DOUGLAS A. JONES, JR. *Rutgers University*

Slave Evangelicalism, Shouting, and the Beginning of African American Writing

Abstract: This essay argues that African American writing emerged as a consequence of slave evangelicalism's ecstatic worship practices, the frenzied, uncontrollable, and unrehearsed behaviors that are commonly referred to as "shouting." Persons shout when they are seized by God through the Holy Spirit, and the affective and intellectual qualities slaves acquired while shouting disposed them to take up written discourse and literary culture more broadly as viable enterprises with which to express political dissent and pursue aesthetic fulfillment. This essay establishes shouting's conceptual formations and contextual features, then reads Richard Allen's "Spiritual Song" (c. 1800) as well as Jupiter Hammon's An Address to the Negroes in the State of New-York *(1786/7) and "The Kind Master and the Dutiful Servant" (n.d.) as works that exemplify how shouting shaped the figural, ideological, and rhetorical dimensions of early black literary and textual productions.*

KEYWORDS: Early African American literature, slave religion, shouting, African spirit possession

By all considered estimations, including his own, New Light clergyman and evangelist Samuel Davies spearheaded the first lasting and successful crusade to teach slaves in the colonial American South, if not all of British North America, to read and write.[1] The earliest resident Presbyterian minister in the Virginia Piedmont, Davies began making inroads in slave literacy in 1751 after procuring support from the London-based Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, an evangelical tract society that lay dissenters founded in 1750 to distribute gratis Bibles, Testaments, spelling primers, and Isaac Watts's *Songs for Children* and *Psalms and Hymns*, among other texts. In a series of solicitation letters to society benefactors, Davies hails the "poor . . . NEGROE SLAVES" of Hanover as "the most proper objects of the SOCIETY's Charity" because of the singular ardency with which they sought to rectify their "*Want* of

[Christian] Instruction" and thus pursued the "Means of Grace" (4–5). He could not satisfy his slave parishioners' demand for the society's books; they spent what little leisure time they had learning to read and worshiping with these texts, doing so on their own or in small societies, often holding nightlong meetings in Davies's home. He writes,

> Sundry of them have lodged all night in my kitchen; and, sometimes, when I have awaked at two or three a-clock in the morning, a torrent of sacred harmony poured into my chamber, and carried my mind away to Heaven. In this seraphic exercise, some of them spent almost the whole night. I wish, Sir, you and their other Benefactors could hear one of these sacred concerts: I am persuaded it would please and surprise you more than an *Oratorio*, and a *St. Cæcilia's* Day. (12)

Davies embraced music in his evangelism, making him a pioneer among American dissenting proselytizers, but his slave parishioners' worship milieu instantiated a broader phenomenon of (African) American religious life: black evangelicals grounded their devotional and intellectual habits in their belief in the interanimation of the embodied and the textual (Richards 358).

Put differently, the advent of black literacy and eventually literature in British North America was in many ways a religiocultural event that emerged from slaves' and their descendants' refusal to dissociate or hierarchize the oral and the literary, but to hold these communicative technologies in symbiotic relation. Performance theorists understand this relation as one of orature, a conception that "goes beyond a schematized opposition of literacy and orality as transcendent categories; rather, it acknowledges that these modes of communication have produced one another interactively over time and that their historic operations may be usefully examined under the rubric of performance" (Roach 11–12). Orature became the dominant communicative paradigm of mid-eighteenth-century evangelical cultural productions because it empowered New Light ministers and proselytizers to cultivate demotic, often extemporaneous performance forms that promised direct, readily achievable access to the divine. This repertoire of ecstatic embodied practices—dancing, shrieking, frenzied gesticulations, rapt transfixion, among other behaviors that collectively came to be known as shouting—consolidated into a distinctive worship style that not only countered the noetic rhetorical and textual traditions

that ecclesiastical authorities upheld as doctrinal necessities in order to reinforce sociopolitical hegemony but also implored persons to experience God personally and without intercession, which is a sacred imperative of evangelicalism. The somatic prioritization and theological tenets constitutive of that style engendered a field of interracial contact and acculturation theretofore nonexistent in British North America, and furnished the phenomenological and symbolic means for those who had ignored or rejected Christianity to view the religion as a positive resource for their spiritual and secular betterments. Indeed, the remarkably latitudinal matrix of evangelical orature compelled even the most outcast persons of the colonial population to reimagine Christianity, ecclesial and civil polities, and their standing within each.[2]

For slaves, shouting achieved the most significance within cultures of evangelical orature. W. E. B. Du Bois identified shouting, or "frenzy" as he termed it, as one of the three "essential[s]" of slave religion and "the one more devoutly believed in than" the other two, the preacher and the music (199). Shouting became the experiential foundation of slave evangelicalism because it affirmed an interrelation between God and person that gave the lie to divine abandonment that the brutalities and privations of New World slavery ostensibly signified. It did so by way of the intimacies of individual bodies: for a person shouts when the Holy Spirit of God seizes her or his body. Slaves construed shouting as confirmation of their eventual deliverance from all forms of human suffering, when the soul would reside with God after death. Yet shouting also produced this-worldly effects, the most fundamental of which was the vivification of a democratic appreciation of the self. Such an understanding posits that the dignity of each individual boasts no less, but never more, value than another's because all persons have equal access to God. For slave (and free black) evangelicals, this felt sense of the sanctity of the person substantiated the abstracted individualism around which contemporaneous economic and political liberalisms cohered. In effect, shouting prepared black persons, affectively and intellectually, for their encounters with and (re)formations of the institutions, practices, and subjectivities constitutive of modernity.

Shouting's eschatological and temporal meanings prompted slaves to inaugurate a series of projects that would bear witness to, archive, and promulgate the democratic notions they acquired when filled with the Holy Spirit. Knowledge of (divine) individuation that orients much of evangeli-

cal praxis demands such publicity, yet the peculiarities of black life within the dispensation of New World slavery often moved slaves and their descendants to cultivate expressive formations that were distinct from, even if not always oppositional to, those of white evangelicals. The most conspicuous feature of this activity was the institutional provenance of African American religion (e.g., independent congregations, churches, and denominations), but the cultural materials they developed were just as consequential to the testimony-based innovations and interventions they carried out in their respective locations and polities. Of this cultural production, the emergence of literacy and literary subjectivities is uniquely striking because of the dearth of such pursuits among black populations of British North America hitherto. Hence any understanding of the beginning of black American writing in all of its aesthetic, formal, or political complexities must return to the revivals, churches, and other worship spaces that instantiated eighteenth-century evangelicalism: it was from shouting in these spaces that slaves and their descendants recognized by and for themselves that they possessed the power and authority to take up writing for the same reasons their white counterparts did.

