans came from and where they arrived in the New World (see tables 1.2 and 1.3). These critics are also given impetus and institutional support by UNESCO's international slave route project, initi-

Figure 1.1

Some principal points in the early Atlantic African slave trade. Map by Lori Collins.

ated in 1994 (see Diène 2001; cf. Teye and Timothy 2004). They join with anthropologists and others and tend to argue that specific African ethnic identities and ethnic cultures remained identifiable, stable, and salient through the enslavement process, resisting in important ways the tendencies toward creolization. Yet, anthropologists might further interrogate this history writing in the present "condition of postmodernity" (Harvey 1989), where multiculturalism is in intellectual and political fashion (see C. Hale 2002; cf. Laurie and Bonnett 2002; D. Thomas 2004), and points to a tradition in the historiography, exemplified by the politically conscious Walter Rodney (1969), where colonial power was emphasized in the construction of African ethnicities, and question to what extent in this model an uncritical notion of "culture" is (ironically) made to trump "history" (Dirks, Eley, and Ortner 1996; cf. Fabian 1983; Thomas 1989). Other anthropologists, working in the present, focus their gaze on the politics of identity representation and how ethnic designations are produced, such as the transformations from "Negro" to "black" to "African American" in the

Table 1.1

Estimated Slave Imports into the Americas, by Importing Region, 1451–1870

Importing Region	1451–1600	1601–1700	1701–1810	1811–1870	Total per region
British North America			348,000	51,000	399,000
Spanish America	75,000	292,000	578,600	606,000	1,552,100
British Caribbean	-	263,700	1,401,300	-	1,665,000
Jamaica	-	85,100	662,400	-	747,500
Barbados	-	134,500	252,500	-	387,000
Leeward Is.	-	44,100	301,900	-	346,000
St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Tobago, Dominica	-	-	70,100	-	70,100
Trinidad	-	-	22,400	-	22,400
Grenada	-	-	67,000	-	67,000
Other BWI	-	-	25,000	-	25,000
French Caribbean	-	155,800	1,348,400	96,000	1,600,200
St. Domingue	-	74,600	789,700	-	864,300
Martinique	-	66,500	258,300	41,000	365,800
Guadeloupe	-	12,700	237,100	41,000	290,800
Louisiana	-	-	28,300	-	28,300
French Guiana	-	2,000	35,000	14,000	51,000
Dutch Caribbean	-	40,000	460,000	-	500,000
Danish Caribbean	-	4,000	24,000	-	28,000
Brazil	50,000	560,000	1,891,400	1,145,400	3,646,800
Old World	149,900	25,100	-	-	175,000
Europe	48,000	1,200	-	-	50,000
São Tomé	76,100	23,900	-	-	100,000
Atlantic Is.	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Total	274,900	1,341,100	6,051,700	1,898,400	9,566,100
Annual Average	1,800	13,400	55,000	31,600	22,800

Source: Curtin (1969:268, Table 77). Reprinted by permission of The University of Wisconsin Press.

Table 1.2

Estimates of Regional Distribution of Slave Exports to America from Africa, 1662–1867

