

'Collusions of the Mystery'

Ideology and the Gothic in *Hagar's Daughter*

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Ideologies exist because there are things which must at all costs not be thought, let alone spoken. How we could ever *know* that there were such thoughts is then an obvious logical difficulty.

Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*¹

'I see no connection.'

Dr Watson to Sherlock Holmes in 'The Adventure of the Dancing Men'²

Detectives search for a source of knowledge. So does the Gothic heroine, the detective's prototype in the long evolution of 'mystery' fiction out of Gothic romance. But the radically gendered distance between Emily St Aubert and Monsieur Dupin or Sherlock Holmes – or the distance between Emily and Miss Marple, for that matter – is not only a question of the difference between Radcliffian sensibility and Poesque ratiocination. For the heroines of Ann Radcliffe, Regina Maria Roche, and all their fictional progeny, what finally matters is not finding a source of knowledge, but finding the source of mystery. The Gothic only indirectly, and by the most roundabout means, asks 'who did it?' (committed the murder, stole the jewel). Most overtly it asks what generated the obfuscating ambiance in which the heroine is immersed throughout the defining Gothic sequences of the narrative: not who did this or that, but what produced the atmosphere of mystery – the flitting blue lights, the spectral apparitions, the strange groans in the deserted wing.

In both cases, however, the heroine's or the detective's task, in a context ordinarily removed from that with which Eagleton is concerned in the epigraph above, is to discover 'things which must at all costs not be thought, let alone spoken', and in both cases success depends on solving the 'obvious logical difficulty' that then presents itself. With this fact we might pair two others. First, in classic detective fiction the modus operandi of the detective is to establish the revelatory interconnectedness of what are manifest to Betteredge or Watson or Inspector Lestrade only as disparate facts, irrelevant and unrelated fragments. Second, one means by which hegemonic ideologies are constituted and sustained is through the drawing of mystifying

dividing lines – lines that obscure the coherence of oppressive social, economic, and political structures by fragmenting them conceptually into categories that appear to be unrelated. These two facts are themselves rarely connected in detective fiction, and ideological mystification is rarely an explicit subject of the Gothic. This essay focuses on an exception to both rules: Pauline Hopkins' *Hagar's Daughter* (1901–02), an early twentieth-century African American romance that is both a revolutionary revisioning of traditional Gothic mystery and an oppositional deployment of the relatively new figure of the detective. In *Hagar's Daughter*, the Gothic question of what generated the mystery becomes a question about ideological mystification – more specifically its role in producing, by means of the kinds of ideological fault-lines mentioned above, the climate of violence and terror that characterized the period of African American history referred to as 'the nadir.'³

The importance of ideology to this detective/mystery story is revealed in the fact that the villain, St Clair Enson, alias Benson, a high official in the US Treasury, almost gets away with his crimes precisely because of the power of mystifying ideology to mask them. Hopkins' detectives are a team: Henson, a white man and chief of the Secret Service; Smith, alias Uncle William Henry Jackson (an African American operative on Henson's force); and Venus Johnson, the young African American woman who gives Henson his first significant lead and then works on the case disguised as 'William's' grandson Billy. It is by working together in an alliance that crosses race and gender lines that they succeed in crossing the mystifying dividing lines on which the villain's success in hiding his crimes depends: lines that produce the illusory separations of masculine from feminine, black from white, home from state, African American families from Euro American families, and the antebellum past from a supposedly much-improved present. Benson is a figure for all these mystifications. Secretly one of the unreconstructed Confederates who earlier plotted to murder President Lincoln, in his high government position he embodies the pervasive but largely invisible presence of Confederate racist ideology at the heart of the newly reconstituted Union. Having destroyed the family of his brother, Ellis Enson, by revealing the latter's apparently white wife to be a slave, 'Benson' is simultaneously a figure for the role of still unexorcised Confederate ideology in drawing lines that shatter the human family into ostensibly separate 'races.' Finally, in more complicated ways that this essay will explore, Benson also figures the illusory dividing lines between home and state that perpetuate the oppressions of slavery, long after the Civil War, by means of the economic, psychological, and physical disruption of African American families.