But what was it about shouting and cultures of evangelical orature more broadly that disposed slaves to identify the compositional and material technologies of written discourse as viable mechanisms with which to claim their interests across spheres of colonial and early national American life? To pursue this line of inquiry is to demur to analyses that prioritize slaves' exposure to religious texts during the First Great Awakening; such narratives are too facile insofar as they hinge on an a priori assumption that posits slaves' exposure to texts (as repositories of sacred wisdom and writ; as curiosities that "talk") would have necessarily spurred them to turn to the writing of their own texts and to claim an interventionary force for that writing. Rather, the aim must be to identify the cultural conditions and intellectual contexts out of which such a view of black authorship began to obtain among slaves. This essay contends that this juncture occurred in the wake of the rise of evangelical shouting, mobilizing the historiography of early African American Protestantism to clarify how the existential-conceptual notions fostered by shouting slaves established the theoretical groundwork for the "transitive beginning" of African American literary work (Said 50).[3] These ideas emerged from significant theological discontinuities between shouting and its most direct antecedent, practices of

spirit possession in traditional African religions. In fine, shouting revolutionized the slave's understanding of God's involvement in her or his life and thereby reoriented the slave's sense of self vis-à-vis the world. The resultant posture might best be called *democratic* insofar as democratic names a positionality that not only hails equal dignity among persons but also strives for "self-expression, resistance on behalf of others, and receptivity or responsiveness (being 'hospitable') to others" (Kateb 241). However incipient or inhibited, the democratic affects and ideas that shouting slaves acquired revealed to them the viability and necessity of black authorial presence. That ecstatic religious experience was the originary source of that presence goes a long way to explain why cultures and strategies performance were among the dominant topoi, organizing principles, and chief rhetorical tactics of the first generations of African American writers.

My construal of the political orientation of early black American writing is not to suggest that all written discourse is inherently democratic but, in this case, is to say slave evangelicals began to identify and deploy Anglo-American literary culture as a worthwhile enterprise with which to craft new forms of dissent and aesthetic fulfillment. Such writing represents features of what Nancy Ruttenberg calls "democratic personality," that is, "a distinctive mode of political (and later, literary) subjectivity," forged in colonial settings like those of the First Great Awakening by "a process of individuation unconnected to the concept of citizenship," that compelled persons from positions of "social invisibility to speak with power and authority in a newly constituted—and uncannily transient—public sphere" (3–4). Like other marginalized populations across colonial settings, slaves grasped the tremendous liberating power inherent to evangelical procedures of individuation, but their realization was cast less in the literal and figurative proliferation of a "popular voice" to which any person might contribute but more in the phenomenology of personal ecstatic embodiment (17–18). In other words, shouting was the principal medium through which slaves cultivated democratic personality and, as such, marks the point when the "American" in African American achieved its first real and lasting substance, cognitive and corporeal. In what follows I delineate the corporeal and intellectual formations that enacted this transition, then read Richard Allen's "Spiritual Song" (c. 1800) as well as Jupiter Hammon's *An Address to the Negroes in the State of New-York* (1787) and "The Kind Master and the Dutiful Servant" (n.d.) as works that exemplify some its

figural, ideological, and rhetorical consequences for what would become an African American literary tradition or set of traditions.[4]

Without broaching too deeply long-standing contentions regarding processes of creolization and concomitant questions of survivals, transformations, and severances, my aim is to hone in on the ways in which the corporeality and theology of shouting enacted a permanent epistemic rupture from African ways of ordering the world for African-descended persons in British North America that, among other consequences, animated them to turn to written discourse.[5] Scholars concur that African traditions of danced or performed religions served as primary conduits of slave conversion to Protestantism in the mid-eighteenth century in that they resonated with the evangelical emphasis on fervent physicality as an essential devotional paradigm. Indeed, the full-bodied nature of evangelical worship, especially in revivals, performed the important task of legitimating elements of a religious heritage that slaves carried with them across the Atlantic. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they found virtually no articulation of this heritage in the Christian proselytisms they encountered, especially in the dominant Church of England, which deemed African forms of bodily and emotionalist worship as brutish heathenism.[6] Beginning in the 1740s, so-called New Light reformations within Anglicanism and dissenting denominations poised slaves to recognize Protestantism as a resource for spiritual fulfillment and thus existential amelioration; new rhetorical styles, modes of address, and deeply interactive settings were among the most significant of these communicative formations. These practices strove to conduct persons to the point of ecstatic bodily expression of communion with God through the Holy Spirit—that is, acts of shouting as the climax of worship—which slaves deemed, however unconsciously, as a ritual effort that aligned with that of traditional African worship such as spirit possession. Yet core theological differences between shouting and spirit possession are what propelled slave evangelicals toward a fundamentally American habitus, setting in motion the democratic habits of mind, heart, and action that I understand as the motive force of African American writing.

These differences concern divine interest and participation in the world. Slaves and their ancestors from west and west central Africa were polytheistic peoples who believed in some form of a supreme God, but one that was "too great to condescend so much as to trouble himself or think

of Mankind," as the Fidasians (Guinea) explained to seventeenth-century Dutch merchant and travel writer Willem Bosman (368). Instead they reserved the great bulk of their blessings, prayers, and sacrifices for lesser deities bound to nature and thus to the common workings of the earthly realm. Interacting with their local gods was constitutive of the everyday lives of these and other west and west central African peoples, who, consequently, often regarded the supreme God as less crucial than lower members of their pantheons. Spirit possession was the most charged of such interactions. Much like the gods it venerated, the particularities of spirit possession varied from community to community, but performers across the region did share a basic framework for the practice: devotees gave over their bodies in such a way that a specific deity's entrance into or of the body caused the devotees to shed their personal identities, even as they maintained enough somatic control for the deity's presence to be identifiable through the devotees' comportment. Each deity possessed its own precise compositions and choreographies, which devotees had to master in arduous training programs and spectators had to learn to recognize as such. Hence traditional African spirit possession was organized by the logic of theatricality, that is, a performance practice "structured in a predictable, formulaic, and hence repeatable fashion," as Diana Taylor puts it. Theatricality "flaunts its artifice [and] its constructedness," and "strives for efficaciousness, not authenticity. It connotes a conscious, controlled, and, thus, always political dimension that performance need not imply" (13). Such performances necessitate a set of carefully preserved texts and social arrangements with which to keep the initiated separate from the uninitiated, the expert from the ignorant, and performers from spectators.

The demographic and material conditions of slavery in British North America precluded the survival of the texts (choreographies, musical scores, and utterances) and social arrangements (cult houses and instructional regimes) dedicated to the pantheons of west and west central Africa. But as the "death of the gods" ensued, as Albert J. Raboteau calls the process, African slaves did preserve the commitment to the fullness of the body as material for spiritual veneration and thus a worthy resource with which to make sense of the world, its limits, and one's ability to conceive that world anew (see Raboteau 43–93). Moved by doctrine and pragmatism, evangelical proselytisms appealed to this conviction, offering African and African-descended persons for the first time a brand of Christian

thought and praxis that accorded with their ancestral customs of ecstatic religious performance. In short order they developed a fairly stable revivalist spatial framework across colonial locations, from congregations and private homes to backwoods "hush harbors" and open-air assemblies on plantations, within which slaves might grapple with evangelicalism's "plain Truth for plain people" and thereby come to experience God firsthand (Wesley v). This milieu came to be what Joseph Roach theorizes as "vortices of behavior," whose purpose "is to canalize specified needs, desires, and habits in order to reproduce them." It is

