“Black Atlantic”—a concise, easily citable label—gained sudden prominence with the publication of Paul Gilroy’s 1993 book, which was subtitled “Modernity and Double Consciousness” and thus fit well into the Cultural Studies surge of that decade. His innovative intellectual history, arguably written from the bottom up, was however limited by its male-centered view of predominantly English-language discourse. Of course, African-origin and European-origin people in the Atlantic used many languages and occupied sharply gendered versions of the Black Atlantic. Just before Gilroy’s book appeared, John K. Thornton’s far more comprehensive *Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1680* (1992; extended to cover 1400 to 1800 in a later edition) provided a meticulously detailed social history of the Black Atlantic. He emphasized unidirectional moves from Africa to the Americas while Gilroy analyzed the connections between abolitionist thought of Americans of African background and White Europeans. The Atlantic World was of course much larger and included African, American, Caribbean, and British as well as French, Dutch, and other peoples, largely through connections between continental Europe and the Caribbean islands.1 Since the 1970s, social, labor, and economic historians have explored the transatlantic cultures created by Africa-born slaves, the few free migrants, and manumitted men and women, and by the Creoles of African, “Indian,” and European background.2

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This ocean-wide and transcontinental research has worked to correct an imbalanced emphasis on slavery and race in British North America and in the U.S., where only about 0.4 million African men and women were landed. The field now also encompasses studies of the British, French, Dutch, and Danish Caribbean where 3.8 million were landed, Brazil with its 3.6 million arrivals, and the 1.6 million who reached other destinations in Spanish America.3

The Worlds the slaves built and those the slave owners framed were inextricably entwined. They emerged in new ecological environments through intercultural exchanges, albeit ones deeply marked by unequal relations of power. The result was societies and cultures that differed sharply from the original homes of slaves and slave-owners alike. In this sense, there was no New England, New France, New Spain, or New Africa in the Americas.4

To better understand these sites of unequal exchange, it is helpful to remember that the slave-owners were as much migrants or n-th generation creole ethnics as were the slaves. We also need to remind ourselves that, up until the 1820s, more Africans than Europeans arrived in the Americas, and that from European men and women more than one half to perhaps as many as two thirds came as indentured servants rather than as free persons. Migrations in the many-colored Atlantic World were interdependent, and Creole societies emerged from adaptations from cultural backgrounds as widely diverse as Scots and Moçambiques, or Christians, Animists, and Muslims. Such Worlds were never generically either African- or European-origin nor were they limited to the Americas but instead encompassed an Atlantic-wide and even global sub-tropical and tropical plantation belt. Migrants,

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