These ideological dimensions of Benson's near-successful villainy are manifest in the nature and scope of his crimes. Late one night in the Treasury office, he murders his stenographer, secretly his sexual victim and mother of his child. Arranging to pin the crime on his secretary Cuthbert Sumner, Benson then plots the abduction and imprisonment of the only witness of the crime, an old African American woman, housekeeper at the Treasury, who once found a heap of money in the Treasury building and guarded it from thieves. This plot disrupts an African American home in several ways, since the abductor, Benson's faithful ex-slave

Isaac, now his (usually unpaid) servant, must not only absent himself from his family for long periods to execute the plot, but must kidnap his own mother-in-law and conceal her in a ruined plantation house.

This Gothic setting reveals slavery as the originary crime underlying all the others. In *Perils of the Night* I argued that novels in what I will here call the Anglo Gothic tradition tell the story of middle-class women who just can't seem to get out of the house.⁴ The ex-slave Aunt Henny's inability to get out of the old plantation house, long after slavery is supposedly over, makes another kind of point, as a metaphor for the seemingly endless re-enactment of slavery in the post-Reconstruction United States. The preface to Hopkins' first novel maintains that the difference between the late nineteenth century and slave-times 'is so slight as to be scarcely worth mentioning.'⁵ Hopkins lays the responsibility at the door of a government morally vitiated by concessions to the South, a fact troped in Benson's status: the man who entraps Aunt Henny in this classic locus of slavery is a government official who once plotted Lincoln's murder. Even more specifically, he is a Treasury official, whose long-term financial swindle of Isaac suggests the disaster of the Freedman's Bank. The connection is underlined when Isaac's wife Marthy, deploring Benson's behavior as an employer, cites the example of the Freedman's Bank as a reason not to trust a white man (177).

In addition to victimizing African Americans, Benson also victimizes white women, a fact Hopkins links to the moral vitiation of rapist slave masters, who end by losing all sense of the 'holy family tie' (271, 284). He has sexually exploited and murdered his white lover; he also orders Isaac to abduct a (supposedly) white woman he has been harassing to marry him, Cuthbert Sumner's fiancée Jewel (now secretly Sumner's wife). This stolen Jewel is the daughter of the late Senator Bowen, Benson's dupe in a financial scam the victim did not see through because, in his words, 'Uncle Sam never employs rascals to transact his business' (140).

Unmasking such villainy takes special insight, more particularly the insight available only at the racial margins where dominant ideology has less hold than it has at the centres of power where Benson is a well-regarded government official. To begin with, what the police who arrest Cuthbert are missing is (the) knowledge of the missing African American woman who, presumably knowing that Uncle Sam does hire rascals, knew enough to guard the money from thieves in the Treasury building.⁶ Thus she immediately recognized 'Benson' as an impostor and unreconstructed Rebel, and was therefore logically the person to witness a crime at the Treasury. Isaac's daughter Venus, in contrast to the police and prosecutors, knows from experience that neither black families and white families nor African American homes and Uncle Sam's government are as separate as those officials imagine when they fail to suspect Benson's disruptions of Isaac's family. As surely as Aunt Henny knows Benson's crime from having seen it herself, Venus – a type of the modern African American who rejects the old servile ways – knows that the Treasury Chief has a psychological hold on her father Isaac, who, 'faithful to the traditions of slavery still', takes his former master's 'will' for his only law (263). Venus, alias 'Billy' (i.e., Will), allied with 'Uncle Henry William' (i.e., Will),

represents a new, independent and insurgent African American will, which has an epistemological dimension, represented in her ability to see equally through white oppression and black collaboration. Likewise, the detectives are able to see past the division between home and government, masked ironically by a familial trust in Uncle Sam that would have been better placed in his smarter and more honest black counterpart, Aunt Henny.