> a kind of spatially induced carnival, a center of cultural self-invention through the restoration of behavior. . . . Although such a zone or district seems to offer a place for transgression, for things that couldn't happen otherwise or elsewhere, in fact what it provides is far more official: a place in which everyday practices and attitudes may be legitimated, "brought out into the open," reinforced, celebrated, or intensified. (28)

While revivalist evangelical vortices occasioned performances that resonated with corporeal features and affective registers of traditional African religions, they simultaneously engendered new theological-existential formations by way of those very performing bodies: the supreme God is concerned with the affairs of mankind and all persons can commune with God through the Holy Spirit. That God descends regularly to alleviate, even rectify temporal matters, sometimes doing so in the humblest of animate forms, was particularly enthralling for populations that bore the brunt of the physical and psychological agonies of life in the New World.[7]

The ideological and morphological differences between spirit possession and evangelical shouting mark a decisive epistemic rupture from slaves' African religious pasts, notwithstanding their relative somatic isomorphism. With shouting *all* persons, not select trained devotees, have the capacity to be seized by the divine—and the divine that seizes persons is the supreme God through the Holy Spirit. Once the Holy Spirit takes hold of the body, the shouter cannot manage the moves and sounds the body produces because its presence is too formidable to fit any choreography or script; more to the point, the Holy Spirit does not assume prescribed shapes and sounds through the body the way an African god does on its devotees' bodies. Thus shouting names an idiosyncratic, spontaneous, and unrehearsed form of religious ecstasy that rejects theatricality. With shout-

ing comes a sort of "*Confusion*," uncontrollable "*Screamings* and *Shrieking*," as well as "*exhorting*," "*singing*," "*laughing*," "*congratulating one another by shaking hands*," and "sometimes *kissing*" that Charles Chauncey and other eighteenth-century antirevivalists abhorred (239). Yet for slaves, shouting focalized and arrayed the person (body and soul) as sacred matter abounding with dignity in the face of daily brutalities. Their shouting experiences enacted processes of divine individuation, rousing an aggregation of democratic affects and ideas that would percolate and erupt well beyond religious contexts.

Slaves shouted whenever they felt the presence of God through their bodies, for its spiritual and secular entailments were too weighty to confine the practice to more official occasions such as revivals, church services, or congregational meetings. Shouting attained a rejuvenating force that buoyed the slave through the quotidian travails of bondage, becoming the most distinctive and lasting "condensational event" that evangelicalism's revivalist vortices of behavior produced. As Roach explains, "The principal characteristic of such events is that they gain a powerful enough hold on collective memory that they will survive the transformation or relocation of the spaces in which they first flourished" (28). Firsthand observations and the historiography of slave religion abound with evidence of slaves shouting beyond revivalist settings, and accounts of twentieth- and twenty-first-century black evangelicalism make clear that, as a condensational event, shouting's purchase on African American imaginaries remained incredibly firm well after Emancipation. In "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind" in *The Fire Next Time* (1963), for example, James Baldwin's eloquent portrait of the Pentecostal congregation he served as a teenage minister reveals morphologic uniformity between slaves shouting and Africans Americans shouting centuries later (47–48). Particularly notable in Baldwin's description is that his diction and imagery are reminiscent of, and at times identical to, that of slaves when they described shouting. Condensational events give rise to fairly rigid and delimited linguistic and visual lexicons that mark concern with (the preservation of) the originary significance of the event itself.

The most striking term in the lexicon that attends shouting is *fire*, a term that not only denotes evangelical ecstasy but also intimates the surge of democratic personality such ecstasies produced. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, such significations of fire derive from Jeremiah of the Old Testa-

ment (Jeremiah 20.9). Jeremiah was the first of the Hebrew prophets to expound the idea that every individual is born with the capacity to experience God firsthand. The most well known aspect of his influence on (African) American culture is the rhetorical form of the jeremiad, the lamentation of societies whose wickedness and moral shortcomings have brought about their own ruination. But slaves sensed in Jeremiah's prophetic witness a more immediate avowal that concerned the interrelation of their spiritual and temporal lives: one's positionality in the world has no bearing before God. Centuries before the apostle Peter declared "God is no respecter of persons," which became a favored refrain among African American orators and writers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jeremiah prophesied that under an imminent covenant with God, individuals "no longer will teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know [God], from the least of them to the greatest" (Acts 10.34; Jeremiah 31.34). Evangelical fire convinced slaves this covenant was in force, as their groans, grunts, screams, thrashes, trances, among other shouting behaviors, substantiated jeremiadic claims that they, "the least" of the American polity, knew God personally and without any form of intercession.

Probably the earliest black-authored literary meditation on shouting and its relation to black subjectivity, Richard Allen's dialogic poem "Spiritual Song" (1800), opens with a comment on evangelical fire. An apologist for religious zeal encounters his interlocutor, Brother Pilgrim, returning from church and asks,

> Is your heart a-glowing, are your comforts a-flowing
> And feel you an evidence, now bright and clear;
> Feel you a desire that burns like fire,
> And longs for the hour that Christ shall appear. (559)

A discomposed Brother Pilgrim cannot even fathom the possibility, because the "groaning and shouting" he just witnessed makes him "fear such religion is only a dream" (559). His disapprobation notwithstanding, Brother Pilgrim describes a scene of shouting that ranks among the most vivid literary portrayals of evangelical fervor in the period.

> The preachers were stamping, the people were jumping,
> And screaming so loud that I neither could hear

Either praying or preaching, such horrible screeching,
'Twas truly offensive to all that were there[.]
. . . . . .
No place for reflection, I'm fill'd with distraction
I wonder that people could bear for to stay
The men they were bawling, the women were squaling [sic],
I know not for my part how any could pray;
Such horrid confusion, if this be religion,
Sure 'tis something new that never was seen,
For the sacred pages that speak of all ages,
Does no where [sic] declare that such as ever has been.
. . . . . .
The scripture is wrested, for Paul hath protested,
That order should be kept in the houses of God,
Amidst such clatter who knows what they're after,
Or who can attend to what is declared;
To see them behaving like drunkards a-raving
And lying and rolling prostrate on the ground,
I really felt awful and sometimes was fearful,
That I'd be the next that would come tumbling down. (559–60)

Fire serves at once descriptive and figural functions: it mediates the gap between cause (e.g., "bawling," "squaling," "confusion") and effect (e.g., "heart a-glowing," "comforts a-flowing," "desire"), signifying the tenability of a causal relation between ecstatic worship and positive spiritual fecundity. Accordingly, fire emerges as the keyword in the debate regarding the social and theological proprieties of religious zeal that "Spiritual Song" stages.

Despite the poem's methodical dialogism, shouting's seemliness was a pressing matter for an emergent clergyman like Allen, who was in the process of consolidating the doctrinal, institutional, and liturgical features of his fledgling black Methodism. He aspired to ecclesiastical self-government, so protocols of worship and the suitability of shouting therein were significant considerations in his pursuit of ecclesial and communal sanction. (In 1816, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court granted several allied black Methodist congregations' plea for independence from the white-controlled Methodist society. They incorporated themselves as the Afri-

can Methodist Episcopal Church, for which they consecrated Allen as its first bishop.) The revivalist fervor Brother Pilgrim describes threatened to undercut the legitimacy Allen sought for black evangelicalism, especially since that behavior evoked African barbarism in the dominant racial imagination. "Spiritual Song" thus contributed to (and archives) a critical discourse regarding shouting that slaves and free African Americans had to negotiate in their efforts to build autonomous, theologically robust socioreligious communities.

