

Africa and Latin America: Histories, Connections, Identities



Workshop proceedings

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Readings and Research exploring Kongo Culture in Brazil*

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Africa and Latin America: Histories, Connections, and Identities

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Opening Roundtable: Africa and Latin America: Histories, Connections, Identities

Introduction

The *Africa and Latin America: Histories, Connections, Identities* workshop opened with John Janzen, director of the African Studies Resource Center, enumerating the goals of the workshop. Janzen indicated sharing successful investigative methodologies, developing engaging and critically stimulating curricula, and discussing solutions to problems encountered when researching the connections between and among Africans, Latin Americans, Afro-Latin Americans, and other African diaspora populations in the trans-Atlantic world as focal issues for the proceedings. Janzen, after describing his work in Kongo cultural regions and his commitment to promulgation of future scholarship treating these important connections and histories, introduced the panel of speakers. The speakers of the opening roundtable included Elizabeth Kuznesof, director of the KU Center For Latin American Studies, Anita Herzfeld, KU Latin American Studies professor, and Debra Castillo, professor of Comparative Literature at Cornell University.

The Demography of the African Presence in Latin America

Elizabeth Kuznesof gave a lecture describing the African presence demographically throughout Latin America. Kuznesof described the African descended majority in Brazil as the largest black population outside of Africa. Only Nigeria has a larger national black population. Kuznesof also mentioned the historic African presence in various Latin American countries where today there are no visible, distinguishable African descended populations. Several of the countries with African majorities or significant populations in the colonial era included Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, and Mexico. The African populations were absorbed through the process of *mestizaje*, or ethnic and racially mixed couples reproducing.

Due to sex imbalances and poor living and working conditions particularly in Brazil and Cuba, slave reproduction rates never reached levels high enough to sustain labor needs. New African slaves were constantly being added to the *creole* mix. The term *creole* in this context describes people of African descent born in the Americas. As a result, generation after generation of Brazilian and Caribbean slave communities had an influx of new people. These new laborers helped lead resistance movements and counter-acted colonizer assimilation attempts. The constant, new, in-coming supply of African laborers in vast numbers in Latin America provided spaces for organized and persistent resistance, relatively unseen in North American colonies.

Kuznesof explained that the failure of indigenous slavery precipitated African slavery in Iberian America. Colonial economies designed to provide certain products to the mother country for consumption or refining processes necessitated many laborers. Colonizers started by exploiting indigenous groups, but this arrangement failed due to resistance, disease and indigenous deaths. The European explorers and colonizers introduced diseases to which the indigenous people had no immunity. The native people faced decimation in most regions, particularly the Caribbean, while in other areas like Peru and Mexico where the indigenous societies were larger, even the deaths caused by disease still left a majority indigenous society. However, in the places where the

indigenous groups were not populous enough to meet labor needs, African slavery provided the solution.

West and Central Africans transported to the Americas, brought with them cultural practices and aesthetics which persisted despite slavery, though in modified ways. Religion and music were areas of African culture, which persisted across the diaspora. Cuba, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic, were named as countries, which due to large slave populations maintained African cultural connections during slave regimes and beyond. Kuznesof indicated exploring the connections between Africa and African-American history and cultural expression demonstrated how effectively some forced laborers were at maintaining and re-inventing Africa in order to resist their own de-humanization and assimilation. Transient African people understood the value of their various cultures and worked to sustain them. For example, lay brotherhoods called *cabildos* in Cuba demonstrate the self-supporting tendencies of particular ethnic groups. The re-creation of ethnic blocks, based on language and place of origin called *naciones* in Spanish and *nações* in Brazil offer a picture of resistance to both Spanish and Portuguese colonizing culture. Another resistance theme explored was the development of communities of runaway slaves called *palenques* in Spanish and *quilombos* in Portuguese. Kuznesof mentioned the famous *quilombo*, Palmares, which existed for at least three decades before falling to colonial authority attack in 1697. The *quilombos*, particularly Palmares, represented not only African resistance, but also, an attempt at cultural continuity, though relationships of kinship were replaced by ethnicity.

