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Jossianna Arroyo
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Technologies:
Transculturations of race, gender & ethnicity in Arturo A. Schomburg's Masonic writings

Jossianna Arroyo

ABSTRACT

For Arturo A. Schomburg, Freemasonry was a space for civic interactions, which went hand in hand with two main complementary agendas: first, the archival agenda, Schomburg's main task of re-writing black history in the *Am□ricas*; and second, his fight for equal citizenship, against racial discrimination. Schomburg dedicated thirty years to his Masonic duties, which have been obscured by his labors as a historian and bibliophile. In this paper I analyze the transcultural shifts of race, gender, and ethnicity in Schomburg's Masonic writings, which I regard as *technologies* of representation of a migrant subjectivity in exile. Masonic writing also offers other opportunities to underscore Schomburg's modernist ethic, and shed light on many questions scholars have had about his historical persona, primarily, how he decided to abandon his commitment to Cuban and Puerto Rican independence after 1898 and commit himself to the civic, social, and political struggles of African Americans. [Key Words: Schomburg Arturo A., Freemasonry, technologies, transculturation, Afro-diaspora, migration]

Top: *Arturo A. Schomburg in masonic dress and hat, 1930s. Photographer unknown. Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Reprinted, by permission, from The New York Public Library.*

Left: *Arturo A. Schomburg□3rd row, far right□ and other Prince Hall masons posing on steps of Mother A.M.E. Zion church, Harlem, ca. 1920s. Photographer unknown. Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Reprinted, by permission, from The New York Public Library.*

TO MY FATHER, J.R.A.

It is not the desire of a brother to injure his less informed, why prate over this inferiority?
—Arturo A. Schomburg, "Masonic Truths"

¡Mi deber es partir! ¡Partir.....!¿A dónde? ¿Para qué? ¿Por qué razón?
—Eugenio Ma. de Hostos, *La peregrinación de Bayoán*

Technologies

In his autobiographical novel *La peregrinaci□n de Bayo□n* (1863), Eugenio Ma. de Hostos, depicts his revolutionary project for Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico. In this novel, the family and love triangle between Bayoán (from Puerto Rico), Marién (from Cuba) and Guarionex (from the Dominican Republic) organizes Bayoán's exiled subjectivity, which is addressed through the notion of pilgrimage. After the death of Marién—his beloved Cuba—Bayoán, an islander, never returns to Puerto Rico, dying adrift (*a la deriva*) on a boat in the Atlantic Ocean. History and revolution mingle in the telling of Bayoán's story, which represents Caribbean migratory experiences at the turn of the nineteenth century. In the novel, Hostos criticizes Spain's imperial projects in the Caribbean. Also, migratory subjects and politics appear, as key axes representing what Walter Mignolo has recently called "the colonial difference." For Mignolo, Latin American colonial histories since the conquest have organized this global "difference" in continuous exchanges among subjects and capital, creating new forms of knowledge.

As shown in Hostos' novel, the knowledge of the colonized subject creates a new language, in which the book becomes transformed through itinerant displacements. An opening quote in Hostos' prologue in the first edition of *Bayo□n* (1863), published in Spain, articulates this new type of knowledge: "the non-transient should not read" ("los que no peregrinan que no lean") (12). This phrase reveals a shift in *letrado* spaces, and demonstrates their connection to social and political transformations, in what I call the technologies of the word in the turn of the century.

In Latin American literatures and cultures, the metaphor of the "book that talks" illustrates, as Antonio Cornejo Polar has argued, histories of violence, conflict, and inequality in colonial contexts. The "talking book" is a metaphor fusing orality and writing and is consequently part of a technology enabling authors such as Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca, Guamán Poma de Ayala, or Juan Francisco Manzano to make sense of their world. For these diasporic Africans and other mestizo and black writers in the Andes and the Caribbean these strategies were technologies of representation. Many of what critics describe today as "national literatures" in the *Am□ricas* originated from unequal shifts in power, as well as from forms of knowledge that were not egalitarian, as they were mediated by the imposed notion of the word and the book, which became tools of domination of indigenous cultures.[1]

For Henry L. Gates in *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, these narratives, gestures, and subaltern knowledges have been subverting views of the enlightened subject since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some of these narratives, for example, the incredible voyages of Oladuah Equiano, the slave narrative of Frederick Douglass, or the life of John Marrant with the Indians, are stories in which the "book that talks" is intersected with the "traveling book," or to use Hostos' words, "the transient book" (*el libro peregrino*). The particular relationship between the "book that talks" and the changing, subaltern character of the "transient" word serves as the foundation for this article, permitting the analysis of the Caribbean migrations of Schomburg, his different encounters with the book, and his migratory shifts of identity in the United States. I will analyze his Masonic writings and locate his transcultural depictions of race, gender, and ethnicity, which define his views as a writer. I locate my analysis in an Afro-Atlantic-Caribbean map, in which Masonic lodges provide places for interaction and circulation of subjects and knowledges.

My analysis links Schomburg's civic connections with Caribbean *clubes* at the turn of the century, and later with the Masonic lodge, shedding light on the complexity of his racial politics, as well as his relationship with the Caribbean. Schomburg confronted and negotiated the contradictions of being black and Puerto Rican in Puerto Rico and in the United States while creating, in Foucault's phrase, a "technology of the self" through his writings. As Lisa Sánchez-González has pointed out, a modern ethic translates these dilemmas in Schomburg's Afro-diasporic historical projects, and in similar fashion, the lives and dilemmas of the first generation of Boricua migrants to the United States. The condition that she describes as "paperlessness" is not just a denial of citizenship and passport papers but also a denial of a "legitimate existential pedigree in our colonial metropole's socio-symbolic order." As citizens of a country relatively recently occupied by the United States in 1898, Puerto Ricans such as Schomburg confronted political displacements with evidence based on history, archives, and documentation in "an ironic legitimization of illegitimacy" (69). Sánchez-González's call for new paradigms and research methods describing this social and literary condition makes Schomburg's own collection of books and archives a site for understanding the subjective colonial order.