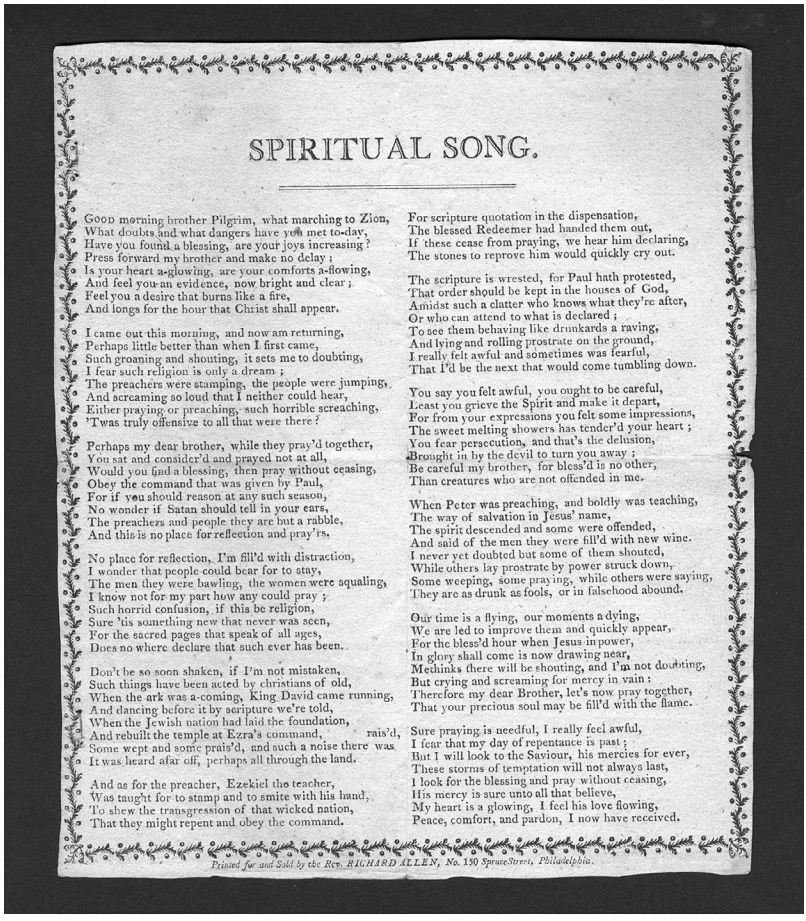
The poem's format and circulation history underscore the import Allen accorded to shouting: he printed it as a broadside that he sold to the public out of his Philadelphia home (fig. 1).[8] The few critics who have studied "Spiritual Song" all read it as Allen's position on shouting in black worship; to that end, most have followed Dorothy Porter, who published the poem in her groundbreaking 1971 collection *Early Negro Writing, 1760–1837*, and claimed Brother Pilgrim's remonstrations as Allen's own (Porter 521). But the poem's dialogic asymmetries suggest otherwise: while both characters ground their arguments in the Bible and early church history, the apologist speaks for seven of the eleven octaves and his command of scripture far outstrips Brother Pilgrim's. If anything, Brother Pilgrim's complaints establish a set of logical predicates for the apologist to refute and thereby erect an opposing conceptual framework with which to expound an eschatology that prioritizes full-bodily worship.

In the apologist's hermeneutic, scenes of congregational pandemonium are affirmations of divine presence and consecration. He adduces Old Testament figures like David who "came running / And dancing" before the Ark of the Covenant, and members of the "Jewish nation" who "wept and some prais'd, and such a noise there was rais'd" after they "rebuilt the temple at Ezra's command." He describes how

> Ezekiel, the teacher,
> Was taught for to stamp and to smite with his hand,
> To shew the transgression of that wicked nation,
> That they might repent and obey the command. (560)

He also reminds Brother Pilgrim of the scene of performance at the first Pentecost in the New Testament:

> When Peter was preaching, and boldly was teaching,
> The way of salvation in Jesus' name,



SPIRITUAL SONG.

Good morning brother Pilgrim, what marching to Zion,
What doubts and what dangers have you met to-day,
Have you found a blessing, are your joys increasing?
Press forward my brother and make no delay;
Is your heart a-glowing, are your comforts a-flowing,
And feel you an evidence, now bright and clear;
Feel you a desire that burns like a fire,
And longs for the hour that Christ shall appear.

I came out this morning, and now am returning,
Perhaps little better than when I first came,
Such groaning and shouting, it sets me to doubting,
I fear such religion is only a dream;
The preachers were stamping, the people were jumping,
And screaming so loud that I neither could hear,
Either praying or preaching, such horrible screaching,
'Twas truly offensive to all that were there?

Perhaps my dear brother, while they pray'd together,
You sat and consider'd and prayed not at all,
Would you find a blessing, then pray without ceasing,
Obey the command that was given by Paul,
For if you should reason at any such season,
No wonder if Satan should tell in your ears,
The preachers and people they are but a rabble,
And this is no place for reflection and pray'rs.

No place for reflection, I'm fill'd with distraction,
I wonder that people could bear for to stay,
The men they were bawling, the women were squaling,
I know not for my part how any could pray;
Such horrid confusion, if this be religion,
Sure 'tis something new that never was seen,
For the sacred pages that speak of all ages,
Does no where declare that such ever has been.

Don't be so soon shaken, if I'm not mistaken,
Such things have been acted by christians of old,
When the ark was a-coming, King David came running,
And dancing before it by scripture we're told,
When the Jewish nation had laid the foundation,
And rebuilt the temple at Ezra's command, rais'd,
Some wept and some prais'd, and such a noise there was
It was heard afar off, perhaps all through the land.

And as for the preacher, Ezekiel the teacher,
Was taught for to stamp and to smite with his hand,
To shew the transgression of that wicked nation,
That they might repent and obey the command.

For scripture quotation in the dispensation,
The blessed Redeemer had handed them out,
If these cease from praying, we hear him declaring,
The stones to reprove him would quickly cry out.

The scripture is wrested, for Paul hath protested,
That order should be kept in the houses of God,
Amidst such a clatter who knows what they're after,
Or who can attend to what is declared;
To see them behaving like drunkards a raving,
And lying and rolling prostrate on the ground,
I really felt awful and sometimes was fearful,
That I'd be the next that would come tumbling down.

You say you felt awful, you ought to be careful,
Least you grieve the Spirit and make it depart,
For from your expressions you felt some impressions,
The sweet melting showers has tender'd your heart;
You fear persecution, and that's the delusion,
Brought in by the devil to turn you away;
Be careful my brother, for bless'd is no other,
Than creatures who are not offended in me.

When Peter was preaching, and boldly was teaching,
The way of salvation in Jesus' name,
The spirit descended and some were offended,
And said of the men they were fill'd with new wine.
I never yet doubted but some of them shouted,
While others lay prostrate by power struck down,
Some weeping, some praying, while others were saying,
They are as drunk as fools, or in falsehood abound.

