The Abstract Slave: Anti-Blackness and Marx's Method

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Abstract

"The Abstract Slave: Anti-Blackness and Marx's Method" presents an immanent critique of the Marxist value-form. While Marx could *historically* think the empirical reality of slavery appearing together with capitalism, the value-form *theoretically* unthinks the significance of the conjuncture slavery and capitalism. Even with attempts to recuperate Marxism from some of the errors of evolutionism, the content and form of slavery is not usually up for debate, only the status of its interaction with capitalist circuits (a rearrangement of difference within unity). Mirroring the Marxist methodology of rising from the "abstract" to the "concrete," this article moves to substitute the abstraction of labor with that of slavery and closes by restaging the concrete development of "real subsumption" through the problem of abolition. Such a substitution deconstructs Marx's method by situating slavery's transposition to brute force (and race's reduction to false consciousness) as the productive source of the capitalist form of value.

For historian Walter Johnson, slavery is the "unthought" of political economy—the "historical and conceptual backdrop for the main event": capitalism.[1] However, it is often unclear what the theoretical occlusion of slavery might mean, given that it has also been said, with much truth, that "Karl Marx recognized the capitalist nature of American slavery long before American historians."[2] It is certainly not the case that Marx merely did not "think" about slavery. The problem of slavery litters Marx's articles and correspondence and, although relegated to rhetoric and marginalia, appears in every chapter of *Capital, Volume 1*.[3] Historically, indeed, Marx's capitalism has a scope that cannot be but global: He pinpoints "the first sporadic traces of capitalist production as early as the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries in certain towns of the Mediterranean"; situates Italy circa the fifteenth century as the earliest development of capitalist production; designates the violent, "man-stealing" Dutch as the "model capitalist nation of the seventeenth century"; and includes "the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins" in a litany of formative events at the "dawn of the era of capitalist production."[4] But because his theoretical account of capitalism's historical origins in primitive accumulation only figures at the close of his dense text, the question remains as to how, and to what extent, they are taken up in Marx's abstract forms.

As Marx is fairly explicit about his methodology in his mature works, beginning with the general commodity-form—as it appears to us as commonplace—only to unfurl, from this abstraction, something of immense complexity, this essay argues that understanding what Marx "thinks" about slavery means

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reconstructing not only *what* he says about it, but *how* (methodologically) and *when* (in the order of presentation) he does so. Rather than confront Marx through his historiography, which often leaves us with an epiphenomenal account of the relationship between slavery and capitalism, I argue that the structural positionality of blackness requires approaching Marx and slavery through his abstractions. Such a critical encounter has largely been forestalled by conflicting approaches towards the problem of abstraction. On the one hand are Marxists who want to redeem Marx's abstractions and, consequently, his totality; on the other are postcolonial and critical race scholars who reject the theoretical validity and political purchase of "abstraction" altogether. When Cedric Robinson, celebrated theorist of (one version of) the black radical tradition, pathologizes Marx's drive "to achieve the scientific elegance and interpretive economy demanded by theory," he equates too much abstraction with the consignment of "race, gender, culture and history to the dustbin," lobbed into the "imagined abyss signified by pre-capitalist, noncapitalist and primitive accumulation."[5] Eschewing abstraction, historians of slavery have, instead, sought to capture the "commodity-as-process," which Nicholas Rinehart contends could not only counteract "the static and normative paradigms buttressed by 'social death,' Marxian commodity fetish, or any other inadequate theoretical position," but also clarify that "the very word 'slavery' itself" is "meaningless insofar as it attempts to describe abstractly what was historically a set of changing, disparate, and transitional circumstances and experiences."[6]

On the surface, this valorization of the concrete resembles early Marxism. Consider these fragments from "The German Ideology": "In direct contrast to German philosophy, which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven"; and "[t]his method of approach … starts out from the real premises… . Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or abstract definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions."[7] But if we are, as Rinehart contends, "condemn[ed] to the realm of pure abstraction, and thereby recklessly obscure, the material, embodied, and mundane processes of enslavement in the modern era," it is because, I propose, slavery has risen to the realm of "pure abstraction," insofar as it is the paradigmatic "real abstraction."[8] By submitting labor, money, and value to a dynamic realization of their "practical truth," Marx (and here I don't quite want to leave behind his methodology) comes to destabilize universal pretenses to epistemology by indexing that abstractions are "real," gaining traction in the sociality of their relations. What is needed, I argue, is an encounter that could render slavery as a *more complex*, not more concrete, abstraction preceding and priming the commodity-form. I am calling, more to the point, for an exposure of the "abstract slave" as a decisive resource in the theoretical-historical realization of "abstract labor."

While informed by Marx's complication of mind and matter, my identification of the "abstract slave" proceeds from the suspicion that Marx's political-philosophical lessons—on the production of knowledge, the genesis of subjectivity and the social world, the movement of history, and the possibility

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for freedom—are symptomatic of, rather than emancipatory for, the problema of the slave. Marx's method, that is, is in excess of his object. For Marxists, slavery instead exudes a problem of embeddedness: An "anomaly" or necessity or, in the words of Robert Miles, an "anomalous necessity,"[9] slavery can *affect* capitalism, in that it can contribute to its wealth or (more radically, perhaps) elements of its ideological reproduction, and it can be *affected by* capitalism, in that it can be made more or less a vehicle for accumulation and, when touched by distortions like race, an ideological wedge for class control. Nevertheless, slavery's formation remains presumed as both derivative and static. With a focus on what slavery produces *for* capitalism, not what produces slavery, comes the ricocheted return to the material assumption of its content—a domestic-economic configuration (as Aristotle long ago supposed) that, absent the security of natural and/or divine providence, is instead maintained by the most material and direct of violence and thus cannot produce anything except the materiality to which it has been consigned.

