

# PAULINE E. HOPKINS'S INTERTEXTUAL AESTHETICS IN *CONTENDING FORCES*<sup>1</sup>

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## PALABRAS CLAVE

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## ABSTRACT

Pauline E. Hopkins's attitude towards fiction as a terrain where political and social truths could be uttered, helped her establish a new hybrid writing paradigm in *Contending Forces*, her historical romance. The extraordinary intertextual load of references, verbatim borrowings and changed citations, her Emersonian "noble borrowing," is in fact both an audacious maneuvering of popular literature, and a systematic and subversive redrafting of preceding canonical texts from the Anglo-American literary traditions and of contemporary historical political testimonies. Hopkins's palimpsestic aesthetics recreate a sense of African American literary interventions aimed at recomposing a new black archival imaginary redeemed of racist detritus. Hopkins does not emerge in this novel as a plagiarist, as happens in some of her novels, but as an alluder, a narrative voice that always signals readers towards the racial burden of the past hidden in a corpus of intertextual debts to anchor her African American historical romance in a world of textually independent dependence.

## RESUMEN

La actitud de Pauline E. Hopkins hacia la ficción como campo para la expresión de verdades políticas y sociales hizo posible que estableciera un nuevo paradigma narrativo en su novela histórica *Contending Forces*. La extraordinaria cantidad de referencias intertextuales, préstamos literales y citas transformadas, su emersoniano "tomar prestado con nobleza," es en

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realidad una maniobra audaz propia de la literatura popular, pero también una reconstrucción sistemática y atrevida de textos canónicos anteriores con el fin de recomponer un nuevo archivo creativo afroamericano libre de detritos racistas. En esta novela, Hopkins no plagia, como así ocurre en otras de sus obras, sino que alude a otros títulos con una voz narrativa que siempre indica a los lectores cuál es la carga racial existente del pasado oculto dentro de un corpus de deudas intertextuales, que sitúan su novela histórica en un mundo de dependencia intertextual independiente.

Pauline E. Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1900) is an empowering picture of the black community that frantically tries to establish links with readers, both black and white, to stand as the definite *talking book* (Gates 127-169) to bring about social and political changes. In this *opus magnus* on American racial history, Hopkins establishes a new hybrid-writing paradigm balanced between the two Emersonian ideals on creativity as exposed in his essay "Quotation and Originality" (1859).<sup>2</sup> For Emerson, "there is no pure originality" and "[a]ll minds quote," since "[o]ur debt to tradition through reading and conversation is so massive, our protest or private addition so rare and insignificant" that "[b]y necessity, by proclivity and by delight, we all quote." In her novel, Hopkins's extraordinary intertextual load of references, allusions, verbatim borrowings and changed citations—her "inspired acts of borrowings" (Brown 385)—creates a dialectic process, an Emersonian "noble borrowing"—which is related to a "self-conscious construction of her identity" (Pavletich 126), as well as to her ambition to be distinguished as an outstanding race writer in the Era of the Black Woman. What some scholars have labeled as Hopkins's "plagiaristic aesthetic" (Sanborn 84) appears in *Contending Forces* as an audacious maneuvering of popular literature, a systematic and destabilizing redrafting of preceding canonical texts from the Anglo-American literary traditions, and a masked deployment of contemporary historical political testimonies.

In *Allusion to Poets*, Christopher Ricks makes a distinction between plagiarism and allusion, being the former the latter's contrary, since "the alluder hopes the reader will recognize something, the plagiarist that the reader will not" (1). For Ricks, "to

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<sup>2</sup> "Quotation and Originality" was firstly read as the second lecture in a course given at Freeman Place Chapel in Boston on March 1859, following Emerson's "The Law of Success" and preceding "Clubs."

allude to a predecessor is both to acknowledge, in piety, a previous achievement and also is a form of benign appropriation" (33). In *Contending Forces* Hopkins constructs her narrative voice as that of an "alluder," who signals readers towards the racial burden of the past hidden in a corpus of intertextual debts to anchor her African American historical romance in a world of textual independent dependence. Hopkins displays thus a writing practice that attests to her ultimate objective to be cherished as a practitioner of "another form of collective authorship" (Dworkin lxi), or, in Barthean terms, as the African American "scriptor" (Barthes 39). Hence, when viewed through the Genettian lenses of literature in second degree, Hopkins's palimpsestic aesthetics recreate a sense of African American literary interventions bent towards the Derridean spectral as well as towards the African American diasporic spectral where the works of the past haunt the present.

Insightful scholars have considered Hopkins's borrowings in *Contending Forces*, but they have done so from a partial point of view.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the relationship of intertextual references in *Contending Forces* cannot be considered adequately without taking into account the close interplay between its borrowings from poetic as well as prose texts, together with biblical and religious quotations, references to the African American culture, allusions to the political, social and cultural world of late nineteenth-century Boston and America, as well as the assumptions that mainstream Victorian American readers projected on quoted or alluded materials.

As Hopkins explains in her Preface to the novel, her political project of historicizing the black past and present is linked to her struggle to denounce "the atrocity of the acts committed one hundred years ago" (the first four chapters), as they "are duplicated today, when no slavery is supposed no longer to exist" (16). This duplication, that Holly Jackson calls "historical recursivity" (193-194), focuses principally on the question of late-nineteenth century

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<sup>3</sup> In his article, "*Contending Forces*' Intellectual History: Emerson, Du Bois, and Washington at the Turn of the Century" (2013), Sydney Bufkin considers the influence of Emerson in the novel and relates it to Hopkins's unacknowledged references to the racial philosophy of Du Bois. For his part, Daniel Hack (2016) studies the writer's use of Tennyson as part of an African American continuum in what he calls "the African Americanization" of Victorian literature. Enlightening, as these articles are, for a better understanding of Hopkins's literary borrowings, they fall short of providing a whole composite picture of the writer's full encompassing vision in the novel.

lynchings and racial violence. This is confirmed by her turning to contemporary history, a fact that is clearly stated when she alerts about her borrowings and informs about the texts she has deployed in chapters XIII and XV:

In Chapter XIII I have used for the address of the Hon. Herbert Clapp the statements and accusations made against the Negro by ex-Governor Northen of Georgia, in his memorable address before the Congregational Club at Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass., May 22, 1899.<sup>4</sup> In Chapter XV I have made Will Smith's argument in

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<sup>4</sup> Northen is alluded on several other occasions in the text. On page 248, Chapter XIII, the expression "living death" appears which is included in "words spoken by Prof. H. M. Brown, a Negro and member of the faculty of Hampton Institute." As Mikko Tuhkanen explains, in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century fiction written by African American women, the expression "living death" usually refers to concubinage and the consequences that haunted black women's lives (359). Yet, Hopkins might be borrowing these words from William J. Northen's address before the Congregational Club at Tremont Temple: "Is there no tender word for the defenseless women of the south who carry with them a living shame in a living death, in a life all too long for its miseries if it lasts but for a day?" (*Boston Globe* 23 May, 1899. Cit. Brown 2007: 184). In Chapter XV, page 267 (author and source unacknowledged), there is another borrowing from Northen: "Another man, also a Southerner, has told us: 'In education and industrial progress this race has accomplished more than it could have achieved in centuries in different environment, without the aid of the whites. The Negro has needed the example as well as the aid of the white man. In sections where the colored population is massed and removed from contact with the whites, the Negro has retrograded. Segregate the colored population and you take away the object-lesson.'" This part was also quoted by Northen, who quotes the source: "Hon. W. T. Harris, U. S. Commissioner of Education, in a pamphlet published in 1896, 'Education in the Various States,' p. 1331." The complete title of this pamphlet is *Education in the various states. Education of the colored race. Slater fund and education of the Negro* (United States. Office of Education. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896). Northen mistakes the page number that is in fact 1333. These words are mistakenly referenced by Sydney Bufkin, who writes that they are from "H.F. Kletzing and W.H. Crogman's *Progress of a Race, or, The Remarkable Advancement of the Afro-American*, published in 1898 and introduced by Booker T. Washington, 349." Klitzing and Crogman were both African Americans, not "[a]nother man, also a Southerner," as Hopkins writes, and they must have also quoted from the government pamphlet. Moreover, on page 270 (author and source unacknowledged), Hopkins writes: "Lynchings are justifiable on two grounds,' says a thoughtful writer: 'First, if they are consonant with the moral dignity and well-being of the people; and secondly, if they stop, and are the only sure means of stopping, the crime they avenge.' Lynching does not stop crime; it is but a subterfuge for killing men. It is a good excuse, to use a rough expression, to 'go a-gunning for niggers.'" These conservative words seem to be also inspired by Northen in his approach to the racial crimes of lynchings. David F. Godshalk studies Northen's antilynching campaigns

answer to the Hon. Herbert Clapp a combination of the best points made by well-known public speakers in the United States—white and black—in defense of the Negro. (16)

What the author presents as her weakness—"I feel my own deficiencies too strongly to attempt original composition on this subject at this crisis in the history of the Negro in the United States" (16)—is precisely her strength: the composition of an imposing *roman à clef* that draws meaning from a constant interplay of literary and historical allusions. Hopkins was "a quintessential Bostonian" (Verner & Davis 43), and *Contending Forces* stands as an homage to the activist history of Boston as well as to its geography full with landmarks of racial struggle (Faneuil Hall, Saint Monica's Hospital, the Boston Common, Tremont Temple, etc.). In contrast to some scholars's approach to Hopkins's fictional world as a bipolar political construction—her rendering of an exclusionary Washingtonian vs. Du Boisean antagonism—her numerous veiled allusions to a wide range of past and contemporary notable white and black political figures expands the range of *Contending Forces* to include a deeper understanding of late nineteenth-century racial politics and a much more nuanced ideological vision. As Alisha Knight rightfully claims, "it would be more accurate to recognize that Hopkins is foreshadowing if not predicting what would later escalate into an antagonistic relationship between these two men" (34). Thus, besides her explicit mention of Northen's speech in the Preface, in her novel, she will also indirectly refer to Benjamin W. Arnett's reply "The Black Man's View"; to James Monroe Whitfield in Chapter IV (78, as Mr. Whitfield); to John Albion Andrew in Chapter V (81, as Father Andrew)<sup>5</sup>; to James W. Jacks in Chapter VIII (148)<sup>6</sup>; to Alexander

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during 1906-1907, undertaken to combat white racial hatred and violence, explains that Northen visited numerous counties and spoke before audiences of black and white men. At that time, however, the Republican Party and the Populist Party, former white allies, had practically forgotten African Americans. Godshalk writes that, "though deeply committed to antilynching reform, Northen disregarded African American appeals for racial equality and integration" (140). He believed that the South belonged to whites, even if white supremacy imposed on them certain responsibilities. Hopkins's introduction of the quoted words as being pronounced by "a thoughtful writer," makes it plausible to attribute them to Northen's lifelong involvement in conservative antilynching campaigns.

<sup>5</sup> Father Andrew does not appear as a visible character in the novel. He is referred to as a protector to Dora and Sappho on two occasions (Chapter V, 81, and Chapter VII,

Crummell in Chapter VIII (150, as Reverend John Thomas); to T. Thomas Fortune, Alexander Walters, Edwin Walker, Archibald Grimké in Chapter XII (224, as members of The American Colored League); to Henry W. Grady in Chapter XIII (251) and XV (266)<sup>7</sup>; to

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128), when he helps Sappho find a job as a stenographer in an office run by white people. Hopkins is probably alluding to John Albion Andrew (1818-1867), governor of Massachusetts between 1861 and 1866, a radical abolitionist devoted to the defense of African Americans. As with so many other past and contemporary figures, she paid homage to him in several articles and praised his role as a political advocate in the antislavery cause and black civil rights struggle. She referred to him in three articles of her series "Famous Men of the Negro Race": "Sergeant William H. Carney," "John Mercer Langton" and "Robert Morris" (*Colored American Magazine*, vol. 3, no. 2, June 1901, pp. 84-89; vol. 3, no. 3, July 1901, pp. 177-184; and vol. 3, no. 5, September 1901, pp. 337-342). In "Latest Phases of the Race Problem in America," an article signed with one of her pen-names, Sarah A. Allen (*Colored American Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 4, February 1903, pp. 244-251), Hopkins transcribed the famous words Andrew pronounced after the proclamation of Emancipation in 1862: "I know not what record may await me in another world, but this I know, that I was never mean enough to despise a man because he was poor, because he was ignorant, or because he was black" (cit. Dworkin 225).

<sup>6</sup> A reference gleaned from Mrs Willis's words encouraging black women to "fill the positions now occupied by your mothers [...] to refute the charges brought against us as to our moral irresponsibility, and the low moral standard maintained by us in comparison with other races." In 1895 James W. Jacks, a journal editor and the president of the Missouri Press Association, had sent a letter to Florence Bargarnie, a British activist who condemned lynchings. In his letter, Jacks attacked African American activist Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) and tried to destroy both her personal reputation and political efforts in her anti-lynching campaigns. He also censured African American women's moral standards. The letter triggered immediate and harsh responses from black women activists, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and Victoria Earle Matthews, among others.