Our time is a flying, our moments a dying,
We are led to improve them and quickly appear,
For the bless'd hour when Jesus in power,
In glory shall come is now drawing near,
Methinks there will be shouting, and I'm not doubting,
But crying and screaming for mercy in vain:
Therefore my dear Brother, let's now pray together,
That your precious soul may be fill'd with the flame.

Sure praying is needful, I really feel awful,
I fear that my day of repentance is past;
But I will look to the Saviour, his mercies for ever,
These storms of temptation will not always last,
I look for the blessing and pray without ceasing,
His mercy is sure unto all that believe,
My heart is a glowing, I feel his love flowing,
Peace, comfort, and pardon, I now have received.

Printed for and Sold by the Rev. RICHARD ALLEN, No. 150 Spruce Street, Philadelphia.

FIGURE 1. *Courtesy Clements Library, University of Michigan.*

> The spirit descended and some were offended,
> And said of the men they were fill'd with new wine.
> I never yet doubted but some of them shouted,
> While others lay prostrate by power struck down,
> Some weeping, some praying, while others were saying,
> They are as drunk as fools, or in falsehood abound. (560)

Homologizing Pentecost with contemporary black shouting, the apologist recalls the apostolic prophecy that ecstatic worship among slaves in particular signifies the imminent fulfillment of God's promise of deliverance and salvation; specifically, the mention of Peter preaching is an allusion to

his proclamation in the midst of Pentecost: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams[;] And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2.17–18). Thus a slave (i.e., a servant or handmaiden) swept up in evangelical fire should understand her or his shouting as an instantiation of a tradition of Pentecostalist revelations that traces back to the very first. The intertextual, hermeneutical apparatus of "Spiritual Song" works to affirm the notion that ecstatic worship does not corrupt the spirit, but, rather, constitutes a ravishment of the spirit that substantiates a first principle of evangelicalism, the doctrine of universal priesthood: all persons, regardless of their stations, have direct access to God.

The story of Pentecost also functions as a cautionary tale for Brother Pilgrim and the persons the figure represents. In this formulation, contemporary critics, those who censure shouting and other acts of evangelical fervor as "falsehood" making persons "drunk as fools," become latter-day versions of the detractors who rebuked the apostles and their disciples at the time of Pentecost; these critics are out of the fold of salvation, "Spiritual Song" suggests. By degrees the poem's admonitory tone becomes more explicit, finally blazoning its homiletic crux in the apologist's final stanza:

> Our time is a-flying, our moments a-dying,
> We are led to improve them and quickly appear,
> For the bless'd hour when Jesus in power,
> In glory shall come is now drawing near. (561)

At this point the apologist is no longer interested in maieutic exchange, so he reconfigures their relationship and ministers to Brother Pilgrim. The poem underscores this new hierarchy by returning to the fire trope: whereas the apologist opens "Spiritual Song" by asking Brother Pilgrim if he "burns like fire" in anticipation of Christ's arrival, his concluding words enjoin Brother Pilgrim to follow his lead "and now pray together, / That your precious soul may be fill'd with the flame" (561). Brother Pilgrim follows the directive, and the poem ends with him, perhaps for the first time, assured of his salvation: for his "heart is a glowing" (561).

Brother Pilgrim's epiphany is the upshot of the poem's dialogic structure. The dialogue was a favored literary technique among contempora-

neous evangelical and social reform writers because they recognized a pedagogic force within the form with which to guide ambivalent or skeptical readers toward some sort of theological or political clarity. Allen was steeped in the aesthetic and political currents of the early national US literary public sphere: coauthored with Absalom Jones, his *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of Some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications* (1794) is a pioneering pamphlet of (African) American socioliterary history (see Brooks, *American Lazarus* 151–78). That Allen, who as a slave underwent an emotionally powerful conversion experience and as a minister preached to induce revivalist worship among his own congregants, should use the rationalist mechanisms of dialogism to appraise the thoroughly sensory act of shouting might seem ironic, if not paradoxical; but Allen's choice exemplifies his full embrace of prevailing literary aesthetics, modes, and technologies, which reflects his more general pursuit of the democratic ideals of the American Enlightenment.

This orientation was by far the dominant ideological charge of African American writers through at least the 1820s. However geographically or sociologically diffuse, the aggregate of their work evinces a corporate literary subjectivity dedicated to the inclusionary aims and means of early black nationalism. (Emigrationism and other modes of race-based separatism would not anchor black nationalist action and thought until the 1850s.) Following Paul Gilroy, I understand that corpus as a project animated by "the politics of fulfilment," which functions by way of "the notion that a future society will be able to realise the social and political promise that present society has left unaccomplished." It "demands that bourgeois civil society live up to the promises of its own rhetoric. . . . The politics of fulfilment is mostly content to play occidental rationality at its own game. It necessitates a hermeneutic orientation that can assimilate the semiotic, verbal, and textual" (37–38). Phillis Wheatley's poetry, Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* (1789), and Allen and Jones's *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People*, among so many other lesser-known and lesser-studied black-authored writings from the period, bear critique of the praxis of American Enlightenment that emerges from within and by means of Enlightenment's spheres of cultural production; that is, these texts "resist" to the extent that, in this instance, resistance names activity

that strives to remove discursive and material hindrances that impede full democratic inclusivity. Even literary productions that do not center on slavery or race-based exclusion such as Allen's "Spiritual Song" or Wheatley's neoclassical aestheticism entail a (racialized) political valence because they instantiate and often elaborate on dominant creeds and prevailing aesthetic-representational norms.

Recognizing early African American writing as a consequence and conduit of the politics of fulfillment goes a long way in addressing Gene Andrew Jarrett's underlying query that organizes his important theorization of a "political genealogy of early African American literature." Since "the racial identity of authorship was not always a reliable predictor of the political nature of early African American literature[,] nor were the literary intentions and productions always reliable indicators of it," Jarrett writes, "the taxonomic insecurity of these political definitions prompts us to ask why contemporary readers regarded early African American literature as political, so to speak, in the first place" (295). Through an extended reading of David Walker's *The Appeal* (1829) and its critical engagement with Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), Jarrett concludes that because Americans across racial lines "had ideologically overlapped in privileging intellectual culture [i.e., the inextricability of literature and politics] within conceptions of political representation and self-governance," African American literary productions like Wheatley's poetry could not help but become fodder for political contestation because they served as "flashpoint[s] for a broader intellectual debate over genius, race, and representation" (314–15). While this argument certainly resonates with my reading of early African American writing as a corpus pitched toward the fulfillment of the democratic ideals of the American Enlightenment, Jarrett's rigorous analyses obscure what I believe is the more primal reason why critics and readers in the era politicized black-authored literary discourse regardless of its subject matter: for slaves, ex-slaves, or descendants of slaves, the very act of taking up writing signaled an assumption of power in an "intellectual culture" that used violence, statutory power, and domestic mores to keep them from doing just that. The politicization of early African American writing was part and parcel of a broader clash over these writers' breach of the prescriptive limits that defined American cultural productions.

