especially in the wake of Brooks's rebellion in 1867. Whereas in the past song

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It is no surprise that W.F.B. Poole—one of America's best-known orphans—uses refrains from spirituals as epigraphs in The Souls of Black Folk (1903) and Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil (1927) to make his enduring metaphors of the color line and double consciousness both plain and timeless. Taking Du Bois's prescient cue, that virtually every major African American thinker before and since him has seized, I posit in this essay a meditation on the righteous indictment and radical kindness that these earlies's survivals simultaneously enact, wherein a third source of insight on the ontological quandaries of blackness maybe explored.

For the past fifteen years, scholars such as F. Patrick Johnson and Sharon P. Holland have challenged us to minethis source, which inculcates aspects of black folks' love quotients that Pu Bois's metaphors could not name. It is the quare: multivalent and measured, capable of modulating from side to side, to perform as needed; it could not name it is the quare: multidisciplinary and black folk's more generalizable and diverse repertoire. To mine this source, we must acknowledge that Pu Bois's metaphor of the eugenic project has been extended to include the eugenic project of blackness may be explored.

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This essay's epigraph, "Song and Sentiment, Song and Symbol," stands as a testament to the erasure of African American thought on the color line and the erasure of the eulogistic in the color line, which, according to the dictionaries of African American thought, has left the eulogistic in the color line, which, according to the dictionaries of African American thought, has left the eulogistic in the place of the elegiac. Thus, these songs have become the foundation for what I call the kweer, the third voice that is heard in the song's erasure.

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The earliest missions of the slave songs, now canonized as the Negro spirituals, were sung in various forms. The songs were passed down from generation to generation, and their words and melodies have been handed down through many generations. The songs were often sung in a call-and-response format, with a lead singer and a chorus.

The spiritual practices of the slaves were deeply rooted in their African heritage and their Christian faith. They believed that the spirituals were a way to communicate with God and to express their faith in the face of oppression.

The spirituals were also a way to resist the system of slavery, and they were often used as a form of resistance. The songs were sung during acts of resistance, such as escape attempts, and they were a way for slaves to express their desire for freedom.

The spirituals were also a form of communication, and they were often used to pass information from one generation to the next. The songs were passed down through word of mouth, and they were often sung in a call-and-response format, with a lead singer and a chorus.

The spirituals were also a way to express the pain and suffering of the slaves, and they were often used to call attention to the injustices they faced. The songs were sung in a way that was both powerful and moving, and they were often used to inspire others to stand up for justice.

The spirituals were also a way to express the hope and faith of the slaves, and they were often used to encourage others to never give up. The songs were sung in a way that was both uplifting and empowering, and they were often used to remind others of the power of the human spirit.

The spirituals were also a way to express the love and connection of the slaves, and they were often used to celebrate the bond between family and friends. The songs were sung in a way that was both tender and joyful, and they were often used to remind others of the importance of community.

The spirituals were also a way to express the resilience and strength of the slaves, and they were often used to inspire others to never give up. The songs were sung in a way that was both powerful and moving, and they were often used to remind others of the power of the human spirit.

The spirituals were also a way to express the joy and celebration of the slaves, and they were often used to celebrate the beauty of the world. The songs were sung in a way that was both lively and joyful, and they were often used to remind others of the importance of finding joy in the simple things.