It is from the mystification of government and family as separate spheres, in fact, that the most dangerous mystery derives. No one suspects that Benson's long-time stenographer is his sexual victim and secretly the mother of the child he refuses to make legitimate; no one suspects, in other words, that his government office was the site of unholy family ties. The word 'sexual harassment' did not exist in Hopkins' day; opposition to that nameless phenomenon was one of those things that must not be thought or spoken. No doubt it was Hopkins' job as a stenographer that enabled her, in Eagleton's terms, to 'know that there were such thoughts.' That Benson goes undetected for so long reveals the extent to which his ability to weave such a mystery around a stenographer's death is literally the consequence of gender ideology. At the same time it is a consequence of race ideology; the detectives, unlike the prosecutors, see that the supposed break between slave-times and the post-Reconstruction present is mere illusion, that the Confederacy lives on at the heart of the US government, and that the crimes of slavery against African American families repeat themselves in these ostensibly more enlightened times. For 'Benson's' crimes stretch back into the antebellum past, and only someone able to see across the supposed dividing line between past and present can piece together the whole puzzle.

'Billy' and 'William' can cross this line because, as African Americans, they know from experience that slavery lives on; Venus sees in her own family that Isaac works, most often without pay, for the Treasury official who steals his labour just as he did when Isaac was his slave. But the final courtroom scene reveals that the white detective 'Henson', at the center of power as chief of the Secret Service, has also, like his African American operatives, benefited from kinds of knowledge whites do not usually have. As he discloses in unraveling the mystery for the court, he himself is Ellis Enson, long presumed dead, and 'Benson' is St Clair Enson, the brother who remanded Ellis's white wife Hagar into slavery, thus provoking her suicidal leap, with her infant, from a bridge over the Potomac. With this revelation more mysteries unravel, as Jewel's beloved step-mother Estelle, a white woman of great social distinction, rushes forward and cries, '*Ellis! Ellis! I am Hagar!*' (261). He joyfully claims her as his wife, having long ago crossed the color line in his imagination by realizing that Hagar's 'race' imparted not a shade of difference to his love. Later, when Hagar opens Bowen's trunk and inexplicably finds her drowned baby's clothes inside, Detective Henson, now Enson, makes his final discovery: a manuscript revealing Jewel to be Hagar's long-lost daughter, rescued from the Potomac just as she was.

By seeing the ideological fragments as pieces of a mystified whole, together the detectives thus succeed in uncovering a Confederacy at the heart of the victorious

Union government, two black family members in a white family, a collusion between a white master and his African American servant, and a family murder in a government office. In a demystification of the gender ideology embodied in the figure of the detective created by Collins, Poe, and Doyle, their work also reveals that in this case the objective, detached male detective, far from separate from the object he investigates, is tied by his very heartstrings to the heart of the mystery. Indeed, his ancestral plantation house is the Gothic location where two African American women of the younger generation arrived, from opposite directions, at the place where the abducted African American matriarch was hidden.

The brief but critical segment of the book centered on this Gothic dwelling is obviously indebted not just to the Gothic of Hopkins' contemporaries and immediate predecessors (Wilkie Collins, for example), but even more fundamentally to the older tradition of Ann Radcliffe. Here, for example, we encounter the 'wild and romantic' twilight setting of late eighteenth-century romance, the 'rusty gates' to the old domain, the 'rank luxuriance' (233) of the grass that grows in all the ruined courtyards of Radcliffe's imitators, a thunderstorm with lightning illuminating 'the inky blackness of the scene' (214), the delicate but intrepid heroine's discovery and exploration of a secret passageway, and her encounter with yet another imprisoned woman. Here too is the innocent girl's imprisonment in an 'ancient ruin,' a 'stately pile' (228) that turns out to be an unsuspected repository of her identity as defined by family ties. Hopkins, however, makes an unparalleled, revisionary use of all these decayed conventions, beginning with Jewel's awakening in the decayed Southern mansion, in a room that seems a sort of Gothic artist's studio, with 'dusty canvases,' 'a broken easel,' a 'disorderly mass' of paint tubes and 'Evidence of decay . . . everywhere' (212).