For Schomburg Freemasonry was a space for civic interactions. He dedicated thirty years to his Masonic duties, which have been obscured mostly by his monumental labor as a historian and bibliophile. Nevertheless, many of these efforts were not separate from his commitment to revolutionary clubs and, later, to the African-American Prince Hall lodge. From his letters, we know that many books and manuscripts acquired for his collection were purchased when he was Secretary of the lodge, particularly the materials for his Haitian-Dominican collection.

Masonic writing also offers other opportunities to underscore Schomburg's modern ethic. As Enrique Dussel and Michel Foucault have defined it, this ethic may be seen as a way of negotiating technologies, or "arti-facts" of power, which build ethics for social freedom. Also it would shed light on one of the main questions scholars have had about Schomburg: Why did he decide to abandon his commitment to Cuban and Puerto Rican independence after 1898 and commit himself to the civic, social, and political struggles of African Americans? Winston James has analyzed this shift in identity politics mostly as Schomburg's withdrawal from Puerto Rican affairs, that is, from Puerto Rican identity politics, for a definite identification with the black movement in the 1920s and '30s. This shift has been referred to by James as

"the change from Arturo to Arthur." For James, Schomburg is a "political aberration," in contrast to other black Puerto Rican intellectuals, such as Jesús Colón.

James has argued that many of the political shifts and identifications in Schomburg's persona are related in part to his relationship with the West Indies. Schomburg's mother, a native of St. Croix, was living in Puerto Rico when he was born. But biographers are still not sure whether Schomburg spent all his chilhood in San Juan, or whether he traveled back and forth between San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the house of a maternal uncle who lived in St. Croix. What is true is that he was part of an ethnic and cultural crossing, a reality for many people from the Caribbean.

For Schomburg, who never wrote his life story, self-fashioning and representation, through his own book collection and through some of his writings, were central strategies. Some of these representations were for him, as for many other migrants, negotiated social identities created in exile. Change as a constant migration therefore becomes an ethic of the self. As Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof has argued in a recent article on Schomburg, biographical analysis brings forward many of these continuous changes and "migrations" as necessary tools for historical and cultural research. For Hoffnung, many of Schomburg's identity negotiations have large implications; being "black from the West Indies in Puerto Rico, a Puerto Rican in the Cuban independence movement, a foreign Negro in Harlem and Brooklyn, has laid the foundation for the ideas of the African diaspora that we have inherited" (33). What is, then, the convergence of these "migratory" languages and identities in Schomburg's writings? And how do they build on a dialectic of the self to create forms of agency?

A closer look at Schomburg's forms of self- fashioning—as a book discoverer, as a traveler and as a writer—articulates forms of transcultural difference in which race, gender, and ethnicity converge with notions of the self. Guarionex, the pen name Schomburg used as a member of Dos Antillas and the pen name for his brief comments in *Patria*, was a name he borrowed from the Indian chief from Santo Domingo, who was convicted by the Spanish colonial authorities for his participation in uprisings and died in 1502 on a ship when he was taken as a prisoner to Spain. Significantly, this name also appears as a fictional character in Hostos' novel *La peregrinaci□n de Bayo□n* (1863). In this novel, Guarionex is an intellectual who represents the island of Santo Domingo (particularly the Spanish part of the island, the Dominican Republic) and goes along with Bayoán in his political pilgrimage throughout the Caribbean. The fact that Hostos himself, a sociologist, Mason, and exile, would fictionalize Guarionex is not a coincidence. His political project, the creation of a Confederación Antillana, was the main political concern for Puerto Rican and Cuban radicals at the turn of the century. I am not sure whether Schomburg had the opportunity to read Hostos' libro peregrino (transient book) during his years involved with Club Dos Antillas in New York.[2] But it is well known that Schomburg was connected to this project through the figure of Ramón E. Betances, the Puerto Rican mulatto leader who was a brother Mason, and who also mobilized and directed the actions of the Revolutionary clubes in New York from his exile in Paris (Estrade, Ojeda). Also, Schomburg became a Secretary of many revolutionary clubes which gathered together many Cuban and Puerto Rican radicals, such as José Martí, Rafael Serra and Sotero Figueroa.

In this sense, the Indian rebel and the black are ethnic constructions that are not separated from each other; rather, they overlap in Schomburg's imagination, creating a complex view of his definitions of *antillan□a*, Caribbean *mestizaje*, and Puertoricaness. In his later years as an activist wholly involved with the African-American community

and Prince Hall Masons, Schomburg maintained the transcultural imaginary forged in his past alliance with revolutionary clubes. The Masonic lodge provided Schomburg a site to articulate a black civic manhood in the United States, and it also gave him, at the same time, the necessary discursive technologies that made possible the representation of these transcultural identities. From the clubes and the Masonic lodge, tropes such as the artisan-bricoleur, the self-made man, and the translator are present. While these tropes create a technology of the word in which identity and language construct a discourse of difference, it is in this discursive realm that the binary "Arturo-Arthur" brings forward a subjective dilemma: how to be black and Puerto Rican in the United States. Hence, from this "transcultural difference," Schomburg's views of the talking book articulate other identities, as a black man, a Mason, as a Caribbean Afro-Hispanic man, with a final identity, one that encompassed all others: Guarionex "the writer."

Arturo Schomburg: The Freemason

The Negro mason is really beginning to understand that Masonry means progress, and that progress should not be made without agitation.

John E. Bruce, "The Significance of Brotherhood", Address to Prince Hall Lodge, #38 (1).

A black man crosses the Atlantic in a boat from the island of Puerto Rico, a colony of the decadent Spanish empire. He is seventeen years old. The year is 1891. He do not return to his native island Puerto Rico; in fact, as many of his friends recall, Schomburg rarely makes any reference to his early years growing up in the island, or to his visits to St. Croix with his maternal uncle. Although he continues to speak Spanish, and to be in contact with Spanish Caribbean migrants, he interacts mainly with the community of migrants of the West Indies and with African Americans. After a few years, he will be more involved with African Americans and migrants from the West Indies. During those years, Schomburg became part of a vibrant community that since the 1860s had been reshaping the social, cultural, and racial configuration of the United States mainland. In the streets of San Juan Hill, Harlem, and Brooklyn, these different subjects were interacting as "overlapping diasporas," to use Earl Lewis' term. We can imagine that the difficulties in adjusting to a different language and social customs were softened by Schomburg's constant interaction with the members of these communities. If, as Fernando Ortiz has argued, the power shifts, displacements, and ruptures in cultural contact are part of the complex process of transculturation, migrants such as Schomburg were translators of their reality. In this sense, cultures are not passive in the sense that they are subjugated entirely to hegemonic discourses but are instead, spaces of negotiation, in which the subject develop skills and strategies with which to adjust to political, social, and economical changes (Gramsci).