Decade	Senegambia	Sierra Leone	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	Bight of Biafra	West Central Africa	Southeast Africa	Total	Annual Exports
1662–1670	3,232		12,174	23,021	34,471	9,695	91	82,684	9,187
1671–1680	5,842		20,597	22,753	24,021	15,794	309	89,316	8,932
1681–1690	10,834		15,333	71,733	21,625	32,760	5,392	157,677	15,768
1691–1700	13,376		17,407	103,313	12,115	30,072	190	176,473	17,647
1700–1709	22,230	34,560	31,650	138,590	23,130	109,780	0	359,940	35,994
1710–1719	36,260	6,380	37,540	138,690	51,410	132,590	0	402,870	40,287
1720–1729	52,530	9,120	65,110	150,280	59,990	179,620	0	516,650	51,665
1730–1739	57,210	29,470	74,460	135,220	62,260	240,890	0	599,510	59,951
1740–1749	35,000	43,350	83,620	97,830	76,790	214,470	0	551,060	55,106
1750–1759	30,100	83,860	52,780	86,620	106,100	222,430	0	581,890	58,189
1760–1769	27,590	178,360	69,650	98,390	142,640	266,570	0	783,200	78,320
1770–1779	24,400	132,220	54,370	111,550	160,400	234,880	0	717,820	71,782
1780–1789	15,240	74,190	57,650	121,080	225,360	300,340	0	793,860	79,386
1790–1799	18,320	70,510	73,960	74,600	181,740	340,110	0	759,240	75,924
1800–1809	18,000	63,970	44,150	75,750	123,000	280,900	0	605,770	60,577
1811–1815	19,300	4,200		34,600	33,100	111,800	8,700	203,000	40,600
1816–1820	48,400	9,000		59,200	60,600	151,100	59,600	328,300	65,660
1821–1825	22,700	4,000		44,200	60,600	128,400	43,200	259,900	51.980
1826–1830	26,700	4,900		70,500	66,700	164,400	58,100	333,200	66,640
1831–1835	27,400	1,100		37,700	71,900	102,800	3,000	240,900	48,180
1836–1840	35,300	5,700		50,400	40,800	193,500	99,400	325,700	65,140
1841–1845	19,100	200		45,300	4,400	112,900	20,300	181,900	36,380
1846–1850	14,700	700		53,400	7,700	197,000	66,700	273,500	54,700
1851–1855	10,300	300		8,900	2,900	22,600	12,800	45,000	9,000
1856–1860	3,100	300		14,000	4,400	88,200	11,300	110,000	22,000
1861–1865	2,700	0		2,600	0	41,200	2,700	46,500	9,300
1866–1867	0	0		400	0	3,000	0	3,400	1,700
Total	599,864	756,390	710,451	1,870,620	1,658,152	3,927,801	391,782	9,529,260	46,035

Source: Klein (1999:208–9). Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

Table 1.3
Percentage Distribution of the African Regional Origins of Slaves Arriving in Major British Colonies, 1658–1713

	Chesapeake	Barbados	Jamaica	Antigua	Montserrat	Nevis
Senegambia	34.2	5.3	5.4	2.5	21.8	8.9
Sierra. Leone	0	0.8	0.5	3.0	0	5.0
Windward Coast	0	0.2	0.4	0	0	2.9
Gold Coast	16.5	39.6	36.0	44.8	37.8	32.1
Bight of Benin	4.0	25.7	26.0	13.9	8.1	12.0
Bight of Biafra	44.0	13.4	11.5	32.3	12.6	24.7
West Central Africa	1.2	10.2	20.1	3.6	0	13.1
Southeast Africa	0	4.8	0.2	0	19.7	1.4
Number of Slaves	7,795	85,995	72,998	8,926	2,037	14,040

Source: Eltis (2000:245). Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

United States (e.g., Houk 1993; cf. Philogene 1994; T. W. Smith 1992).

Some sympathetic critics of the creolization positions point out the still existing danger of biogenetic analogies tied to creolization, such as "hybridity" (Brah and Coombes 2000; Hutnyk 2005; Maurer 1997; Palmié n.d.; cf. Werbner and Modood 1997), while others (Khan 2001, 2004a, 2004b; M. Trouillot 1998) correctly insist on seeing creolization as the product of power relations. But the idea is flexible enough to accommodate scholars tracing the origins of cultural, as well as linguistic, creolization back to the coast of Africa (McWhorter 1997, 2000b; Thornton 1998a), while others temporalize creolization stages (Abrahams 2003; Berlin 1996; Burton 1997; Duany 1985; Olwig 1985, 1993) or spatialize creolization processes (Berlin 1980). Some see creolization as an apt concept-metaphor for other regions (Hannerz 1992; cf. Khan 2001), while scholars such as Mintz (1996, 1998) argue that concepts such as creolization are found to be useful to scholars of globalization but the Caribbean modernity it referred to was historically

unique. Further, the emphasis is on the struggle to build culture despite contexts not conducive to the success of such projects: "What typified creolization was not the fragmentation of culture and the destruction of the very concept, but the creation and construction of culture out of fragmented, violent and disjunct pasts" (Mintz 1996:302).