<sup>7</sup> In chapter XIII, page 251 (author and source unacknowledged: "holding it better and wiser to tend the weeds in the garden than to water the exotic in the window"), Hopkins borrows from Henry W. Grady's "The Race Problem in the South" (Shurter 203), a speech delivered on December 12, 1889 in Boston at Faneuil Hall, in what would be Grady's last public appearance. Grady (1850-1889), a Georgian journalist and orator, and editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, was one of the main spokesmen of the creed of the New South during the last half of the nineteenth century. This creed tried to reintegrate the old Confederate states into the Union. The new social order enclosed the reinforcement of segregationist laws and was defended nationally in Grady's speech "The New South," delivered in the New England Society of New York, on December 21 1886. Grady encouraged the industrialization of the South, announced that the Old South of slavery and secessionism was past and had been changed by a new South of union and freedom. And in Chapter XV (266, author acknowledged and source unacknowledged), Hopkins quotes again from Grady's speech "The Race Problem in the South."

John T. Morgan in Chapter XVII (290, a senator from Alabama)<sup>8</sup>; and to Edward A Johnson in Chapter XXI (372).<sup>9</sup>

As for her poetic borrowings, Hopkins's deployment of verses must be necessarily assessed taking into account late nineteenth-century views on poetry, that is to say, "the inexistence of a distinction between high or elite culture and popular or mass entertainment," "the appreciation of women's contribution to poetry" and "the appreciation of transatlantic authors" (Larson 1). An understanding of Hopkins's talents in *Contending Forces* demands attention to the long list of authors from whom she quotes, names that disparage the dwindling relevance of certain types of poetic forms and themes at the turn of the early Modernist era. Another element to be taken into consideration is the fact that many of the borrowings the author includes in her text must not have been necessarily taken from first editions, but from newspaper reprintings, scrapbooks, commonplace books, personal translations, and a vast array of literary forms which allowed a refashioning of original wording through memorizing exercises and annotations that were well received and accepted in nineteenth-century culture.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hopkins is referring to Alabama senator John T. Morgan, author of "The Race Question in the United States" (*Arena* 2 [1890]: 385-398), where, among other ideas, he stated that some of the methods to prevent African Americans from voting were not due to Southern racial prejudices but to the innate inferiority of the black race. As Joseph O. Baylen and John Hammond Moore explain, Morgan was a staunch supporter of segregation, an expansionist who defended the annexation of Hawaii, and the Philippines. For Morgan, neither political nor social equality could guarantee the integration of African Americans in the American national life (65-75).

<sup>9</sup> Mrs Smith tells her son about her own life story. Hopkins borrows here from the end of chapter XXXI (Educational Progress) of Edward A. Johnson's, *A School History of the Negro Race in America from 1869 to 1890. With a Short Introduction as to the Origin of the Race; Also a Short Sketch of Liberia*, published in 1890 (158). Hopkins makes slight changes in the original text. Johnson writes: "The love of knowledge seems to be instinctive, and thousands of faithful mothers spend many weary nights at the ironing-board and wash-tub, in order to get money to help their children obtain an education." Hopkins writes: "a story of faithful fathers bearing insult and injury to keep the meagrely paid employment; of mothers 'spending weary days and nights over the washtub and ironing-board in order to get money to educate their children.'"

<sup>10</sup> Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray agree, recalling Emerson's ideas in "Quotation and Originality," that, in nineteenth-century culture, "literary creativity was not restricted to devising original texts," but "one-of-a-kind texts could be fashioned from parts of preexisting ones in myriad ways [...] The prodigious exertion of weaving published words into new combinations testifies to the important role literature played in these people's lives" (28).

Poetry pervaded all areas of Victorian life both in American and transatlantic English society. Hence, whereas most of the intertextual borrowings in *Contending Forces* point to a direct impact on the reader and try to establish a link between authoritative authors and the African American text, there still appear other references which evince Hopkins' artistry at combining new meanings out of well-known materials. Hopkins uses poetry, "a common idiom of middlebrow culture from the Jacksonian period onward" (Larson 2), to show "refinement and cultural literacy that prose alone did not provide" (Larson 2). As attested by the poets she borrows from, Hopkins leans on the "alliance between poetry and political advocacy," a fact that stood out throughout the century. In fact, most of the poets she mentions were not only popular but "objects of veneration" (Rubin 31) among her targeted African American readers and potential white readers. Hence, she identifies herself as a member of an intellectual and bourgeois group with access to a privileged cultural capital.

Hopkins, generally, though not always, uses widely recognized British and American poets who had written on slavery and were well known as antislavery or abolitionist authors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet she also turns to authors who could only be indirectly or completely disengaged from the politics of racial denunciation. She exhibits what Zboray and Zboray call "literary creativity" behind her deployment of preexisting texts, works which circulated widely in newspapers and were immortalized in Americans's cultural collective conscience.<sup>11</sup> In *Contending Forces*, the author sometimes acknowledges the author but she never provides information about the original text from which she borrows. In contrast to her plagiaristic practices in other works she wrote, in this novel she never claims property of any of the materials referenced. Hopkins always alerts readers that she is using borrowed

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<sup>11</sup> Thus, Hopkins follows a practice widely recognized and respected at her time, as, for example, John Morton explains in his study on Tennyson's influence on writers of fiction, from the nineteenth-century to the present day. Morton shows how "novelists in the Victorian period often self-consciously turned to poetry to create their own 'parallels,' perhaps in an attempt to ally their work with the more surely 'literary' poetry" (7). Tennyson himself, Morton writes, would have agreed with the practice as "his own theory of artistic influence was: 'People accused Virgil of plagiarizing, but if a man made it his own there was no harm in that (look at the great poets, Shakespeare included)'" (8).



material by introducing quotation marks, or by separating her borrowed lines from the main text. There is just one occasion when, as analyzed later, this does not happen (Chapter XVII, 295).

Hopkins might not have necessarily encountered these poems in edited volumes but in verse compilations, local newspapers, scrapbooks, commonplace books, or even quotations compilations, such as *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. Some of the lines she borrows have a clear inspirational character and such an enduring interest that somehow neutralize their political or ideological impact. These lines recall what Ryan Cordell and Abby Mullen call "fugitive verses," which "often moralize, and in their chastening or instruction echo and reinforce the lessons of middle-class classrooms, sermons, and parlors."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Hopkins feels free to play with the lines of these

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<sup>12</sup> Cordell and Mullen use the term "fugitive verses," as "a conceptual framework for grappling with the textual and authorial fluidity of newspaper poetry, a genre that gestured toward the stability of literary conventions while refracting those conventions through the exchange, selection, and seriality that defined newspaper networks." Hopkins seems to have culled some of her borrowings from these sources. Thus, on page 144 (Chapter VIII, author and source unacknowledged: For of the soul the body form doth take, For soul is form and doth the body make, quoted Dora), Hopkins quotes lines 132-133 from Edmund Spenser's "An Hymn in Honour of Beauty." In Chapter IX, 171 (author and source unacknowledged), lines 25-32 from Henry Carey's "The Ballad of Sally in our Alley"; and page 172 (author and source unacknowledged: "'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour," quoted Will, marching up to the mirror) from Charles Stuart Calverley's "Disaster" (1872) a line from this poem included in *Fly Leaves*. Calverley (1831-1884) was an English poet and an initiator of the university school of humour, makes a parody of the oft-parodied Thomas Moore, "The Fire Worshippers," which contains the following lines: "Twas bright, 'twas heav'nly, but 'tis past! Oh! ever thus, from childhood's hour." The Calverley's original says: "'T was ever thus from childhood's hour! / My fondest hopes would not decay; / I never loved a tree or flower / Which was the first to fade away." In Chapter XI, 202 (author and source unacknowledged: "Will Smith's gay voice sounded in her ear: 'Whither away, fair lady?'" ), Hopkins quotes from quartet 30 of George Agar Hansard's "The Ballad of Robin Hood's Marriage" (1770) in *The Book of Archery*, but she inverts the original order: "Said Robin Hood, Lady fair, whither away? / O whither, fair lady, away?" Yet she might also be quoting from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Act 1, scene 1, line 180, when Herminia addresses Helena: "Godspeed, fair Helena! Wither away?" And on page 206 (author and sources unacknowledged: "she read from a slip of paper in her hand: All that glistens is not gold; / Often have you heard this told. / Despise the false; welcome the true, / So shall you receive your due." The two first lines belong to *Merchant of Venice*, Act II, scene 7, but the last two lines seem to be Hopkins's invention. In Chapter XIII, 242 (author and source unacknowledged: "land of the free and the home of the brave"), Hopkins quotes the final line which concludes the four stanzas of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, originally a poem written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key, "Defense of Fort McHenry," a fortress in Baltimore, Maryland,

during the 1812 war against England. Yet, she might have had in mind Whittier's quotation from the same piece in his anti-slavery poem "The Hunters of Men" (Packer 139). On page 245 (author and source unacknowledged: "Up then and act! Thy courage wake!/Combat intrigue, injustice, tyranny/And in thine efforts God will be with thee."), Hopkins uses quotation marks but does not provide the source, "The Promised Land" by King Oscar II of Sweden. She also chooses the first line, second part of the second line, and the eleventh and twelfth lines from the original. I have been unable to locate the exact source from which she might have read the poem, but I did find the poem as it appeared in at least two publications in 1907 when King Oscar died: *The Linnean: A Monthly Magazine of High Ideals*, vol. 10, July 1907, p. 14; and in *T.P.'s Weekly*, vol. 10, December 13, 1907, p. 77. Richard Edgcumbe in *Byron: The Last Phase*. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1909, p. 45) also refers to the poem and provides its complete text, even if he does not mention King Oscar's name as the author who had died two years before: "In the spirit of an exalted poet who has lately passed from us, if such prescience were possible, Byron might have applied these stirring lines to himself: 'Up, then, and act! Rise up and undertake/The duties of today. Thy courage wake!/Spend not life's strength in idleness, for life/Should not be wasted in Care's useless strife./No slothful doubt let work's place occupy,/But labour! Labour for posterity!/'Up, then, and sing! Rise up and bare the sword/With which to combat suffering and wrong./Console all those that suffer with thy word./Defend Man's heritage with sword and song!/Combat intrigue, injustice, tyranny,/And in thine efforts God will be with thee.'" (in italics those lines chosen by Hopkins). In Chapter XVI, 277 (author and source unacknowledged) ("God rest us all—we know not what we are!/What nature wills, not what we wish, are we"). The lines are from "An Echo," a poem written by Robert Burns Wilson for *The Times Democrat* (New Orleans, Louisiana, Sunday 2 September 1888, 5). Due to the place of publication of this composition, it is possible to think that Hopkins must have encountered it reprinted in another local newspaper or compilation. The complete poem says: "For *The Times Democrat*: God rest us all—we know not what we are!/What nature wills, not what we wish, are we./In quiet days, when, on the flowering sea/Peace waits, white-robed, and finds no cloud to mar/Her smiling reign, we hail Opinion's ear,/Whereon Death proudly sits, and though we see/The red wheels wet with bloodshed soon to be,/We mount with these, and blind drive to war./And when our brothers sleep, and sorrowing years/Have crossed their sunken graves in slow procession,/All all their hearts are turned to dust, we say,/How useless was it all—the pain and tears!/And so we are consoled with that confession,/Till some new difference sweeps regret away. (Robert Burns Wilson, Frankfort, Ky.)" In Chapter XVIII, 307 (author and source unacknowledged: "April's sun and showers had blessed the earth," and "Cold Nature, by his amorous kiss/Stung sweetly, stirred his limbs and felt/A thrill of immemorial bliss."), Hopkins quotes lines 13-15 from William B. Wright's "April," with slight changes, since Wright's original says: "Cold Nature by thy amorous kiss/Stung sweetly, stirs his limbs and feels/A thrill of immemorial bliss" (109). And on page 308 (authors and sources unacknowledged: "The breeze runs riot with thy charms,/O faint, delicious, springtime violet!"), for the first and only time in the novel, Hopkins composes a two-line poem, taking each line from a different author. The first line, "The breeze runs riot with thy charms," belongs to line 42 of Wright's "April" (111). The second line belongs to line 1 from "The Violet," a poem by William Wetmore Story (224) that praises the fidelity and modesty symbolized by this flower in Victorian times.

poems as she changes some words or omits lines from the original stanzas, producing what Leslee Thorne-Murphy calls “re-authorships” of the originals, produced as “a combination of successive individuals writing, editing, and rewriting in a way that shapes anew the image of a single author” (Thorne-Murphy 84). For Thorne-Murphy reauthorship is “a type of editing that appropriates and refashions a text—a hybrid notion of authorship, one in which both editors and authors are creative and original rewriters” (83). On other occasions Hopkins draws on the reputation of authors such as Shakespeare, Emerson, Whittier, Cowper, Goldsmith, and Tennyson, among many others, what D.F. McKenzie calls “the poem’s social text,” to offer radical remakings where the original, even if unchanged, is subtly altered by the African American world in which it is breathed into a new life.