Clubes or associations of a different sort became the places where a part of these adjustments took place. The club as a phenomenon during the fin-de-siècle became for American women and minorities an axis for socio-political interaction, particularly for the middle class. Clubes were also, for Afro-Caribbean migrants,

sites of political activity and radicalism in their own countries.[3] In this sense, they were not only social gatherings, but also places in which a praxis of politics was developed. In Latin America as in the United States, the clubes became centers for secular mores and were symbols of intellectual and social status. In Puerto Rico and Cuba, Masonic lodges were meeting sites for *criollo* and artisan elites, and after the 1820s became centers of closed meetings and revolutionary conspiracies. In 1868 the Revolutions of Yara (Cuba) and Lares (Puerto Rico) had a strong Masonic leadership and an abolitionist agenda (Ayala, Ferrer Benimelli). These middle class and poor artisans were mostly white *criollos*, blacks, and mulattos. These local chapters were separated from Peninsular lodges affiliated to the Great Lodge of Spain (Ayala).

In the United States Schomburg would become affiliated immediately with two societies at the turn of the century, the Club Revolucionario Dos Antillas (1892–1896) and El Sol de Cuba (1892, founded in 1881), a Prince Hall Masonic lodge formed by immigrants from the Spanish Caribbean. In Harry Williamson's words,

> from the humble beginning of a Master Mason in his Lodge, in later years Brother Schomburg developed into one of the outstanding members of the Craft of this generation and because of a wide sphere of activity in the Fraternity his name will go upon the records of the Negro group along with those of the distinguished brethren of a previous generation whose names are revered in many grand jurisdictions throughout the United States.(1)

Later Williamson states that Schomburg became a member of lodge El Sol de Cuba in the year 1892. Schomburg's activities in El Sol de Cuba, a Prince Hall lodge erected in 1881, whose membership consisted mostly of Spanish Caribbean migrants or Spanish-speaking migrants of the West Indies, coincided with his membership in the revolutionary Club Dos Antillas, of which he was Secretary from 1892 to 1896.[4] About El Sol de Cuba meetings a Prince Hall document states:

> During the years 1891–1895 when the Spanish speaking colonials of Cuba and Puerto Rico were actively engaged in furthering their campaign for independence, the soil of the American States have already dedicated to liberty. El Sol de Cuba no. 38 was comprised of Cubans who exercised the esoteric principles of Masonry and many brothers who lived far away from home, would find the Spanish speaking lodge a haven for rest and comfort. At one time there were visiting brothers to El Sol de Cuba from almost every republic of South America and the exchange of fraternal greetings were cordial and pleasurable. The lodge was unique in that all business and ritual was conducted entirely in Spanish.

Dos Antillas also worked for the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico. At the same time, Cuban and Puerto Rican members were joined together by the charismatic leadership of Rafael Serra, a black cigar maker turned journalist, and the conciliatory and powerful speeches of José Martí. In these clubs and Masonic lodges, views of the artisan as a self-made man, and as a brother who is part of the Craft (as Freemasonry is called), shaped Schomburg's notions of masculinity, citizenship, morals, and politics (Wallace). A Mason himself, Martí created with Serra a school for artisans composed

of cigar makers and tailors, called La Liga.[5] At the same time, Dos Antillas published a journal, *Patria*, with articles written mostly by Martí, Serra, and Schomburg (alias Guarionex). Here they imagined an integrated national project in which blacks and whites would serve in the politics of their future nation with civic pride. Education and racial integration, the main tasks of this nation, were intended to be imagined outside of the colonial borders of Cuba and Puerto Rico but within the everyday interactions of the migrant community. From Harry Williamson's pen, we also know that Schomburg was a member of Dos Antillas and at that specific historical juncture, he translated El Sol de Cuba's initial Constitutions and lodge rosters from Spanish into English.

It is during this time of political activism—during his revolutionary struggle for Cuban and Puerto Rican independence and his Masonic duties in the Prince Hall lodge—that Schomburg created two intermingled civic identities, one as Guarionex the writer, and the other as brother of the lodge. If, as Arcadio Díaz Quiñones and Walter Mignolo have argued, the 1898 Cuban-Spanish-American War inaugurated another imperial frontier in which the United States reorganized the global-economic, political map, it is clear that the revolutionary and pro-independence clubs and the Masonic interventions in politics were also shaped by these changes. The revolutionary clubs disintegrated after 1898, and afterward Schomburg dedicated his efforts entirely to Prince Hall Masonry and other duties until 1932. What was Schomburg's compromise with Prince Hall Masonry? To what extent did the lodge shape his views of black struggle in the United States?

Oratory and rituals of Prince Hall Masonry were for Schomburg, as they were for his other black mason brothers, a school of discipline of citizenship and morals. For Prince Hall masons in the *fin-de-siècle*, racial equality and citizenship were main concerns. Prince Hall, a freeborn child of slaves from Barbados, organized the first Lodge No. 459 (Most Worshipful Lodge), with a group of black soldiers, in Massachusets in 1787.[6] This lodge was erected with a warrant conceded by the Grand Lodge of England. Years later other lodges were established in Philadelphia and Providence, Rhode Island, and in 1808, they joined together in Boston under the name African Lodge #459.[7] Although the Masonic law of global brotherhood is the key component in the Masonic ritual, Prince Hall lodges have been segregated from white lodges in the United States since the lodge's inception. Though they share similar laws and rituals, which are secret and sacred, related for the most part with morality, citizenship, and virtue, Prince Hall lodge affiliations have been different from white lodges.