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The very meaning of being black shifts through black maternity and the queer. To be queer, as African American poetic has always been, is to defiantly multigeneric, multimodal, multicultural, spiritually syncretic, and harmonious in a host of minor keys. In every written word, foremothers' cries come forth to carry us home to ourselves, our bleeding hearts longing to be rocked free of fear of whites supremacist aggression, abuse, and theft. In this way, the simplicity of these spirituals' lyrics belie more complex messages. As easy to remember as any nursery rhyme, they remain ideal clarions, respectively, to expose chattel slavery's cruelty in destroying familial relationships ('Sometimes') and mobilizes slaves planning to flee to freedom in the North or Canada ('Hush, Hush'). With the anaphora of "Sometimes," singers (and auditors) aim to mitigate—if not outright reject—the pain of feeling (or, in fact, being) bereft of a mother, a condition that seems at times permanent and implacable. Those who inhabit spirituals in performance most affectively know that this feeling of loss is not a perpetually emotional and metaphysical state; it does, in fact, pass, maybe even as acutely and quickly as the last breaths of these mothers, who can be conjured at any moment with cantitory, choral song. Thus, these spirituals' anaphoras and epistrophes convey slaves' and their descendants' revisionist relationship with orphanhood and Calvinism, whose tenets, duplicitously used to justify their enslavement, ironically undergird their subjugation to unimaginable physical suffering and their newfound understanding of spiritual liberation.

This syncretism of African and European beliefs and practices also pulse through "Hush, Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name." The spiritual's refrain alone illuminates two points of protest. The first exploits the forceful command of silence that Africans no doubt heard not long after their whimpers, screams, and cries began to unnerve those who failed to understand that, unlike animals, they weren't chattel, not without voices to express their pain, anguish, and rage. To silence those who silenced slaves in the name of their God with the same command that stifles slaves' cries to pre-Christian gods and ancestors is the most daring thing a white person can do. It becomes all the more powerful once one considers the word's origins. Shortly after the Spanish's failed attempt to occupy South Carolina in 1526 with their African cargo, the British inculcated hush into English as "to impose silence upon" (OED), so it was likely common speech in the decades before Sir John Hawkins, a cousin of Sir Francis Drake, would bring the first Africans to the Caribbean on what is now known as the Good Ship Jesus, in 1552. Nodoubt, the British immigrants who in 1619 traded goods for the twenty African orphans on a Dutch ship, the White Lion, spewed it at these inhabitants of England's first successful colony who were refused a path to citizenship. They, in turn, read the text and extrapolated the words, thereby transplanting and internalizing this command to the Americas, where it was found in use in the works of William Shakespeare, John Milton, and Alexander Pope, in the monologues of characters invoking a higher power than those oppressing them. As they do in each Negro spiritual, they subvert biblical teachings of obedience to earthly masters and appeal directly to the deity, asking why they were treated as they were. The poem as published in the 1800s, with a few lines excised, reads:

August twas the twenty-fifth,

Seventeen hundred forty-six;
The Indians did in ambush lay,

Some very valiant men to take,

Then names of whom I'll not name out.

Samuel Allen like a hero stood,

And show on mercy, save one white boy.

All is fair in war: when "Rawp Creation"
And though he was so brave and bold,
His face no more shalt we behold.
Ezer Haws was killed outright,
Before he had time to fight,—
Before the Indians see,
Wasshot and killed immediately.
Oliver Amsden he was lain,
Which caused his friends much grief and pain.
Simeon Amsden they found dead,
Not many rods distant from his head.
Adonijah Gillert did lose his life which was dear.
John Sadler fled across the water,
And thus escaped the dreadful slaughter.
Eunice Allens the Indians coming,
And hope to save herself by running,
And had other petticoats stopped her,
The awful creatures had not catched her,
Nor Tommy hawked her on the head,
And left her on the ground for dead.
Young Samuel Allen, Oh! lack-a-day!
Was taken and carried to Canada.