With the terms of the weight of the historical debate in the present outlined, the task came to identify seminar participants. Because I would be writing about an aspect of the history of Afro-American anthropology from the point of view of a practicing, ethnographic anthropologist, as opposed to a specialist historian of anthropology (see Yelvington 2003b), but nevertheless at somewhat of a distance, I also wanted theorists-ethnographers who were close to the ethnographic material, as well as the history and politics of theory. Therefore, I invited Richard Price to reconsider the career of the Mintz and Price (1992) creolization model while writing on the subject of creolization itself, and Sally Price to explore the various interpretations of Afro-American visual arts and the anthropological interpretations made of them. The chapters by Richard Price and Sally Price derive from their thirty-plus years of ethnographic engagement with the Saramaka Maroons of the Suriname and French Guiana rain forests and towns (e.g., R. Price 1975a, 1983a, 1990; R. Price and S. Price 2001; S. Price 1984; S. Price and R. Price 1980, 1999), arise out of one of their latest books on the place of art in Maroon life, and use artistic creations to show what they conceive of as more general, deep-level creative processes (S. Price and R. Price 1999).

Dialogical interaction could be conceived of and shown in different ways—of this I was aware. But instead of esoteric reflections or attempts to apply, say, Bakhtinian theory to a particular ethnographic situation, I wanted papers that would illustrate dialogue in action. With this in mind, I invited J. Lorand Matory, who had done fieldwork in both Nigeria and Brazil and had invoked the dialogue metaphor in various recent publications (1999a, 1999b, 1999c), to consider "dialogue" in contrast to other metaphors. I also asked John W. Pulis, whose work on Afro-Caribbean religion and diaspora (1999a, 1999b, 1999c, n.d.) is complemented by his archival research on Afro-American loyalists who dispersed to the Atlantic world with the withdrawal of the British from North America (1999a, 1999c), to use his archival research to show one

episode of dialogue: the enduring legacy of African American religious leaders in Jamaica in the late eighteenth century. The linguist Joko Sengova is a scholar whose range of interests was relevant to the theme of the seminar. He had written on national language policy in post-colonial Africa with respect to Sierra Leone (1987), as well as a reevaluation of pioneering African American linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner's research on the Gullah/Geechee language from the perspective of a native Mende speaker (1994). I asked him to reflect on the history of his involvement with the Gullah/Geechee-Sierra Leone connection. I invited Theresa A. Singleton, an archaeologist of plantation America, to discuss how archaeology might dialogue with sociocultural anthropology and history, and vice versa, and also to show how an awareness of this archaeology's place and history might affect the work of getting on with archaeological research.

Because the anthropology of the African diaspora has always been historical in orientation, and given Herskovits's concern to use history for the purposes of social betterment, preceded as it was by the praxis of luminaries such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, I invited Sabiyha Robin Prince, who had conducted cross-class fieldwork in Harlem (2004), to present her work on public anthropology and history's potential role in presenting histories of Africans and their descendants in Manhattan. Thinking of contrasting constructions of blackness, I invited Arlene Torres to present her new work on museum representations of Afro–Puerto Ricans in the venerable Smithsonian Institution. She had researched depictions of blackness in Puerto Rico itself (1995, 1998a) and how these depictions arose in and through nationalist projects. Here was a chance to see what happens when these nationalist projects become part of traveling culture (Clifford 1997; cf. Hansing 2001). If blackness is a floating signifier, it is not constructed out of thin air. Manifestations of blackness in performance had been a prominent theme in the literature, but I often found that works devoted to them dislocated "culture" from the rough-and-tumble of ethnic politics. Peter Wade was invited to share from his work on how black music and representations of Africa in Colombia (e.g., 2000) are neither politics-free nor bereft of ideological import.