For these black soldiers, who later became the first black Masons, and for Schomburg at the turn of the century, the Masonic lodge became a place for defining discourses of citizenship through a "revolutionary" moral practice of the word. The Masonic lodge defines itself as a "workshop," in which brothers as artisans (and future architects) work on their own process of initiation, through the help of other brothers. The brothers are seen allegorically, as cornerstones meant to be polished to perfection by ritualized practices. In this sense, and as Michael Wallace has pointed out, the brother as a polished stone is at the same time a "builder" who regards masculinity and self-reliance as ideals of citizenship. The ideal is a perfected stone that will be part of the universe, which is visualized as the Temple of Solomon. Symbolic words and signs are part of the ritual that mixes esoteric knowledges, readings of the Bible, and symbols from architecture, such as the square, the compass, and the rule, among others.

As Schomburg will make clear in his work as a secretary of the lodge, Masonic debates act as a practice of writing the word. Ritual initiations are a symbolic manifestation of politics. To be an initiate would be to know the mysteries of this language of freedom, in the "praxis" of the *taller* or workshop. In Spanish the word taller is related directly with the artisan class. It is the place in which the artisan makes his work of art from different materials, mastering his task with his own hands. In Masonic and esoteric language, it is connected with the laboratories of alchemy, in which science, art, and philosophy converge as forms of knowledge. Freemasons based their workshops in the mastery of their architectural/engineering arts, but also in the sharing of materials, and in the mastery of their work.

During his life, Schomburg would intertwine his definition of the Masonic workshop with his own story as a self-made man, which included his interaction with other Masons who were also free-born slaves who became leaders and mentors of other African Americans (such as John Bruce), and his work as a bibliographer and historian of the African diaspora. While the workshop locates the space in which the worker or artisan perfects his own skills as a subject and in politics, it is also a place where specialized kinds of knowledge come together in an atmosphere of shared education. In his article about the Puerto Rican mulatto painter José Campeche, Schomburg conflates the workshop with the natural instinct of art:

> His instinctive ability in design, his well-executed chalk and charcoal drawings on the city pavements on his home, were notable for their life-like fidelity. Clearly drawn in detail, animated with a vivid resemblance, each character depicted was easily recognized by the actual passerby. Education on the island was almost sterile. A doctor taught him anatomy privately as an aid to better study of the nude from life. (2)

In this quote, Campeche's drawings are described as intuitive designs for his future paintings. The reader is made aware of the fact that they were drawn in "city pavements on his home," in the urban streets of his poor mulatto neighborhood in San Juan. Here, Schomburg addresses issues of race, class, and self-education for the future artist. For Schomburg, as for other writers, art, rhetoric, and good speech were traits related to the humanity and the soul of the black race. If "education on the island was almost sterile," as Schomburg states, the benevolent education of a doctor (as a mentor and master) will continue Campeche's "formal education." Hence, disciple and master create a form of brotherhood and apprenticeship that reformulates the educational ways of the taller.

If the taller or workshop is a way of creating habits—of citizenship, morals and creativity—*patria* or fatherland becomes the center of this creation. It is possible to integrate morality and politics if every man works in the atmosphere of the taller. Solitude, the mastery of individual creation, and brotherhood, which comes from the interaction with others, are ways of creating patria. There is a process of recognition in these technologies in which the Hegelian master-slave (lordship-bondage) dichotomy is integrated and displaced at the same time. In the taller of present and future, every man is the master of his own work, and at the same time, workers depend on their "raw materials," and sometimes on the protection of a master (in the case of Schomburg, the masters are W.E.B. Du Bois, John Bruce, and Harry Williamson) to help them refute their slave condi-tion. The slave is the subject perfected through his/her work, with a kind of "embodied consciousness," in which the body and the spirit act together in the mastery of art and politics (Russon).

For Prince Hall Masons, as for Masons around the world, the Masonic temple is also the allegory of another temple, the Temple of Solomon, and the legend of its architect Hiram Abiv (or Abif). Though it is based in the Biblical story, this particular legend is an elaboration of Gnostic medieval and Enlightenment texts. Hiram, the architect of the temple, is the body desired and emulated by his disciples for his perfection and philosophical knowledge. He is killed by three of his disciples in an act of love, desire, and revenge. They mourn their loss by learning how to polish themselves to perfection. This incident makes the temple incomplete and creates an allegoric search for Hiram and a narrative of revenge from the other disciples. For black Masons in the US as well as in the Caribbean, this language comes together with political issues of legitimacy, representation, and brotherhood (Ayala, Williamson).

If the white Masons did not recognize black men as honorable men, or even as men, and if the US constitution was proposing segregation rather than equality, how could the imaginary of the brotherhood be shaped (Wallace)? For Prince Hall Freemasons, and particularly for the historians such as Harry A. Williamson, solving this dilemma took most of their lives. Language and an understanding of the word as technology was the way to address these questions. In his Masonic and historical writings, Schomburg would share this confidence in the power of the discursive word, not only as a formal strategy, but also as an understanding of the self in politics.

The press, as a modern and mechanized technology of circulation, finds in the publication of the pamphlet or booklet in the Masonic debate an ideal space for these languages. Thus, the printing machine becomes a workshop for the word, creating a base by which Latin American modernity, as Francine Masiello and Julio Ramos have argued, inscribes its own contradictions. For African Americans in the US, the pamphlet became a way of articulating a public discourse. In fact, the pamphlet mediated between the print word and orality: "the value of the pamphlet lay in the very possibility inherent in it, the luxury of experiment it permitted, and the access it promised to a variety of audiences" (Newman, Rael, Lapzansky 7).[8] In one famous pamphlet from 1797, entitled "A Charge," Prince Hall, the Worshipful Master of the First African Lodge, declares:

> My brethren, let us not be cast down under these and many other abuses we at present labour under.... Although you are deprived of the means of meditation; by which I mean thinking, hearing and weighing matters, men, and things in your own mind, and making that judgment as you think reasonable to satisfy your minds and give an answer to those who may ask you a question. This nature hath furnished you with, without letter learning, and some have made great progress therein, some of those I have heard repeat psalms and hymns, and a great part of a sermon only by hearing it read or preached and why not in other things in nature.... (48)

Here Hall reminds his fellow disciples of other types of knowledge, which are given by the lodge and which brother Masons can receive by the power of the word "without letter learning." Brothers reunited in the temple follow the master and become masters themselves as part of a critical pedagogy in brotherhood. In this sense, Prince Hall masons gave Schomburg a forum to exercise, understand, and negotiate the inherent tension between orality (speech) and writing (the letter).