Instead of redeeming or rejecting Marxist abstractions, I follow Frank B. Wilderson III to propose that "Work is not an organic principle for the slave."[10] Being that labor for Marx is (1) the primary activity of historical subjects; (2) the historically distinct form of social mediation under capitalism; and (3) the grounds for revolutionary unfettering, this proposal already moves away from the method and aim of the critique of political economy. Further, I do not assume, as Robinson does, that Marx's naturalization of the slave condition merely replicates the Aristotelian natural slave.[11] Marx, as I elaborate elsewhere, could only appropriate natural slavery because of the conjunction of anti-blackness and slavery; that is, the realization of Aristotle's philosophical speculation of the natural slave has given us the forms of freedom on which Robinson's oppositional freedom still relies.[12] Insisting that "we need a new language of abstraction to explain this horror," Wilderson redirects our attention from the critique of political economy to the critique of "political ontology."[13] As the essential methodological protocol of attention for the critical current that goes by the name of Afro-pessimism, "political ontology" complicates the empirical and experiential lenses that characterize both the sociohistorical study of race and the theoretical critique of capitalism, precisely because anti-blackness composes a challenge to the reality that would undergird such access.

Mirroring the Marxist methodology of rising from the "abstract" to the "concrete," my immanent critique expands the frame from the problem of "abstract labor" under capitalism to the "abstract slave" of anti-blackness. The "abstract slave" is political ontology's necessary companion piece—its radicalization of "abstract labor" corresponds with Afro-pessimism's reconfiguration of "political economy" through "political ontology." I clarify the stakes of this radicalization by recomposing Marx's analysis of the revolutionary potential of the working day through the prism of abolition, Reconstruction, and its aftermath. In deconstructing Marx's method of presentation, I situate the transposition of slavery to brute force and the reduction of race to false consciousness as

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the productive source of the commodity-form and the capitalist totality itself, indeed, of the very distinction between the abstract and concrete. Slavery's condensation to "direct slavery," that is, is a real abstraction, the hypostatization of the ideal from the real being the slave's arche-production.

Chains and Threads

Internal to Marxism, the position of slavery vis-à-vis capitalism takes shape along vectors of commensurability and incommensurability that adjudicate the historical-logical relations between modes of production and forms of exploitation. In an evocative passage of *Capital*, Marx appears to collapse the two: "The Roman slave was held by chains; the wage laborer is bound to his owner by invisible threads."[14] By distilling modes of labor extraction through forms of domination, Marx stages a conceptual confrontation between the direct subordination of slaves and serfs of the peasant economy and the mystification of exchange relations (and the abstraction of and alienation of one's labor) for the wage-slave under capitalism. On the one hand, is the excessive, spectacular, and bloody feudal violence; on the other, the quotidian mechanisms of "silent compulsion."[15] It is not easy to make an aphorism of this quote. Read as either a logical opposition (personalistic chains *versus* invisible threads) or a historical development (chains *subsumed by* threads), the route by which direct domination is or is not subsumed by impersonal relations in the expanded reproduction of capital and the problem of how forms of domination that are characteristic of slavery and capitalism may historically and theoretically interarticulate, is incredibly complex, especially internal to Marx's method.

As a logically oppositional relation, the metaphor of the "wage slave" can dramatize an apparent truth—the proximity of formal freedom and its apparent opposite.[16] The wage-laborer is conditioned by a double freedom, a positive freedom to "dispose of his labor-power as his own commodity" and a negative freedom from dependency, "having no other commodity for sale."[17] Although free wage-labor is often celebrated as an advancement on "unfree labor," "free" labor does not necessarily mean an absence of coercion. As contingent positions emergent from protracted legal and social struggles, "free" and "unfree" might be seen as united through a continuum of coercion, where "'free' simply meant dispossessed, divorced from the means of production."[18] The logical distinction between labor and slavery is poised to reveal a more abiding commensurability, albeit one that carries ambiguous rhetorical and structural weight, insofar as it also deems slavery of less theoretical interest.

Because Marx identifies bourgeois society (and English manufacture in particular)[19] as "the most developed and the most complex," his slice of the present is granted immanent potential to reveal something of the "ruins" of "vanished social formations," if only in contradictory, stunted, or vacated form.[20] While this backwards view might be only illustrative, Marx's epochal sketch of capitalist reproduction famously takes on evolutionary hues, such as his positing of the capitalist social relation as "a result of a past historical

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development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the *extinction* of a whole series of older formations of social production."[21] With this language of extinction, slavery, as a "relation of domination," seemingly falls out of the totality, a mere relic in the realm of limitless accumulation.[22] In its priority to capitalism, slavery instead is posited as a consequence of the reduction of laborers to a natural condition of production. Unlike human actors, the slave is classified "along with other natural beings, such as cattle, as an accessory of the earth."[23]

When Marx does address how slavery gets "drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalistic mode of production," the basic premise and problem of slavery remains unvarying.[24] In *Theories of Surplus Value*, for instance, plantations are conceived as only *formally* capitalist in their mode of production: Although commercial, speculative, and global "from the start," for Marx, "slavery of Negroes precludes free wage labor," and thus any incipient capitalist orientation on the part of slaveholders and merchants "has not arisen out of slavery but is grafted onto it."[25] The difference is that when slaves become compelled to produce commodities, instead of products for immediate consumption, and when "the business in which slaves are used is conducted by *capitalists*," the "civilized horrors of over-work" can become "grafted" onto slavery, and the slave can suffer problems proximate to those confronted by the wage-laborer.[26] This is not because of any historical shift in the system of slavery itself but because of an external process induced when temporalities collide and slaves are subjected, for the first and only time, to the mercy of capitalists. As Marx writes in the *Grundrisse*, "The fact that we now not only call the plantation owners in America capitalists, but that they *are* capitalists, is based on their existence as anomalies within a world market based on free labor."[27] The anomalous slave can become a commodity and a "direct instrument of production," but nonetheless retains their approximation to nature.[28] The substantive difference between labor and slavery is instead presupposed by the degree of mystification one has towards the conditions of one's own laboring. The form of exploitation of slavery remains theorized as a residual or resistant core, tethered to the personal domination of individuals amidst the contrasting formal freedom of capitalism and only *ideologically* impinging on relations of production.