Unbeknownst to Jewel, this is her ancestral mansion – the home where Ellis Enson, so long ago, established her mother Hagar in their early domestic bliss before St Clair arrived with his shocking news and Hagar discovered, to her horror, that she shared a common ancestry with her slaves. At first Jewel is strictly confined; later, like so many Gothic descendants of Emily St Aubert, she is allowed access to a room with a view – no sublime landscape, however, but 'ruins of what must once have been buildings and offices of a large plantation' (214), including slave quarters standing 'like skeletons' beneath the rustling trees (228). As Carol Allen says,

By turning Enson Hall into a gothic place of horrors, Hopkins reverses the ideological postulations of writers such as Joel Chandler Harris who . . . attempted to fabricate a romantic antebellum south. Hopkins' scene highlights that no safe romantic place exists in the history of slavery, as the 'big house' will be forever shadowed by the skeleton cabins.⁷

The past to which those skeletons belong opens to the heroine both literally and metaphorically during a dramatic storm, when, in Hopkins' version of the moving portrait of classic Gothic romance, a painting set into the wall suddenly bulges out and then tears. The fluttering canvas signals a hidden passageway behind the moving portrait, thereby revealing it as also a Gothic threshold.⁸

In Hopkins' version of these classic conventions of the hidden passageway, the moving portrait, and the threshold, however, are two fascinating innovations. First, the heroine's access to the secrets of this ancestral home – her ability to enter, however unwittingly, into her mother's past – depends upon the (literal) rending of a traditional image of womanhood: 'the portrait of an impossible wood nymph, but so faded that its beauty – if it had once possessed any – was entirely gone' (214). As the image of the ruined art studio also implies, this is the site not only of the past-yet-still-present world of slavery but also of a past-but-still-present art, perhaps the art of gracious living celebrated in the idealized portraits of the South this novel sets out to refute. The image of woman-as-nymph is fading, even passé, but still capable of stirring to life. The storm rips the painting part-way; to pass through this barrier, Jewel cuts a bigger opening with a knife.

Gothic heroines' nocturnal adventures in secret passageways always suggest a certain rending of gender norms for middle-class women, even as they observe so meticulously what one might have thought were lesser proprieties. In this case, that rending is more forcefully suggested by Jewel's passage through the torn painting – not a painting of a specific ancestor, like the moving portraits in earlier Gothic, but a generalized ideological ancestor of all True Women. In a parallel but even more overt gender transgression, Venus, whose name is another classical image of womanhood (already revised by her race) makes herself into Billy in order to arrive by another route at the same discovery Jewel makes by going beyond the image of the nymph. Inside the crumbling Gothic plantation house, Jewel is the intrepid Gothic heroine-detective who explores her prison and discovers a hidden Other Woman. Outside, Venus climbs a wall, peers in a window, and finds them both. Both heroines violate artificial divisions of gender; indeed the artificiality is rendered in allusions to art.⁹ Venus need not be a classical nude white statue; she can be black, adventurous, not only dressed but dressed as a boy. Jewel's transgression relates similarly to the illusory division between race and gender; her act of crossing the gender barrier represented by the painting – of recognizing it as no barrier but a threshold – has consequences in the realm of race. The portrait of the idealized nymph separates the white Jewel from her African American past, the daughter from her mother, white families from black, and an ostensibly white present from a lost African American history. In this revolutionary revisioning of Female Gothic, passing beyond the artifice of gender results in the exposure of race as an artifice as well.