Because of these tensions, education for many African Americans as well as for some of these Black Masons remained a power struggle. Three main themes are depicted in this negotiation: (1) rewriting of history, (2) education, and (3) citizenship for blacks and black cultures. All of these themes are intertwined in Schomburg's writings, and the Masonic lodge was an active forum for the discussion of all of them. Many of these concerns have been understood by Schomburg's critics and biographers as possessing a unique "Pan Africanist" perspective (James). What, then, is the connection of these writings between history and politics? And how are Masonic views of brotherhood and revolution are embedded in them?

Schomburg traces the global history of black struggle in two main theaters, in Europe and the Old World, and in the post-revolutionary Américas, specifically the United States and Haiti after the Haitian revolution. Schomburg's Janus-faced enterprise was intended to restore the pieces of past memories to shape political agendas in a violent present. The Haitian revolution gave Schomburg, as it did for blacks all over America, a sense of pride in which brotherhood was intermingled with revolutionary struggle. This was made clear when one of the first black lodges was named Boyer #1, after Charles Boyer the Haitian military leader.[9] In his three years as secretary of the Prince Hall lodge, Schomburg was the contact brother of Prince Hall lodges in New York; he corresponded with lodges in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Africa (Liberia). He used his Masonic contacts to buy more books for his collection and to get acquainted with hidden facts about Haiti's revolutionary past. Revolutionary struggles, specifically the shared struggles of African Americans, Haitians, and other Caribbean blacks in the United States, were a point of departure for his rewriting of history:

> The Haitians have rendered to the cause of Independence invaluable and meritorious services. The historians Madiou and St. Mery have chronicled in pages of their books the undisputable facts that over 800 Haitians, free men of color fought for the cause of North American Independence. In South America, Simón Bolívar hailed president Pétion with words of the highest praise for the great service he so generously rendered for the cause of South American Independence. (202)

Most of the revolutionary connections made through Masonic lodges at the turn of the century were oral accounts retrieved in lodge meetings, and for Price Hall Masons, they were a way of recovering a glorious past—a past in which connections were not built on a return to Africa, but rather in an in-between locus, from a (North and South) "American," Afro-Atlantic perspective. But with this intervention, Schomburg not only wanted to make a call for the black Caribbean presence in revolutionary struggles in North-South America, he also wished to describe the imperial politics of the United States in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, a critique he would pursue in his essay entitled "Is Haity [sic] Decadent?" (1904). In this essay, Schomburg proposed a practice of politics for Haitians based on Booker T. Washington's model for self-reliance, "uplift," and "raising up" from slavery. Regarding Schomburg's proposals, it can be argued that racial ideologies travel from the US to the Caribbean, and vice versa, through migrant subjects, intellectuals, print materials, and Prince Hall lodges. From this point of view, racial ideologies are also discourses that are remade and changed continuously.[10]

For Schomburg, racial discourses were organized through many dialogical formations, which came from Spain and from the criollo (creole) discourses of miscegenation created in nineteenth-century Latin America. In other words, while national projects in Latin America wrote racial diversity as an integrative but not participatory (citizen-oriented) model, Schomburg confronted race and racism from a point of view different than the one he encountered in the United States. It is my belief that his fight for racial equality in the United States, and the way he understood racism as well, was always mediated by this fusion. First, I will address what I call a "transcultural mulatto subjectivity." For a mulatto such as Schomburg class and upward mobility appeared as options in the hierarchical racial models of Spanish Caribbean societies. Nevertheless, the idea that money "whitens" in the Spanish Caribbean creates a more complex picture here.

In the Spanish Caribbean, racism is embedded with hierarchically complex models of color and class, which also work as a binary structure (black and white) based on skin color (Dinzey). In other words, black men and women's racial discrimination or acceptance in society is influenced by how dark their skin is. As Torres and Dinzey have shown, the Puerto Rican racial democracy model, or "prejudice of having no prejudice" (to use Betances' phrase), constructs blackness as a signifier that plays both inside and outside the national borders of cultural-political imaginaries. For example, Schomburg's racial identity as a man from the Virgin Islands (because of his mother's connection to St. Croix) could be racially marked as that of someone who is an islander (from the Virgin Islands), that is, a black man who is outside Puerto Rican imaginaries of nationhood.

This ideological crossing of racial discourses refers directly, as James has argued, to Schomburg's involvement in the US black movement or what he describes as his change from "Arturo" to "Arthur." Schomburg confronted subjective and political dilemmas similar to the ones faced by Latino subjects in the United States, particularly in the ways that black migrants from the Spanish Caribbean identify themselves with cultural and political agendas of African Americans (Flores). Schomburg's encounter with United States racial paradigms creates a new form of consciousness or "transcultural difference" that is not separated from but rather interacts and intermingles with his notions of race and nation building. To analyze the complexity of these facts, it is necessary to understand why some of his historical contributions were embraced, while others were a case for debate or not understood at all in African-American black intellectual circles. Schomburg's double consciousness as a black man from the Spanish Caribbean therefore differs from W.E.B. Du Bois or John Bruce or Harry Williamson and brother Masons, despite the fact that they share the realities of being black men in the United States. So if some of Schomburg's travel accounts of his visits to Spain in search of black brotherhoods, or his interactions with Cuban black writers and painters and Puerto Rican mulatto artists, seem far away from the political struggles of citizenship of African Americans in the United States, my notion is that they offered a transcultural knowledge, a third space, and "a transmodern way of understanding the colonial difference" (Dussel, Mignolo).

But at the same time, Schomburg understood the importance of arguments for citizenship and internationalism, in his defense of colonized black races and cultures around the world. His articles in defense of the Prince Hall Masonry and his biographical account entitled "Two Negro Missionaries to the American

Indians" are an example of these notions. In the Masonic articles, a quest for Prince Hall legitimacy is interwoven with the universal "claim of the citizen of the lodge" and the unique presence of the narrator, whose voice translates at the same time all these discourses.