To assess what our efforts would mean, I invited Faye V. Harrison to be a discussant. Here was a scholar whose work had straddled all our concerns. An ethnographer of the Caribbean, she was the editor of

a special issue of *Urban Anthropology* titled "Black Folks Here and There: Changing Patterns of Domination and Response," in which she set out a programmatic statement (1988). Her edited book *Decolonizing Anthropology* (1991) called for an "anthropology of liberation"—liberating anthropology from racism, sexism, and classism and using anthropology itself to address these social ills. She had written on "race" as an ideological construct and material relationship (1995), guest-edited a contemporary issues forum on "Race and Racism" in *American Anthropologist* (1998), and was about to be involved in issues of "race" and human rights with the UN's World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in South Africa in 2001 (2000). At the same time, she was deeply aware of the history of Afro-American anthropology, having researched the role of W. E. B. Du Bois's anthropology (1992) and coedited *African-American Pioneers in Anthropology* (I. Harrison and F. Harrison 1999). Her role was to place the participants' efforts in the context of that history.

As a whole, then, the book unites in dialogue somewhat diverse traditions in scholarship and, not to be forgotten, the perspectives of diverse scholars. To the extent that there is a "there" there, I can imagine that there will be no easy agreement as to the status of what or where "it" is. I hope that the reader will see the unity in the diversity, however. To the end of placing the arguments herein, the book is divided into four sections: Part I: Critical Histories of Afro-Americanist Anthropologies; Part II: Dialogues in Practice; Part III: The Place of Blackness; and Part IV: Critical Histories/Critical Theories. My own chapter begins Part I by questioning the formation of Afro-American anthropology by delving into the sources of Herskovits's thought. I trace his connections to ethnographers/ethnologists based in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as Jean Price-Mars in Haiti, Fernando Ortiz in Cuba, and Arthur Ramos in Brazil. I suggest that their own work was reflective of differing modes of modernity as they—similarly, but with differing effect and purpose—sought to document the black presence as part of nationalist projects. They were, in turn, responding to and involved in local developments to promote blackness. I also show how these relationships went into what I call an "intellectual social formation" of diverse and dispersed scholars, who nevertheless were able to define anthropological paradigms.

In chapter 3, Sally Price begins by tracing contextual changes in the reception and valuation of art across the world and how aesthetic evaluation—once operating in predictable fashion, assigning variable high and low, art and craft, modern and primitive status to various works—is becoming transformed as critics and evaluators begin engaging in reflexive strategies and revaluations of their own. In the midst of collapsing borders, arts of the African diaspora are traveling as they never have before. And with their proliferation comes increasing theoretical attention to particular media, including quilts and stitched cloth textiles. These readings have a politics, Price shows us, and she does not call for endless interpretation and esoterica but admonishes these theorists—and us—to do archival homework in the first instance.

Richard Price is the coauthor with Sidney Mintz of an acclaimed book (Mintz and Price 1992, first published in 1976) that represents a major rethinking of the Herskovitsian African cultural retentions and survivals paradigm. As outlined above, their emphasis is on culture building and cultural creation. Yet, they suggest that enslaved Africans shared basic cultural "grammatical principles" beneath the surface of behavioral response, and it is at this level that similarities through the African diaspora in the New World may exist. In chapter 4, Price reflects not only on the model but also on the politics of the model's reception in anthropology and in other disciplines, such as history and linguistics.