Such claims to power had to derive elsewhere, away from the networks

and syndicates of early national intellectual culture. As I have argued, that elsewhere was the revivalist evangelical spaces wherein by acts of shouting African Americans acquired feelings of personal authority and standing—that is, democratic personality—in the face of quotidian abjection and marginalization. Those feelings were the aftereffects of shouting's ecstatic visions of deliverance from all forms of personal suffering and eternal salvation, "utopian" yearnings that articulate Gilroy's notion of a "politics of transfiguration." As he argues, the politics of transfiguration

> emphasises the emergence of qualitatively new desires, social relations, and modes of association within the racial community of interpretation and resistance *and* between the group and its erstwhile oppressors. . . . The politics of transfiguration strives in pursuit of the sublime, struggling to repeat the unrepeatable, to present the unpresentable. Its . . . hermeneutic focus pushes towards the mimetic, dramatic, and performative. (37–38)

To my mind, shouting was the most consequential expression of the politics of transfiguration among black populations in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America, not least because it spurred them to initiate and participate in a number of secular enterprises (e.g., literary discourse) dedicated to the realization of the broader society's most excellent aims and pronouncements. In other words, the transfiguration of enslaved persons through shouting propelled them to hail themselves as central actors in the fulfillment of American democracy through writing.

In this regard, the genesis of African American literary production constitutes an instance of a harmonious, even determinative relationship between the repertoire (i.e., shouting) and the archive (i.e., written discourse). Centering on that relationship, as this essay does, not only reveals the underlying conceptual and contextual attributes that fostered the advent of black authorial presence in British North America and the early United States; as well, orienting one's critical purview in this way also helps to account for a number of the formal-rhetorical dimensions that configure early black literary and textual productions. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon has modeled this approach; in fine, hers is an effort to theorize new, counter-Habermasian models of public sphere formation and the circulation of culture therein by centering on the functionality of the formal conditions of performance (embodied action, presence, and lived space) to the

constitution of incipient black literary codes, networks, and assemblages in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. She argues that attending to "scenes of performance that inform print production . . . significantly augments and shifts our understanding of the public sphere such that [early black] texts . . . reveal central dynamics of race, embodiment, and performance in relation to the social and political belonging that characterizes the public sphere" (320). This critical orientation stresses the ways in which early African American writers used performance culture, as semiotic and subject, to counteract the racialized frameworks of the cultural and civic order that stratified early American polities. Such writing invests deeply in the experiential and the interested, as it works toward the achievement of an alternative "*sensus communis* [i.e., an assemblage] at the limits of an Enlightenment reason that holds a contradictory racial politics at its core" (339).

In their determination to forge bonds of communal affect, expressivity, and reciprocity constitutive of such performative assemblages, early black texts intimate a broader ethic of collectivism: an aesthetic, rhetorical, and social predisposition that opposes the precepts and pursuit of liberal individualism. According to historian Craig Steven Wilder, collectivism pervaded west and west central African societies and, as a result, shaped the coalitions, institutions, and networks slaves and their free descendants created to withstand early American racism and racialism. Wilder's crucial sociointellectual history explains the political character and demographic heterogeneity of black associationalism in the period, but the stark ideological and intellectual divergences across the black-authored texts that circulated within spaces of black association renders race-based collectivism an inadequate hermeneutic with which to conceptualize or explain the beginnings of African American written discourse. Indeed, even when performance occasioned a *sensus communis*, the only politicoethical claims black writers felt the need to uphold within that assemblage were those that accorded with their individual aims and sensibilities. Accordingly, early African American writing archives structural and affective features of the shift from past African dispositions (e.g., collectivism) toward future American ones that performed slave evangelicalism set in motion.

No corpus instantiates this development with greater clarity than that of slave writer Jupiter Hammon. Even though Hammon was the first black poet to be published in what became the United States, and his sermons

and political orations invigorated audiences in New York and Connecticut, there are no major monographs and only a few article-length treatments concerning his life and work. This scarcity registers an overinvestment in the "oppositional" or "radical" in black literature from the era of slavery (and beyond) that continues to impoverish our understanding of the contingencies, depth, and intricacies of African American thought and cultural productions.[9] The mainstream of African American literary criticism refuses Hammon's writing as a subject of rigorous, sustained analysis because his Calvinist traditionalism is anathema to the ideological currents that structure the field. The thrust of his work evinces little concern with "the end of slavery in a temporal, civil sense," as Cedrick May puts it. "Such matters fell into the realm of secular politics, which did not interest Hammon except where they contradicted his sense of religiosity" (25). This principle organizes his most well known production, *An Address to the Negroes in the State of New-York*, which Hammon delivered before the African Society in New York in 1786 and then published in 1787. The *Address* enjoins slaves to remain obedient to their masters and maintain the highest of standards of personal rectitude, even if masters and free whites do not. Hammon writes,

> Some of you to excuse yourselves, may plead the example of others, and say that you hear a great many white-people, who know more, than such poor ignorant negroes, as you are, and some who are rich and great gentlemen, swear, and talk profanely, and some of you may say this of your masters, and say no more than is true. But all this is not a sufficient excuse for you. (12)

Hammon argued that a higher moral law obliged slaves to maintain righteousness, and as their reward at God's "judgment seat" their "slavery will be at an end, and though ever so mean, low, and despised in this world, we sit with God in his kingdom as Kings and Priests, and rejoice forever, and ever" (12). Obedience and patience within one's station as positive (spiritual) goods run through his creative and political writings, nullifying whatever antislavery inklings one might tease out of the *Address*.[10] Despite these proslavery concessions, Hammon's speech galvanized the African Society and, in pamphlet form, went on to occasion a number of other text-based assemblages in New York and Philadelphia, if not elsewhere.

Hammon's prioritization of individual piety and probity was odds with

the collectivism that vitalized associations such as the African Society, but he was assured and determined in his capacity to promulgate his convictions among even the most unsympathetic of audiences.[11] The *Address* begins with Hammon's admission that he had longed to help mitigate "the poor, despised and miserable state" of black people, and contribute to the quashing of their "ignorance and stupidity, and the great wickedness of the most of" them. But the subject too often "pained [him] to the heart," moving him "to turn [his] thoughts from the subject" (5). Overcoming these affective barriers as well as the reticence his "own ignorance" and "unfitness to teach others" caused, Hammon bolsters his rhetorical ethos by adducing the wisdom of his old age, the success of his earlier writings, and his identity as a "negro" among others. He writes, "I think you will be more likely to listen to what is said, when you know it comes from a negro, one your own nation and colour, and therefore can have no interest in deceiving you, or in saying any thing to you, but what he really thinks is your interest and duty to comply with" (6). This amalgam of self-effacement and self-aggrandizement marks Hammon's familiarity with the conventions of late-eighteenth century oratory, but it is the broader rhetorical genealogical context within which he positions the *Address* that frames early African American writing as a culmination of evangelical imaginaries and passions: Hammon aligns himself with the apostle Paul, a writer empowered and duty bound to speak out against the obstacles, self-imposed or otherwise, that impede his "nation" from fulfilling its most excellent potential.

