

# to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis

**\*\*Unpacking "To Maecenas": Phillis Wheatley Analysis\*\***

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis** opens a fascinating window into the literary prowess and historical significance of Phillis Wheatley, one of the earliest African American poets and a pioneering figure in American literature. Her poem "To Maecenas" stands out not only for its classical allusions but also for its rich blend of personal ambition, artistic expression, and subtle social commentary. Diving into this work reveals layers of meaning that resonate beyond its 18th-century context, offering insight into Wheatley's complex identity and the cultural landscape she navigated.

## The Historical and Literary Context of Phillis Wheatley

Before exploring the poem itself, it's important to understand the backdrop against which Wheatley wrote. Born in West Africa, Phillis Wheatley was brought to America as a slave and purchased by the Wheatley family in Boston. Remarkably, she was educated by her owners and soon displayed extraordinary talent in poetry, a rarity for an African American woman at that time. Her work was published in 1773, making her the first African American woman to have a book of poetry printed.

## Why "To Maecenas" Matters

"To Maecenas" is a tribute poem that references Gaius Maecenas, a historical patron of the arts in ancient Rome. By invoking Maecenas, Wheatley aligns herself with a tradition of patronage and artistic cultivation, subtly positioning herself within the broader literary canon. This connection is especially significant given her marginalized status. The poem embodies themes of gratitude, aspiration, and the power of poetry to transcend social barriers.

## Exploring the Themes in "To Maecenas"

When analyzing "To Maecenas," several key themes emerge that illuminate Wheatley's intentions and the poem's broader implications.

## **Patronage and Artistic Support**

At its core, "To Maecenas" is an ode to patronage—the support that artists historically relied on to create their works. Wheatley's invocation of Maecenas symbolically acknowledges those who foster artistic talent, including her own benefactors. This theme reveals Wheatley's awareness of the social dynamics governing art and literature in her time.

## **Ambition and Literary Identity**

Wheatley's poem conveys a deep-seated ambition to be recognized as a legitimate poet. By addressing Maecenas, she articulates her desire for validation and support within the elite literary circles. This reflects her struggle to carve out a literary identity amid the constraints imposed by race and gender.

## **The Power of Poetry**

Throughout "To Maecenas," the transformative power of poetry is a recurring motif. Wheatley portrays poetry as a noble and elevating force capable of immortalizing the human spirit. This theme resonates with the Enlightenment ideals prevalent during her lifetime, emphasizing reason, art, and moral virtue.

## **Stylistic Devices and Classical Influences**

A significant part of any Phillis Wheatley analysis involves examining her stylistic choices and the classical influences that permeate her work.

## **Use of Classical Allusions**

"To Maecenas" is steeped in references to Greco-Roman culture and mythology. Wheatley's use of Maecenas as a symbol of patronage reflects her classical education and her efforts to situate herself within the tradition of Western literature. These allusions serve as both a literary strategy and a declaration of intellectual capability.

## **Formal Structure and Tone**

The poem adopts a formal and elevated tone typical of neoclassical poetry.

Wheatley employs heroic couplets—pairs of rhyming iambic pentameter lines—which was a popular style in 18th-century English poetry. This structure lends the poem a rhythmic and dignified quality, underscoring Wheatley's mastery of poetic conventions.

## **Imagery and Symbolism**

Imagery in "To Maecenas" often revolves around light, inspiration, and artistic creation. These symbols reinforce the poem's celebration of creativity and the poet's hope for enlightenment and recognition. The symbolic language also reflects Wheatley's broader themes of aspiration and transcendence.

## **Interpreting the Poem's Social and Political Undertones**

While "To Maecenas" is primarily a literary homage, it also carries subtle social and political implications, especially when viewed through the lens of Wheatley's unique position as an enslaved African woman.

## **Subtle Resistance Through Poetry**

Though the poem does not overtly challenge the institution of slavery, Wheatley's very act of writing and publishing poetry was a form of resistance. By engaging with classical forms and addressing figures of authority, she claimed intellectual equality and challenged contemporary prejudices.

## **Negotiating Identity and Acceptance**

The poem reflects Wheatley's delicate negotiation of her identity. She balances humility and ambition, expressing gratitude while asserting her worth as a poet. This delicate dance reveals the complexities faced by African American writers seeking acceptance in predominantly white literary spaces.