The Unity of the Diverse

Animated by subaltern, postcolonial, and feminist studies, critical Marxists have sought to correct the limitations of Marx's grafting method in two ways. The first, which I will call the *expansionist thesis*, expands the totality, challenging the implicit Marxist teleology by introducing alternate moments in Marx—overlapping historical examples, tertiary texts, ambiguous language, residues of difference—to stretch the conceits of his abstractions. The second, which I will call the *sufficiency thesis*, maintains faith in the totality, reinterpreting Marx's theoretical presentation to argue that Marxist categories *already* include historical differences like slavery, and that what is required is a modification of our

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understanding of Marx. Both seek to redeem the capitalist totality—"the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse"—by recalibrating its relationship with difference.[29]

The expansionist thesis leverages the apparent "non-correspondence"[30] between abstraction and history to maintain the possibility of a unified analytic, one that can (1) avoid collapsing relations of production and forms of exploitation and (2) determinatively ground the complex ways in which the world market is historically reproduced, through both wage and nonwage relations of production. Unlike vulgar Marxism, which would reduce slavery, feudalism, and capitalism to modes of supersession, attendant to their content, Jairus Banaji contends that "deployments of labour, the organisation and control of the labour-process, 'correlates' with historical relations of production in complex ways … free labour, so-called, *cannot* be an essential moment of capital, not if the self-expansion of value is intrinsically indifferent to the forms in which it dominates labour."[31] In conversation with the critique unleashed by *Black Marxism*'s analytic "racial capitalism," critics of Eurocentrism more broadly have sought to avoid the spatial and temporal "tunneling" that takes Europe as the capitalist origin,[32] in order to move from a unilinear to "multilinear" account,[33] or to one which "may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous."[34]

While these calls for differential unity open counter-trends of explicit un-freedom internal to the Marxist tradition, capitalism's *tendency* toward universalizing wage-labor remains relatively undisputed. As Kevin Anderson elaborates, "Marx was not a philosopher of difference in the postmodernist sense, for the critique of a single overarching entity, capital, was at the center of his entire intellectual enterprise."[35] This centrality certainly leaves the dynamics of a correlation or interarticulation (as well as Marx's representational linkage between logic and history) continuously up for dispute. Although Marx did analyze how slavery transformed from the "more or less patriarchal" to a "system of commercial exploitation," once even referring to "capitalistic slavery," he does not seem to give much insight into the significance of the transformation.[36] Indeed, even though an immanent critique can be made to recuperate Marxism from some of the errors of evolutionism, the content and form of slavery is not usually up for debate, only the status of its interaction with capitalist circuits (a rearrangement of difference within unity). As such, the archeological recovery of "difference" within Marx secures a desire for redemption that operates by expanding Marx's framework without fundamentally altering it.

In contrast to the expansionist thesis' project to re-think the unthought of capitalism, more emphatic Marxist currents insist that slavery, colonialism, and difference writ large have already been sufficiently thought, at least by Marx. At the heart of this sufficiency thesis is the problem of Marx's mode of presentation in *Capital*. Remember, Marx gives primacy to logical form, only insofar as it distills an aggregate practice given by the social history of capitalism.[37] Because Marx's logical unfolding does not map onto its historical one—instead mimicking capitalist representation in a critical project of undoing—his logic, it is

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argued, can include and embed difference. Even at its most ahistorical, historical realities have been accounted for, as one astute commentator puts it, but they merely "disappeared into Marx's system as the work of a tailor disappears into a finished coat."[38] And Marx's finished coat, as Nicole Pepperell shows, gives signs of its own construction: Like a play within a play, analysis of *Capital*'s literary techniques—its "subtle gestures," its "voicing and tone, characters, dramatic structure, and plot"—call attention to "the artificiality of the performance playing out in the main text."[39]

The key critical edge comes with the introduction of primitive accumulation at the end of the first volume of *Capital*, meant to then be re-integrated back into an understanding of its early, abstract premises.[40] By opening the section on "so-called primitive accumulation" with "original sin," Marx can be read as ironically cuing us to the possibility that this origin story relays more accurately the origin story that capitalism tells to itself. Because dramatic interventions of force and discipline have to continuously be foreclosed to fulfil the smooth functioning promised by exchange, the significance and character of violence might be thought not only in the transition to but also in the reproduction of capitalism, evocative of Rosa Luxemburg's famous argument that "the accumulation of capital, seen as an historical process, employs force as a permanent weapon, not only at its genesis, but further on down to the present day."[41] Marx may seem to disagree when he situates "direct extra-economic force" in the form of the state and law at the "historical genesis of capitalist production" and dismisses direct force under capitalism as only deployed in "exceptional" instances.[42] But given that capitalism's normal functioning is compelled to prop up the ahistorical separation of the laborer from his means, every moment of accumulation expresses the continuous reproduction of primitive accumulation. Certain aphoristic moments in Marx (see "Force is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power"[43]) could then be claimed to signal such a continuity. With Marx's abstractions repositioned as critically capacious containers, the failure to grasp different modes of production and domination would lie not with Marx or his limited historical scope but rather with readers who lack grounding in Marxist methodology.