Part II begins with J. Lorand Matory's chapter, which elaborates a notion of dialogue as a multiplex set of relationships through time, discursive styles, ideologies, and religious traditions that are mutually constitutive between peoples of African descent on both sides of the Atlantic. He surveys what he calls the "analytic metaphors" employed in the anthropology of the African diaspora and shows how many of them, or parts of many of them, can be seriously misleading in how they regulate our anthropological vision. "Africa" is not merely a symbol, nor a point of origin that fades in importance once we awake from the nightmare of the Middle Passage, but it is active in creating its own diaspora, and the diaspora is active in creating Africa.

John W. Pulis is also concerned with intra-diaspora movement and especially how such movement affects local religious idioms. In chapter 6, he employs archival research with anthropological interpretive

skill to illuminate the careers of African American preachers who went to Jamaica when, as loyalists, they evacuated the North American colonies with the British in the era of the American Revolution. Some of these preachers, such as Moses Baker and George Liele, are well-known to African diaspora scholars, and Pulis shows something of how their religious life and influence on Afro-Christianity in Jamaica were intertwined with local politics and economics.

What happens when the researcher is part of the subject he or she studies? Or better, can we go on pretending that all of us are not part of what we study? In chapter 7, Joko Sengova reflects in an experimental way on multiple levels of understanding derived from his experience doing fieldwork in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia—predefined as "black" and "African" spaces. He provides us with an account of his involvement with a research team from Sierra Leone that set out to investigate linguistic and human connections from the period of the slave trade between that African country and the Sea Islands. He narrates attempts to make communion from both sides in a fascinating example of dialogue in action.

In chapter 8, Theresa A. Singleton shows how the sociocultural anthropology and archaeology of the African diaspora, at least in the United States, developed with similar concerns and methodological preoccupations (and limitations). Her mode of dialogue is layered and multi-directional. She demands that US four-field anthropology live up to its billing as encompassing all subfields. In a slice of her latest fieldwork in Cuba, she demonstrates ways in which questions become posed—or how they remain unthinkable—in particular disciplinary regimes and how the archaeology of the African diaspora in the Americas is uniquely positioned to provide the answers for historians, anthropologists, and others.

Sabiyha Robin Prince begins Part III with a long discussion (chapter 9) of some aspects of the history of blacks in colonial Manhattan, from the time of the Dutch settlement in the early seventeenth century until emancipation in 1827. She relies on the burgeoning secondary sources for the still little-known history of slavery in New York to tell the stories of largely anonymous enslaved toilers and their contributions. This discussion is framed anthropologically in two ways. On one side, Prince ploughs through the history to offer up evidence

of cultural practices of significance to anthropologists: religious ritual, the vicissitudes of everyday life, and resistance to power, among others. On the other, she suggests a role for public anthropology and history in presenting these stories—and takes the African Burial Ground as an exemplary case—in present-day identity politics.

Arlene Torres follows (chapter 10) with a consideration of the ways in which identity, culture, and citizenship are presented in official institutions such as museums. Once identity and culture are "fixed" with their exhibition, what becomes of the dialogue that is known to constitute and reconstitute such phenomena? she asks. Her substantive focus is on an exhibit titled "A Collector's Vision of Puerto Rico" at the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution. From her position as a participant observer, paid consultant, and Puerto Rican anthropologist, she goes about documenting the myriad ways "race," class, and ideology and signification styles are enacted in this space.

In chapter 11, Peter Wade's substantive focus is on the representations of blackness, and more recently Africanness, in Colombian popular music. He shows how "Africa" as a sign is now utilized in Colombia, in multiple and often contradictory ways by the state, anthropologists, black activists, and non-blacks. This is a historical development. Images of Africa were not used the same way in the past; indeed, blacks were in many ways rendered "invisible" in nationalist discourse and practice. But at the same time, their difference and distance from whiteness under the "whitening" ethos conjoined with *mestizaje* meant that their existence and visibility were always assured. Wade traces these changes through the effects of the globalization of images and commodities in international commerce, as well as through national legislation. Bringing us in some ways full circle, Wade argues that anthropologists cannot easily separate out so-called Africanisms as such from the way people perceive and talk about blackness and Africa, and he calls into question an arbitrary anthropological focus on *either* what people say *or* what they do.