*Contending Forces* paratextual materials also evince Hopkins’s political agenda of collaborative interventions. The first paratextual information that readers encounter when opening the book is Hopkins’s portrait and signature: “Yours for humanity, Pauline E. Hopkins.” Her image, a self-engrandizing strategy in 1900, appears to foreshadow what the third-person narrator states in Chapter XVII, when it laments that “[i]n the present emergency which confronts us as a race, no leader has yet pressed forward to take command, as in those glorious old days” (277). Those past days of glory refer to the abolitionist movement and, her signature, as “yours for humanity,” legitimizes her as that “leader” in “the present emergency” since those exact words recalled readers of the way Abigail Kelley Foster (1811-1887), the abolitionist, radical reformer and women’s rights activist, “dedicated to aid the cause of humanity and justice” signed her letters, “Yours for humanity—Abby” (Moran).<sup>13</sup>

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Story (1819-1895) was a recognised American sculptor, art critic and poet. *The Libyan Sybil* is one of his most celebrated sculptures, a figure that inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe to write an article comparing the stone sybil with Sojourner Truth (“Sojourner Truth: The Libyan Sybil,” 1863), when she saw it at the International Exhibition of London in 1862.

<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Hopkins’s presentation mirrors that of another book published by the Colored Co-Operative Publishing Company in 1901, Ellen F. Wetherell’s *In Free America; or Tales from North and South*. Wetherell was white, and her portrait appeared with the signature: “Yours for Equality.” *In Free America* was advertised as “the most powerful book on the wrongs and injustices heaped upon our race in the

The conventions of fiction writing make it possible for Hopkins to deploy widely the literary convention of poetic epigraphs.<sup>14</sup> Hopkins initiates her novel with an epigraph on her title page by Emerson. Emerson's privileged position at the threshold of the text is aimed to be prospective. Hopkins's epigraphs are all allographics (Genette 152) and—except one, most probably due to a print erratum—correctly author-referenced. She follows what, according to Genette, is “the most common custom” of naming the author “without giving a specific reference” to the work epigraphed (151), except when quoting from Shakespeare, when she inverts the method for obvious reasons of familiarity and literary reverence.

Genette adds that “the use of the epigraph is always a mute gesture whose interpretation is left up to the reader” (156). In this vein, Hopkins's prolific deployment of the convention undergirds her aim of historical clarity and collaborative didacticism between the narrating persona and the readers. Thus, her epigraphs establish a direct link between a community of readers who are highly cultivated in Anglo-American literary traditions. Far from being mere ornamental devices or emotional catalysts, chapter epigraphs in *Contending Forces* trigger the readers's hermeneutic capacities as well as their racialized understanding of “Negro Life North and South.” Out of the four main functions for epigraphs that Genette distinguishes (156-169), Hopkins concentrates on two, since her recourse to this type of backing is never superfluous, or used for the sake of the name of the author quoted. The most direct function is “one of commenting—sometimes authoritatively—and thus of elucidating and thereby justifying not the text but the *title*” (156). In fact, she tries to relate these epigraphs with the titles of the chapters, instigating a reciprocity between the interpretation of the former and the latter. Chapter titles and their accompanying epigraphs evoke

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South as well as in the North,” and, together with *Contending Forces*, presented as “most acceptable Holiday gifts” in 1901.

<sup>14</sup> In *Paratexts*, Genette claims that epigraphs become in prose narratives at the end of the eighteenth century, especially in gothic novels starting with Mrs Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and with Walter Scott following suit. At the beginning of the nineteenth-century this English fashion of the novelist epigraph is copied by French authors (Charles Nodier, Victor Hugo, Stendhal), but rejected by those who do not cultivate “the historical, fantastic, or ‘philosophical’ narrative,” as for example the authors of the novel of manners (Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, Henry James, to name a few) (148).

complementary meanings that transcend into the content of the chapter. Included, thus, in the function, is the deployment of the canonical use of the epigraph as a commentary on the text, “whose meaning it indirectly specifies or emphasizes” (157). Epigraphs serve as thematic guides into the author’s plot development, and stand as highly illuminating thresholds into the chapter’s contents and the author’s ideological intentions. There are, however, variations to this pattern when the title changes the meaning of the epigraph and this is modified into a parodic distortion when, as analyzed later, she borrows from William Grayson’s *The Hireling*.

Opposite to the opening illustration on page 69 by R. Emmett Owen and on the title page of the book, readers find the initial epigraph to the novel: “The civility of no race can be perfect whilst another race is degraded.” Its author, Emerson is acknowledged, as mentioned above, a practice Hopkins follows in all the chapter epigraphs in the novel, where authors’s names are provided but never the title of the work quoted, except for those lines by Shakespeare, where this practice is inverted. Note that Hopkins’s opening line belongs to *An Address Delivered in the Court-House in Concord, Massachusetts on 1<sup>st</sup> August, on the Anniversary of the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies* (1844). According to Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson, this speech inaugurated Emerson’s public participation in the antislavery movement (30).<sup>15</sup> Hopkins will deploy these words a second time in chapter I (20), and a third time in chapter VIII (150), now as part of Mrs Willis’s speech.<sup>16</sup> Also on page 152, slightly varied from the

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<sup>15</sup> See Anita Haya Patterson (82). For a study on the Emersonian thought about the questions of race and slavery, see Field. As Gougeon and Myerson state, “[t]o say that the speech was a great success would be a gross understatement. Firsthand accounts of the well-attended gathering refer to tears flowing down the cheeks of ‘sturdy men as well as tenderhearted women’ when Emerson described the infinite wrongs done to blacks... Virtually all abolitionists saw the speech as a declaration of Emerson’s commitment to their cause. It was praised in the pages of the *Liberator*, *Herald of Freedom*, *Emancipator*, and elsewhere. “John Greenleaf Whittier, the most highly regarded abolitionist poet of the age, told Emerson in a letter, ‘That you join with us in supporting the great idea which underlies our machinery of conventions and organizations, I have little doubt after reading thy *Address*’ [...]. The address was a major step forward for Emerson. It brought him into firm contact with a group whom he had mostly avoided, and he forged thereby a de facto alliance with them” (xxx).

Hopkins also used it in her article “The New York Subway,” on December 1904 in *Voice of the Negro*. In Chapter I (20) (author and source unacknowledged), she repeats

original, but still with author and source unacknowledged, Mrs Willis, the influential black club woman, declares: “Happiness and social position are not to be gained by pushing.” Emerson’s original *Address* reads: “They [West Indies blacks] hold back, and say to each other that ‘social position is not to be gained by pushing.’” Emerson is also quoting and places his words within quotation marks but does not acknowledge either author or source, and varies the original.<sup>17</sup> For instance, Mrs Willis appropriates Emerson’s words twice to endow black women in the sewing circle with the obligation to act against James W. Jacks’s charges on African American women’s low moral standards. Mrs Willis’s allusions attest to Alisha Knight’s opinion when she argues against so many literary critics who “mistakenly assume Hopkins’s portrayal of Mrs Willis is intended to diminish the influence of ambitious black women” (74). Instead, Emerson’s words, as echoed by Mrs Willis and her condemnation of Jacks’s opinion on black womanhood, make of this club woman “an archetype of black female success through active participation in the club movement to benefit the race outside the home” (Knight 81).

In chapter XV (264) Will Smith echoes words previously spoken by Mrs Willis on page 152 from *Address*, but with a slight variation that reverts the borrowing to its original phrasing, and where quotation marks are used: “Social position is not to be gained by

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the same line as that of the title page, and some sentences later, there is an extended quotation from the same *Address*.<sup>16</sup> Emerson’s epigraph heading the novel is not surprising because, as Elizabeth McHenry asserts, the philosopher, together with Longfellow and Whittier, “had been frequently included in Frederick Douglass’s and *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*.” Besides Emerson was “regularly discussed, his lectures announced and reviewed, and his work excerpted” (123).

<sup>17</sup> In fact he is citing from J.A. Thome and J.H. Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A Six Months Tour in Antigua, Barbados, and Jamaica, in the Year 1837* (1838) Thome and Kimball, however, also borrow these words without mentioning author or source: “‘Social intercourse,’ they say, ‘was not a thing to be gained by pushing.’ They could not go to it, but it would come to them” (306). Daniel Koch (234) gives the following information about the names Emerson refers to in “Emancipation of the West Indies”: Joseph Sturge, *The West Indies in 1837: Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Monsterrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Jamaica; Undertaken for the Purpose of Ascertaining the Actual Condition of the Negro Population of those Islands* (1838); J.A. Thome and J.H. Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A Six Months Tour in Antigua, Barbados, and Jamaica, in the Year 1837* (1838); John Jay Gurney, *Winter in the West Indies* (1840); James Phillippo, *Jamaica: Its Past and Present State*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1843).

pushing.” In chapter XVII (295) readers encounter the only occasion where a borrowing is fully appropriated by the omission of quotation marks, as well as by the omission of both author and source. The reference is taken once more from *Address*: “I believe that the same rules which govern all races will be applicable to mine,’ returned Will. ‘If men are rude and foolish, down they must go. When at last in any race a new principle appears, an idea, *that* conserves it. Ideas only save races. If the black man is feeble and impotent, unimportant to the existing races—not on a parity with the best races, the black man must serve and be exterminated. But, if he carries within his bosom the element of a new and coming civilization, he will survive and play his part.” Yet, Hopkins keeps the original ‘that’ in italics, a fact that might be a signal to her appropriation.<sup>18</sup> For Sidney Bufkin, Hopkins’s direct attribution of these words to Will Smith “serves to strengthen the bonds Hopkins constructs linking Emerson to the late nineteenth-century movement for racial equality” (83). Hopkins’s repeated borrowings from Emerson’s *Address* are in line with the fact that thanks to this speech he “made the transition from philosophical antislavery to active abolitionism” (Gougeon & Myerson xxx).<sup>19</sup>

After the initial Emersonian epigraph, Hopkins continues displaying her intertextual aesthetics throughout *Contending Forces* both in other epigraphs as well as in the main text. In CHAPTER I, A RETROSPECT OF THE PAST, Hopkins opens her narrative with an

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<sup>18</sup> Emerson’s original reads: “It [Nature] deals with men after the same manner. If they are rude and foolish, down they must go. When at last in a race, a new principle appears, an idea,—*that* conserves it; ideas only save races. If the black man is feeble, and not important to the existing races, not on a parity with the best race, the black man must serve, and be exterminated. But if the black man carries in his bosom an indispensable element of a new and coming civilization, for the sake of that element, no wrong, nor strength, nor circumstance, can hurt him: he will survive and play his part.”

<sup>19</sup> Hopkins will resort to two essays by Emerson, “Friendship” and “Character.” She borrows from “Friendship” in the epigraph of Chapter VII (115, source unacknowledged): “What is so great as friendship? The only reward of virtue is virtue: the only way to have a friend is to be one” (Essay VI, *Friendship*, 352). It is in Chapter IX (168), where she introduces the author and indirectly refers to the source, “Character,” even if the borrowing appears slightly varied from the original. Hopkins writes: “Emerson’s words on character were an apt description of the strong personality of this man: ‘A reserved force which acted directly by its presence, and without (apparent) means.’” Emerson’s original reads: “a reserved force which acts directly by presence, and without means” (Essay III, *Character*, 495).

epigraph (17)<sup>20</sup> taken from John G. Whittier's "We Wait Beneath a Furnace Blast," a borrowing which stands as Hopkins's endorsement of Whittier's vision, the most celebrated and provocative abolitionist poet. This first stanza of the poem describes how America will be transformed by putting an end to slavery. That change is compared to a furnace-blast that will "mould anew the nation." The epigraph resonates with past but also present meanings and urgent challenges. The popularity of the poem, which was also a song,<sup>21</sup> assured its immediate recognition. Russell Sanjek describes the song as "a bold and burning cry for an end to black slavery" (126). The lines cater thus for Hopkins's intended ideological kinship among Whittier, herself as well as her readers. Readers are thus doubly addressed by the unquestionable authority of the eminent antislavery poet and, consequently, by the self-aggrandizing figure of the novelist. As such, the epigraph represents a direct reminder of past addresses to political action against racial injustice.

Whittier's poem had originally appeared in the *New York Independent* on June 13, 1861. The Quaker and fierce antislavery poet who devoted his life to social reform, was one of the most often quoted poets by black writers both in the antebellum and postbellum periods. He stood as "the proper site for expressions of national feeling because of his relation to common readers" (Cohen 165). As Barbara Packer asserts, "for more than thirty years he was involved in the struggle against slavery, as an active member of both local and national anti-slavery parties" (137). In Wood's words, "[a]pproximately one third of Whittier's massive poetic output is directly on slavery and abolition themes; it is without doubt the single most important issue in his life's work" (xxv). In a similar thread of thought, as Lockard puts it: "We Wait Beneath a Furnace Blast" became very popular throughout the Civil War since it captured the sense of emergency that the unsolved problem of slavery enclosed for the country, and even Lincoln "credited the poem with influencing the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation"

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<sup>20</sup> (We wait beneath the furnace-blast/The pangs of transformation;/Not painlessly doth God recast/And mould anew the nation./Hot burns the fire/Where wrongs expire;/Nor spares the hand/That from the land/Uproots the ancient evil.)

<sup>21</sup> Song: Words by J.G. Whittier. Music by W.O. Perkins. Publisher: Oliver Ditson & Co., 277 Washington St., 1862.