The concluding statements of the talk focused on Africans in the Americas contributing linguistically, aesthetically, musically, and spiritually to American thought and practice. Challenging the way scholars think about conducting study of African histories and descendants should be reconsidered. African histories in the Americas were not marginal; they were central to Iberian American life. Kuznesof asserted that Africans played a central role in American development. According to Kuznesof, this workshop was designed to help make these contributions more widely acknowledged, and to serve as a forum to discuss how transatlantic world study should move forward.

The Linguistic Legacy of African Languages in the Americas

Anita Herzfeld introduced the process of African language influence on the European languages of colonizing nations in the Americas. The narrative began by acknowledging the indigenous language groups present in the Americas upon European first contact. She described “the demographic disaster”, the seventy percent reduction of the indigenous population in central Mexico researched by Woodrow Borah. She used this data to explain how indigenous language pre-dominance, was quickly replaced by Old world and creole language pre-dominance based the various Europeans in charge and African cultural groups present. The conquistadors of Spain, for example, adhered to the idea that culture meant having “ . . . one language, one religion, and one race . . .” (here race refers to the idea of nation; this was a common usage until the late nineteenth century). The indigenous languages of the Americas provided a significant amount of vocabulary, but linguistically speaking this was a minimal type of language contribution.

African language influence had a greater impact. Due to the migration of slavers and slaves new languages did appear as a result of Atlantic world migrations. Herzfeld described the process whereby African languages influenced speech in the Americas. The first result of language contact between a European language and an African language was a pidgin. Pidgins emerged when members of each language group used vocabulary from their own tongue and the new language discriminately, until terms became recognized in both language communities. Verb conjugation was reduced and auxiliary verb usage with infinitives facilitated communication, though the sentence composition radically differed from the normal patterns in the original language contexts. When this shared language between distinct language speakers became the native speech of a subsequent generation, the new language was known as creole.

The changes in speech, which are distinct from communication in the mother tongues move through the above processes. The beginning of the process is described as basilect. The middle process of codification and normalization of speech patterns, intonations, and word choice is mesolect. The end of the process, acrolect, refers to the stage where creole produces its own standardized usages.

This process of integrating Dutch, Spanish, English, French, or Portuguese with specific African languages like Kikongo, Yoruba, Ewe, or Hausa, or with African pidgins

used by Africans of different language groups on the African coast or in the Americas led to reflexification. Reflexification refers to the maintenance of language structure, in the case of African slave speech communities throughout the Americas, where African grammar patterns and tendencies persisted. Herzfeld discussed simplified versions of theory explaining how these processes began. The monogenetic models suggested that one pidgin of a particular region emerged and spread to other regions thereby becoming the standardized pidgin. The polygenetic theory suggested that several pidgins evolved in various areas, but were similar in development due to the similarities of language structure and preferences of the African and European language speakers in different areas. Herzfeld recounted that there were 100,000 million speakers of creole languages in the world and that three million of those speakers live the Americas. Creole languages generally indicated societies in flux according to Herzfeld. Disturbances in traditional societies were widespread in situations where creole languages developed, so examining the language formation process can reveal the geographic and ethnic origins of diverse populations, who were disconnected from origin language contexts.

Herzfeld gave several examples of the processes described. She mentioned the English-based creoles of Belize, and later developing English-based creoles found in Panama, Honduras, and even Costa Rica based on patterns of black migrations connected to railroad construction, fruit production, and the construction of the Panama canal.

The English based creole languages were historically and continue to be found on the Caribbean coasts where African descendants formed runaway communities before independence and abolition in the Spanish American colonial context. Also, nineteenth and twentieth century migration helped produce new pockets of English-based creoles in various parts of Spanish America. Speakers of Jamaican creole moving to Panama or Honduras exemplified this movement. Tripartite blends of Dutch-based creole, with English and later Spanish have produced further blends of speech, which incorporate as many as four languages. African descendants migrating to the Americas and within the Americas have facilitated much of this linguistic mingling. The Garifuna, the Rama, and other inhabitants of Central America and the Bay Islands still exhibit the results of these linguistic processes. African movement to the Americas and within the Americas contributed to the linguistic diversity, which characterizes New World speech.

Speaking from Where You Are: Re-Imaging Latin American Literature through Post-colonial Theory and Practice

Deborah Castillo discussed post-colonial theory and its uses in examining culture and power among people who are framed as marginal groups due to language, location, or ethnicity. Her focus was speaking from alternative and marginal spaces. Though her examples did not utilize African-American literatures, she suggested the re-reading being done of Latino literature might provide useful approaches and analytical practices when discussing African descendant experiences.