Recuperating this Marx means, however, downplaying his insistence on the historical distinctiveness and radical shift that is abstract labor. While Marx undoubtedly does theorize violence in the state's concentrated executive function, especially as a mechanistic engine for transition, capitalism's characteristic form of violence is situated *immanently* with regards to its processes of reproduction. Insofar as commodity-producing labor expresses a social facticity of abstraction—real and not merely thought—it exerts an impersonal imperative generated not by intersubjective domination but, as Moishe Postone puts it, "the domination of people by abstract social structures that people themselves constitute."[44] More than just constitutive of the capitalist epoch, this immanent violence, what Postone calls "abstract domination," is formative of capitalism's social mode of mediation itself and the key to commodity fetishism. There need

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be no sinister "Mr. Money-bags" out to expropriate the means of production from the meek, for regardless of intent the "immanent laws of capitalist production" confront even "the individual capitalist as a coercive force external to him."[45] That is, even the capitalist and political economist become alienated and objectified by the tautological demands of value. From the standpoint of abstract domination, primitive accumulation might be more comprehensively grasped as, in Jason Read's figuration, itself a "transformation of the form of violence."[46] As such, direct force cannot be considered the primary target of critique, or else we misapprehend capitalism's ground.[47]

Again, we repeat the oscillation between commensurability and incommensurability. On the one hand, this transformation may be thought of as telic. Marx does overwhelmingly situate abstract violence at the end of a progression, where primitive accumulation marks the passage of violence from direct domination to the overt mechanisms of the state and, finally, to the abstract domination of labor that Marx most often associates with "the normal European level."[48] Despite the disarticulation the likes of Banaji might like to induce, Marx has wage labor arising "out of the dissolution of slavery and serfdom," implying that any continuation of slavery into capitalism would be the result of a stubborn persistence on slavery's part—slavery an "anomaly opposite the bourgeois system itself."[49] In this dissolution, the oppressive and enabling capacities of abstraction are rendered as the conservation and generalization of direct violence. The "external relations" of independent producers, Marx insists, are "very far from being an abolition of 'relations of dependence'; they are rather the dissolution of these relations into a general form; they are merely the elaboration and emergence of the general *foundation* of the relations of personal dependence." He continues in a very crystallizing fashion: "[I]ndividuals are now ruled by *abstractions*, whereas earlier they depended on one another."[50] Abstract domination, in this theorization at least, is very neatly the dialectical synthesis after which every Hegelian dreams.

A more Marxist spin on this synthesis might situate abstract domination as a hypostatization *internal to* capitalism's mode of representation. In this light, Marx's complex compendium of backward glances at capitalism's "pre-history" would do more than rhetorically or historically clarify the terms of capitalism's revolutionary upheaval: They performatively reenact it. After all, capital "posits the conditions for its own realization."[51] Capitalism cannot expose the production of labor-power as a commodity—the dramatic interventions of force and discipline at its genesis that have to be foreclosed for its continuation—else it lay bare the violence at its origin. Instead, it crafts a past whose presuppositions naturalize accumulation in order to rationalize the present. It is not only, as Werner Bonefeld clarifies, that Marx generalizes primitive accumulation as "the presupposition of capital and the result of its reproduction" and, thus, "the social constitution of capitalist social relations." Rather, the continuation of these social relations would be a fetish itself and abstract domination its mode of functioning—a "domination over thought itself."[52]

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Into a Finished Coat?

Despite Marx's explicit statements on difference, we seem to swing back to continuity. While the unique theoretical challenges represented by capitalism's materialistic mystification are simplified in the brute force of slavery, it is nevertheless the case that maintaining an absolute distinction between free and unfree labor in effect valorizes the fiction of capitalism. Thought historically, abstract domination might work as a reverse magnet for the domination of slavery *because capitalism itself enjoins it*, because capitalism shines a spotlight on violent hierarchy to stage its own relative progress. "The abstraction, or idea," Marx seems to confirm, "is nothing more than the theoretical expression of those material relations which are their lord and master."[53] The most charitable reading of the finished coat of *Capital* would comprehend the conjuring of violent, abject, backwards, mute slavery within a (critical) capitalist representation as a means to both capture the indirect tyranny experienced by the "wage slave" *and* express the coevalness of force with the complex realization of capitalism's forms. If this is Marx's point, we would then be required to situate almost every citation of slavery as a parodic voicing of capital's own positionality, with as many self-referential asides, literary allusions, and cheeky footnotes to tip us off to its theatricality as with capital.

This preliminary reading, however, is not induced by critical cues on Marx's part. Marx does empirically provide examples of the coexistence of abstract and concrete domination, free and unfree labor, as well as of force being used as a political tool. But unlike Sylvia Wynter, who insists that the secret of capitalism is to be found "not in the factory but in the plantation,"[54] Marx maintains that labor, under the sign of industrial manufacture, is the representative "unity of the diverse." Although the presence of wage labor may not define capitalism—after all, both slavery *and* wage labor preceded capitalism, only to be rearticulated by it—the main achievement of *Capital* is nonetheless to define the *social relationship* between capital and wage labor. Again, the attention is not on the abstract slave's reproduction of political ontology but on abstract labor's role in the production and positing of capital: Capital "produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital-relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer."[55] Slaves remain empirical protrusions and formal flourishes to the logic of capital; they are not theorized as part of this social relationship.