(87).<sup>22</sup> Hopkins also quotes from this piece in her essay on the poet, “Whittier, Friend of the Negro” (*Colored American Magazine* 3.5 September 1901: 324-330), and used it as a title—“blast” in the plural—in an article published in two parts that appeared in that same magazine but under her pen-name J. Shirley Shadrach: “Furnace Blasts I. The Growth of the Social Evil Among All Classes and Races in America,” and “Furnace Blasts II. Black or White—Which Should Be the Young Afro-American’s Choice in Marriage.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1894, Samuel T. Pickard in his *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* attests to the importance of the piece chosen by Hopkins: “Probably no other of Whittier’s war hymns had such wide and immediate effect upon the popular mind [...]. It was read in the Cabinet of the President, in every household in the North, and sung in the Union camps” (467). Pickard refers to the process of transformation of the poem from a written text to a Civil War song composed by the hand of John W. Hutchinson and his family. Hutchinson had founded a reputed quartet in 1841 and had toured United States and some European countries. At the outbreak of the war, The Hutchinson Family Singers were already popular among Northern audiences for composing and performing songs committed to social and political issues such as temperance, women’s rights, and slavery. In a recital for the Lincolns in January 1862, they sang their version of Whittier’s poem that would immediately become “one of the rally songs for abolitionists” (467-468).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lockard analyses the poetry published after the execution of John Brown, and comments on Whittier’s poetical response to Brown’s hanging. Whittier, who “had recognized the unbridgeable contradiction between pacifist principles and the probable trajectory of the antislavery struggle years earlier,” with the approach of civil apocalypse, “adopted in his poetry, a prophetic voice that characterized the conflict less as one of racial justice, and more as one of divine justice” (78). In this vein, Whittier had a momentary vision in his garden several years prior to the Civil War, went into his house and quickly wrote out the poem, and then appalled at its apocalyptic images, placed it in a desk drawer. First titled “The Furnace Blast,” then retitled “Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott” for its modeling after Martin Luther’s hymn, Whittier’s poem was a preeminent antebellum example of poetic recognition of the war’s proximity. He published the poem only in June 1861, after the war’s first battles had begun” (79).

<sup>23</sup> *Colored American Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 5 February 1903, pp. 259-263/March 1903, pp. 348-352.

<sup>24</sup> In a letter to John Wallace Hutchinson (Amesbury, March 6, 1862), Whittier expressed his surprise at his poem’s transformation: “I am glad to know that there is *any sing* [sic] in my verses. Of course, you have no objection to thy use of them. If thee

Hopkins displays her endorsement of antislavery politics borrowing from several other authors. On page 17 (author and source unacknowledged: “The air of England is too pure for any slave to breathe.”), she quotes these words pronounced in 1772 by Lord Mansfield, the English politician, judge and Lord Chief Justice, during the *Somerset’s Case* on the legality of keeping slaves in England.<sup>25</sup> On page 18 (author acknowledged but source

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can get any music out of them, I shall be pleased and gratified.” And then he goes on to sarcastically comment on General McClellan tactics, for which he would be later dismissed: “Whatever General McClellan may do with my rhymes, I am thankful that Congress is putting it out of his power to ‘send back’ fugitive slaves as well as singers” (John B. Pickard 29-30). For his part, Samuel T. Pickard, in *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* (467-468) writes:

John W. Hutchinson, with his family of singers, had been given permission by Secretary Cameron, after the first battle of Bull Run, to sing to the soldiers encamped upon the Virginia side of the Potomac, and he ventured to introduce this hymn, which he called ‘The Furnace Blast.’ On one occasion he had an audience of two thousand soldiers, and as he sang Whittier’s hymn with strong feeling, his whole soul wrapped in its sentiment, an intense stillness pervaded the house, until he came to the words: ‘What whets the knife for the Union’s life? Hark to the answer: Slavery!’ Then a solitary hiss was heard in a remote corner; there was instant commotion, and the soldiers were with difficulty restrained from summary dealing with the man who had expressed his disapprobation. This disturbance was reported to headquarters, and Mr. Hutchinson was brought before General Kearney, who ordered him to sing no more in the camps. General Franklin sent for copies of all the songs in the Hutchinson programme, and selected this hymn as incendiary. Later, an order came from General McClellan revoking the permit given the Hutchinson family to sing to the troops. Mr. Hutchinson returned to Washington, called on Secretary Chase, and told him the story. At his request, a copy of the prohibited song was given the Secretary, and he submitted it to the Cabinet at its next meeting. President Lincoln remarked that these ‘were just the songs he wanted his soldiers to hear,’ and gave the Hutchinsons permission to cross the Potomac again.”

<sup>25</sup> James Somerset was a Virginian slave who arrived in England accompanying his master Charles Stewart in 1769. A few days after the arrival, he escaped, was captured and imprisoned in a ship to be sold in Jamaica. His case was brought to court and Mansfield ordered a hearing in 1772. The case attracted the attention of the press of the time and the influential power of the lawyers who defended Somerset. On the slave’s behalf, it was argued that, even if slavery was supported by colonial laws, the law of England did not recognize the institution on the island’s soil, and therefore, slaves were illegal in their territory. Mansfield concluded that Somerset was to be discharged. On the other hand, since the reign of Elizabeth I, the defenders of slavery have stated the legitimacy of its existence due to the impure character of the climate in the colonies. The case of *Somerset vs. Stewart* stands as a turning-point in the

unacknowledged: “Thomas Clarkson, [...] confirming his own belief, ‘that Providence had never made that to be wise that was immoral; and that the slave trade was as impolitic as it was unjust.’”), she quotes from Clarkson, one of the harshest critics of the slavery trade and the institution of slavery,<sup>26</sup> specifically from his *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, 2 vols. (London: R. Taylor and Co., Shoe-Lane, 1808, vol. 2, p. 249). And on page 22 (author and source unacknowledged: “The spot of earth uncursd,/To show how all things were created first.”), lines 46-47 from Edmund Waller’s parodic poem “The Battle of the Summer Islands” (1638) are quoted.<sup>27</sup> They are introduced by an allusion to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*: Waller (1606-1687) was one of the most preeminent poets in the court of Charles II of England, and a contemporary of John Dryden. His works are characteristic of the courtesan poetry of the English Restoration period. The first line quoted by Hopkins belongs to the second part of Waller’s line 46: “Heaven sure has kept this spot of earth uncursd.” Suvir Kaul affirms that a large number of eighteenth-century poetical compositions were political. The piece makes the Bermuda, “The Summer Islands,”

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debate about the legality of slavery in the British Isles and its ending in insular British territories. Slavery was taken outside British land and placed in the frontiers between civilization and barbarity. Lord Mansfield’s judgment in *Somerset’s Case*, however, did not challenge the institution of slavery, but simply reconfirmed the idea that the common law reigning in the colonies only applied to those living there, and therefore, lacked a legal basis in the metropolis. As Domenico Losurdo claims, from this principle, Mansfield came to the conclusion that “it was necessary to avoid an influx of blacks from Africa or America into England. Somerset’s master was held responsible for an assault on the purity of the land of the free, who could not tolerate being confused and mixed up with slaves, rather than a violation of the liberty and dignity of a human being” (48). This judgment, moreover, “provided the premises for the subsequent deportation to Sierra Leone of blacks who, as loyal subjects of the Crown, sought refuge in England after the victory of the rebel American colonists (48).

<sup>26</sup> His main inspiration was the Quaker Anthony Benezet, author of the influential *Some Historical Account of Guinea* (Philadelphia, 1772). Clarkson’s first antislavery piece was written in Latin for a contest organized by the University of Cambridge. His essay had to respond to the question whether it was legal to enslave other human beings against their will or not. Inspired by Benezet, he wrote the text, later translated into English and published under the title *An essay on the slavery and commerce of the human species, particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation, which was honoured with the first prize in the University of Cambridge, for the year 1785*.

<sup>27</sup> Edmund Waller, *Poetical Works of Edmund Waller*, edited by Robert Bell, J.W. Parker, 1806, p. 98.

the scene of a near-epic battle waged against two stranded whales. Nature is itself the opponent here, and in this quasi-allegorical depiction of warfare in Edenic circumstances, Waller's poem provides an exemplary instance of the myriad ways in which cultural documents of this period are compendiums of territorial desire and colonial anxiety, of Edenic fantasy and of dystopian fear (Kaul 49-50).

The poem is divided into three cantos. The first one celebrates the richness of the place; the second one tells about the arrival of the whales, and the third sings their capture as a battle. Hopkins quotes two lines from the first part of the poem and includes that long-lost pastoral into this first chapter of the novel to highlight the destruction of the Arcadian New World at the hands of the slave traders.

CHAPTER II, THE DAYS "BEFORE THE WAR" opens with an epigraph (32)<sup>28</sup> borrowed from William Cullen Bryant's "Antiquity of Freedom" (1842), lines 13-14 and 33-34. Bryant, the American Wordsworth, speaks about the history of Freedom and its fight against its eternal enemies, Power and Tyranny. Hopkins uses again lines 13-14 in the first instalment of *New Era Magazine*, in February 1916. In this chapter she continues with her display of borrowings, a fact that is related to the aims of many black women's clubs at her time, and that, according to Elizabeth McHenry,

reveals the extent to which gaining access to the 'great world of art, science and letters' meant engaging in a course of reading that included such 'masters' of the genteel tradition as John Milton, Sir Walter Scott, William Cullen Bryant, and John Ruskin [...]. Through contact with these texts, black clubwomen wished to label themselves as 'lovers of higher literary criticism', which they associated predominantly with readers of those 'great' writers such as Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Macaulay, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and William Makepeace Thackeray (227).

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<sup>28</sup> "O Freedom! thou art not as poets dream,/A fair young girl with light and delicate limbs,//Thy birthright was not given by human hands:/Thou wert twinborn with man."

Yet, in the second chapter, Hopkins includes texts that radically depart from this tradition of including high-brow literature into the plot. On pages 32-33 she inserts two slave work songs—"Turn dat han' spike roun' an' roun'" and "Hark, dat merry, purty bell go jing-a-ling"—that are referenced by Eileen Southern and Josephine Wright in their *African-American Traditions in Song, Sermon, Tale, and Dance, 1600s-1920: An Annotated Bibliography of Literature, Collections and Artworks*, as appearing originally in *Contending Forces* (249). After the war, black music was recognized as an important phenomenon by white Americans, who started to collect and preserve the songs sung by the slaves of the South. Two texts represent landmarks in this new field. The first one and most influential is *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: A. Simpson & Co., 1867), a compilation of over 130 songs, arranged by their geographical location, by William Francis Allen, Lucy McKim Garrison and Charles Pickard Ware. The second title is Thomas Wentworth Higginson's article "Negro Spirituals," first published in June 1867 in *Atlantic Monthly*, and later republished as Chapter 9 in his memoir of the war *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (1869). In 1900, as Robert H. Cataliotti states, Hopkins, like African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), incorporated music in her literary works as part of her contributions to the progress of the race (28), but also as a reappropriation of her own musical legacy. In *Contending Forces*, the representation of the black musical lore reinforces the cultural links between "the days before the war" and the postwar period in which the action takes place. In the first scene in Chapter II the slaves's words and music relate them directly to their African cultural legacy (Cataliotti 29). The contrast between their music and what white listeners understand of it highlights the differences between both communities, and show how Hopkins was aware of the cultural relevance of music among black people as well as its key role as a repository of past histories (30). Hopkins is here echoing her own words in the Preface and reasserts that African Americans must and can assume the responsibility of their own representations. Black music and later black vernacular (especially Chapter VII, 137)<sup>29</sup> stand as competing sources of her imaginative

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<sup>29</sup> In Chapter VII, 137, Abraham Peters says: "Cap'n; how's yer corporosity seem to segashiate?" As "How does your copperosity sagaciate this morning?" this expression appears for the first time compiled by British Nicholas Doran P. Maillard in his *The*

writing, elements that construct an empowering picture of the African American community to counter white American segregationist representations.<sup>30</sup>

In CHAPTER III, “COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE,” the title chapter (author and source unacknowledged, 43) is a popular idiom which appeared for the first time in Thomas Campbell’s poem “Lochiel Warning” (1802, I, line 56), and was also used in a Currier & Ives print, authored possibly by Louis Maurer, which appeared in 1864, late in the campaign for the election of that year, titled “Abraham’s dream!—‘Coming events cast their shadows before.’” In the print, which probably appeared late in the campaign since the Library’s copy was deposited for copyright on September

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*History of the Republic of Texas, From the Discovery of the Country to the Present Time; And the Cause of Her Separation from the Republic of Mexico* (1842), a warning against the recognition of Texas by Great Britain, where Maillard writes that it is “the usual salutation of the Texan gentlemen” (212). The expression, in its black pronunciation, appears in Joel Chandler Harris’s “Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby” (*The Tar Baby and Other Rhymes of Uncle Remus*, D. Appleton and Company, 1904, p. 9): “Good mornin’ suh, an how’s you’ Ma? An’ how does you’ copperositee seem ter segashuate?” It also appears in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*: “Your corporosity sagaciating O K?” R. Bruce Bickley, Jr., in “Two Allusions to Joel Chandler Harris in *Ulysses*: ‘Wusser Scared’ and ‘Corporosity’ Redux” (*English Language Notes*, vol. 17, no. 1, September 1979, pp. 42-45), reveals Joyce’s debt to Harris. For her part, Susan Lanser highlights that in *Contending Forces* and *Iola Leroy* (1892), both authors, Hopkins and Frances Harper, respectively, faced “the narrative dilemma of authorizing a discursive community that is identifiably African American within the frame of a realist ethic dependent on the construction of a superior narrator for whom the ‘King’s English’ is a master sign.” This fact explains that in both novels “the narrator and the most authoritative characters are educated African Americans whose voices are indistinguishable formally from those of educated whites” (124-125).