Although Terry Prince's rhyming couplets certainly are devoid of conventionally ironic or sardonic wit, the ballad's historical account offers telling insights into the society of the day and its resonance with Terry Prince's audience is evinced in its critical reception and publication nearly a century after she first performed it and nearly thirty years after her death. It documents the vulnerabilities of European Americans' fledgling pseudo-nation-state as she underscores the porosity of the borders of what would become the United States, pointing the African American imagination to Canada, which scholar Rinaldo Walcott calls "the most queer of diasporic spaces." 9 "Bars Fight," which we should consider the first blues ballad, also introduces two aspects of the genre in the American-American experience: its voice and its resonances. Terry Prince's voice and words were so powerful and persistent that their haunting resonances lived on in cultural memory and were passed down through generations as a folk standard. What has gone too long unnoticed about "Bars Fight"—given its prominence in concurrent Negro spirituals and succeeding works by black male and female writers—is its countervail on narratives of the circum-Atlantic slave-trading project and white supremacy proliferating. Terry Prince offers a rare perspective on racial stratification and racism as these concepts are being reinvented and revised in the Americas. Although Terry Prince's rhyming couplets certainly are devoid of conventionally ironic or sardonic wit, her voice carries the multiracial, multicultural narrative of a young black woman's voice capturing the multiracial, multicultural nature of a young black woman's voice under the authority of the black mother's voice, commanding the Puritan's sense of moral superiority in the wake of a white family's massacre and demonstrating the capacity for both unflinching brutality and extreme empathy. In truth, the "very valiant men" Terry Prince extols inline 4 had no fighting chance on that Deerfield lea; thus, there lies in the ballad's title alone an obvious and desperate need for whites to endow themselves with agency over their fate, even when there clearly is none. In addition, what is unmistakable is that Terry Prince's voice and words were so powerful and persistent that their haunting resonances lived on in cultural memory and were passed down through generations as a folk standard. What has gone too long unnoticed about "Bars Fight"—given its prominence in concurrent Negro spirituals and succeeding works by black male and female writers—is its countervail on narratives of the circum-Atlantic slave-trading project and white supremacy proliferating. Terry Prince offers a rare perspective on racial stratification and racism as these concepts are being reinvented and revised in the Americas.
AN AFRICAN PRODIGY REDEFINES MERCY
FROM HER BULLY PULPIT TO THE PAGE.

In her journey from Guinea through the Caribbean to Massachusetts, Terry Prince had learned intimately what trauma does to make one complicit to the wills of perpetrators of violence as well as to those who might feel the weight of the orphans of violence, as well as to those who might feel the weight of the orphans of violence. Eight-year-old Sam Allen is taken to Canada, and it is there that, according to the author of the account, he implored to remain once his family's sentries found him. Terry Prince knows the irony of this account of a white boy of presumed sound mind finding in a matter of months more joy in Canada than he had known in Massachusetts among the family into which he was born. Her poem's final lines, then, tacitly raise the question: Why would little Sam beg to live among such "awful creatures"?