"Masonic Truths: A Letter and a Document" (also published as "Freemasonry vs. an Inferior Race") is Schomburg's most famous defense of the role of Prince Hall Masonry in the US. It is the answer to an article by Professor Arnold P. Whiting, published in the Masonic journal *National Trestle Board*. The language of the article, organized around "oratio," uses the rhetorical strategies of a Masonic address or discourse. Blacks as subjects of history appear as a central theme, while notions of brotherhood are articulated from the Masonic lodge to national politics:

> We believe men, no matter of what race, can respect each other without the hobby of raising the dust of social equality. What we demand and are entitled to is plain justice, nothing but equality before the law. Where is the white brother or the honest man who will deny to any citizen a right to work, eat and live with his ability in the republic of opportunities, without going out of his way to slur him because he wears the livery of the burnished sun? (2)

Claims of citizenship and equality before the law are therefore connected to the practice of politics; additionally, the lodge should become the ideal space of integration under the protection of "the Great Architect of the Universe" (3). This impossibility creates a double critique in which the lodge becomes society and society becomes the lodge: "It is no longer the true and plain Masonry handed down to us, but as provided by a variety of the American people, who have injected all their prejudices and their 'beautiful abstractions' by which evasion can be kept up" (4). When white Masons and Professor Whiting are represented as "whitening" discursive agents vis-à-vis black Masons, natural law becomes a way of creating consciousness: "What of it the darker races are creating consciousness isn't the world large enough for people of all bloods to dwell therein?" (3). This type of consciousness places both races together in a civic realm.

In his article, "Prince Hall Masons of the State of New York," Schomburg associates this notion with the uplift of the race: "How to work without discord and yet cement the Fraternity in one bond of usefulness and uplift, praying for the spirit of toleration so well handed by the great Locke in his essays" (1). As explained in the former article, wars brought participation and citizenship to free black men. Notions of freedom are, therefore, intrinsic to what "fatherland" means as a phallic identification with "sacrifice" for the land, because, as Schomburg states, "truth, perseverance and patriotism" are articulated "when men forget all distinction of color and stand together in defense of the fatherland as human beings with a right to live as well as to die" (1). War, as Schomburg states, makes citizens of black men because of their share in the fighting: "In the Spanish American War we find the negro at San Juan Hill leading Roosevelt to victory, in Europe, aiding the white race to save itself to the ferocity of the barbarians." But this citizenship is nevertheless second class. Also, it extends itself to global imperial conflicts in Europe and the Americas, particularly the Cuban-Spanish American War of 1898. After making a statement about the global character of the "colonial difference," Schomburg closes his argument with a curious statement:

> Yet he [Professor Whiting] does not give the tell-tale facts that the souls of white men did not revolt when they were raising millions of mixed breeds in the country; when they were bleaching or whitening up the masses of blacks, making possible such a large number of individuals whose racial nomenclature is uninterminable by any rule; they do not belong to the black, and have by all rights a better position with those in whose veins courses the best blood of the southland. (4)

In this quote Schomburg makes reference to the relativity of race as a marker and signifier, while he builds at the same time a type of third space to negate the US dichotomies of black versus white. It is not clear whether Schomburg wants to end his discussion, of how Masonic discourses on civil pride contribute to debates about citizenship and equality, with an emphasis on mestizaje. In this case, Caribbean views of mestizaje described the social realities of the American South. Here mestizaje works together with transculturation as a process of unequal exchange in social, political, and cultural realms in which, as Fernando Ortiz has pointed out, races but also cultures mix with each other to produce a third element. Another two-sided argument can be detached from this relationship. On the one hand, fusion of blacks and whites "culturally" will produce a process of whitening of the race, which would mean greater "civilization" and socialization. On the other hand, there is the use of the Masonic debate as a space for providing a third alternative, that is, a transcultural discourse in which race and culture intermingle in a power relationship. Schomburg created thus, a discourse in which a "third element" broke the United States' radical binary (black and white) in political and social realms. Although it is not argued clearly, the "Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex" (i.e., Black, Hispanic Caribbean, African American and Taíno identities) persona is articulated here as a form of transcultural difference.

From Schomburg's Afro-Caribbean perspective, these forms of transcultural difference are best articulated in the article entitled "Two Negro Missionaries to the American Indians, John Marrant and John Stewart." Here both knowledges and positionalities, the black and the Indian, will intersect. In this case, the Native Indian is not of Taíno ancestry, as in the Caribbean, but of US Native-American heritage. Schomburg traces a biographical sketch of the life of the two black missionaries and their experiences as educators of several Indian nations. In his life account of John Marrant, the narrator organizes the narrative of his life to finish his story with Marrant's initiation as a Mason under the first African lodge in Massachusetts in 1784. In fact, Schomburg will edit Marrant's famous address to the African lodge, "A Sermon Preached on the 24th Day of June 1789 Being the Festival of St John the Baptist by Reverend Brother John A. Marrant," for the *Masonic Quarterly Review*, and will purchase the first edition of John Marrant's story for his library.

To understand the transcultural knowledge proposed by Schomburg's depiction of Marrant's story I need to focus on Schomburg's Introduction to Marrant's "Sermon." Marrant as a self-made black man, a Methodist preacher, a migrant in London, and a Mason was in many ways an interesting character for Schomburg, first, because of his historical persona, and second, because of his account of his life with the Indians. In his introduction Schomburg writes:

Marrant was born in New York City, June 15th, 1755, and at the age of five, after his father's death, was taken by his mother to St. Augustine where he was sent to school "and taught to read and spell." He remembers having heard when a young man the great Whitefield preach in Charleston on the text, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." This brought about his conversion and he became a Christian, suffered the privations of life, became a missionary and an itinerant preacher, learnt the Indian tongue from an apprenticeship with an Indian hunter. He was the first man to carry the word of God and the teaching of Jesus Christ to the Cherokees, Creeks, Catawar and Housaw Indians.... (1)