## **Tips for Readers Engaging with "To Maecenas"**

Understanding "To Maecenas" can be rewarding but may require some background knowledge and careful reading. Here are some tips to enhance your

appreciation:

- **Familiarize Yourself with Classical References:** Knowing who Maecenas was and the significance of patronage in ancient Rome can deepen your comprehension of the poem's themes.
- **Consider the Historical Context:** Reflect on Wheatley's life circumstances, including her status as an enslaved woman and the racial dynamics of 18th-century America.
- **Analyze the Poetic Form:** Pay attention to the rhyme scheme, meter, and tone to appreciate Wheatley's technical skill.
- **Look for Subtext:** Beyond the surface, notice how Wheatley subtly asserts her intellectual presence and challenges societal norms.

## Why Phillis Wheatley's Work Still Resonates Today

The enduring appeal of Phillis Wheatley's poetry, including "To Maecenas," lies in its blend of artistry, courage, and historical significance. Wheatley's work paved the way for future generations of African American writers and highlighted the power of literature to cross cultural and racial divides.

Moreover, her poems remind us of the importance of recognizing diverse voices in the literary canon. "To Maecenas" is not just a tribute to a patron but a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the universal quest for artistic expression and recognition.

Reading and analyzing "To Maecenas" invites modern readers to appreciate the layers of meaning embedded in Wheatley's poetry and to acknowledge the cultural and historical contexts that shaped her voice. This understanding enriches our perspective on early American literature and the ongoing dialogue about race, identity, and creativity.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who was Phillis Wheatley and why is she significant in American literature?

Phillis Wheatley was the first African American female poet to be published. She is significant for her remarkable achievements as an enslaved woman who

mastered classical literature and wrote influential poetry during the 18th century.

## **What is the main theme of Phillis Wheatley's poem 'To Maecenas'?**

The main theme of 'To Maecenas' is a celebration of patronage and artistic inspiration. Wheatley praises Maecenas, a historical figure known for supporting poets, symbolizing the importance of patronage in enabling poets to create and flourish.

## **How does Phillis Wheatley use classical references in 'To Maecenas'?**

Wheatley employs classical references such as Maecenas, a Roman patron of the arts, to align herself with the literary tradition of ancient poets and to elevate her own work within that esteemed cultural context.

## **What literary devices are prominent in 'To Maecenas' by Phillis Wheatley?**

Prominent literary devices in 'To Maecenas' include allusion, metaphor, and elevated diction. Wheatley uses these devices to convey respect for her patron and to position her poetry within a classical framework.

## **How does 'To Maecenas' reflect Phillis Wheatley's personal experiences and challenges?**

'To Maecenas' reflects Wheatley's desire for recognition and support as an African American woman poet in a predominantly white literary world, highlighting her struggle for acceptance and validation.

## **Why is the poem 'To Maecenas' considered an example of Neoclassical poetry?**

'To Maecenas' exemplifies Neoclassical poetry through its use of classical allusions, formal structure, and themes of patronage and artistic virtue, all characteristic of the 18th-century literary movement.

## **What is the significance of patronage in Phillis Wheatley's poetry, especially in 'To Maecenas'?**

Patronage is significant as it represents the support system necessary for poets like Wheatley to publish and gain recognition. In 'To Maecenas,' she acknowledges the essential role of patrons in advancing artistic careers and cultural production.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Exploring "To Maecenas": Phillis Wheatley's Poetic Dialogue with Patronage and Power**

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis** offers a compelling window into the complex interplay of art, patronage, and identity in 18th-century America. Phillis Wheatley, the first African American woman to publish a book of poetry, crafted "To Maecenas" as a tribute to her patron, encapsulating themes of gratitude, aspiration, and the intellectual exchange between poet and benefactor. This analysis unpacks the poem's historical significance, literary devices, and cultural implications, situating it within both Wheatley's oeuvre and the broader context of colonial American literature.

### **Contextual Background of "To Maecenas"**

Understanding "To Maecenas" requires an appreciation of Phillis Wheatley's unique position in colonial America. Enslaved as a child and brought to Boston, Wheatley was educated by the Wheatley family, who recognized her extraordinary literary talents. The poem pays homage to her patron—referred to metaphorically as "Maecenas," a nod to the famed Roman patron of the arts—highlighting the critical role patronage played in enabling Wheatley's poetic endeavors.

The choice to invoke Maecenas is itself a strategic literary and cultural gesture. It aligns Wheatley with classical traditions, asserting her place within the Western literary canon despite her marginalized social status. This connection also reinforces the reciprocal nature of patronage, where the poet's creativity is both nurtured and constrained by the patron's influence.