Part IV consists of Faye V. Harrison's commentary (chapter 12). In her remarks, she employs a mode of "rehistoricization" that involves reclaiming the discipline's exposed and unexposed past and highlighting the struggles over the politics of knowledge. She places the contributors' efforts in a conceptual framework that underscores the

development of concept-metaphors and how these are responsive to politics at many levels; the ways in which the anthropology of the African diaspora can engage intra- and interdisciplinarily, asking what concrete historical moments call for methodological innovation and the stretching of disciplinary boundaries; a concern for structured inequalities that must be integral to anthropological consideration and awareness and cannot be simply bracketed off; and, finally, the nature of the presentation of self—both from the perspective of the anthropologist and from the people who teach us much of what we know, our consultants and, in some cases, collaborators, who have conventionally been designated as "subjects" or anthropological "informants."

At around the same time as the appearance of the massive *Africana* encyclopedia (Appiah and Gates 1999) and specialist overviews of African Americans in North America (R. Kelley and Lewis 2000) and Latin America (Andrews 2004; cf. Martínez Montiel 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; from earlier, see Pollak-Eltz 1972 and T. Price 1954), it seems that there are endless edited books on the Afro-Americas (see Manning 2003 for a long review of two). A number include chapters on North America, South America, and the Caribbean, all in the same volume. Some recent ones are Jalloh and Maizlish's *The African Diaspora* (1996), Okpewho, Davies, and Mazrui's *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities* (1999), and Hine and McLeod's *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora* (1999). There is a special issue of the journal *African Studies Review* (vol. 43, no. 1, 2000) titled "Africa's Diaspora," a special issue of *Mamatu: Journal for African Culture and Society* (nos. 27–28, 2003) titled "A Pepper-Pot of Cultures: Aspects of Creolization in the Caribbean," and a special issue of *Historical Archaeology* (vol. 38, no. 1, 2004) titled "African Diaspora Archaeologies: Present Insights and Expanding Discourses," among many others. Anthropologists are prominent as contributors, and the landmark *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives* (Whitten and Szwed 1970b) was for many years (and still is) the standard against which others in this genre are judged.

More recently, there are also fine examples whose titles indicate that they are unified around particular themes, such as Rahier's *Representations of Blackness and the Performance of Identities* (1999), which links performativity with identity; Palmié's *Slave Cultures and the Cultures of Slavery* (1995b), which uses ethnohistory to investigate the past of the

creolization dynamic; and Whitten and Torres's two-volume set, *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean: Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations* (Torres and Whitten 1998; Whitten and Torres 1998), which, in presenting mostly well-known republished articles, is comprehensive in its coverage of Latin America and the Caribbean, regionally and topically (on the region, cf. García 2002; Weik 2004; Whitten 1976).

Afro-Atlantic Dialogues does not necessarily cohere along topical lines but instead represents the diversity of the contemporary anthropology of the African diaspora in the Americas. The perspectival unity despite topical and regional diversity comes from a shared awareness of the profound historicity of situated knowledges, as well as a common orientation in these chapters toward movement, interaction, contestation, emergence, and innovation, in both large and small frames. This approach means that the book is of broad importance to anthropology in general for at least three reasons. First, many of the staple theoretical concepts in cultural anthropology in the past, such as acculturation, assimilation, and syncretism, in part emerged from the concerns of Afro-Americanists, even though this was often not acknowledged. In this regard, many contributors synthesize a vast amount of anthropological literature and offer an evaluation of the history of anthropological theory. Second, some of the new perspectives found herein address central issues in contemporary anthropological theory. Besides the interest in the history of anthropology, examples include the globalization of cultures, creolization, hybridity, transnationalism, colonialism, postcolonialism, and political economy, as well as the argument that anthropologists, no less than the people we learn from, are political "positioned subjects." The contributors to this volume critically address and assess these concerns, providing a valuable evaluative function for contemporary theory.