Education and the master-apprentice relationship of the Masonic craft appear in this quote. Also, preaching the word of God becomes a way of education for African Americans. Christianity and Masonry are two discourses that do not contradict each other; rather, they complement each other to create a different type of knowledge of the "word" in which a liberatory strategy appears. Here, the word appears as a marker that indicates strategic views of freedom. Native Americans (Indians) are, nonetheless, the carriers of "another tongue" that the black Marrant has to learn for his transmission of the word of God. The apprentice becomes a master and, most of all, has a "divine quality" in his mastery of the main word, the word of God. It can be argued that this passage articulates relations of power in the subaltern colonial discourses, in which blacks as subalterns educate themselves in the language of the Other, that is, the "Indian," seen as a subjectivity marked outside the imaginary frontiers of discourse. Later, and after his cultural contact with the Indians, Schomburg states that "Marrant served in the Revolutionary war with the English... then preached the Gospel in Nova Scotia and was made a Mason in African Lodge 459 by Prince Hall.... Reverend John Marrant by his services to the conversion of the Indians noted, will in time come into his own" (1).

As the narrative follows, in an interesting shift Schomburg as a narrator fashions himself as "the other" carrier of the language, that is, as an Indian. In a rare passage in Schomburg's writing, a real encounter between him, Nathaniel Cassell, John Bruce, and Bishop Alexander Camphor is depicted:

It was on an August afternoon, in Brooklyn, New York; the southern zephyrs were blowing calm and refreshing breezes over the home of a modest bibliophile. In the library, there were present Bishop Alexander Camphor of the A. M. E. Church, President Nathaniel Cassell of Liberia College in Monrovia, Liberia, journalist John M. Bruce Grit and Guarionex, the writer. At first the conversation dealt with education in the Republic of Liberia... Bruce Grit cast his reflective mind exploring from another angle, such as the men who had sailed over the seas to help in the work of giving prestige to the black man.

Later, as the conversation turns to the subject of John Marrant and Stewart and their encounters with the Indians, Schomburg-Guarionex, the writer, states: "Many years ago while browsing in an old bookshop, I ran across a booklet containing a narrative of the life of John Marrant in New York.... The next copy that came into my hands

was the London edition, of 1785, in which John Marrant was put down as 'black.'... The book related that the contents were taken down, arranged, corrected and published by Reverend Alridge" (2).

Here the Guarionex-bibliophile-writer encounters Marrant's book. Again, from the fictionalization of a "real" encounter with the book, we see how Guarionex, the bibliophile, assimilates the word of Marrant. Recovering the alias he used as a member of the Cuban-Puerto Rican Club Dos Antillas, the writer Guarionex, or Guarionex the Indian chief, positions himself *ante el libro* (before the book).

In this form of self-fashioning, Schomburg-Guarionex the writer plays both roles; he is the Indian-Guarionex, the warrior who died at sea because of Spain's colonizer's power, and also the black man, as he discovers Marrant's book. In this sense, he becomes the master and the apprentice of "the tongue of the other" (the Indian) and articulates with Marrant a mastery of the word and a new kind of subjectivity: "by constant and patient study [he] became a preacher among his people [and] was welcome to the Indian tribes around the state of New York" (3). Although Schomburg used his alias Guarionex in two writings for *Patria* at the turn of the century, it is interesting that it is precisely his Indian "name," found in a Masonic text, which depicts his ethnic and language difference, as a Caribbean migrant and member of the lodge.

Schomburg is Guarionex the writer, but at the same time is also Marrant, the black brother Mason, who is also a Christian. In this language with crossed and shifted identities, he is Guarionex and Marrant, Caribbean, Puerto Rican, and black. If the Indian is a type of "dead," but mythical, identity for the Spanish Caribbean, it is interesting that it is precisely an Indian name that disguises, in an allegorical way, Schomburg's narrative. In Schomburg's case, to be Guarionex could be read as a displacement of his blackness for an indigenous race, as has been argued in a different context in Jorge Duany's article entitled "Making Indians out of Blacks." Though this construction might seem problematic because of his commitment to black politics and his self-identification as black, it can be argued that as a politics of identity, it embraced his way of understanding Caribbeanness, within cultural constructions of Puerto Ricanness. In this sense, I prefer to argue for a transcultural politics of identities, in which ethnicity as language of self-representation is problematized, and in which "Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex" coexist as transculturated notions of the self.

Your country? How came it yours?
W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

**Time is a river and books are boats.
Many volumes start down that stream only
to be wrecked and lost beyond recall in its sands.
Only a few, a very few endure the testing of time
and live to bless the ages following.**
"The Bible in Masonry"
R.: and Rev. Joseph Fort Newton.

In conclusion a close analysis of Schomburg's writings articulates a technology of the word written from languages of citizenship, radicalism, and internationalism for blacks in the United States. Transculturations of these languages would address in the space of the lodge an ethic for the self and a site for rewriting history from an ethic of difference. This ethic relies on the constant transpositions, or shifts, in Schomburg's subjectivity, particularly regarding his negotiated understanding on how to be black and Puerto Rican in the United States. The fictionalization of the self in his uses of Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex—conceived as a revolutionary alias when he was a member of the revolutionary clubes at the turn of the century—is the main strategic jump for this ethic. As I have shown in my analysis of Schomburg's Masonic writings, his view of a Caribbean-Antillean ideology was never displaced by his active involvement with the African-American community and political struggles. The lodge therefore became a space in which identities could be reconciled: the public space of a black man in the United States mixed with the ideological space of an Afro-Caribbean man strongly influenced by the discourses of colonial difference, globalism, and subjection at the turn of the century.

Schomburg's insistence on re-interpretation or rediscovering a "Negro history" was in many ways a global cultural and historical project because of the conflation of racial, cultural, and political discourses that he experienced. If race and cultural identity were the main paradigms for this contradictory formation (in which Schomburg is seen not only as a Puerto Rican but also as a West Indian-Virgin Islander), he is a figure who remained outside the imaginary constructions of the nation in both geographies. Nevertheless, discourses of miscegenation in his writings articulate a more problematic stance, which, as I mentioned before, tries to dissolve the dichotomy black versus white—not for a discourse of harmony or "racial democracy," but for a transcultural shift in power, politics, and self-representation in his "Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex" positionality.