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Knowles Bromell considers that slave music works in this opening scene as a choral commentary about the fictional actions occurring during the prewar period. Here, Bromell argues, “self-preservation is maintained through work, and self-expression is achieved through work song, which at once denies the effectiveness of desire and reaffirms the self-protective aspects of work-work as the place in which slaves are least seen, least heard by their masters, and thus most free to engage in communal engagement upon their situation” (206). Cataliotti also studies the performances of a “medley of Moody and Sankey hymns,” “the duet from ‘Il Trovatore,’” and “the ‘Chariot Race’ from ‘Ben-Hur’ in true dramatic style” in Chapter VI (108); the dances in Chapter VIII (164); and the singing of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic in Chapter XIII (244) (30-40. And he concludes stating that “the music also functions as a nexus between the culture of black men and women in America and the heritage of their African American past [...] the music-making impulses intrinsic to this heritage have created an expressive form that subverts the alleged superiority of white America” (40).

22, pictures Lincoln suffering nightmares because of his fears of defeat in the election of 1864.<sup>31</sup> The epigraph (43) is from *Merchant of Venice*, Act I, Scene 1, lines 1-7.<sup>32</sup> As Genette claims Shakespeare “probably holds the world’s record for number of times quoted in epigraphs” (159). In these oft-quoted lines Antonio, the merchant of Venice, a middle-aged powerful man, respected by all, and willing to die for his friend Bassanio, shows himself pondering about his own melancholy in front of his friends Salanio and Salarino. Antonio has everything he can wish yet he is unhappy and concerned about the cause of his misery. His words, his desire “to learn” and discover the truth about himself, are connected to Hopkins’s merchant Monfort and the coming tragedy on his life caused by his commitment against slavery.

In CHAPTER IV, THE TRAGEDY, the epigraph (65) is borrowed from William Cowper’s *The Task*, Book II (1784), lines 20-21 and 23-25.<sup>33</sup> Cowper (1731-1800) was one of the most popular English poets and one of the most deeply appreciated by antislavery authors. Prompted by a fervent evangelical zeal, he authored many religious hymns and social and philosophical pieces condemning slavery. Hopkins omits the third line (22) in the original stanza: “As human nature’s broadest, foulest blot.” Cowper “had an almost pathological desire to

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<sup>31</sup> “The President lies on a bed under a sheet embroidered with stars. In his dream Columbia or Liberty, wielding the severed head of a black man, stands at the door of the White House. She sends a frightened Lincoln away with a kick. Lincoln, wearing a Scotsman’s plaid cap and a cape and carrying a valise, flees to the left, saying, ‘This don’t remind me of any joke!’ The cap and cloak allude to an incident in 1861 before Lincoln’s first inauguration. On being informed that an attempt would be made to assassinate him on his way to Washington, Lincoln took a night train and disguised himself in a large overcoat and Kossuth hat. The press made the most of Lincoln’s timidity, and it was widely reported that Lincoln was seen wearing a Scotch plaid cap and a very long military cloak. Lincoln also carries a rolled piece of paper ‘To whom it may concern.’ For this famous announcement, see ‘The Sportsman Upset by the Recoil of His Own Gun,’ no. 1864-32. At right General McClellan, in uniform, ascends the steps to the White House, carrying a valise with his initials on it” (Information provided by the Library of Congress //www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003689256/).

<sup>32</sup> “In sooth I know not why I am so sad:/It wearies me; you say it wearies you;/But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,/What stuff ’tis made of, whereof it is born,/I am to learn;/And such a wantwit sadness makes of me/That I have much ado to know myself.”

<sup>33</sup> “Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys him;/And worse than all, and most to be deplored/Chains him, and tasks him and exacts his sweat/With stripes that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,/Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast” (Cowper 30).

sympathize with victims” (Wood 81) and participated in the Evangelical crusade to abolish the slave trade at the end of the eighteenth century. In “The Task,” he “could condense the ethical essence of abolition argument into the majestic blank verse” of the poem, with “intellectual authority” (Wood 82). His impact was lasting both in Great Britain and the United States, and he “was more frequently reprinted by American abolitionists than any other poet with the exception of Wordsworth” (Wood 83).

In CHAPTER V, MA SMITH’S LODGING HOUSE, the epigraph (81) is taken from Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751), lines 39-42.<sup>34</sup> The poem is a *memento mori*, reminding readers about the inevitability of death. Hopkins’s turn to Gray’s celebrated poem is in line with the taste and cultural preferences of the nineteenth century, as shown by the frequency this piece was quoted. Harriet Jacobs, for example, in her *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) quotes from Gray’s “Elegy” in Chapter XL (The Fugitive Slave Law), when she refers to the “short and simple annals of the poor” (286). The eighteenth-century cult of sensibility with its sympathy for others stands out in the poem as a feeling incited by the simple life of the low classes. Victims of society, such as fallen women, children, poor people, slaves or animals, are among the figures targeted by this type of compositions, where the poetic persona’s emotional outpourings are described to draw the identification of the readers. Gray’s sympathy for the villagers and his respectful support of the downtrodden made the poem a frequent quotation in reformist writing.

These lines are Hopkins’s tribute to the simple lives of those who inhabit the domestic space of Ma Smith’s lodging house. As Gray, she will not disdain their records but honor their greatness as characters playing outstanding roles in her narrative. Ma Smith’s house, ruled by a woman, acquires political identity and, as such, mirrors the debates that take place in public spaces governed by men—the American Colored League or the Canterbury Club. Yet, in contrast to the melancholy for the departed expressed in the poem, Hopkins praises and celebrates the optimism and hopefulness enclosed in the house alive with resolutions to uplift the race. The

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<sup>34</sup> “Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,/Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;/Not Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile/The short and simple annals of the poor.”



lives of her working men and women deserve dignity, honor, and will be recorded in the book of history which is *Contending Forces*.

In CHAPTER VI, MA SMITH'S LODGING HOUSE.—CONCLUDED, the lines appearing in the epigraph (97)<sup>35</sup> are attributed to "Whilliam," a print erratum, since the popularity of Whittier's "Snow-Bound. A Winter Idyl," his best-selling poem, would have corrected the mistake in the eyes of readers. Hopkins quotes lines 32-36, but omits the first line of the stanza (31) and the first word of the second line ("Unwarmed by any sunset light/The gray day darkened into night,/A night made hoary with the swarm"). The poem longs for a past New England. For Michael E. Cohen "New England was described from the lenses of the colonial mystique that emerged during the post-bellum years" when his poem "strongly impressed a domestic ideal of early New England rusticity upon the public imagination" (18). For Rubin, "Snow-Bound" is "the narrative of a rural family's determinedly cheerful response to a blizzard," where Whittier emphasizes "the warmth that resulted from sharing the 'homestead hearth' with others" (114). Similarly, Hopkins initiates this chapter contrasting the elegiac comforting environment of domesticity, represented by Ma Smith's house, with the coldness of the outside streets in February, a month that recalls the poem's publication. In fact, Whittier's apparent irretrievable nostalgia disappears when the date, February 17, 1866, and the circumstances of the poem's composition are recalled. Ma Smith's House, in the same way as Whittier's idyllic retreat, are not sheltered from the outside darkness but intimately linked to the world outside—in the poem a country living under the ravages of the war; an African American community suffering the increasing bruises of racial hostility. Angela Sorby suggests that "Snow-bound" is a poem about whiteness but also a questioning of "the privileges of whiteness" (36). Even if the poem initiates with a "series of black and white binaries, by the end emerging shades of grey signal the poet's distinctive vision of the nation's multiracial potential" (36). As argued by Sorby, "to read 'Snow-bound' as a poem about whiteness is to explore what readers saw, but also what they did not, or could not see" (37). Hopkins seems to have read that whiteness in the poem

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<sup>35</sup> (The gray day darkened into night,/Made hoary with the swarm/And whirl-dance of the blinding storm./As zigzag wavering to and fro,/Crossed and recrossed the winged snow.)

and have tried to wrench Whittier's abolitionist and radical racial poetics from the encompassing conservative transformations that his texts were suffering at the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, by 1900, the poem's reception was underwritten by "the discourse of colonial revival" and considered to be its "ur-text" (Sorby 37). Hopkins's deployment signals to the retrieval of the poem's hidden racial anxieties and the suppression of the white patriotic colonial revival. In the same way as Whittier demands to break free from the snow-bound constrictions, Hopkins will make clear that tenants at Ma Smith's domestic haven, now seemingly "content to keep within the bounds" of this domain (97), are engaged in a collaborative effort to question the whiteness outside and the specific forces threatening the black family homestead.

On page 100 (author and source unacknowledged: "And he who does the best he can,/Need never fear the church's ban/Nor hell's damnation./God reck's not how man counts his beads,/For righteousness is not in creeds/Nor solemn faces;/But rather lies in Christian deeds/And Christian graces"; quoted Dora softly," Hopkins writes these lines, that echo Matthew 23, from Elizabeth Doten's "Words o' Cheer," a poem inspired by Robert Burns and included in her *Poems from the Inner Life* (Boston, 1863, 99-103). Yet, as it is Hopkins's usual practice, the novelist changes the original. The first three lines are transformed into four with a new phrasing (lines 49-52): "The upright, honest-hearted man,/Who strives to do the best he can,/Need never fear the Church's ban,/Or hell's damnation." The following correspond to the original lines 55-60: "The one who knows our deepest needs,/Recks little how man counts his beads,/For Righteousness is not in creeds,/Or solemn faces;/But rather lies in kindly deeds,/And Christian graces." Elizabeth Doten or Lizzie Doten (1829-1913) was one of the most popular trance-speakers and spiritualist poets. She was also a lecturer on women's rights, and claimed to have crafted several of her poems under the direct influence of luminaries such as Shakespeare, Poe, Burns, and Mrs Hemans. Besides *Poems from the Inner Life*, she published *Poems of Progress* (1871). In her first volume, she assured that the spirit of Poe had directly acted upon her and dictated to her some of her compositions. As Ann Brauden maintains, Doten and other mediums, "undisputed favorites of the Spiritualist public," were given an enthusiastic response before the Civil War, a fact that paved the way for women in the postbellum era to speak in other roles (98). Hopkins's reference to Lizzie Doten evinces the writer's interest in

sensationalist questions such as spiritualism and hypnotism, and her familiarity with their writings.

On page 107 (author and source unacknowledged: “a combination of ‘queen rose and lily in one’”), Hopkins presents her first borrowing from Tennyson, “the embodiment of the poetical spirit of Victorian Britain” (Wood 313). Her quoted line is a reference to line 904 of *Maud: A Monody* (1855), Part I, Section XXII, stanza 9, line 4. Hopkins alters the original: “Queen lily and rose in one,” to describe Sappho. Thanks to the absence of international copyright protection, Tennyson’s works reached “all classes, in every part of the country,” at a lower cost than in Britain. Thus Tennyson enjoyed an influence among the American reading public that was “diffusive, pervasive, atmospheric” (Rubin 37). As Daniel Hack notes, Hopkins borrows from Tennyson when she describes the relationship between Sappho and Will (their falling in love, Sappho’s acceptance of his marriage proposal, their final reunion after their three-year separation, their departure from the United States). For Hack, “Hopkins’s systematic citations of Tennyson serve to mark the progress of this relationship and to reinforce connections and contrasts between particular moments in the narrative” (492).

The line chosen here by Hopkins belongs to the part of *Maud*, which was selected by the publisher John Boosey, and sent to Michael Balfe, who composed the celebrated parlor song “Come to the garden, Maud” in 1857 for the famous tenor Sims Reeves (Scott 139). For the song, the line was changed and sang as “Queen, lily, and rose, in one.” The obscurity that characterizes Tennyson’s poem is diluted in the song, as expected in a sentimental ballad. Moreover, this line refers to the moment when the protagonist in the poem courts Maud and waits for her in the garden, before he kills her brother in a duel, and she dies. To recreate the mental process that the protagonist undergoes followed by madness and the emotions that overwhelm him, Tennyson makes use of the language of flowers. In fact, as E.D.H. Johnson argues, “considered apart, the two flowers evoke a wealth of traditional symbolic meaning, traceable throughout English poetry from Chaucer on; placed in direct relation to each other as here, they create an added potential for dramatic interplay” (1222). The subtle change that Hopkins introduces in the verse relegates the lily to a second place after the rose. Tennyson’s placing the lily as “queen” seems to enhance the chastity symbolized by the flower or all the associations surrounding the purity of this mystic flower carried by Gabriel in the Annunciation as expression of the

immaculate conception. Yet the first line of Tennyson's stanza says: "Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,/Come hither, the dances are done,/In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,/Queen lily and rose in one." Hopkins's might have chosen the beginning of this first line to stress her own recognition of the metaphorical meaning of the rose as the representation of love dissasociated from whiteness and purity, as an homage to her non-white lily heroine Sappho.