We can say, for now, that Marx recognizes trans-Atlantic slavery's ostensive "capitalist nature" as a historical particular, *important* for the development of capital and the means by which it is reproduced, yet ultimately *inessential* to his critical presentation of capitalist totality. Sequestering his profound insights into the genesis of subjectivity from the constitutive problem of slavery and blackness, the slave can only analogically reappear as theoretical ammunition in a comparative explication of capitalist materiality. Marx's grafting method is incongruous with his major methodological innovation: Slavery is theoretically abstracted out of the capitalist totality, even though the purveyors of personal

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domination—masters, purportedly—are recognized in their transformation into those capitalists who, in Marx's articulation, are themselves sufferers of abstract domination. Indeed, in the second volume of *Capital*, Marx again affirms that the slave market "retains an element of natural economy" and "receives supplies of the commodity labour-power from war, piracy, etc., and this pillage is not mediated by a process of circulation, but is rather the appropriation in kind of other people's labour-power by direct physical compulsion."[56] The difference that historiographers have identified in the slave market, where slaves were being produced *for* circulation in a complicated causal relationship to blackness, is explicitly disavowed, its qualitative difference repressed.[57] Slavery's modes of subjection, then, never become the Marxist premise from which to re-think the condition of production of knowledge and social life, of mind and matter, of freedom and necessity.

A large determinant of this repression is that Marx never theorizes race as a productive force. In a key fragment found in Marx's "Wage Labor and Capital," Marx parrots Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to ask (and answer) "What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is as good as the other."[58] His critique of Proudhon's tautology does not fare much better, as Marx continues: "A Negro is a Negro. He becomes a slave only in certain relationships."[59] Blackness is naturalized apart from the economy, and slaveness is contingent on broader relations of production. By naturalizing, and thus neutralizing, the power of racial slavery, capitalism's disavowal of its own conditions of reproduction is theoretically carried over into Marxism, insofar as, to be a little glib, Marx is himself a product of capitalism and immanent to its standpoint. Or, as Hortense Spillers suggests with respect to Freud, Marx "could not 'see' his own connection to the 'race'/culture orbit, or could not theorize it, because the place of their elision marked the vantage point from which he spoke."[60] Because Marx's method expresses the political ontology of the human (only), it is one-sided: Slavery, as a real abstraction, goes behind Marx and Marxists' backs.

If Marx constitutively unthinks racial slavery, then the problem of racial slavery cannot simply be integrated into the theorization of capitalism without the entire constellation of the abstract and concrete undergoing a dramatic modification. Nor can Marx's critique be destabilized only at the level of his mode of "inquiry," as with Robinson's substitution of the Anglo proletariat for the Atlantic maroon, without also intervening at the level of abstraction engendered by Marx's dialectical "mode of presentation."[61] Further, because Robinson (1) characterizes "racial capitalism" as a problem of the appropriation and extraction of black labor power and (2) reduces race to an "epistemology" for the "rationale and cultural mechanisms of domination," his rejection of Marx's abstractions all too easily translates into their redemption.[62] With race as a ruse approximate to "false consciousness," Robinson can assert that the black radical tradition has increasingly made strides in rendering the problem of race "more transparent," acquiring awareness and clarity with "each historical moment."[63]

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Moreover, in his progressive enthusiasm, Robinson misses that "transparency" and "history" may be emergent abstractions of anti-blackness.[64] While Robinson does identify that "racialism," both material and ideal, "insinuated not only medieval, feudal, and capitalist social structures, forms of property, and modes of production, but as well the very values and traditions of consciousness through which the peoples of these ages came to understand their worlds and their experiences," the traditions of consciousness to which he alludes do not challenge the formal predicates of consciousness itself.[65] Despite approaching the depth of the structure of anti-blackness, then, *Black Marxism* delivers an oppositional consciousness whose immanent outside ("Africanity"), predicated on a developmental ordering of history, invested in sovereignty, and proselytizing a narrative of redemption, keeps Marx's abstract premises intact. Marx's abstractions absorb the slave. Therefore, instead of the corrective of the concrete, I argue that we need, to repeat Marx, to re-diagnose the "general illumination," that which "bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity."[66]

Labor in White Skin

The efficacy of this re-diagnosis can be tested through an examination of *Capital*'s lengthy chapter on the working day. With its relatively unusual preponderance of historical details, "The Working Day" exposes the dynamic between the intensification of capital and the elevation of working-class consciousness. Marx warns that capital, "in its blind and measureless drive, its insatiable appetite for surplus labour," tends to threaten the very life of the labor it needs to extract, overstepping "not only the moral but even the merely physical limits of the working day."[67] With capitalism set to engulf the very life of the laborer it simultaneously enshrines in freedom, Marx recapitulates the chains and threads opposition and returns to the rhetorical register of "wage slavery" as an imminent encroachment of forces reducing the worker to a contemporary variant of the slave.[68] By exposing the construction of the freedom to contract, however, the struggle over the working day is particularly primed to mobilize a class consciousness capable of revolutionizing social life, for "[w]hen the worker co-operates in a planned way with others, he strips off the fetters of his individuality, and develops the capabilities of his species."[69] Although this telos, which Marx characterizes as "the negation of the negation,"[70] has been criticized as all too Hegelian, the chapter on the working day continues to garner praise because its dialectics evolved through grounded attention to "the voice of the worker."[71]

Such attention derives in part from an aberrance in Marx's method. "The Working Day" was a late edition to *Capital*, itself informed and inspired by the historical emancipation of slaves in the United States, the growth of the First International, and a wider Atlantic intercourse. Given this historical and textual interlay, several readers have gone so far as to suggest that it was in the international abolitionist movement, more than (as is so often supposed)