This posture dominates Hammon's literary and oratorical work. His poem "The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant" (n.d.) is even more forthright in its insistence on the necessity of Hammon's prophetic-apostolic intervention, and it, too, relies on techniques of performance, albeit textualized, to reinforce the legitimacy of his voice and authority. The poem imagines a dialogue between a master and his servant (most certainly a slave) who are both concerned with morality and dutifulness, a scenario that recurs in Hammon's writings. Unlike the *Address*, "The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant" does not exhort slaves to resist the temptation of conforming to the example of their depraved masters or free white counterparts because the titular kind master is an exemplar of moral rectitude and virtue. He implores his servant to follow his lead because it will bring them both closer to God: it is his obligation as master to provide pathways of Christian servility and tuition, just as it is the servant's obligation to

set about them. The first half of the thirty-stanza poem stages their conversation by way of alternating quatrains of dialogue in which both voice traditional Calvinist doctrine. Set in rigid common meter, their banal dialogue makes for a fairly conventional eighteenth-century religious poem. With its predictable content in tidy form, "The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant" placed contemporaneous readers and auditors on familiar poetic terrain.

Yet Hammon unsettles expectations midway through the dialogue. Between stanzas fifteen and sixteen, he writes: "*A* Line *on the present war*" (*America's First Negro Poet* 62). Over the course of the next eight stanzas, master and servant discuss the ongoing American War of Independence, construing its death and destruction as God's handiwork:

> *Master.*
>
> This is the work of God's own hand,
> We see by precepts given;
> To relieve distress and save the land,
> Must be the pow'r of heav'n.
>
> *Servant.*
>
> Now glory be unto our God,
> Let ev'ry nation sing;
> Strive to obey his holy word,
> That Christ may take them in. (63)

These and the other thirteen stanzas that make up the second half of "The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant" maintain the Calvinism that begins the poem but grounds it in a specific time, place, and event. That is, whatever "line" (i.e., gloss) on the war Hammon promises is shot through with his religiosity, and any sort of allegiance (i.e., Patriot or Loyalist) or political commentary is conspicuously missing.[12] The only way to end the armed conflicts of the American Revolution, indeed any temporal discord, is total submission to the word of God, the poem argues.

Hammon further emphasizes his religious prescriptions in another distinguishing, unexpected move: from stanza twenty-four to twenty-five, "The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant" transforms from a dialogue to a soliloquy–political sermon:

Servant.

Thus the dialogue shall end,
Strive to obey the word;
When ev'ry nation acts like friends,
Shall be the sons of God.

Believe me now my Christian friends,
Believe your friend call'd Hammon
You cannot to your God attend,
And serve the God of Mammon.

If God is pleased by his own hand
To relieve distresses here;
And grant a peace throughout the the [sic] land
'Twill be a happy year.

'Tis God alone can give us peace;
It's not the pow'r of man:
When virtuous pow'r shall increase,
'Twill beautify the land. (63–64)

For the final third of the poem, Hammon assumes the role of the servant and speaks directly to his readers and auditors. His identification of the American War of Independence as divine compensation for the combatants' religious shortcomings and moral turpitude reflects the jeremiadic sensibility that animates the poem. Critics have not positioned "The Kind Master and the Dutiful Servant" or any other Hammon texts within genealogies of the African American jeremiad because his Calvinist accommodationism runs counter to the religious and political norms we prefer to ascribe to this literary-rhetorical tradition. Yet Hammon claimed the same authority and aptitudes other black (literary) Jeremiahs in the era did, and it is that gesture and its catalyzing agent—namely, ecstatic evangelical performance—that established the conditions for the rise and flourishing of African American written discourse and, eventually, literary cultures. The performance devices that configure "The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant" (soliloquy, direct address, masking and unmasking, and epilogue) and the decision to publish the poem alongside Hammon's sermon "An Evening's Improvement" throw this process into stark relief.

My account of the provenance of African American writing as a consequence of evangelical performance culture and its procedures of individuation (i.e., shouting) dovetails with Alexis de Tocqueville's more general theorization of modern democracy as a consequence of Christian thought and practice, especially its more radical Protestant strains. In his introduction to volume 1 of *Democracy in America* (1835), Tocqueville sketches the ways in which the leveling capacity at the core of Christianity (i.e., "Christianity, which has made all equal before God, will not flinch to see all citizens equal before the law") empowers lowborn persons to take on economic and political elites and thereby disrupt prescriptive social hierarchies and their underlying frameworks (21). While economic (e.g., laws of entailment and inheritance) and political (e.g., common consent, civic accountability and administration) concerns dominate Tocqueville's schema, he remained keen on how essential the cultural front is to processes of democratization. "From the moment when the exercise of intelligence had become a source of strength and wealth . . . [p]oetry, eloquence, memory, the beauty of wit, the fires of imagination, all these gifts which heaven shares out by chance turned to the advantage of democracy," he writes. "Literature was an arsenal open to all, where the weak and the poor could always find arms" (13–14). While holding Tocqueville's distinctive providentialism at bay, I argue that the origins of African American writing affirm his thesis regarding the relationship between Christianity as an authorizing episteme of democratic cultural praxis, especially for the "weak and the poor." What this essay has worked to explain is that it took the *felt* ecstasies of shouting for slaves to recognize that episteme as legitimate and viable in light of their enslavement; they did not merely absorb its democratic potentiality by osmosis or rationalist deduction. Thus as a democratic effect, slave (and free black) evangelicals' turn to literature did not bring about anything close to politicoideological uniformity in the writing itself. Rather, their writings posit idiosyncratic, very often divergent of means of aesthetic and political fulfillment for the slavery and postslavery milieus they endured. The differences in form and normative claims that characterize early African Americans' writing, ranging from Jupiter Hammon's conservative poetry to David Walker's militant *Appeal*, simply reflect the phenomenology of ecstatic evangelicalism itself: no person caught up with the Holy Spirit will shout like any other.

NOTES

1. Davies began converting and ministering to Hanover slaves, masters, and nonslaveholding whites in 1748. Although he made great headway appealing to their emotions, he also concentrated on developing general literacy because reading the scriptures is of utmost importance in Presbyterianism (see Richards).
2. Evangelical orature instantiates what Gustafson expounds as the general "performance semiotic of speech and text" that prevailed in eighteenth-century America, a system in which "claims to authenticity and relations of power were given form and meaning through the reliance on or freedom from text in oral performance" (xvi–xvii). The performance semiotic was animated by the ongoing ascendency of verbal arts across cultures (elite, folk, or otherwise), and depending on the circumstances, dictated the degree to which one grounded one's assertions in terms of the embodied or the literary-textual. Whereas Gustafson concentrates on the ways African American ministers successfully exploited the performance semiotic and swayed culturally distinct audiences by reconfiguring Christian narratives and tropes, I explore how slave evangelicals came to recognize the discursive, literary, and performative models of the American performance semiotic as usable in the first place.
3. Said defines transitive beginnings as a "problem- or projected-directed beginning. . . . A transitive beginning assumes the following circumstance: an individual mind wishes to intervene in a field of rational activity" (50).
4. Following Scott, I understand tradition as "a differentiated field of discourse whose unity, such as it is, resides not in anthropologically authenticated traces, but in its being constructed around a distinctive group of tropes or figures, which together perform quite specific kinds of rhetorical labor" (278).
5. For a fine overview of the deep and contested fault lines that attend this historiography and the creolization model therein, see Price.
6. The vast literature on the struggle to convert slaves before the Great Awakening of the 1740s explores a number of obstacles ministers and proselytizers had to overcome, especially slaveholder opposition, including the chasm between African religiolinguistic cultures and English ones, and the lack of black-led ministrations. Many scholars center their researches and theses on the subject on the failures of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the missionary organization the Church of England founded in 1701 with the express purpose of converting persons of all races and statuses in the British Americas to Anglicanism, which "enjoyed a virtual monopoly on missionary work in the plantation colonies" (Frey and Wood 63). For contemporaneous accounts of masters' and slaves' problems with the society's campaigns, see Gibson.
7. For slaves, the most powerful of these forms was that of Jesus. His story captivated them above all others because they understood him as one of them: an outsider, man of the poor, and target of state-sanctioned torture As Cone explains, slaves' version of the Incarnation holds "God in Christ comes to the weak