The Masonic lodge gave Schomburg a public persona as a black man, a citizen of the lodge in search for validation and respect, for whom morals and discipline went hand in hand. But it also gave him the opportunity to address in the strategic forms of oratio, gramma, and rhetoric, which articulated an "ethic of freedom" in which the master-apprentice relationship in the self-made man model was explored. Also, it located a strategic confluence of discursive realms in which the encounter with "the talking book" becomes, at the same time, a metaphor for the "traveling-transient book."

In this sense, Schomburg, as a black man born in Puerto Rico (he is not an official citizen of the US until 1917), as Caribbean migrant and exile, as Secretary of the lodge, translator, and contact between Prince Hall lodges, Africa, and the Caribbean, builds his transcultural politics as negotiating realms for subjectivity. For Schomburg, that is, the black citizen and pilgrim, traveler, and bibliophile, this space exists in his notion of a self-made man, and in his struggles with English and Spanish, between orality and the written word, and between blackness and whiteness. Transculturation articulates relations of power, but also problematizes fusions and translations; in other words, it refers to the semiotic and strategic uses of language and culture. It is in this contradictory axis that I propose we read Arturo Schomburg's various "encounters" with "the book" as a technology of the word, but also as an ethic of the self.

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NOTES

1 Nevertheless, this fusion of indigenous and European techniques or forms of knowledge, was not an egalitarian exchange. This unequal relationship made of the "talking book" a space of confrontation, violence, and constant mediation. Capital global markets in colonial times put slavery of Indians and blacks as a historical mark of the Enlightenment , inscribing, at the same time, a colonial relationship between self and others (Mignolo). For the definition of the "talking book" in African American literatures and cultures; see Henry L. Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*. The same metaphor has been used in Latin American colonial and subaltern studies; see the works of Antonio Cornejo Polar and Walter Mignolo.

2 The first edition of Hostos' novel was published in Spain in 1863 and submitted to political censorship. Nevertheless many volumes were secretly hidden from the authorities when sent to Puerto Rico. It is possible that Schomburg had access to the second edition of *Bayón*, published in Valparaíso, Chile, in 1873.

3 See Winston James' essay *Raising Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America*.

4 As it is stated in a Prince Hall no. 38 document, "On June 26 1880 Lafayette Marcus, Andrew N, Portos, John Johnson, Manuel R. Coronado, Abraham Seino and Sixto Pozo of Mt. Olive no. 2 and Abony Brown of Celestial no. 3 (two Prince Hall lodges) presented a petition to the Grand Lodge of New York for a dispensation to set up a Spanish-speaking lodge to be named 'El Sol de Cuba.'" As Jesse Hoffnung has noted,

some of the petitioners with English surnames probably included migrants from the West Indies or Jamaica, who may have spoken Spanish because they had lived in Cuba, Puerto Rico, or Panamá.

5 Martí's involvement with Freemasonry is a source of debate in contemporary socialist Cuba. As Jorge Mañach has argued in his biography of Martí, he was initiated in 1872–73, during his exile in Spain, by the lodge Armonía affiliated to the Oriente Lusitano Unido a Portuguese lodge. Cuban Masons in Cuba and in exile have used historical references, particularly from his life in the United States, to make clear that Martí was a brother Mason grade 18th and that his visits and addresses to many lodges around Tampa, Key West, and New York proved this point. For Cuban historians such as Luis Toledo Sande, Martí was "re-appropriated" by Cuban Masons, for symbolic, esoteric, and political reasons even though there is no historical document that proves his initiation. For the relationship between Cuban Freemasonary and politics, see Eduardo Torres Cuevas' article, entitled ."La masonería cubana en las décadas finales del siglo XX: escenario y alternativas ante el nuevo milenio".

6 It was believed that Prince Hall, the father of black Freemasonry, was a freeborn child of slaves born in Barbados. His father Thomas Prince Hall was an Englishman, and his mother was from the French Antilles. For Michael Wallace this is part of a legend. I believe that even if it is not historically accurate, the story opens good venues for analysis and discussions on the construction of a diasporic black subjectivity in the United States.

7 To erect or to "constitute" a Grand Lodge there has to be at least seven members who ask for permission from a Great Lodge to do so. In colonial times these warrants came mostly from England; there were also lodges in Louisiana and Florida that were affiliated with the Great Lodge of France or Great Lodge of Spain. This fact was related mainly with the cultural background of migrant populations, and also was more common during colonial times, when Louisiana was part of the Spanish and French empires.

8 In Prince Hall rituals, these pamphlets were published and read in the lodge meetings, and also were part of the Masonic press and journals such as *The Caravan*, *The Craftsman*, *The Freemason*, *The Masonic Quarterly* and *The Eastern Star*, among others (Williamson, *History of Prince Hall Masonry*, II).

9 Besides Schomburg's many references to Haiti in articles such as "Is Haity decadent?", many scholars have covered the importance of Haitian Revolution as a key historical moment for Europe and the Americas. Many have focused on the Haitian Revolution as a pivotal event for the Americas that unfortunately, as Michel Ralph-Trouillot has pointed out, has been silenced by history. See his essay *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*, and Susan Buck-Morss article entitled "Hegel and Slavery."

10 For the intrinsic connection between racial ideologies and Freemasonry, see Schomburg's essays about Haiti, and the political investment of Prince Hall lodges with Freemasonry in West Africa and Liberia. As a Great Secretary Schomburg organized the reception for the visit of Cyril B. King, the Most Worshipful Great Master of the Lodge in Liberia, Africa, in the 1920s. For other references see Harry A. Williamson's "History of Prince Hall Masonry in the United States," folios 1–5, and Schomburg's papers. For the influence of US racial ideologies in the Caribbean and vice versa, see Gustavo E. Urrutia's article about Schomburg entitled "Teamwork" (*Diario de la Marina*, La Habana, nov. 9, 1932), in which he criticizes some of the political agendas of African Americans in the US while supporting the notion of teamwork as a way of social and civic collaboration between blacks and whites: "It is true that there is racism in Cuba and a global mediatization against blacks, therefore we need to practice 'teamwork' of our racism against whites and mediate to maintain our limits while we assert our power."

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