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the Tory-Radical critique filtered through Engels, that Marx's analysis of wage labor and its rhetorical twin, "wage slavery," fundamentally took shape.[72] The abolitionist origin story synthesizes the sufficiency and expansionist theses, as slavery can only be supposed to suffuse Marxist categories through an expansion of our canonical understanding of Marx. Evidence of Marx's interest in slavery can be found first in his 1850s role as noted correspondent for abolitionist newspaper *The New York Daily Tribune* and spills into his private research notebooks. Andrew Zimmerman, editor of the most recent volume on Marx's Civil War writings, argues that this body of work represents not just extraneous historical material; it "reveal[s] the co-evolution of Marxism and the American Civil War."[73] Given that "The Working Day" was appended to an already largely formed speculative method, there is reason to think that it may still evolve to expose a new "general illumination." Marxism may need yet again "to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection," for, as Marx claims, "[o]nly after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented."[74]

For Marx, the Civil War, "the one great event of contemporary history,"[75] provided an instructive model of a variant of primitive accumulation—what Lucia Pradella calls "competitive accumulation"—that can critically pair revolution and crisis.[76] Relatively unencumbered by the contradictory compositions of capital and machinery in the more developed England, the United States' consolidation as a capitalist stronghold coincided with its position as a source of class consciousness, represented in the 1866 founding of the National Labor Union and memorialized in the struggle for a shorter working day.[77] Marx explains the global transformative effects of the Civil War on the First International in *Capital*'s 1867 preface: "Just as in the eighteenth century the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle class, so in the nineteenth century the American Civil War did the same for the European working class."[78] This claim has been used to internationalize what is usually considered Marx's restricted British vision. Note, however, that the Civil War is posed primarily as a teaching tool for a nonblack working-class, with slavery as a drag on the (contradictory) advancement of both competitive accumulation and working-class consciousness. For this paradigm, abolition, I will explain, can inform English workers but only if it moves the slave *from* the problematic of blackness and *to* the position of the worker and revolutionary-subject-in-waiting.[79]

It is in this vein that Marx celebrates abolition as a social precipitate for the wage struggle. Marx's *Tribune* writings venerated the "iron character … and purest conviction" of abolitionists like Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and Gerrit Smith.[80] Because abolitionists saw capitalism as the most important step towards black liberation, the prime boon for emancipated slaves was that "labor is no longer the badge of his servitude, and the consummation of his misery: it is the evidence of his liberty … For the first time in his life, he is a party to a contract."[81] It may seem strange that Marx would endorse

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such abolitionist reform, which approximated liberalism at best, as more than masked class interest. After all, Marx chides those liberals who "overflowed with moral indignation at the preposterous notion of making a man work for nothing," but who could not perceive the domination of waged work.[82] While Eugene Genovese has famously positioned Marx's Civil War writing as a sign of "the retreat of Marx, Engels, and too many Marxists into liberalism," other commentators take a more methodologically consistent approach, arguing that Marx sympathizes with the abolitionist failure to penetrate the veil of wage slavery because his method recognizes in them the "immanent dynamic that restricts vision in capitalist society," being themselves beholden to the beguiling commodity fetish.[83]

If no such sympathy was extended, however, to the misapprehensions of slave-holders, it is because their techniques were made to represent outdated modes of coercion.[84] In inducing an illusory freedom through comparison, instead of a fetishistic relation to freedom, slavery's ideological intercourse could only *incidentally* contribute to capitalism's reproduction. Though its raw materials might stimulate Northern commodity production, slavery does not form the internal dynamic of emergent capitalist markets. That is, it is because "many millions of so-called poor whites," especially poor Southern whites, are only *formally* subsumed by capital that they can be said to bear more resemblance to "the Roman plebeians in the period of Rome's extreme decline" than to capitalist subjects primed with revolutionary potential.[85] Workers were not only threatened by the potential reduction to the status of the slave, they were threatened both by the potential liberation of slaves (the end of slavery) and the liberation of slavery from its geographical limits (the continuation of slavery). The worker, "while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned labourer to sell himself and choose his own master."[86] The Northerner, in particular, both "sees in the Negro a dangerous competitor" and comes to "hate the Negro second only to the slaveowner. For them he is the symbol of slavery and the debasement of the working class, and the Democratic press threatens them daily with an inundation of their territories by the 'nigger.'"[87] From this grafting perspective, neither abolitionists nor workers could move past the ideological wedge of slavery to recognize the domination implicit in the "freedom" of the contract *until slavery was abolished*.

Because Marx's critique of capitalist self-valorization positions abstract labor as structurally indifferent to difference, abolition is the great equalizer, capable of overcoming the paralysis induced by ideological deflection. Only with the distortions of race removed, the argument implies, could class consciousness cohere to focus on a critique of labor itself (and not contingent class tools of exploitation and discrimination). This limit forms the basis of Marx's heralded quip that "In the United States of America, every independent workers' movement was paralyzed as long as slavery disfigured a part of the republic. Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in the black skin."[88] The promise of abolition is that it can clarify a truth

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about labor, not slavery or slave experience; it can lead to a revolution, which means first a revolutionizing of working conditions by workers. And this is precisely the prophetic vision that follows the famed warning of labor in white skin: "[A] new life immediately arose from the death of slavery. The first fruit of the American Civil War was the eight hours' agitation … "[89] But Marx underestimated what the "death of slavery" would entail. He has, more to the point, no account of its "afterlife" because he has no synthetic account of its life.