and the helpless, and becomes one with them, taking their condition of oppression as his own and thus transforming their slave-existence into a liberated existence" (71).

8. "Spiritual Song" never appeared in any edition of Allen's pioneering *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns, Selected from Various Authors by Richard Allen, African Minister*, which he first published in 1801. *A Collection* excludes musical notation or even suggested melodies with which to sing each song, yet it innovates in that, as Southern writes, it "seems to have been the earliest [hymnal] to include hymns to which 'wandering' refrains and choruses are attached; that is, refrains freely used with any hymn rather than affixed permanently to specific hymns." Because of such formal-lyrical innovations, Allen's hymns became a "primary source for the worship song later to be called the 'camp-meeting hymn' and the progenitor of the nineteenth-century gospel hymn," both of which are related to, though different from, slave spirituals (155). Despite its title, "Spiritual Song" does not share the formal qualities that typify Allen's hymns and thus it reads most like a poem, which is how I treat it.
9. See Brooks's "Our Phillis, Ourselves" for a major, potentially paradigm-shifting counterexample to this critical proclivity in African American literary studies.
10. Hammon's "An Essay on Slavery," a recently discovered unpublished poem, suggests he may have become more responsive to antislavery thought late in his life. See May and McCown.
11. Wilder offers an overly sanguine reading of the reception of Hammon's performance of the *Address*. He writes, "The 'Address to the Negroes' had an obvious appeal: Hammon appreciated Africans as people and parents and siblings and spouses and friends and families and communities. He understood the complexity of their personal and social ties, realities that typically determined the priority of physical freedoom in an individual life. Hammon emphasized the humanity of the enslaved" (71). While the African Society certainly valued Hammon's recognition of the full humanity of black persons, its charge as an association dedicated to ending slavery and the amelioration of the plight of free black people living in and around New York City conflicted with the proslavery drift that runs throughout the entirety of the *Address*. Despite their considerable disagreements, Hammon and his audiences still engaged each other in person and in print deliberately and in good faith; ideological consensus was not required to receive a fair hearing. My point here is that early African American writing evinces an incredibly diverse, often conflicting range of ideas, and those who study this discursive field must resist homogenizing impulses if we are to grasp its incredible depth.
12. While religion was Hammon's dominant ideological guiding force, the divisions within his owner's family might also in part account for the poem's striking disinterestedness in the war as a politicogeographic conflict. Most of the Lloyds were Loyalist, but Hammon's owner and family patriarch Joseph Lloyd was not (Hammon 64).

WORKS CITED

Allen, Richard. "Spiritual Song." 1800. *Early Negro Writing, 1760–1837*. Ed. Dorothy Porter. Beacon P, 1971. 559–61.

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. Dial P, 1963.

Bosman, Willem. *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts*. London, 1705.

Brooks, Joanna. *American Lazarus: Religion and the Rise of African-American and Native American Literatures*. Oxford UP, 2003.

———. "Our Phillis, Ourselves." *American Literature* 82.1 (2010): 1–28.

Chauncey, Charles. *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England, a Treatise in Five Parts*. Boston, 1743.

Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, Orbis, 1997.

Davies, Samuel. *Letters from the Reverend Samuel Davies, &c. Shewing the State of Religion (Particularly among the Negroes) in Virginia*. London, 1757.

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock. "John Marrant Blows the French Horn: Print, Performance, and the Making of Publics in Early African American Literature." *Early African American Print Culture*. Ed. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein. U of Pennsylvania P, 2012. 318–39.

Du, Bois W. E. B. *The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois Reader*. Ed. Eric J. Sundquist. Oxford UP, 1996.

Frey, Sylvia R., and Betty Wood. *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*. U of North Carolina P, 1998.

Gibson, Edmund. *A Letter of the Lord Bishop of London to the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Colonies Abroad; Exhorting Them to Encourage and Promote the Instruction of Their Negroes in the Christian Faith*. London, 1727).

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard UP, 1993.

Gustafson, Sandra M. *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America*. Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and U of North Carolina P, 2000.

Hammon, Jupiter. *An Address to the Negroes in the State of New-York*. New York, 1787.

———. *America's First Negro Poet: The Complete Works of Jupiter Hammon of Long Island*. Ed. Stanley Austin Ransom, Jr. Kennikat P, 1970.

Jarrett, Gene Andrew. "'To Refute Mr. Jefferson's Arguments Respecting Us': Thomas Jefferson, David Walker, and the Politics of Early African American Literature." *Early American Literature* 46.2 (2011): 291–318.

Kateb, George. *The Inner Ocean: Individualism and Democratic Culture*. Cornell UP, 1992.

May, Cedrick. *Evangelism and Resistance in the Black Atlantic, 1760–1835*. U of Georgia P, 2008.
May, Cedrick, and Julie McCown. "'An Essay on Slavery': An Unpublished Poem by Jupiter Hammon." *Early American Literature* 48.2 (2013): 457–71.
Porter, Dorothy. Introduction. *Early Negro Writing, 1760–1837*. Beacon P, 1971. 515–21.
Price, Richard. "The Miracle of Creolization: A Retrospective." *NWIG: New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 75.1–2 (2001): 35–64.
Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. 1978. Oxford UP, 2004.
Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. Columbia UP, 1996.
Richards, Jeffrey H. "Samuel Davies and the Transatlantic Campaign for Slave Literacy in Virginia." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111. 4 (2003): 333–78.
Ruttenburg, Nancy. *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*. Stanford UP, 1998.
Said, Edward W. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. Basic Books, 1975.
Scott, David. "That Event, This Memory: Notes on the Anthropology of African Diasporas in the New World." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.3 (1991): 261–84.
Southern, Eileen. "Hymnals of the Black Church." *Black Perspective in Music* 17.1–2 (1989): 153–70.
Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Duke UP, 2003.
Tocqueville, Alexis, *Democracy in America: And Two Essays on America*. Trans. Gerald E. Bevan. Penguin, 2003.
Wesley, John. *Sermons on Several Occasions*. Vol 1. London, 1829.
Wilder, Craig Steven. *In the Company of Black Men: The African Influence on African American Culture in New York City*. New York UP, 2001.