Hopkins' second innovation in the conventions of the moving portrait and the secret passageway lies in the nature of the passageway itself, which is part of a system, not of secret passageways in the usual Gothic sense, but of the behind-the-scene slaves' routes to and from the various rooms of the old plantation house:

The passage was dark. It had evidently led to the servants' quarters at the back of the house when mirth and gaiety held high revel in the glorious old mansion. She went swiftly on, till she came to a black baize door. She pushed it open with difficulty. Here she paused irresolute, for this door gave admission to the front of the house. . . . (215).

The function of such passages was to make the slaves' presence, and their labour, as unobtrusive and invisible as possible. Such passages were part of the mystification of elegant and gracious plantation life in the Old South by means of artificial divisions between the lives of plantation owners and the lives of the slaves with which their lives were so intimately bound up. By entering these secret passages, Jewel thus returns to the secret world of her slave ancestors, the hidden world behind her mother Hagar's life as the 'white' mistress of a plantation home. The Gothic scenes reveal that this home had a sort of double interior: that in which Hagar and Ellis spoke their youthful endearments and admired their baby, and this other, hidden interior of the slaves' labour. It is to these secret places of her mother's bridal home – and of her racial identity – that Jewel returns on her Gothic adventure. Passing through the black door to the front of the house, Jewel turns into another passage, goes down some stairs into yet another passage with many closed doors, sees one ajar, and goes in (215–16).

Typically, in this second Gothic enclosure there should be some (usually older) counterpart (present either physically or in the form of a portrait or manuscript) of the young woman who has just escaped from the first prison – as in *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), where Julia, fleeing the bandits' cave through underground passageways, comes upon her mother's subterranean prison. In Hopkins' novel, the Other Woman discovered by the heroine does not at first appear to be her counterpart; Jewel is a young 'white' lady (typically clothed in white as well) and the other prisoner is the aged ex-slave Aunt Henny Sargeant. Thus Jewel encounters here the Other Woman so many Gothic heroines must encounter (always in some symbolic sense a version of themselves), but with a significant difference. This other woman, Jewel's fellow prisoner and therefore mirror image, is the mother of Marthy, Hagar's slave in the days before she knew she herself had African blood. In the wake of that revelation, gazing first at Marthy and then at a mirror, Hagar was overcome with the sudden internalization of the race prejudice she had always been able to project outward before:

Hagar suddenly arose, caught [Marthy] by the shoulders and turned her toward the light, minutely examining the black skin, crinkled hair, flat nose and protruding lips. So might her grandmother have looked . . . Her mother a slave! She wondered that the very thought did not strike her dead . . . Was she, indeed, a descendant of naked black savages of the horrible African jungles? (56–8).

As she told Ellis, she would not blame him for rejecting her now: 'I myself think and feel as you do' (61).

Jewel's encounter with her black fellow prisoner is a prelude to the revelation that this place she explored was her own ancestral home and – in a radical departure from traditional accounts of the heroine – that she, too, is black. Like Hagar, Jewel confronts the consequences of having once Othered what is now herself. Unconsciously echoing Hagar, she tells Cuthbert she will understand his rejection: 'I know your prejudice against amalgamation: I have believed with you' (281). This Gothic space in which Jewel discovers Aunt Henny is thus a sort of unacknowledged potential site

of self-decolonization: the white woman's encounter, across the illusory dividing lines of race, with the racially Other woman who is nonetheless herself.

All of the revelations toward which the linked detective story and Gothic romance of *Hagar's Daughter* move have in common the dissolution of ideological lines that mystify the unities of the human family, the invasive presence of the state at the heart of African American families, and the invasive presence of white racist psychology even in the psyche of an African American, in this case Isaac, whose collaboration with his former master requires him to abduct his own mother-in-law. Long ago when his master St Clair made his vindictive journey home to the old Enson plantation to remand his brother's wife into slavery, Isaac summed it all up: 'He's jes' gwine home to tare up brass, dat's de whole collusion ob de mystery' (24). Unlike the solutions arrived at by Venus, who sees so clearly across the lines of mystification, Isaac's solutions of the mystery imply his collusions with it, a fact that necessitates his own daughter's detective-work to expose him. As the cross-dresser on the cross-racial, cross-gender detective team, Venus initiates the unraveling of all the mysteries by committing that transgression on which so much female Gothic depends: the rebellion of the daughter against the father, often (although not always) masked in traditional Gothic as a rebellion against father-substitutes whom the author separates carefully from the idealized real fathers of the heroines. Hopkins complicates the Gothic convention of the daughter's rebellion by turning these contortions around: in *Hagar's Daughter* the African American father is neither perfect nor an oppressing patriarch but a collaborator with a white patriarchy that also oppresses *him*. Indeed, one effect of his collaboration is his abdication of a responsible position as father in his own family.