### **In-depth Analysis of Poetic Devices and Themes**

#### **Classical Allusions and Symbolism**

Wheatley's use of the Maecenas figure is a rich classical allusion that serves multiple functions. On one level, it flatters her patron, likening him to Augustus Caesar's adviser who was instrumental in fostering Roman literature. This comparison elevates her patron's status while simultaneously positioning Wheatley as a cultivated poet worthy of such patronage.

Symbolically, Maecenas represents the ideal of enlightened support for the arts, a concept deeply embedded in 18th-century intellectual circles.

Wheatley's invocation of this figure subtly critiques the limitations imposed on African American writers by emphasizing the universal ideals of artistic mentorship and cultural contribution.

## **Thematic Exploration: Gratitude and Intellectual Aspiration**

Central to "To Maecenas" is the theme of gratitude. Wheatley's eloquent expression of thanks transcends mere politeness, reflecting a nuanced awareness of the socio-political dynamics at play. Her acknowledgment of patronage is intertwined with a quiet assertion of her intellectual capabilities and literary ambitions.

The poem also explores aspirations toward artistic immortality and recognition. Through references to classical mythology and poetic tradition, Wheatley aligns her personal journey with a broader narrative of artistic excellence. This alignment serves both to legitimize her work and to challenge contemporary prejudices regarding race and authorship.

## **Structure and Stylistic Features**

"To Maecenas" exhibits a structured form typical of Wheatley's poetry, often influenced by neoclassical conventions. The poem's rhythm and meter reflect a disciplined approach, mirroring the formal elegance expected in the literary circles she sought to engage.

Wheatley's diction is notable for its refinement and erudition, characteristics that underscore her educational background despite her enslaved origins. The polished style enhances the poem's persuasive effect, making her arguments for recognition and respect more compelling to her audience.

## **Phillis Wheatley's Role in Shaping Early African American Literary Identity**

The "to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis" inevitably intersects with discussions on Wheatley's pioneering role in African American literature. As one of the earliest published Black poets, Wheatley's work challenged prevailing narratives of racial inferiority by demonstrating intellectual and artistic sophistication.

Her poetry, including "To Maecenas," functions as both personal expression and social commentary. By engaging with classical motifs and Enlightenment ideals, Wheatley navigated the complex terrain of identity, asserting her

humanity and creative agency in a society structured by racial hierarchy.

## **Patronage as a Double-Edged Sword**

While patronage was essential for Wheatley's literary production and public reception, it also imposed constraints. The dependence on white patrons meant that her poetry often reflected the tastes and sensibilities of her benefactors, potentially limiting the scope of her critique and self-expression.

However, Wheatley's skillful negotiation of these dynamics is evident in "To Maecenas." The poem simultaneously honors her patron and subtly reclaims intellectual space, illustrating the delicate balance she maintained between gratitude and self-assertion.

## **Comparative Insights: Wheatley and Her Contemporaries**

Comparing "To Maecenas" with works by contemporaneous poets reveals Wheatley's unique voice within colonial American literature. While many poets of the era employed patronage-themed poems, Wheatley's status as an African American woman adds layers of complexity to her engagement with this tradition.

Unlike some of her white counterparts who treated patronage purely as a social convention, Wheatley imbued her poem with a deeper resonance related to issues of freedom, identity, and authorship. This distinction enriches the interpretive possibilities of her work and underscores its historical significance.

## **Influence of Classical Education**

Wheatley's classical education, unusual for an enslaved person, is evident in her adept use of mythological and historical references. This grounding allowed her to dialogue with a wide range of literary traditions, positioning her work within a transatlantic intellectual framework.

The poem's invocation of Maecenas thus serves as a testament to Wheatley's erudition and her strategic adoption of classical forms to assert legitimacy and command respect.

# Legacy and Modern Relevance of "To Maecenas"

Today, the "to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis" gains renewed importance as scholars and readers revisit Wheatley's contributions to American literature and cultural history. The poem stands as a testament to the enduring power of literary patronage and the complexities of artistic production under conditions of social inequality.

Wheatley's deft negotiation of her identity and circumstances continues to inspire contemporary discussions on race, authorship, and the politics of recognition. Her ability to weave gratitude, classical allusion, and personal aspiration into a cohesive poetic statement exemplifies the resilience and creativity of marginalized voices.