In CHAPTER VIII, THE SEWING CIRCLE, the lines from the epigraph (141) belong to Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village."<sup>36</sup> The first three lines Hopkins quotes are 223, 225 and 226, but she omits line 224. The three following lines correspond to lines 251, 252, half line from 253 and line 254. "The Deserted Village" (1770) was a popular piece from its publication and was frequently quoted throughout Victorian times for its criticism on the pernicious consequences of urban luxuries in contrast to the humbleness of the country. Similarly to Gray's "Elegy," this pastoral lament, as Raymond Williams puts it, was also a precursor to the "Romantic structure of feeling—the assertion of nature against industry, and of poetry *versus* trade; the isolation of humanity and community" (79). Sebastian Mitchell argues that the poem creates "an archetypal account of urban estrangement," where the scorn is directed towards "a particular form of middle-class social and economic deviancy in which the merchant does not observe the rules of conduct for somebody of his station" (126). The village's destruction is in fact tied to the redistribution of agrarian lands and the parliamentary enclosure acts. The poem, a sociopolitical comment on the disappearance of a way of life, appealed to Hopkins precisely because it drew together the public and the domestic, as it is shown in the chapter's title "The Sewing-Circle." According to Carolyn J. Lawes, starting in the 1830s and 1840s, years of remarkable development, the sewing circles, "the most ubiquitous form of women's organization [...]" "emerged as centers of community life when women joined together to redefine their place in a rapidly growing and secularizing city" (6 and 7). For these antebellum women these sewing circles were "what the political party was for antebellum men:

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<sup>36</sup> "Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,/Imagination fondly stoops to trace/The parlor splendors of that festive place.//Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,/These simple blessings of the lowly train;/To me more dear,/One native charm than all the gloss of art."

a forum for good fellowship, mutual improvement, and social activism" (6). Hopkins's domestic sewing circle allows women to participate politically in the uplift of the race, in the same way as the public black women clubs do.

In CHAPTER IX, "LOVE TOOK UP THE HARP OF LIFE," the title chapter and epigraph (166) belong to Tennyson's "Locksley Hall,"<sup>37</sup> lines 31-33, a poem written in 1835, but published in 1842 in *Poems*. The piece describes the sensations felt by a soldier when he returns to Locksley Hall, his home. He also ponders the possibility of abandoning the civilized world and go to a tropical island where "I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race" (line 168). For Daniel Hack, "by mining such a poem for imaginary to describe the love of a (mixed-race) African American man for a (mixed-race) African American woman," Hopkins "extends the literary and affective franchise in ways that 'Locksley Hall' not only fails to imagine but also arguably makes harder to envision" (494). Even if Robert J. C. Young believes that Tennyson "perhaps deserves some credit for at least contemplating marriage to his dusky woman" with this line (143). Hack is right when he asserts that Hopkins "captures" a "radical recalibration" of Tennyson's wild dream, since that imaginary "dusky woman" "is transformed from racist trope to romantic heroine and wife as virtuous as she is beautiful" (494). Hopkins shows her literary skills and high cultural literacy by manipulating her white-lily Tennysonian sources and African-Americanizing them to construct dignified parallelisms that challenged preconceived notions of white literary canonicity.

On page 169 (author and source unacknowledged) ("The starlike beauty of immortal eyes,"), Hopkins quotes again from Tennyson, now from "A Dream of Fair Women," stanza 23, line 100. Hopkins uses Tennyson for the second time to describe Sappho, but as it is usual with her, she alters the original, "The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes," an alteration which "bespeaks a casualness and familiarity" with Tennyson, a marker of cultural literacy (Hack 491).

In CHAPTER X, "THE FAIR" and CHAPTER XI, "THE FAIR.—CONCLUDED" both epigraphs belong to William J. Grayson's "The

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<sup>37</sup> (Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;/Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands./Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might.)

Hireling and the Slave.” The first one (183)<sup>38</sup> is taken from Part Second, lines 49-50, 51, 111-12; and the second one (197),<sup>39</sup> from Part Second, lines 85-86. These two chapters form a whole in the development of Hopkins’s narrative plot. It may come as a surprise that Hopkins quotes from one of the most well known proslavery poems, “The Hireling and the Slave” (1854) by William J. Grayson, a poet and politician from South Carolina. Structured in heroic couplets, the piece was one of the many literary replies to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and, in 1856, it appeared with other compositions in *The Hireling and the Slave, Chicora, and Other Poems*. The poem summed up the apologetic proslavery argument crafted by many white Southerners and Northerners during the first decades of the antebellum period when the abolitionist efforts intensified. The piece elaborates the paternalist view of slavery as an essential benevolent feudal system where in return for life-long protection and sustenance, slaves submitted willingly to their masters. The depiction of a Southern society economically based on a patriarchal slavery economy was contrasted with the ruthless exploitation of workers under the industrializing and capitalist North, as George Fitzhugh popularized, and “less fiercely reactionary forms of the argument appeared in the writings of William Gilmore Simms, Nathaniel Beverly Tucker, George Frederick Holmes, Edmund Ruffin, among many other names of the Southern intellectuals” (Fisher III 1065). Hopkins’s allusion to Grayson’s poem, a defense of slavery that privileges slave work in contrast to free labour, can be described as a “contemptuous” act, as Christopher Rick calls this particular type of non-appreciative allusions. In these two epigraphs, Hopkins changes what D. F. McKenzie calls “the cultural situation” of the quoted words, and thus, the original poem’s social text. Her ironic deployment of one of the most celebrated proslavery poems transforms the circulatory life of the verses and highlights the contrast existing between the epigraphs and her own text.

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<sup>38</sup> “Boisterous jest and humor unrefined,/That leave, though rough, no painful sting behind;/Warm social joys surround the Negro’s cot./No ennui clouds, no coming cares annoy,/Nor wants nor sorrows check the Negro’s joy.”

<sup>39</sup> “In feasts maturing busy hands appear,/And jest and laugh assail the ready ear.”

On page 200 (author and source unacknowledged),<sup>40</sup> Hopkins quotes some lines from Sarah Morgan Bryan Piatt's "The Black Princess: A True Fable of My Old Kentucky Nurse." Piatt (1836-1919) was born in Lexington, Kentucky, and was married to John James Piatt, a poet who served as American consul in Ireland. During her lifetime she published more than four hundred poems in fifteen volumes and periodicals. The poem that Hopkins selects appeared in 1872 in *The Independent* (Bennett 2001: 38-39), and it was Piatt's most anthologized piece (Gray 114). Hopkins might also have read it in John G. Whittier's *Songs of Three Centuries* (Boston: James E. Osgood and Company, 1875, 303-304), where it appears under the title of "My Old Kentucky Nurse." She quotes lines 1-4, yet lines 5 to 8 of the quartet are changed into a tercet, and then she quotes lines 25-28. For Paula B. Bennett, the piece praises the poet's black mammy, and idealizes the relationship between servant and mistress, a fact that shows Piatt's loving feelings but also her sense of guilt towards the black woman (1998: 234). Piatt begins this poem by "devoting eleven tetrameter ABAB quatrains [...] to dismantling the lore of fairy books, piecing together a revisionary representation of this princess's nobility and beauty" (Gray 114). Piatt's lines are quoted to dignify Madame Frances, "spiritualistic sooth-sayer and marvelous mind-reader" (197). Lois Brown highlights that Hopkins "was taken by Piatt's biographical poem" and would use parts of the eleven-stanza poem to describe another of "her most memorable accounts of mystical women," Aunt Henny in *Of One Blood* (612). Here she "uses practically all of the first two stanzas of Piatt's poem to achieve her transformation of Hannah into a figure capable of being romanticized" (Brown 397-98).

On page 202 (author and source unacknowledged: "she moved 'a daughter of the gods divinely fair"), Hopkins quotes again from Tennyson's "A Dream of Fair Women," stanza 22, lines 87-88, and she also alters here the original: "A daughter of the gods, divinely tall/And most divinely fair." She borrows once again from Tennyson to describe Sappho, yet two pages before she has praised the beauty

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<sup>40</sup> "I knew a princess; she was old,/Crisp-haired, flat-featured, with a look/Such as no dainty pen of gold/Would write of in a fairy book./Her face was like the Sphinx's face, to me,/Touched with vast patience, desert grace,/And lonesome, brooding mystery./Nothing of loveliest loveliness/This strange, sad princess seemed to lack;/Majestic with her calm distress/She was, and beautiful, though black."

of Madame Frances deploying Piatt's "The Black Princess." Hack argues that "[r]ecognition of the applicability of Tennyson's language to Sappho leads directly and immediately to recognition of the injustice of the existing racial order in the US" (495). In fact, the echoes of Piatt's description of "The Black Princess" reinforce the randomness of racial stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination as reflected by the contrastive use of "dark" and "fair" images. As Janet Gray asserts, Piatt "describes lily-white hair, bringing the floral symbology of white womandhood into her description of the nurse" (115). In contrast, Hopkins highlights the absurdity of Tennyson's conceptualizations of feminine beauty in white terms making Sappho the beneficiary of his "dream of fair women."

In CHAPTER XII, A COLORED POLITICIAN, the epigraph (220) belongs to *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II, scene 9, lines 40-45.<sup>41</sup> The Prince of Arragon, Portia's second suitor, here shows his doubts about which casket to choose and delivers "a heartfelt speech in praise of the principle of merit," according to Peter Holbrook (31). Arragon, a conceited man, is convinced of his own merit. Arragon shows himself humble by not choosing the gold casket, yet he does not want to rank himself "with the barbarous multitudes" (Act 2, scene 9, line 33), but still selects the silver one and fails to act by his principles. His words are fitting to introduce the character of John Langley, the controversial and double-faced "colored politician," who, similarly to Arragon, tries to play a double game.

In CHAPTER XIII, THE AMERICAN COLORED LEAGUE, the seventeen lines (240) opening this chapter belong to three stanzas from Whittier's "Stanzas for the Times-1839" (lines 25-42).<sup>42</sup> Hopkins, however, omits the third line of the first stanza, line 27, "Shall freemen lock the indignant thought?" The piece lists a number of

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<sup>41</sup> (O, that estates, degrees and offices/Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor/Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!/How many then should cover that stand bare!/How many be commanded that command!)

<sup>42</sup> "Shall tongues be mute when deeds are wrought/Which well might shame extremest hell?/Shall Pity's bosom cease to swell?/Shall Honor bleed?-Shall Truth succumb?/Shall pen and press and soul be dumb?//No;-by each spot of haunted ground/Where Freedom weeps her children's fall,-/By Plymouth's rock and Bunker's mound,/By Griswold's stained and shattered wall,/By Warren's ghost, by Langdon's shade,/By all the memories of our dead!//By their enlarging souls, which burst/The bands and fetters round them set,/By the free Pilgrim spirit nursed/Within our inmost bosoms, yet,/By all above, around, below,/Be ours the indignant answer,-No!"



episodes in the American Revolution where battles for freedom took place and claims the urgency to bear testimony. Whittier's poem is accompanied by the following introduction: "The 'Times' referred to were those evil times of the pro-slavery meeting in Faneuil Hall, August 21, 1835, in which a demand was made for the suppression of free speech, lest it should endanger the foundation of commercial society." The poem was first published in *Liberator* 22 (March 1839), 49 (Whittier 35). Whittier refers to the anti-abolitionist meeting held in Faneuil Hall—Boston most emblematic site for reformist gathering since revolutionary times—organized by the city's elite business class and politicians, and attended by a number of southerners to denounce immediate emancipation, and where William Lloyd Garrison and his followers were denounced and accused of plotting against the government. Hopkins's deployment of these lines is, once again, resonant with historical echoes of the past abolitionist struggle and her present racist fight against segregation. Angela M. Leonard remarks how the use of the interrogative is rhetorical and questions the unresponsiveness in front of injustices (249).

Whittier also used the same title for later compositions, which were also later retitled: "Stanzas for the Times-1839" ("The Response"); "Stanzas for the Times-1844" ("The Sentence of John L. Brown"),<sup>43</sup> and "Stanzas for the Times-1850" ("In the Evil Days"). These texts describe specific events related to the antislavery struggle. As Steve Gac explains, these pieces were "shorter and thus quicker to make their point than newspaper articles, served as abolitionist interpretations of current events," and "tied interpretive sentiment to reportage, turning his [Whittier's] poems into a valuable source of history" (31-32). In the poem quoted by Hopkins, the children of Revolutionary fathers show themselves unsympathetic towards the persecuted, but the poet, because of his commitment to the old national spirit and faith in American democratic traditions is obliged to speak out harshly and denounce the oppressions suffered by his fellow-men. Michael Cohen informs that "Stanzas for the Times-1839" was sung at a meeting of the Old Colony Anti-Slavery

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<sup>43</sup> In "Stanzas for the Times-1844," retitled, "The Sentence of John L. Brown," Whittier tells about John L. Brown, a white South Carolinian, who was sentenced to death after being found guilty of helping a woman slave escape from slavery. American and British protests pressed to lessen the sentence. An international outrage ensued, and protestors pressured officials into lessening the penalty. See McDaniel.