Finally, this book is important to anthropology because the discipline needs to lend its expertise to ongoing societal issues and social movements related to the topics of the seminar, including the politics of the "culture wars" in the United States, Brazil, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, such as multiculturalism and the movement for "racial" and cultural rights, for example, as these movements affect the populations of African descent across the Americas (see table 1.4). Oftentimes, these debates turn on anthropological theory, even if parties to the

Table 1.4
Populations of African Descent in the Americas, c. 1990

Country	Population (thousands)		Percent of Total	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Brazil	9,477	53,097	5.9	33.0
United States	29,986	29,986	12.1	12.1
Colombia	4,886	7,329	14.0	21.0
Haiti	6,500	6,900	94.0	100.0
Cuba	3,559	6,510	33.9	62.0
Dominican Republic	847	6,468	11.0	84.0
Jamaica	1,976	2,376	76.0	91.4
Peru	1,356	2,192	6.0	9.7
Venezuela	1,935	2,150	9.0	10.0
Panama	35	1,837	14.0	73.5
Ecuador	573	1,147	5.0	10.0
Nicaragua	387	559	9.0	13.0
Trinidad and Tobago	480	516	40.0	43.0
Mexico	474	474	0.5	0.5
Guyana	222	321	29.4	42.6
Guadeloupe	292	292	87.0	87.0
Honduras	112	280	0	5.0
Canada	260	260	1.0	1.0
Barbados	205	245	80.0	95.8
Bahamas	194	223	72.0	85.0
Bolivia	158	158	2.0	2.0
Paraguay	156	156	3.5	3.5
Suriname	146	151	39.8	41.0
St. Lucia	121	121	90.3	90.3
Belize	92	112	46.9	57.0
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	94	105	84.5	95.0
Antigua and Barbuda	85	85	97.9	97.9
Grenada	72	81	75.0	84.0
Costa Rica	66	66	2.0	2.0
French Guiana	37	58	42.4	66.0
Bermuda	38	39	61.0	61.3
Uruguay	38	38	1.2	1.2
Guatemala	*	*	*	*
Chile	*	*	*	*
El Salvador	**	**	**	**
Argentina	0	**	0	**
Total	64,859	124,332	9.0	17.2

* presence of people of African descent acknowledged but no official figures given

** no figures available

Source: Monge Oviedo (1992:19).

debate are unaware of the origins of these ideas. These debates will continue without anthropologists, and it is our responsibility to engage in them.

Notes

I would like to thank Catherine Cocks, Sidney W. Mintz, and the two anonymous reviewers for SAR Press for their helpful comments on this introduction.

1. Some criticisms of Herskovits are that he was unable to wholly escape the "racial" thought he ostensibly combated and that he uncritically accepted colonial historiography and ignored the ways "Africa" was constructed in the diaspora. More generally, to these criticisms could be added a view of culture as a reified, bounded, thing-like entity, a static conception of acculturation and culture change, a related inadequate reading of African ethnic group traditions as fixed and enduring rather than fluid and porous, a lack of serious interest and attention to politics and power differentials affecting change on both sides of the Atlantic, and, like Boas before him, suffering from an incomplete critique of evolutionism. Cultural "survivals," it must be recalled, constituted a central element in the evolutionism of E. B. Tylor. I refer to some criticisms of Herskovits in chapter 2.

2. Creolization models can fall into the same trap as static culturalism by wielding a "strong" culture concept, in which culture trumps time. The concept could also be teleological, as when a particular period is studied and then projected into the present, where continued creolization is assumed to be inevitable. Also, the converse problem: when the present is projected into the past and contemporary forms are labeled "creole" by virtue of political processes and might lead to new trait analysis, conceptualizing a "creolism" on a par with an "Africanism."