As academic interest in early African American literature grows, "To Maecenas" remains a crucial text for understanding the intersections of race, literature, and power in the colonial era. Its rich layers of meaning invite ongoing analysis and appreciation, making Phillis Wheatley's work a vital part of the literary canon.

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**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis: Ravishing Tradition** Daniel Cottom, 2019-06-07 Though central to contemporary debates over identity, politics, and culture, the concept of tradition often remains unexamined. In a series of readings that transgress cultural and disciplinary boundaries, Daniel Cottom subjects this concept to close scrutiny. He calls into question conventional accounts of tradition, with their reliance on standard oppositions between dogma and reason, animality and humanity, community and society, religion and science, and modernity and its predecessors. Tradition, as Cottom envisions it, is a complex of cultural forces that moves, divides, and undoes those it touches; it ravishes, is ravished, and is centrally etched with acts of ravishment. Engaging writers from William Shakespeare to John Ashbery and from Phillis Wheatley to Antonin Artaud, Cottom examines literary history within the contexts of war, rape, and slavery; education, technology, and sexuality; repetition, imitation, stereotyping, and travesty; censorship, grief, and

ecstasy. He also evaluates the work of various theorists who address questions of tradition, such as Sigmund Freud, Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, and Adrienne Rich. Cottom draws on works in social and cultural history as well as on literary texts from different eras, nations, and genres. At once using and critiquing contemporary literary and cultural theory, this eloquent book shows why tradition continues to be of compelling interest and importance.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Phillis Wheatley as Prophetic Poet Wallis C. Baxter III, 2022-05-04 In *You Must Be Born Again: Phillis Wheatley as Prophetic Poet*, the author argues that Phillis Wheatley is the mother of liberation theology. The author uses Wheatley's poetry and life experiences to create a portrait of Wheatley beyond that of a poet. Wheatley is described as both poet and visionary who wrestles with God during the creative process. The lyrical expressions of Wheatley's poetry unlock the spiritual impressions on her heart. The author sets up the racial dynamics of Wheatley's time and her engagement with those politics. As a preacher, Wheatley combats the immoral undercurrent that erodes the community's social, economic, and spiritual foundation as well as its political systems. The author positions Wheatley as one uniquely qualified to address the hypocrisy within her world and, by implication, present-day society by calling for immersion into a radical understanding of love and justice, resulting in a renewed hope for equality and a pathway toward equity.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** We Wear the Mask Rafia Zafar, 1997 Zafar demonstrates that in doing so, these forerunners of modern black American writers both adapted to and reacted against a milieu of social resistance and cultural antipathy. By the end of Reconstruction, this first century of black writers had paved the way for a distinctive, African American literature.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture Catherine E. Ingrassia, Jeffrey S. Ravel, 2005-05-04 With this well-illustrated new volume, the SECC continues its tradition of publishing innovative interdisciplinary scholarship on the interpretive edge. Essays include: Misty Anderson, *Our Purpose is the Same: Whitefield, Foote, and the Theatricality of Methodism* Tili Boon Cuillé, *La Vraisemblance du merveilleux: Operatic Aesthetics in Cazotte's Fantastic Fiction* Simon Dickie, *Joseph Andrews and the Great Laughter Debate: The Roasting of Adams* Lynn Festa, *Cosmetic Differences: The Changing Faces of England and France* Blake Gerard, *All that the heart wishes: Changing Views toward Sentimentality Reflected in Visualizations of Sterne's Maria, 1773-1888* Jennifer Keith, *The Sins of Sensibility and the Challenge of Antislavery Poetry* Mary Helen McMurran, *Aphra Behn from Both Sides: Translation in the Atlantic World* Leslie Richardson, *Leaving her Father's House: Locke, Astell, and Clarissa's Body Politic* Sandra Sherman, *The Wealth of Nations in the 1790s* Alan Sikes, *Snip Snip Here, Snip Snip There, and a Couple of Tra La Las: The Rise and Fall of the Castrato Singer* Rivka Swenson, *Representing Modernity in Jane Barker's Galesia Trilogy: Jacobite Allegory and the Aesthetics of the Patch-Work Subject*