Society (Abington, Massachusetts) on January 17, 1838, among many other occasions of “national crisis as late as December 1860” (71).<sup>44</sup>

The redeployment of these verses throughout the antebellum era as well as by Hopkins in her historical romance is justified by the resonances that the lines offer. Cohen argues that “in order to be abstracted from its setting, the antislavery poem had to already be abstract; to read it as history, it first had to be history, or to become history, by addressing a time it did not name.” Thus, for example, when in “Stanzas for the Times” the poem “angrily speaks out against the times, it makes few references against them [...] the poem foregoes historical description to go straight to their hearts and minds” (71). Hopkins’s choice of these lines to open one of the chapters most centered on racial politics is highly meaningful. Whittier’s lines enclose “temporal immediacy and contextual immanence” (Cophen 71), elements that bend themselves to different uses in different times, and of course, in 1900 segregated America.

In CHAPTER XIV, LUKE SAWYER SPEAKS TO THE LEAGUE, the epigraph (254) is taken from William Cooper’s *The Task*,<sup>45</sup> half line 5 to 15 from Part II (1784) (Cowper 29-30). Hopkins will use the last four lines in her article “Educators (Conclude),” number VII, in the series “Famous Women of the Negro Race,” published in *Colored American Magazine*, on July 1902. Cowper’s lines were frequently quoted throughout the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century to express the abhorrence towards slavery and racism, as shown by Upton Sinclair’s choice in *The Cry for Justice: An Anthology of the Literature of Social Protest* (1915). White abolitionist Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880), for example, also used the first four quoted lines (until first part line 9) by Hopkins to open her *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833). On page 262

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Cohen has discovered reprintings of the poem in *Monthly Offering* (December 1841, 179), *Liberator* (5 April 1844, 156), *National Era* (12 December 1850, 198); *Christian Watchman Reflector* (2 January, 1851, 4) and *Liberator* (28 December 1860, 208) (42).

<sup>45</sup> My ear is pained,/My soul is sick with every day’s report/Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled./There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart;/It does not feel for man: the natural bond/Of brotherhood is severed as the flax/That falls asunder at the touch of fire./He finds his fellow guilty of a skin/Not colored like his own; and, having power/To enforce the wrong for such a worthy cause,/Dooms and devotes him as a lawful prey.)

(author and source unacknowledged: “Peace if possible; justice at any rate.”), Hopkins quotes these lines by abolitionist Wendell Phillips, which accompanied his signature on cards (Stewart 146-147).

In CHAPTER XV, WILL SMITH’S DEFENSE OF HIS RACE, the epigraph (263)<sup>46</sup> is borrowed from Whittier’s “Ritner,” lines 1 and 10. Hopkins uses the first part of line 1, and then quotes from line 10, the last line of the first stanza, which she then divides into her second and third lines (Whittier 47). Her division of line 10 changes the original meaning. Whittier writes: “Thank God, that one man as a freeman has spoken!” while Hopkins stresses the word “freeman” when she separates the compounding terms: “Thank God that one man as a free/Man has spoken!” In his *The Poetical Works in Four Volumes* (1892), Whittier addead the following introduction:

Written on reading the Message of Governor Ritner, of Pennsylvania, 1836. The fact redounds to the credit and serves to perpetuate the memory of the independent farmer and high-souled statesman, that he alone of all the Governors of the Union in 1836 met the insulting demands and menaces of the South in a manner becoming a freeman and hater of Slavery, in his message to the Legislature of Pennsylvania.

The lines from “Ritner” borrowed by Hopkins are followed by an introduction and a religious song: “Someone at this moment began to sing that grand old hymn, ever new and consoling: ‘Jesus, Lover of my soul,/Let me to thy bosom fly,/While the nearer waters roll,/While the tempest still is nigh.’” This is an hymn written by Charles Wesley, the English reformist, who founded the Methodist movement with his brother John. Together with Isaac Watts, he is one of the most prolific and celebrated authors of protestant hymns. For Cataliotti, this spiritual connects Luke Sawyer’s speech with that of Will Smith’s, and symbolizes the unwillingness of both men to accept white racist oppression. Thus, “the individual black voice raised in song amidst a comunal gathering is an affirmation that identifies these African Americans with the struggle for freedom and the spirituals traditionally represented” (36). The music interpreted by blacks in the novels is a cultural expression of their past of

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<sup>46</sup> “Thank God for the token!/Thank God that one man as a free/Man has spoken!”

oppression, and symbolizes their protest against the racist present, as well as the possibilities of transcending it spiritually. Sean McCann writes that this song that concludes Luke Sawyer's speech, precedes that of Will Smith's, in the same way that African American scholar and writer W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) would later deploy spirituals as authenticating paratextual devices for the content of the chapters in *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903. "For Hopkins," says McCann, "the spiritual likewise serves as an emotionally immediate political message that requires the cultivated formulation it can be given by Will Smith" (815).

On pages 266 and 272, Psalm 68:31 (second part) ('Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand and princes shall come out of Egypt'; "Ethiopia shall indeed stretch forth her hand and princes shall come out of Egypt) is quoted as spoken by Will Smith, who adds an emphatic "indeed" the second time he refers it. For Eric J. Sundquist, the different interpretations of the psalm highlights the fact that both colonized Africa and enslaved Africans in the diaspora were ready to rebel against their chains. The psalm announced the arrival of a black millennium through violence sanctioned by God and led by an African or an African American Moses (553). Hopkins's deployment of psalm 68 on two occasions in this crucial chapter attests to Hanna Wallinger's opinion of the writer as a relevant contributor to "a pan-African Ethiopianist, black nationalist movement" and "one of the few female writers who joined this discourse" (112).

CHAPTER XVI, JOHN LANGLEY CONSULTS MADAME FRANCES opens with an epigraph (274) from *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 1, lines 67-75,<sup>47</sup> which suggest that Langley is a reincarnation of Macbeth. Shakespeare's witches will represent Madame Frances, the old fortune-teller, who advises Langley to "choose the right path, no matter what the cost." Madame Frances prophesies his descent into misery and final downfall. The Shakespearean scene sets an ominous tone for chapter XVI.

In CHAPTER XVII, THE CANTERBURY CLUB DINNER, Hopkins turns to Oliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" on two occasions. The first

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<sup>47</sup> (Macbeth.-Tell me, thou unknown power,-First Witch.-He knows thy thought:/Hear his speech but say thou nought. Macbeth.-Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks;/But one word more,-First Witch.-He will not be commanded: here's another./More potent than the first.)

one is in the epigraph (287) (“Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,/Where wealth accumulates and men decay), lines 51-52. The second one is three pages later, 290 (“And a proud yeomanry, its country’s pride/When once destroyed can never be supplied”), lines 55-56. Yet, she changes the beginning of line 55, since the original line says: “*But a bold peasantry, their country pride*”).

In CHAPTER XVIII, WHAT EASTERN SUNDAY BROUGHT, the lines in the epigraph (303)<sup>48</sup> belong to Henry W. Longfellow. They are spoken by Preciosa in *The Spanish Student. A Play in Three Acts* (1840), act I, scene III, lines 205-206. Longfellow did not write specifically on slavery themes, but he “wrote some of the most spectacular and widely disseminated poetry of all time” (Wood xxv). Medora Gould, in her article “Literature,” published in *Women’s Era*, 24 March 1894, had written at the time of the publication of Longfellow’s entire poetical works that “a thorough knowledge of Longfellow is part of the education of every American” (10, cit. McHenry 229). In fact, his *Poems on Slavery* (1842) and his “reputation lent support to the abolition movement even though he never became a true abolitionist” (Harris 91). Hopkins seems to have borrowed the lines for ornamental purposes since the title of the chapter is “What Easter Sunday Brought.” Yet, this title looks forward to the final reunion of Sappho and Will in Chapter XXII, also with an epigraph with lines from two different titles by Longfellow, that takes place on another Easter Sunday, but now in New Orleans (391).

On page 312 (author and source unacknowledged: “Ask me no more; thy fate and mine are sealed:/I strove against the stream and all in vain;/Let the great river take me in the main:/No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;/Ask me no more.”), Hopkins borrows once again from Tennyson. Her turning to the English poet is unsurprising taking into account the poet’s reputation and how, as John Morton argues, English, Irish, Canadian, Australian, and American writers responded and appropriated the poet laureate’s poetry from the nineteenth-century to contemporary times. Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Yonge, Thomas Hardy, James Joyce, Evelyn Waugh, Andrew O’Hagan, among others, converse with Tennyson’s poetry and provide different types of interpretations and revisions. Hopkins quotes from *The Princess: A*

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<sup>48</sup> ‘Twas Easter Sunday. The full-blossomed trees/Filled all the air with fragrance and with joy.”

*Medley*, Canto VII (canto written in 1849 and added in 1850), lines 11-15. The poem was published in 1847, after *Poems* (two volumes 1842). Tennyson tackles two relevant social questions: universal education and women's access to superior education. In the poem Princess Ida's initial rejection of marriage is transformed into acceptance when she finally encounters the Prince's love. Alisa Clapp-Itnyre comments on how the thematic ambiguity in the poem is explained by means of the six musical interludes that Tennyson includes in the main plot, since these pieces tell the story that Princess Ida would have told if women had waged full power over their stories. In fact these interludes were added by Tennyson in the third edition of the poem, in 1850, as a way to enhance his sympathies for women's rights. The lines chosen by Hopkins belong to the last interlude and represent "a crushing defeat after the optimism presented by the first five songs" (Clapp-Itnyre 240). While Ida gets ready to accept the prince and give herself to him "the women sing a tragic song of forced love, 'Ask me no more,' in which the speaker, presumably a woman, very reluctantly agrees to marry her wooer" (240). The stanza Hopkins selects, the last one of the sixth musical interludes, does not seem to contain the highest ideals of love, but a mere physical surrender. Thus, the Princess's answer far from being "a flattering response to an impassioned lover like the Prince, this song casts doubt on the 'happy ending' envisioned by all the male storytellers" (241). Clapp Itnyre laments that "the songs' political relevance has been marginalized by readers even to this day," since "these songs suggest a more liberal dimension to this conventionally read" (242). In fact, for Sappho this is not a defeat. Hopkins may have seen through the more liberal meaning of these lines in the interlude in order to highlight how the trauma of a fallen womanhood, which traditionally engenders the expected happy ending, can be transformed into a subversive political claim against the heroine's racial and sexual oppression.

In CHAPTER XIX, *THE BITTER ARROW* opens with an epigraph (323) belonging to Tennyson's "The Ballad of Oriana" (1830), lines 64-68: "O, BREAKING heart that will not break,/Oriana!/O, pale, pale face so sweet and meek,/Oriana!" In this chapter Will learns that Sappho is gone, he reads her letter telling him about her true identity, and knows about John Langley's villainy. Tennyson's "Oriana" is a dramatic monologue inspired by an old ballad, "The Ballad of Helen of Kirconnel," that has "attracted an appreciable amount of critical response," even though "much of the response is

derogatory and even derisive” (Lovelace 45). The poem is the soliloquy of the bereaved lover who, fighting in a battle while Oriana stands on the castle wall watching him, misfires an arrow that pierces her heart and accidentally kills her. As in the poem, Sappho is figuratively killed not by her lover or even by John Langley’s perfidy, but by “the cross” “the Negro” bears while “carrying *the sins of others*” [italics in the original], in a “community where slavery has cast its baleful shadow” (332). Forced to depart from Boston, Sappho disappears and Will starts a life of despair without his beloved. Lovelace asserts that in Tennyson’s poem, “the outrageous improbability” of the accidental death of Oriana at the hands of her lover seems to enclose “a figurative meaning”—“the disastrous potential inherent in the mingling of romantic love and war” (48). Hopkins’s borrowing of these lines exemplifies once more her acts of literary resistance. Will’s passion for Sappho encourages him to fulfill his expected role as a race leader, a commitment rewarded by her return at the end of the novel.

On page 334 (author and source unacknowledged: “And there rises ever a passionate cry/From underneath in the darkened land”), Hopkins quotes lines 5-6 from Tennyson’s *Maud: A Monody*, Part II, Stanza 1. As it is usual, Hopkins also alters slightly the original here and changes the Tennysonian “From underneath in the *darkening* land” to “[...] in the *darkened* land.” Here she is describing John Langley’s emotions when trying to blackmail Sappho, and the change of the Tennysonian present participle (“darkening”) for the past participle (“darkened”) indicates the profound corruption Langley’s soul has undergone due to his desire for Sappho.

In CHAPTER XX, MOTHER LOVE, the epigraph (340)<sup>49</sup> quotes Preciosa in Longfellow’s *The Spanish Student. A Play in Three Acts*, Act III, Scene 4, lines 1587-1593. These lines that welcome death as an end to suffering on earth announce Sappho’s fleeing from Boston and, consequently, her temporal absence for three years in the novel—a figurative death. The epigraph of CHAPTER XXI, AFTER MANY DAYS (359) reverses the tragedy announced in the previous chapter, as it refers to Job 42:12 (“The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more

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<sup>49</sup> “What is it to die?/To leave all disappointment, care and sorrow,/To leave all falsehood, treachery and unkindness,/All ignominy, suffering and despair,/And be at rest forever! O dull heart,/Be of good cheer! When thou shalt cease to beat,/Then shalt thou cease to suffer and complain!”

than his beginning.”) The biblical verse speaks about the restoration of property to Job because of God’s will. Like Job, the protagonists of the novel will be compensated for all their sufferings and adversities.<sup>50</sup> This reward is further highlighted on page 370 (author and source unacknowledged: “The supreme hours unnoted come”) where Hopkins quotes line 69 from Whittier’s “The Maids of Attitash,” a piece that describes two young women who, by Attitash Lake, think about their future husbands. One of them wants riches, the other one just love, and the poem tells how the former finds out that love means riches.