Despite the contravening evidence, little scholar of the Oratorian tradition, Phillis Wheatley, was eventually placed in her rightful place as one of the first African American exegetes. In fact, for the past quarter-century Jarena Lee and Maria 'N. Stewart, born free, respectively, in New Jersey and Connecticut, have been regarded as black women pioneers in the preaching of the Gospel. Scholars Chanta Haywood, Marilyn C. Richardson, and Valerie C. Cooper have made compelling cases for this pair as exegetes whose narratives of conversion and incultation into American Puritanism inspired other African American women to join their faith. The fervor that drove these African American women to become witnesses to the living God was palpable in print in 1773, in the orphaned prodigy's Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral. Before Equiano, Walker, Douglass, Du Bois, and others, Wheatley Peters set the tone for subversive, woman-centered protest by foregrounding the haunting pain and transformative power of the black maternal voice as she affirmed her native land's life-giving soil and reflected on her lost mother's spiritual realm. All the more awe-inspiring is that, like Terry Prince, the harbingers of these spiritual awakenings, and others in the slave kweer, this orphaned child expressed her grievances alongside subtle, exegetical interventions in the Calvinism and Puritanism into which she was indoctrinated while simultaneously comforting European American immigrants mourning their children's deaths. Coupled with aligning her mother's likely Islamic and traditional African faith practice with the West's Christianity, Wheatley Peters's phenomenological interventions in Poems on Various Subjects underscore the role of the black maternal as a generative bridge between sociocultural divides created by varied religious ideologies. With a framework that takes into account evidence in "To Mr. Stowe" that Wheatley Peters traces her artistic kinship to African writers and visual artists, I focus primarily on the italics in Wheatley Peters's "On Being Brought from Africa to America" that underscore linguistic choices central to her foundational protest against whiteness/white.
Tracking the spirituals, Terry Prince and Wheatley Peters empower scholars to chart subversive dissent in African American literature back to its advent in ways that deepen our understanding of post-structuralist discourse on black consciousness and black performativity. These readings trace an uncharted link between studies of the qur'an and the "countertradition" that scholars Jahan Ramazani and Max Cavitch so accurately name yet inadequately frame as, essentially, remixes of European verse with African "lava." In American Elegy (2007), a definitive survey of the genre through the nineteenth century, Cavitch rightly identifies Wheatley Peters as initiating a "countertradition in U.S. literature" with Poems on Various Subjects (53), continuing the conversation begun by Ramazani in his 1994 text, Poetry of Mourning. Ramazani, like Cavitch, devotes one chapter to the foundational role of Wheatley Peters in the American and African American elegy traditions and brackets the African American elegy in ironic quotations as, to the unsophisticated eye, "a contradiction in terms or a redundancy" (134). Noting the "politically coded" verse of Wheatley Peters, whom he calls "the mother of the African American elegy," Ramazani traces a traditional genealogy of black elegists "making the Eurocentric genre in their own image" (135–136).

In the past decade, Tom McCulley and Vincent Carretta have brought Wheatley Peters's work into queer discourse more directly. In "Queering Phillis Wheatley," McCulley rejects reading her poems as subservient odors to benevolent enslavers, their friends and loved ones but reifies her accepting a position as an "othered other" (New Essays 11). He acknowledges the performativity at work in the voices he presents in his book, yet reads here elegiac laments as earnest expressions of her limitations as a slave, missing their implicit ironies and satirical potential, given her role as an evangelical exegete. "To Maecenas," for example, introduces the ironic juxtapositions that satirize white evangelicals' sense of racial superiority. In this poem, Wheatley Peters not only positions herself as an intellectual, artistic peer (honoring patrons from the present day and distant past along side Greco-Roman Muses, showing her agility with the rhyming couplet) but also flaunts her lineage as unapologetically African and equal under the auspices of the Christian God and the accepted pagan ones. With this poem and others in her own canon collection, she positions herself, writes Philip Wharton, "as the precursor and equal under the auspices of the Christian God and the accepted pagan ones."

Wheatley Peters single-handedly nullifies the now-infamous notions of blackness purported by Kant and others of the Enlightenment, situating her people as a "sablerace," a point of pride rather than shame and akin to the most prized fur being traded at the time. In defining an Afro-diasporic imaginary that rejects subjugation to any other forces than those of the divine, Wheatley Peters points readers' attention to the philosophies of African Greco-Roman slavery that her and Terence's respective masters espoused. Like Terence and Terry Prince, Wheatley Peters was afforded an education, and in pointing to Terence's oeuvre, she testifies that all of the slaves and ex-slaves in his plays, particularly Syrus in Heauton Timorumenos (The Self-Tormentor) and Parmenon in Eunuchus (The Eunuch), recur as literary tricksters challenging the absurdity and intractability of whitesupremacy dating to antiquity in the face of prerequisite, precursory, and contemporaneous African subjectivities.