Central to her discussion was changing what academics teach or curriculum design. Teaching literature based on national or regional borders no longer worked according to Castillo, when so many people and populations move back and forth across geographic, cultural, and intellectual borders. The borders are really no longer outlying areas. They are often the center or the base for individuals with complex, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual perspectives and identities.

Another key issue for Castillo was the democratization of meaning. Meaning should be contested, and critiquing, canonical interpretation is necessary in the academy. She pointed to how Euro-centric generations of investigators have written through binary lenses, and as a result she challenged scholars to first produce literature, which is a response to previous bias. However, writing in response to bias or articulating a voice that is the opposite side of the coin of Euro-centrism could only be useful for so long. In her view, not moving beyond critique only reinforces the notion of these biases, and limits how the contemporary researcher asks and frames questions. It limits both the imagination of current analysts and students.

Castillo recoiled at the idea of a universal standard for judging culture in the post-modern praxis and located bilingualism, ethnicity, and geographic location as new points of departure for research. Asking the question, how does the world sound to individuals accustomed to speaking two languages or more could begin an investigative piece. Exploring the social reasons why language preference exists among bilingual populations, and what the criteria is for usage in particular settings beg to be explored. Which language is seen as being more powerful and why? What language is used daily, at work, and at home? What necessitates a specified usage in a particular context?

Castillo announced scholars have the responsibility of asking how does the United States look from Latin America, instead of always directing a North American gaze at Latin Americans and consistently generating an exotic “other”. Castillo also envisioned and described a time when writers from Latin America would not explain their Afro-Iberian or Indigenous/Iberian cultures to their readers like a “safari guide”. Castillo challenged her audience to move Latin America from the margins to the center of intellectual investigation and analysis. How does Latin America look to a Nuyorican (a person of Puerto Rican heritage born in New York)? How do chicanas (Mexican descendents born in the United States) relate to Cubans? Exploring Latin American diversity and looking at literature outside of national spaces to see connections and differences was a clearly stated goal of Castillo. Privileging euro-centric, patriarchal, Anglo-American perspectives by building canons, and hierarchal departmental organizational units within the academy subjects the subjects of analysis and investigation. Deborah Castillo called for these practices to end, and suggested post-colonial theory and application as a useful way to begin dismantling systems of privilege.

Panel 1: Africa and Africans in the Formation of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680

Saturday March 1, 2003

8:30-10:00 a.m.

Jayhawk Room, University of Kansas

Speaker: John Thornton (Professor of History, Millersville University)

Session Chairperson: Suresh Bhana, (KU History)

Respondents: John Janzen (KU Anthropology)

Elizabeth Kuznesof (KU History)

African Action and Cultural Creativity

John Thornton spoke about the predominant influence of Central Africa, particularly Kongo culture in colonial Brazil due to large numbers of slaves moving from

this region to the new world. According to Thornton, seventy percent of the African laborers transported to Brazil before 1670 came from Kimbundu, Luanda, and surrounding areas. These laborers in many instances were already at least nominally converted Catholics due to the christianization of the Kingdom of Kongo within years of Portuguese contact. In response to christianization, a literate segment of the population evolved as early as the first few years of the 1600's. Having individuals capable of reading the Bible was important to conversion processes. As a result many Kongoese, had both Christian identities and traditional Kongo belief systems intact and co-existing before being moved to the new world. As such, syncretism or at least the concurrent co-existence of two systems of belief could be coalesced.

Afro-Brazilians practiced Catholicism while developing the re-invention of Kongo practice, and mixing it with Yoruba ideology to generate *candomblé and macumba*. *Candomblé and macumba*, despite their mix of traditions from Yoruba ideology, Kongo ideology, and Portuguese Catholicism, still maintained some degree of cultural distinctiveness based on the geographic origins of practitioners. These distinctive characteristics were evident in drumming patterns, hand movements, and cosmological representations. For example, *candomblé* houses identified as *de Angola*, demonstrated stronger ties to Central African ritual tradition than houses without this descriptor. (Clarence Henry and Robert Farris Thompson)

Thornton focused on the complexity of African involvement in the slave trade, and African responses to the trade on both sides of the Atlantic. He emphasized the African political elites willingness to sell and be rid of potential enemies. By discussing the hierarchal structure of the Kongo kingdom, he clarified several reasons why selling war captives was such a common practice and demonstrated the autonomous participation African elites had in the slave trade. This is important because it negated the common idea that Europeans simply went to Africa, crushed African kingdoms and polities, and took who and what they wanted. In the version of history described above, leaders of African societies were not victimized, and they acted autonomously in the drama of early trans-Atlantic encounters.