The title of the last chapter of the novel—CHAPTER XXII, “SO HE BRINGETH THEM INTO THEIR DESIRED HAVEN”—is a quotation from Psalm 107: 30; and the epigraph (385)<sup>51</sup> quotes from Longfellow: the first tercet includes lines 121-123 from *Evangeline*, Part II, V, and the following stanza is taken from *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, “VIII. The Spinning Wheel.” Yet, Hopkins quotes lines 94-96, but line 97 is only quoted in its first three words made into an independent line (“So these lives”). Then the three following lines (99-101) are omitted, and Hopkins ends with line 101.<sup>52</sup> Hopkins’s choice to quote from these two pieces is far from whimsical. *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie* (1847) was one of the most world wide celebrated and enduring poems by Longfellow. Set in Acadie, the Canadian territory, it tells the tragic tale of Evangeline Bellefontaine, an Acadian girl, who searches for her lost love Gabriel Lajeunesse, after their separation by the Indian-French wars at the time of the expulsion of the Acadians. *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), a ballad placed against the

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<sup>50</sup> Biblical quotations in the novel include Chapter VII (126) Genesis 25: 29-34, (133) Exodus 16: 1-3; VIII (150) James 1:13, (157) Matthew 10:26; VI (99) Luke 15:2; XIII (241) Psalm 13; XV (267) Lucas 6: 39; XVIII (310) Genesis 29:18; XIX (332) Romans 6:23, Revelations 7:14; XX (341) Reference Epistle to Galatians 5: 19-21.

<sup>51</sup> The epigraph says: “All is ended now, the hope and the fear and the sorrow;/All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,/All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!//Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,/Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks, and pursuing/Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer,/Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest;/So these lives/Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.”

<sup>52</sup> In the original: “So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,/Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing asunder,/Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer, Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.”



backdrop of Puritan colonial times and tinged with humor, describes the love triangle among three Pilgrims—Miles Standish, Priscilla Mullens, and John Alden. This romantic poem offers a literary contrast to *Evangeline*, and the story of the origins of early Plymouth Colony. Miles and John fight for the love of Priscilla, an independent woman, but John wins her love. Charles C. Calhoun refers to how Priscilla, “seated at her famous spinning wheel [...] achieves a long life of her own beyond Longfellow’s texts, as an icon of colonial femininity [...] and the inspiration for a Colonial Revival wave of ‘Pilgrim Century’ reproduction furniture.” Moreover, Calhoun adds, “in the early twentieth century, her face would launch a thousand advertising campaigns, from detergents to life insurance” (198). Hopkins’s decision to end the epigraph quoting from *The Courtship* is a rejoinder to the immortalization of white womanhood in poetry at the end of the nineteenth century. However, it can also be read as an African American rewriting of the American tale of origins as embodied in the marriage of Priscilla and John. Longfellow was a direct descendant of the couple, and romanticized his family history in the poem. Consequently, the final marital union between Sappho and Will reconstitutes the white patriotic tale in terms of the black family and subtly encumbrates Hopkins to the level of chronicler of a collective African American history, which even though it had its foundations in slavery, it could look up to optimism and future prosperity. Longfellow’s lines will be enhanced by Hopkins’s final borrowing from Tennyson’s *The Princess*, which, in turn, is preceded on page 394 (author and source unacknowledged: “O, that ‘twere possible,/After long grief and pain,/To find the arms of my true love/Round me once again!”) by lines 1-5 from Tennyson’s *Maud: A Monody*, Part II, Stanza IV.2. These verses celebrate the reunion between Sappho and Will after their three-year separation and pave the way for the happy end, eight pages later, on page 402.

Hopkins’s last intertextual borrowing (author and source unacknowledged: “My wife, my life. O, we will walk this world/Yoked in all exercise of noble end,/And so through those dark gates across the wild/That no man knows./[...]//Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me”) is from *The Princess: A Medley*, Canto VII, lines 339-342 and 345. Without taking into account the source of these lines, Debra Bernardi writes that these final words indicate that the African American family will never be able to find a place to settle down and enjoy definite protection (216). Yet, Hopkins is here recreating Tennyson’s words, and as shown in some previous

occasions in the novel, she introduces some changes in the original. Hopkins's fourth line belongs to the first half of the original 342 line, then she omits original 343 and 344, and finishes with Tennyson's 345. (My wife, my life! O we will walk this world,/Yoked in all exercise of noble end,/And so thro' those dark gates across the wild/That no man knows. *Indeed I love thee: come,/Yield thyself up. My hopes and thine are one./Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;* Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me. In italics the original omitted). As explained when analyzing Hopkins's borrowing from the same poem in Chapter XVIII (312), there is not critical unanimity when assessing the feminist message of the poem. Critics such as Donald E. Hall, John Killham, Eve Sedgwick and Terry Eagleton have argued that, even if *The Princess* starts with the presentation of a community of women committed to defend their emancipatory rights, the poem concludes with a rearticulation of the popular Victorian image of "the angel in the house." Tennyson's poem is "reactionary," Hall complains, and "a relentless process of silencing self-interested women and quelling agitation that disrupts patriarchal order" (46).<sup>53</sup>

These last lines from Canto VII—skilfully selected and manipulated by Hopkins to grant a happy ending to a love story condemned to failure by the white society—tell how the Prince tries to overcome Princess Ida's resistance, convincing her to fuse with him even if that means to abandon her own truthful identity as a promoter of women's emancipation. According to Lindal Buchanan, Ida's hopes to construct an egalitarian and independent feminine society are destroyed by a forced union that reduces her to silence. The end, thus, reaffirms patriarchal authority and neutralizes the discursive acts of subversion carried out by the Princess and her friends. For Buchanan, however, the feminist discourse does not disappear but goes on to exert a revolutionary influence in the society of men, since it triggers its slow dissolution and change in those individuals who have internalized it (588-589, 592).

Following Genette, according to Daniel Hack, this final borrowing is called the "terminal epigraph" (2016: 489). For Hack,

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<sup>53</sup> For her part, Lorraine Janzen Kooistra explains how the gilt miniature of the embracing Prince and Princess appearing on the cover of the first English edition of the poem (London, Edward Moxon, 1860) "foretells and celebrates the happy ending of the fairy tale" (67).

Hopkins's decision to end *Contending Forces* with these lines by Tennyson obeys to her intention "to put the novel in dialogue with writings by other African Americans—Chestnut and Cooper in particular—and to further its challenge to existing racial and sexual norms" (490). Hack rightly argues that Hopkins uses Tennyson to question "the normalizing trajectory of the novel's romance plot" and "amplify the novel's counternormative energies" (497). To show his point he compares *Contending Forces* to Constance E. C. Weigall's *The Temptation of Dulce Carruthers* (1893), and Weigall's more conventional treatment of the poet. For Hack, the fact that both novels practically, though not completely, "omit the same two-and-a-half lines, and mark this omission with an ellipsis," leads him to think that "Hopkins almost certainly borrowed her terminal epigraph from Weigall" (499). Yet the reasons for Hopkins's deployment of these lines at the end of her fiction must be found in what Karen Tracey calls the use of "the double proposal plot" in nineteenth-century women's fiction. That is, Tennyson's contemporary women readers were disappointed, and challenged his conservative views, as was the case of Elizabeth Barret-Browning who replied with her *Aurora Leigh*. Among the novels that made use of *The Princess's* double proposal plot "to give voice to conflicting views of women's roles, to generate intertextual dialogue, and to mediate varied social conditions" (Tracey 76), there is one that became a postwar bestseller—Augusta Evan's *St. Elmo* (1867). Evan's novel "incorporates literature critique, direct quotation, and overt allusion to previously double proposal texts as she negotiates between British versions of renegotiated courtship and her partially disguised alliance to the American South" (76). Moreover, in this novel, Tennyson's lines appear as follows: "My wife, my life. Oh! we will walk this world,/Yoked in all exercise of noble end,/And so through those dark gates across the wild/That no man knows. My hopes and thine are one;/Accomplish thou my manhood, and thyself,/Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me." As Tracey notes, in 1867 Evans's "final endorsement of Tennyson's vision" is already changed by her "deletion of the impervious and perhaps indelicate command:—'Come,/Yield thyself up' (line 342-43) from the middle of the quotation" (77), an alteration that Hopkins will also follow. By invoking Tennyson and similarly to Augusta Evans's deployment of the poet's double-proposal plot, Hopkins enters into "an ongoing literary and critical conversation" about "the appropriate roles for women and the best model for marriage" (Tracey 77). The fact that

Evans was a Southerner and staunch conservative author poses no problems for Hopkins as a writer. Moreover, the national acclaim and circulation of *St. Elmo* allows her to have Evans's work as inspiration. Thus, Hopkins's use of Tennyson's controversial lines is in accordance to her re-authorship style. Her ending is a radical departure from the reactionary accommodation of women's place in Victorian society and signals towards a recuperation of her protagonist's dignity separated from previous definitions of femininity linked to sexuality. Yet, in contrast to Evans's use of the double-proposal plot, Hopkins's does celebrate "women's aspirations" but not their "dependency" (Tracey 77). She aims to establish a new sense of black womanhood unattached to Victorian conceptions of true femininity, while at the same time reinvigorating a model of partnership based on black male respect towards black women's history of sexual exploitation.

It is not a coincidence that the unmentioned black woman who figures prominently throughout the text as a fundamental inspiration to Hopkins was called after Tennyson's heroine, Princess Ida, that is, Ida B. Wells, a woman committed to the racial struggle and an anti-lynching crusader. Hopkins pays thus homage to the woman she admired in "Famous Women of the Negro Race IV: Some Literary Workers"<sup>54</sup> with the following words:

Among the Reformers of the nineteenth century none stands more powerful than Mrs. Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Her story is romantic. Everybody has heard of this fearless woman. She stirred Europe with her eloquent appeals until Parliament and crowned heads delighted to honor her. The press of her own country, governors, senators, representatives, heard her with pleasure and profit. She is without doubt the first authority among Afro-Americans on lynching and mob violence (Dworking 144).

The conclusion of studying Hopkins's borrowings shows that, in *Contending Forces*, Hopkins is not a plagiarist, but an alluder who always, except on one occasion, acknowledges her borrowings. The outstanding number of literary appropriations appearing in her novel allows this African American writer to become a member of what Pierre Bourdieu calls "the aristocracy of culture" (11-96). Hopkins

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<sup>54</sup> *Colored American Magazine* 4.4 (Mar. 1902): 276-280.

displays a selective manipulation of earlier literary sources, Anglo-American “titles of cultural nobility” (Bourdieu 18), a powerful transmutation of contemporary political materials, together with a definite intertextual impulse aimed at recomposing a new African American archival imaginary redeemed of racist detritus. Hopkins’s writing trends—her acts of deliberate palimpsestry—fit into what may be labeled “guerrilla intertextuality,” echoing Marilyn Randall’s coinage of “guerrilla plagiarism,” characterized by the radical and strategic use to which Hopkins’s numerous appropriations are put. Her strategies, however, were not exceptional but participate in a trend followed by other African American women who, as Elizabeth McHenry asserts, “questioned established literary standards and traditional literary values,” paying attention to canonical texts, a fact that highlights “their desire to recalibrate the value of those works” (228). Hopkins makes use of and instrumentalizes white writing to serve her purpose of racial denunciation. Focusing exclusively on her borrowings from Emerson or Tennyson, or trying to establish a comparison between her male protagonists and the Booker T. Washington-W.E.B. Du Bois tandem, as the only names that resonate in *Contending Forces*, is an approach that minimizes the ambitions and aims of Hopkins when writing her historical romance. In fact, the most outstanding writer, if the number of words and their strategic positioning in the epigraphs are counted, is undoubtedly Whittier, the writer who former slave and African American intellectual leader Frederick Douglass had already heralded in his newspapers “as a major poet worthy of extended study by readers of the newspapers” (McHenry 123). Furthermore, Hopkins’s borrowings are not just chosen from authors related to the antislavery or racial struggle, as showed, for example, by her choice of William Grayson, her strangest literary bedfellow, or her use of poetic lines that tend to be celebratory or inspirational. Hopkins’s attitude towards fiction recalls Karl Marx’s assertion in his article “The English Middle Class,” in *New-York Daily Tribune*, August 1, 1854, where he states that Dickens and his “splendid brotherhood of fiction-writers in England” “issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together.” At a time of extraordinary black mobilizations against the escalating measures of racism and segregationist laws, Hopkins pays homage to the many men and women in public and domestic spaces who were engaged in the racial fight against destructive racist America. Her intertextual aesthetics

made it possible for her to assert her cultural and intellectual authority as the “daughter” and heir of a long tradition of activists, capable of achieving change within American society—whether white or black. In *Contending Forces*, Hopkins takes a sit with Shakespeare, Emerson, Whittier, Longfellow, Tennyson, among others, and they wince not.

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