The family member he abducts, of course, is the most important key to the mystery; without the former slave woman's knowledge of the white man's crime – without her testimony against him – the mystery and its collusions would remain. Her symbolic Gothic imprisonment at the old Enson place gives this fact a deeper resonance. Knowledge of the slave woman, and the slave woman's knowledge, are the secrets still hidden in the old plantation house; they must be recovered to demystify the supposed separation of the present from the past. In other ways too in *Hagar's Daughter*, a slave mother holds the key to that demystification. When Hagar, the original slave mother of the story, unlocks Bowen's trunk near the end of the novel, she finds a package she has never seen before, and carefully unties the string that binds up what she will soon learn is the secret of her own broken family connection, the mystery of her lost child. 'She undid the knot with the feeling of pride which attends the operation of succeeding in untying a string without cutting it' (276). The image establishes Hagar, rather than the detectives, as the final unraveler of the mysteries. In the package Hagar unties are the beautiful things she made for her baby – her handiwork, her labour for her child. This slave mother with her past and her child's past in her hands, bound up in a knot she knows how to untie, is a figure for all Hopkins' slave mothers, and this moment when she holds in her hands the lost connection between herself and her child is an emblem of all the lost knowledge of which the slave mother alone is the repository.

The ideological occlusion of that knowledge is the loss of bonds between black and white family members, as well as bonds between the present and the past. How that knowledge gets lost, how it can be recovered, what mystifying knots it will finally untie, is one of Hopkins' great subjects. In the courtroom scene of *Hagar's Daughter*, a woman who has been passing as white but is really a slave's child is asked who her mother was. 'I do not remember my mother', she says – 'I never saw her. I know nothing of her' (245). Even if these words are a lie, they have in them the truth of the slave child's experience, evoking as they do the opening of Frederick Douglass' narrative: 'I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night.'¹⁰ The story of slavery as Hopkins tells it, again and again, is the story of the repressed mother, and – in both senses – the repressed knowledge of the mother. Whether it is true or not that Aurelia knows nothing of her mother, her masquerade as a white woman would necessitate repressing any connection. Hagar narrowly escapes the fate of the repressed/suppressed mother, because, as the title of the novel implies, she finally recovers her daughter.

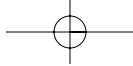
Such recoveries are the staples of sentimental Gothic, but once again Hopkins' African American Gothic works to a radically different end than the Gothic of Radcliffe or Roche. In Hopkins' Gothic, private mysteries in the home are intimately tied to mysteries of state; as a result, mere private recoveries of kinship do not lead to unmitigatedly happy endings. When Jewel is revealed as 'black', her husband finds himself unable to transcend the barrier of race in time to prevent her from leaving in despair for Europe. There, like heroines of Henry James and Edith Wharton, she dies of Roman Fever, but with quite a different ideological significance. That significance derives from the fact that Jewel's tragedy is highly politicized in the context of Hopkins' work as a whole, which consistently ties the disruption and violation of African American families in their private lives to the denial of their public rights as citizens. The link is well summarized in *Contending Forces*, when Sappho insists that African Americans must agitate for suffrage: 'Temporizing will not benefit us; rather it will leave us branded as cowards, not worthy a freeman's respect – an alien people, without a country and without a home' (125). Denied a home by her own husband because of her race, Jewel dies in Europe. The implications are clear in her husband's final musings on the larger significance of the wrong he did her: 'Cuthbert Sumner questioned wherein he had sinned and why he was so severely punished. Then it was borne in upon him: the sin is the nation's. It must be washed out' (283).