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** *Written by Herself* Frances Smith Foster, 1993 ...substantial contribution to African-American Studies and women's studies. --Mississippi Quarterly A bravura performance by an accomplished scholar... it strikes a perfect balance between insightful literary analysis and historical investigation. --Eighteenth-Century Studies ... an impressive study of a wide range of writers.... Foster's work is both scholarly and accessible. Her prose is economical and direct, making this book enjoyable as well as instructive. --Belles Lettres ... an impressively wide-ranging discussion of texts and contexts... --Signs Foster has written a fine book that provides the reader with a context for understanding the importance of the written word for women who chose to 'set the record straight'. --Journal of American History ... fascinating, meticulously researched... Likely to prove seminal in the field... highly recommended... --Library Journal *Written by Herself* comprises a volume of remarkable female characters whose desires for social change often made them catalysts for spiritual awakening in their own times. --MultiCultural Review ... an outstanding piece of scholarship... Foster's book offers deeply intelligent, provocative, totally accessible analysis of a tradition and of writers still not sufficiently read and taught. --American Literature Well written and thoroughly researched. Highly recommended... --Choice The first

comprehensive cultural history of literature by African American women prior to the 20th century. From the oral histories of Alice, a slave born in 1686, to the literary tradition that included Jarena Lee and Octavia Victoria Rogers Albert, this literature was argument, designed to correct or to instruct an audience often ignorant about or even hostile to black women.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis: Revolutions and Reconstructions** Van Gosse, David Waldstreicher, 2020-08-28 *Revolutions and Reconstructions* gathers historians of the early republic, the Civil War era, and African American and political history to consider not whether black people participated in the politics of the nineteenth century but how, when, and with what lasting effects. Collectively, its authors insist that historians go beyond questioning how revolutionary the American Revolution was, or whether Reconstruction failed, and focus, instead, on how political change initiated by African Americans and their allies constituted the rule in nineteenth-century American politics, not occasional and cataclysmic exceptions. The essays in this groundbreaking collection cover the full range of political activity by black northerners after the Revolution, from cultural politics to widespread voting, within a political system shaped by the rising power of slaveholders. Conceptualizing a new black politics, contributors observe, requires reorienting American politics away from black/white and North/South polarities and toward a new focus on migration and local or state structures. Other essays focus on the middle decades of the nineteenth century and demonstrate that free black politics, not merely the politics of slavery, was a disruptive and consequential force in American political development. From the perspective of the contributors to this volume, formal black politics did not begin in 1865, or with agitation by abolitionists like Frederick Douglass in the 1840s, but rather in the Revolutionary era's antislavery and citizenship activism. As these essays show, revolution, emancipation, and Reconstruction are not separate eras in U.S. history, but rather linked and ongoing processes that began in the 1770s and continued through the nineteenth century. Contributors: Christopher James Bonner, Kellie Carter Jackson, Andrew Diemer, Laura F. Edwards, Van Gosse, Sarah L. H. Gronningsater, M. Scott Heerman, Dale Kretz, Pádraig Riley, Samantha Seeley, James M. Shinn Jr., David Waldstreicher.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis: Brill's Companion to Classical Reception and Modern World Poetry**, 2022-12-28 *Brill's Companion to Classical Reception and Modern World Poetry* explores the relations between antiquity and modernity from the angle of the reception of Graeco-Roman antiquity in modern world poetry. In an innovative combination of the fields of Classical Reception and World Literature, it tackles ever-challenging questions which are central to both fields, such as the questions of literature and identity, specificity and universality, Eurocentrism, poetics and translation. Leading experts from both Classics and Modern Languages contribute 11 chapters on modern poetry and poets from different linguistic and cultural traditions from around the world.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis: The Ebony Column** Eric Ashley Hairston, 2013-06-30 In *The Ebony Column*, Eric Ashley Hairston begins a new thread in the ongoing conversation about the influence of Greek and Roman antiquity on U.S. civilization and education. While that discussion has yielded many exceptional insights into antiquity and the American experience, it has so regularly elided the African American component that all classical influence on black writing and thought seems to vanish. That omission, Hairston contends, is disturbing not least because of its longevity—from an early period of overt stereotyping and institutionalized racism right up to the contemporary and, one would hope, more cosmopolitan and enlightened era. Challenging and correcting that persistent shortsightedness, Hairston examines several prominent black writers' and scholars' deep investment in the classics as individuals, as well as the broader cultural investment in the classics and the values of the ancient world. Beginning with the late-eighteenth-century verse of Phillis Wheatley, whose classically inspired poems functioned as a kind of Trojan horse to defeat white oppression, Hairston goes on to consider the oratory of Frederick Douglass, whose rhetoric and ideas of virtue were much influenced by Cicero, and the writings of educator Anna Julia Cooper, whose classical training was a key source of her vibrant feminism. Finally, he offers a fresh examination of W. E. B. DuBois's seminal *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and its debt to antiquity,