Thornton emphasized African agency in the Americas. He described how Kongo naming processes persisted despite slavery. He discussed the example of Pedro Kongo.

Attaching the location of the port of departure to a name was a strategy used to identify oneself, widely in Afro-Latin American contexts. Thornton also talked about how early Christian slaves used Christian identities to negotiate, sometimes successfully religious freedom, greater freedom of movement, and sometimes emancipation based on the idea that holding Christians as slaves was intolerably immoral.

Finally, Thornton mentioned that African slaves used religion to build and rebuild communities in the Americas. Newly arriving African slaves reaching the other side of the Atlantic until the mid 1870's in Latin America contributed to a constant flow of African experts who used ethnic ties and cultural practice as a way to cultivate identities outside of those assigned to them as slaves. Also, Afro-Brazilian preachers taught potentially liberating ideas about Christianity to slaves, as well as serving as de facto leadership for Afro-Portuguese communities. The mix of newly arriving Africans and Afro-creole populations led to communities, which incorporated ritual specific to Kongo ideology within a Christian paradigm and other communities devoted specifically to using the power of African religion uninterrupted. As an example of integration and cultural ideology retention, Thornton mentioned the practice of eating and using salt in various ways to connect with the spirit world (*Kudimungu/KiKudamungu*) and in conjunction with baptism (*Lusakakisi*). Christianity and Kongo belief co-existed and sometimes became intertwined. Thornton ended his lecture by emphasizing that the continuance and re-invention of Africa in Brazil, despite grave oppressive forces came from within African communities.

Thornton's work was well received. Respondents John Janzen and Elizabeth Kuznesof both gave examples, which corroborated the validity of the archival work Thornton mentioned. Kuznesof discussed lay brotherhoods and the idea of African cultural creativity mentioned by Thornton to emphasize the uniqueness and the utility of the responses African descended Brazilians generated to resist and persist. John Janzen emphasized the changes occurring within continental Kongo culture in order to show that Kongo culture was in motion on both sides of the Atlantic. Therefore, the newly arriving African laborers from Kongo in the late nineteenth century, were different from previous generations, when the Kongo Kingdom was larger and more centralized. Janzen, as such, emphasized the creolization processes and responses to these processes within Kongo

culture on both sides of the Atlantic. Janzen also provided a contemporary perspective, which focused on the continued process of transculturation between contemporaneous Protestant ideology and Kongo cosmology visible within one of the largest independent churches in Africa, founded by Simon Kimbandu. The Thornton presentation and the question and answer session addressed research methodology, language acquisition issues, graduate student curricula development, and ways to write transatlantic history providing a space where African contribution and agency can be visible.

Panel 2: Post-Colonial Perspectives: Theory and Practice

Saturday March 1, 2003
 10:15 –11:45 a.m.
 Jayhawk Room, University of Kansas

Speaker: Deborah Castillo (Professor of Comparative Literature, Cornell University)

Session Chairperson: Jill Kuhnheim (KU Spanish and Portuguese)

Respondents: Tony Rosenthal (KU History)
 Vicky Unruh (KU Spanish and Portuguese)

Who Gets to Speak? Subaltern Voices Silenced in the Academy

Deborah Castillo focused on the politics involved in subaltern representation and analyzing works from subaltern individuals, groups, or geo-political regions. Castillo used three books to illustrate how ineffectively academics listen to voices outside of the academy due to issues of power related to the construction of knowledge. Castillo read and presented her interpretations of the following works; *Decline and Fall of the Lettered City* (2002) which is Latin American cultural theorist Jean Franco's reading of Angel Rama's *The Lettered City* (1984); John Beverly's *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory* (1999); and *Proceed with Caution, When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas* (1999) by Doris Sommer. She urged scholars to

analyze and consider the power associated with their knowledge building processes and how parasitic they can be. For example, she noted the results of investigative and analytical work, tend not to directly benefit the communities being studied. The scholar or the academic institution is normally the beneficiary in terms of profit and prestige.