Afterlife

Marx's foreclosure of the afterlife of slavery is pronounced in his elision of slaveholders as formative voices in the critique of free labor.[90] Echoing Marx almost too closely, the famous proslavery ideologue George Fitzhugh proposed in 1857 that "Capital exercises a more perfect compulsion over free laborers than human masters over slaves; for free laborers must at all times work or starve, and slaves are supported whether they work or not."[91] While the Northern laborer was positioned as a "slave of the community," subject to the indifferent whims of the market instead of those of one individual master, slaves, Fitzhugh argued, enjoyed more actual practical liberty, ampler allowance, and constant protection. Although Marx would likely situate Fitzhugh's position as mere deflection (a footnote in *Capital* mocks a similar defense in the *London Times*),[92] Fitzhugh's logic synthesizes the radical egalitarianism of Marx's neo-Republicanism with the hierarchy of the Republicanism of the past. Ever the exemplary firebrand, Fitzhugh broke with a liberal emphasis on rights to reassert the supremacy of a generalized slavery, which he calls "slavery in the abstract": "Whatever rights he has are subordinate to the good of the whole and he has never ceded rights to it, for he was born its slave, and had no rights to cede."[93] If Republicanism (ambiguously) embraced subordination for its potential to express the organic truth of natural hierarchy, the announcement of abstract slavery, the specter of the general possibility that everyone be subordinated to slavery, was historically and logically new.[94] The possibility of total slavery is the inverse of natural slavery: Natural slavery was raised under the old Republic to stand in for unexplained problems of difference and degree and to guard against the encroachment of slavery for all, but when natural slavery becomes a priori configured as black, abstract slavery can be posed with all the safeguards that would keep the hierarchy intact.

Fitzhugh's critique united slaveholders and non-slaveholders, not because all could potentially be reduced to general slaves, but because all were elevated to a freedom of expectation. As such, this confluence anticipated the postracial moment in all directions—from liberals who claimed the slave could move beyond slavery without addressing its structural and substantive dimensions to Southern apologists who sought to protect slavery even in its most abstract form and radicals who organized to overturn labor—linked by a certain enunciation of freedom whose wellspring remains the tradition of anti-blackness.

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The abstraction of slavery, not that of labor, can better account for the fault lines that followed abolition. It is only if we conceive of slavery as a form of labor attendant to its mode of exploitation that 1865 can appear as a moment more emancipatory than W. E. B. Du Bois's succinct "The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back into slavery."[95] Consider Fitzhugh's prophesy that "One set of ideas will govern and control after awhile the civilized world. Slavery will every where be abolished or every where be re-instituted."[96] The centrality of labor guarantees that we can celebrate the achievement of the former instead of ever broaching the possibility of the ascendency of the latter. For Marx, of course, the abolition of slavery is an empirical fact whose outcome generalized labor and stimulated labor-consciousness. In his journalistic voice, Marx does recognize an alternate history à la Fitzhugh, in which what would take place is "not a dissolution of the Union, but a *reorganization* of it, a *reorganization on the basis of slavery*, under the recognized control of the slaveholding oligarchy."[97] But his reorganization rejects the specificity of blackness, in favor of a logic of super-structural exclusion: If the slave system were to "infect the whole Union" then, Marx claims, "the white working class would be gradually depressed to the level of helotry. This would be in accord with the loudly proclaimed principle that only certain races are capable of freedom, and that as in the South, the real labor is the lot of the Negro, so in the North it is the lot of the German and the Irishman, or their direct descendants."[98]

But if, as Du Bois contends, southern slaveholders "died as a class" in the Civil War, "decimated," submerged in "bitter disappointment and frustration," imperceptibly subsumed into the ranks of poor whites, the violence of Reconstruction would reveal not only the fallen status of planters thrust into the degraded position of workers, but the inversion of expectation in which slaves could potentially upend abstract slavery and undermine the nonblack union of political, economic, and libidinal capacity. The paramilitary violence of Reconstruction, "its lynching and mob law, its murders and cruelty, its insensibility to the finer things of civilization," was an exercise in and reassertion of such capacity.[99]

The Marxist disavowal only accumulates in so-called late-capital. Marxism cannot position, for instance, the continuity that leads Wynter to assert "The ghettoes and prisons of today's North America are the new forms of the plantation archipelago."[100] Marxist legal scholars instead sublate the legal-form to the commodity-form. With punishment conceived of as a medium for equalization, incarceration functions to rectify imbalances in social wealth by imagining abstract freedom through abstract labor time.[101] The transition from slave to worker would be just one moment in the exposition and development of an abstract domination that toggles the abstract criminal. Marxism is subsequently rife with the sort of analyses that identify the continuity of slavery under the Thirteenth Amendment as the state protection of capital, purportedly uniting the postracial slave and worker in the project of their joint liberation. Like

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the struggle over the working day, incarceration as we know it would be an objective example of abstract labor's capacity to capture existence.[102]

A reading of the "abstract slave," however, clarifies that the postemancipation debt of the black worker/criminal is not just the residual effect of congealed historical barriers to access, like segregation in housing and employment, or subjective bias, like racial profiling, such that the only difference between the abstract laborer and the black laborer would be the historically specific accumulation of interlocking exclusions. With slavery conceptualized as pre-capitalist in its violence, and with the social form of violence being a spur for subjectivities, the slave can only generate for the social whole the desire for a negative measure of freedom, a freedom incommensurate with the mystification of capitalism. A critical strand in black studies, however, suggests that the freedom for self-mastery is itself what the slave is compelled to produce for the collectivity of capitalist subjects. In what Saidiya Hartman calls a "racist optics," black flesh signifies simultaneously "the source of opacity, the denial of black humanity, and the effacement of sentience integral to the wanton use of the captive body"; the mode of abstractness and immateriality reveals that "the figurative capacities of blackness and the fungibility of the commodity are directly linked."[103] Denise Ferreira da Silva advocates that we might follow the passage on the fetishism of commodities to examine the "exchange value" of race, that is, its productive power.[104]

In Marxist terms, the force present and continuously identifiable as slavery's characteristic feature participates in labor's abstraction into the value-form. Slaves do not confront their phantasmatic objective conditions (form), as in the case of commodity fetishism, and instead remain in a unity with those conditions (force).[105] The failure of slaves to produce value is expressive of the *ontological* figuration of black fungibility, serving as an explanation of racist difference (its precondition) and a justification for the continuation of anti-black violence (its effect). Although the visible distinction between black and nonblack *appears* to have little to do with form or value, the othering of slavery writes itself through a compound fiction—presupposing slavery while sketching the subsumption of the direct violence of slavery by the materialistic promise of value, such that the black/nonblack distinction is anticipated as no longer substantively operative in political economy, though the fact of race (insofar as its biological underpinnings are reified in Marx) remains and may exercise occasional ideological distortion. The slave labors not only in the production of commodities, not only as a commodity, but in the further circulation of labor-power, insofar as the slave regulates between nonwaged work and wage labor, past and present, nature and history, the concrete and abstract, force and form, nothingness and species-being.