which volumes of commentary have largely overlooked. The first book to appear in a new series, *Classicism in American Culture*, *The Ebony Column* passionately demonstrates how the myths, cultures, and ideals of antiquity helped African Americans reconceptualize their role in a Euro-American world determined to make them mere economic commodities and emblems of moral and intellectual decay. To figures such as Wheatley, Douglass, Cooper, and DuBois, classical literature offered striking moral, intellectual, and philosophical alternatives to a viciously exclusionary vision of humanity, Africanity, the life of the citizen, and the life of the mind.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Literary History of New England Women Writers 1630-1800 Jacqueline Hornstein, 1978

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Rome's Patron Emily Gowers, 2024-02-27 The story of Maecenas and his role in the evolution and continuing legacy of ancient Roman poetry and culture. An unelected statesman with exceptional powers, a patron of the arts and a luxury-loving friend of the emperor Augustus: Maecenas was one of the most prominent and distinctive personalities of ancient Rome. Yet the traces he left behind are unreliable and tantalizingly scarce. Rather than attempting a conventional biography, Emily Gowers shows in *Rome's Patron* that it is possible to tell a different story, one about Maecenas's influence, his changing identities and the many narratives attached to him across two millennia. *Rome's Patron* explores Maecenas's appearances in the central works of Augustan poetry written in his name—Virgil's *Georgics*, Horace's *Odes* and Propertius's elegies—and in later works of Latin literature that reassess his influence. For the Roman poets he supported, Maecenas was a mascot of cultural flexibility and innovation, a pioneer of gender fluidity and a bearer of imperial demands who could be exposed as a secret sympathizer with their own values. For those excluded from his circle, he represented either favouritism and indulgence or the lost ideal of a patron in perfect collaboration with the authors he championed. As Gowers shows, Maecenas had and continues to have a unique cachet—in the fantasies that still surround the gardens, buildings and objects so tenuously associated with him; in literature, from Ariosto and Ben Johnson to Phillis Wheatley and W. B. Yeats; and in philanthropy, where his name has been surprisingly adaptable to more democratic forms of patronage.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** JACT Review , 1999

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Black American Literature Forum , 1989 Provides image and full-text online access to back issues. Consult the online table of contents for specific holdings.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Redemption Songs Heather Neff, Heather Neff-Mayson, 1989

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** *Ulysses in Black* Patrice D. Rankine, 2008-12-30 In this groundbreaking work, Patrice D. Rankine asserts that the classics need not be a mark of Eurocentrism, as they have long been considered. Instead, the classical tradition can be part of a self-conscious, prideful approach to African American culture, esthetics, and identity. *Ulysses in Black* demonstrates that, similar to their white counterparts, African American authors have been students of classical languages, literature, and mythologies by such writers as Homer, Euripides, and Seneca.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Spiritual Interrogations Katherine Clay Bassard, 1999-01-18 The late eighteenth century witnessed an influx of black women to the slave-trading ports of the American Northeast. The formation of an early African American community, bound together by shared experiences and spiritual values, owed much to these women's voices. The significance of their writings would be profound for all African Americans' sense of their own identity as a people. Katherine Clay Bassard's book is the first detailed account of pre-Emancipation writings from the period of 1760 to 1863, in light of a developing African American religious culture and emerging free black communities. Her study—which examines the relationship among race, culture, and community—focuses on four women: the poet Phillis Wheatley and poet and essayist Ann Plato, both Congregationalists; and the itinerant preacher Jarena Lee, and Shaker eldress Rebecca Cox Jackson, who, with Lee, had connections with African Methodism. Together, these women drew

on what Bassard calls a spirituals matrix, which transformed existing literary genres to accommodate the spiritual music and sacred rituals tied to the African diaspora. Bassard's important illumination of these writers resurrects their path-breaking work. They were cocreators, with all black women who followed, of African American intellectual life.

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Guide to American Poetry Explication James Ruppert, John R. Leo, 1989

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** Arts & Humanities Citation Index , 1990

**to maecenas phillis wheatley analysis:** A Study Guide for Phillis Wheatley's "To His Excellency, General Washington" Gale, Cengage Learning, 2016 A Study Guide for Phillis Wheatley's To His Excellency, General Washington, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Poetry for Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Poetry for Students for all of your research needs.

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