Castillo also criticized the tendency of academia to produce “token” academic subalterns to speak for subaltern groups outside of the academy. She discusses the limits of former subalterns in the academy to articulate the experiences of disposed, oppressed groups. By virtue of connections with “first world academies” former subalterns translate their vocational prestige into social prestige which truly separates them from the social, political, economic, ethnic, or regional group or groups from which they emerged.

Castillo engaged the argument of Gayatri Spivak from the essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” and suggested that if subalterns speak then they are no longer subalterns. She noted that Spivak does not literally mean subalterns cannot talk. Of course, they can and do speak. Castillo explained “. . . that the subaltern cannot speak in a way that would carry any sort of authority or meaning for us [academics] without altering the relations of power/knowledge that constitute it as subaltern in the first place.” Though individuals still might be a subaltern group within the academy, this is still different from being a part of the subaltern masses outside of the institution. She is highly critical of these conflicting grouping practices which leads to sustaining what she calls “. . . metropolitan theoretical discourse . . .”—in short, a continuing Euro-centric, western ideological project.

She described even the best attempts to move academia from this particular culturally biased gaze as ineffective. In the end of paper, she comments on how even deliberate pedagogical attempts to break down binary opposition and ways of knowing reinforce the “us vs. them” dynamic. She also suggested that despite these current paradigm limitations that publicly talking about these issues in conferences, in books, and in classrooms as the best way to demonstrate and in turn deconstruct the links between discourse and strategies of oppression.

Vicky Unruh expounded upon on the ideas of respect, caution, and humility when attempting to write and investigate subaltern spaces and experiences. According to Unruh, the subjects must not be subjected. The people whose lives scholars wish to

explore should be respected. People must be more than data. Particularly when writing of the subaltern, the researcher's class position, ways of writing and articulating thought must be negotiated in a way where the agency of research subjects is not underemphasized. Even in studies focusing on pro-active social processes, the process instead of the human actors often becomes the focal point. Unruh suggested that emphasizing stories may work to more effectively frame investigation. Academics should focus more on listening to subaltern speech in various formats and through various discourses instead of cutting and pasting subaltern "talk" to fit our research objectives. Making room for subaltern voices and listening to, not automatically critiquing, subaltern talk was suggested as a way of really engaging in dialogue versus imposing the power laden, hierarchal prescriptions which define academic learning and knowledge construction.

Respondent Tony Rosenthal emphasized the selective applications of post-colonial theory based on time appropriateness in historical analytical research. He suggested, for example, that post-colonial analysis had limited usage in pre-colonial seventeenth century Africa, because the analysis necessitates a highly centralized, industrializing, nation state. Analytical tools should correspond to developmental processes.

Rosenthal identified key themes or approaches useful to innovatively approach and deconstruct the culture of colonialism. He suggested moving beyond binary tendencies as described by Edward Said as a habit or approach to guard against. Instead of consistently basing work on critique and therefore reinforcing oppositions in an effort to challenge them, approaching subjects across unrelated regions may generate exciting parallels and connections. Rosenthal also mentioned the psychoanalytic sphere as explored by Franz Fanon as useful in pushing traditional boundaries discussing colonialism. Furthermore, focusing on the theme of exile, or trans-national movement was offered as a way to help push ideological limits. Finally discussing the persistence of empire, despite the official termination of colonial relationships was offered as way of approaching investigation, which could also stretch intellectual boundaries.

Rosenthal also emphasized comparing highly localized popular culture and mass media culture as a way of framing post-colonial protest or processes. He discussed the

similarities between vampire beliefs in Peru and East Africa (particularly Kenya and Tanzania) as a cultural metaphor used to articulate the draining effects on society by individuals or groups in power practicing discrimination, economic exploitation, or other forms of oppression. West African “Third Cinema” and Brazilian “*Cinema Novo*” (New Cinema) as well as the rise of hybrid reggae-rai (reggae music sung in Arabic) showed how post-colonial processes across seemingly unrelated modern regions can produce similar critiques of systems of power.