As African American writers have oftendone before white witnesses, Wheatley Peters frames herself not only as an interlocutor for black slaves in America but also for white Americans fashioning a national identity separate from their British (and otherwise European) ones, the latter of which she bears out more fully in an elegy for a family friend, George Whitefield. In the process of identity translation and transformation, her use of heroic couplets signalsthat she has, in fact, studied Dryden and Pope. However, she does so as Audre Lorde would instruct all writers invested in the qur'an in "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," exactly three hundred years later. She circumvents the white patriarchal gaze on her verse by going meta-phenomenologically, "To Maecenas" the opening poem of her collection, seeking the blessing of African Greco-Roman literature in her own image, and in doing so, she positions the entire canon. The monocultural gaze of American English poetry is aligned...
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The power of African diasporic consciousness can be self-affirming. They include the operatic soprano of Elizabeth Taylor-Greenfield, Maria Selika Williams, Matilde Sissieretta Jones, Leontyne Price, and all who have followed; the bluesy moans of Ma Rainey, Ethel Waters, and the Smith trio (Mamie, Bessie, and Clara); the offbeat scats of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and their jazz progeny; the stirring gospel and rollicking rock of Clara Ward, Mahalia Jackson, Big Mama Thornton, and Rosetta Tharpe, and all the divas they inspired, whose scale-bending belting invented and innovated American popular music and culture, including Dionne Warwick, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Roberta Flack, Minnie Riperton, Tina Turner, Donna Summer, Gladys Knight, Patti LaBelle, Whitney Houston, and Beyoncé; the multifarious, disruptive hustle and flow that hip-hop's Salt-n-Pepa, Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, Lauryn Hill, Missy Elliot, and Lil' Kim torqued and freaked, maturing most recently for the quartet to birth a new wave of trap gospel and sex positivity in the bars that Nicki Minaj, Janelle Monáe, Megan Thee Stallion, and Cardi B have brought, alongside an awakening of womanist praise of living legends and ancestors on African and American soil in the verses of Rapsody. "Thankfully, there are too many to name. This vast kweer's merciful wonder awaits."

NOTES

1 Du Bois was orphaned at sixteen when his single mother, Maryjlsina Burghardt, died. See Darkwater, particularly the essay "The Damnation of Black Women" and the poems preceding it, Children of the Moon," in which he offers a sobering indictment of the ways black mothers' lives are cut short by labor, disease, and other emotional and physical traumas.

2 In Slave Songs and the Birth of African American Poetry, Lauri Ramey deploys this historiographic intervention to name this music 'both new and a recuperation of something ancient by hearkening back to models spanning from classical Greek tradition to the ballad tradition' (19). She cites it as the origin not only of African American poetics but also the free-verse experimentation of imagism and 'high' modernism and the elements of performance that define postmodern Beat and contemporary slam poetry.

3 Joylene Valero Sapinoso's dissertation, "From 'Quare' to 'Xweer': Towards a Queer Asian American Critique," offers an important intervention that launches in a different direction than my invocation of the allomorph for "queer." It's exciting that both avenues lead us to new paths of self-identification for people of color. See my review of Kathleen Pfeiffer's Brother Mine: The Correspondence of Jean Torner and Waldo Frank (2010) in Callaloo, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 237-74, for my other contributions. The work would lead to consciousness of the power of African Diasporic consciousness can be self-affirming.
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tothe1540BattleofMabila,andothersaredocumentedintheregionsthat
wouldbecomeCanada.Despitethepersistenceofsmall-scaleracialslavery
inCanadapriorto1833underbothBritishandFrenchrule,thisnationrep
resentedafantasyoffreedom,particularlyforindigenouspeoplesdisplaced
byEuropeanAmericancolonialism.African- andCaribbean-bornpeopleof
colorinCanadawereabletoenjoyamodicumofindependenceandaccess
tocapitallamegenerationbeforetheirenslavedAmericanpeers.Some
wouldfoundcities,namelyJeanBaptistePointduSable,themanofmythical
HaitianandFrenchCanadiandescentwhomarriedaPotawatomiwomanand
withherinhabitedthelandthatwouldbecomeChicago.Itisnotastretch
toconjecturethatblackAfricanswereamongtheAbenakiswholedthe1746
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'0SeeHaywood'sProphesyingDaughters:BlackWomenPreachersandtheWord,
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