Neither the detective story nor the Gothic romance of *Hagar's Daughter* can end happily, because in Hopkins' mystery story, identifying the collusions of the mystery is only necessary, but not sufficient, to repair the rents in the social and political fabric. Those rents are not caused by, but only reflected in, the ideological process that shatters unities – the unity of families, of races, of history – into disconnected fragments. Thus in *Hagar's Daughter* finding the source of mystery, putting together the pieces of the puzzle, is finally not enough to dispel the Gothic horrors embodied in the ruined plantation house with its skeletal cabins still

standing for a long list of unredressed crimes. Like all of Hopkins' novels, this one is a call to resistance, a call for a real-world dénouement to the action of the plot. At the end of the book it remains for the readers to think those things that must at all costs not be thought, to ally themselves across the merely illusory lines of race and gender, and to cross one final dividing line: that between reading a book and taking action in the world.

Notes

- 1 Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 58.
- 2 A. Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Dancing Men', in *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Novels and Stories*, Vol. 1 (New York: Bantam, 1986), pp. 704–26, at p. 704.
- 3 See Rayford Logan, who first used this designation in *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877–1901* (New York: Dial, 1954); Dickson Bruce's *Black American Writing from the Nadir: the Evolution of a Literary Tradition 1877–1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); and the use of the term by such literary historians as John Gruesser in 'Pauline Hopkins' *Of One Blood*: Creating an Afrocentric Fantasy for a Black Middle Class Audience', in *Modes of the Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Twelfth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*, ed. Robert A. Latham and Robert A. Collins (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), pp. 74–83. Despite an explosion of studies on Hopkins beginning in the late 1980s, there is no extensive study of her use of the Gothic tradition. Considerations of Hopkins' Gothic (not always by that name) have been primarily confined to her last novel, *Of One Blood*, most notably Thomas J. Otten's 'Pauline Hopkins and the Hidden Self of Race', *ELH*, 59/1 (Spring 1992), 227–56 (see especially pp. 250–1). An exception is Carol Allen, whose mention of the Gothic in *Hagar's Daughter* is cited below. Quotations from the novel are from *Hagar's Daughter: A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice*, serialized in *The Colored American Magazine*, 2:5–6, 3:1–6, 4:1–4 (March 1901–March 1902), and reprinted in *The Magazine Novels of Pauline Hopkins*, Intro. Hazel V. Carby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 3–284.
- 4 Eugenia DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- 5 Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* [1900] reprinted in the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 15.
- 6 As Janet Gabler-Hover says, Aunt Henny 'is the custodian of the capital in more ways than one.' She points out, although the text does not state this directly, that the money Aunt Henny finds is 'graft money': *Dreaming Black/Writing White: The Hagar Myth in American Cultural History* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), p. 178.
- 7 Carol Allen, *Black Women Intellectuals: Strategies of Nation, Family, and Neighborhood in the Works of Pauline Hopkins, Jessie Fauset, and Marita Bonner* (New York and London: Garland, 1998), p. 40.
- 8 My discussion throughout this essay should be seen in the broader context of my readings, in *Perils of the Night*, of the Other Woman, the predominance of boundaries and barriers among the conventions of women's Gothic, and the room-with-a-view.
- 9 I read Venus as a figure of Will and therefore as a heroine in Hopkins' moral and political schema. On the question of whether she is a heroine more generally, see Hazel



- Carby, 'Introduction' to *The Magazine Novels of Pauline Hopkins*, p. xxxix, and Claudia Tate's response in *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 247.
- 10 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), Electronic Edition, Documenting the American South (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hills Libraries, 1999), p. 2.

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