Panel 3: Music, Performance, and Culture: African Diaspora and Latin American Realities

Saturday March 1, 2003

1:00 –2:30 p.m.

Jayhawk Room, University of Kansas

Speaker: Kazadi wa Mukuna (Professor of Music, Kent State University)

Session Chairperson: Walter Clark (KU Music and Dance)

Respondents: Omofolabo Ajayi (KU Women’s Studies and Theatre and Film)
Clarence Henry (KU Music and Dance)

Migrating Music, Material Culture, and Myths

Kazadi wa Mukuna presented the migratory histories of various musical instruments from Africa to the Americas. He began by emphasizing that slave communities within the Brazilian context organized themselves into groups based on shared language, religious beliefs, or ethnicity. The organization of African laborers into nations as discussed at various points throughout the workshop was again emphasized as a way African culture was maintained. *Nações*, spiritually and ethnically based, mutual aid communities facilitated much of the cultural continuity found in Brazil. Mukuna emphasized that though Brazilian music exemplifies cultural continuity, differences do emerge as the musical expression moves across the Atlantic. This point was emphasized with the explanation that African languages, at least in western and central African regions, are tonal. This means that the point of articulation or

accentuation can change the meaning of a word. Therefore modification of tonal patterns produced new, possibly disjointed or even offensive meaning. Mukuna suggested that Africans episodically resisted singing songs translated from Latin or Portuguese into their indigenous languages based on the inability of the translators to recognize the importance of tone. Mukuna suggested the pre-existing melodies muddled meaning in indigenous African languages, so resistance to learning European hymns was a common way to rebuff Portuguese colonization and Christianization attempts. However, for generations of African descendants removed from the continent, the importance of tonality, and meaning was one of first features lost as a result of the trans-Atlantic journey.

Mukuna identified rhythm as the feature, which survived most intact, musically speaking throughout the diaspora. Polyrhythmic drumming and instrumentation characterize African and African derived musical expression, which can be found even in countries where the visible African presence today is small to non-existent. Salsa, rumba, and samba among other forms of Latin American expression can be linked to an African presence across the continent.

After establishing the centrality of rhythm as a marker of African expression, Mukuna discussed specific instruments, which crossed the Atlantic. According to Mukuna, some instruments persisted and some fell out of favor. Mukuna asserted that European audience preference affected the fate of an instrument's staying power. The *mbira*, a gourd with various metal keys, which was relatively easy to make, fell out of favor due to slave masters disinterest, and a cultural de-contextualization. On the other hand, some instruments became linked with particular ritual or dance movements, and became widely used, even popular. For example, the *berimbau*, became popular due to its link with the Afro-Brazilian martial art invention, *capoeira*. Since slaves were not allowed to carry weapons, Mukuna argued *capoeira* developed as a means of defense in Brazil, which incorporated the *berimbau* later, as part of performance. Once the *berimbau* became linked to *capoeira* it began to take on symbols of dominant cultural groups. Therefore, the clearly Kongo cosmological symbols pictured on a *berimbau* featured in Mukuna's slide presentation exemplified the innovative ways individuals used new and old forms of representation and expression to generate new meaning in the Atlantic world. Transculturation, the idea developed by Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz, in the

context of African and Hispanic cultural transformation in his home island, Cuba, was emphasized by Mukuna to show how various African groups integrated ideas and material culture as a response to colonization and slavery.

Omofolabo Ajayi and Clarence Henry responded to Mukuna's presentation. Ajayi listed several Yoruba words to demonstrate visually and aurally the semantic difference tonality generates. She listed the following examples; oko-farm; òkò-pebble; lya-mother; and lyà-suffering. Ajayi also noted a particular movement represented in one painting shown and suggested the pose could be connected to a series of gestures and dance movements based on religiously inspired trance or secular movements. She also mentioned the process of feminization and modification of particular movements, due to gender ideas about masculine and feminine gestures in the emergent multi-cultural Brazilian context.

Clarence Henry discussed the meeting of music, movement, and myth in candomblé. Henry mentioned the continuing secrecy and protective measures taken by members of candomblé houses to provide a safe space for their African-based spiritual and cultural communities. Henry also emphasized, as did both previous speakers, that polyrhythmic patterns and interactive call-response patterns characterize African liturgical performance music. Each respondent used visual and auditory examples based on fieldwork or representations found in widely available cinematic or musical works. Most importantly though, this panel emphasized the necessity of specifying the particular African cultural group or groups, which serve as the progenitors of specific instruments, movements, drumming patterns, myth, and ideology, when and if possible.

Final Roundtable: Key Issues in Approaching and Understanding the Trans-Atlantic: Views from Africa and Latin America

The final session of the workshop featured comments ranging from five to ten minutes on issues related to framing, gathering, analyzing, and disseminating work exploring the transatlantic world. Professor Danny Anderson, KU chairperson of the

Department of Spanish and Portuguese moderated this session. The featured speakers included new and veteran faculty and several graduate students.

Liz MacGonagle, KU professor of African and African-American Studies, discussed contemporary Africa and the move of music and performance in both directions across the Atlantic. She suggested looking for connections in the context of post-national identity formation patterns and in nationalist liberation struggle.

Judith Williams, KU professor of African and African American Studies, emphasized the wider scope of African Diaspora thought, particularly the confrontation between modernity and racist ideology creating anxiety over the cultural role of African descendants in modern nation states. She also suggested investigating issues of identity formation due to the continuance of oppressive forces affecting African descendants. Williams considered *afoxê* groups and *blocos afros* as contemporary descendants of *nações* in late twentieth century and twenty-first century Brazil. Finally, underscoring the post-colonial critique of Deborah Castillo, Williams emphasized the language sensitivity and selectivity scholars must practice to formulate questions and frame answers when studying the transatlantic world.

Walter Clark, KU professor of Music and Dance, suggested non-essentializing approaches must be pursued. The context of widespread globalization processes and mass media proliferation also merited consideration according to Clark when examining patterns of cultural movement. Clark also raised the question of how one approaches moving beyond the cultural context of one's own personal, ethnic, and national identity in order to reduce judgmental engagement with cultural practices, ideologies, and individuals of differing traditions.

Jay Metz, KU graduate student in Latin American Studies, focused on the spread of Pan-Africanist thought in Brazil. He noted the tensions this has caused among Brazilians and Brazilianist scholars inside and outside of the country who evaluate these new articulations and critiques of racial politics in contemporary Brazil as being based on non-applicable North American models.

Kiran Jayaram, KU graduate student in Anthropology, challenged scholars to go beyond conventional framing devices in order to examine the neo-colonial economic and political practices, which unite these regions. Exploring themes, which examine the

effects of neo-liberal economic policy, US government involvement in political corruption, instability, and non-democratic regime support have the potential to be fruitful in revealing new ways to critically think about Africa and Latin America and their contemporary connections and histories.

Danny Anderson closed the workshop by discussing the futility of looking at cultural connections in terms of authenticity. Anderson declared that specifying cultural contexts on both sides of the Atlantic are essential steps to produce work that is unambiguous, meticulous, and credible. He thanked the participants who presented work, respondents, and the audience for attendance. He stated the workshop had been a success in terms of beginning to dialogue across disciplines to explore the wealth of connections Africa and Latin America assuredly hold.

Conclusions

The workshop sponsored by the Center for Latin American Studies and African Studies Resource Center focused on stated goals of better acquainting University of Kansas, “. . . faculty, students, and area teachers . . . with each other’s regional studies, disciplinary perspectives, and teaching methods on the transatlantic world . . .” Leaders in the field of Atlantic world history, post-colonial theory and practice, and ethnomusicology led informative sessions discussing the results of their investigative and analytical work. However, not only were the investigative results focusing on Africa and Latin America central to thematic exchanges, but the politics involved in conceptualizing study and the processes involved in project realization, were discussed. Tracing human, material culture, religious, and ritual migration grounded most of the work presented. Discussions of histories and connections centered around colonial Brazil. The modern links between these regions hinged on the uses and problems associated with applying post-colonial theory and on the successfulness of comparing the functions and content of artistic expression in popular culture on both sides of the Atlantic. The theme of hybridity centered the presentations and audience response. As such this workshop explicitly and implicitly suggested that the meetings, the crossings, and exchanges

between the peoples of Africa, the Americas, and Europe indeed gave birth to a new reality best described and approached as the transatlantic world.