Thus, when slaves enter the market for the first time, as black workers freely exchanging their labor-power, they bring the force of slavery with them. Empirical examinations of history may want to relegate this interplay to an imaginary representation or false consciousness, as if "enslavers *wrongly* perceived *persons* as *things*," or they may want to "repatriate the *human*" and

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return us to the scene preceding the formal subsumption of slaves to workers—what might be considered the formal subsumption of humans to slaves.[106] If this formal subsumption never became "real" subsumption, if slaves, that is, retained their humanness despite their slaveness, then their unsubsumed humanness could be leveraged for postbellum racial progress. But slavery does not, as Rinehart (and Robinson) assumes, become "yet more heinous" as it becomes "less unthinkable."[107] It becomes truly abstract *as* unthinkability, reproduced by every attempt to think about its experiential and embodied dimensions. The abstract slave enables us to understand how only the (rehabilitated) nonblack criminal can transcend their abstract criminality to become the productive laborer capable of then transcending abstract labor. Although nonblack citizens could "blacken" themselves by threatening the peace and property of the republic, their punishment ultimately reinvigorates it, reasserting the value-form totality through the redemptive possibility of reclaiming possession of the self proper to labor. Reconstruction and its aftermath represent not the real subsumption of a generic version of subjectivity but the anti-black "perfection" of the antagonism between abstract slavery and abstract freedom in the erasure of its own mode of reproduction.[108]

Conclusion

None of the above can be easily re-synthesized by Marxist method, logic, or historicity alone. While Marx, the most radical representative of neo-Republican labor movements, could *historically* think the empirical reality of slavery appearing together with capitalism, he *theoretically* unthinks the significance of the slavery-capitalism conjuncture, formalizing freedom and the fulcrum by which capitalist fetters might be overthrown through labor's historically specific social representation. Marx's totality, and the potential for the transformation of that totality, is not capacious enough to understand the processes that generate and subsume the slave. In effect, I have been implying, neither can Marx comprehend the processes of capitalism or the plight of the laborer. Abstract domination, the ontological ground for capitalist revolution, becomes the fetish that occludes its own condition of production. When slavery's constitutive violence is concealed, and the fantasies around which it coalesces are presented only in the register of empirical fact and experiential horror, the collapse of force and form is mystified, slavery appears as personalistic, and race alternates in appearance between contingent effect and congenital defect, its biological reification the flipside to the incidental ideological distortion of an immanent power for which no one is culpable and from which everyone can be saved.

Insofar as the abstract slave enfolds (and does not merely substitute) the speculative totality of one frame (the abstract labor of capitalism) into another (the abstract slave of anti-blackness), Marx's methodological approach and theoretical adumbrations—the inheritance of abstraction, value, materiality, and freedom—begin to shift, mutate, and explode.[109] The danger of an immanent critique, given this torsion, is the likelihood that Marx's recuperative

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faith in an "inside" will absorb and erase black critique, and this essay may very well exemplify the failure of an immanent leveraging of the world's collapse. An immanent critique of immanent critique points not to the positivist difference of the abstract slave but to its negativity, not the fullness of Robinson's Africanity and the imperative to "preserve the collective being, the ontological totality" but, following another of Robinson's conclusions, to "the consciousness that there remains nothing to which it may return."[110] In the gap between the displacement of the capitalist totality with anti-blackness and the displacement of totality itself, the abstract slave elaborates a black radical tradition whose refusal of the world might just take up "nothing" as its aim.[111]

NOTES

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3. James Edward Ford III, "From Being to Unrest, from Objectivity to Motion: The Slave in Marx's Capital," *Rethinking Marxism* 23 (2011): 22–30.

4. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 875–6, 876n1, 916, 915. See also "From letter to Pavel Vassilyevich Annenkov, December 28, 1846," in *On America and the Civil War*, ed. Saul K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 36.

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6. Nicholas T. Rinehart, "The Man That Was a Thing: Reconsidering Human Commodification," *Journal of Social History* 50 (2016): 28–50, at 38.

7. Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology [excerpts]," in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis Feuer (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1959), 247–8.

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10. Frank B. Wilderson III, "Gramsci's Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?," *Social Identities* 9 (2003): 225–40, at 230.

11. See *Black Marxism*, xxix.

12. See Sara-Maria Sorentino, "Natural Slavery, Real Abstraction, and the Virtuality of Anti-Blackness," *Theory & Event* 22, no. 3 (2019): 630–673.

13. Frank B. Wilderson III, *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2010), 55. For "political ontology," see 55–67, more generally.

14. *Capital*, 719. See also 1031.

15. Ibid. 899.

16. On the "wage slave" metaphor, see Joseph Persky, "Wage Slavery," *History of Political Economy* 30 (1998): 627–51, and Marcus Cunliffe, *Chattel Slavery and Wage Slavery: The Anglo-American Context, 1830–1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979).

17. *Capital,* 273.

18. Jairus Banaji, *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 13.

19. See *Capital*, 90–1 and 876.

20. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. and trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 105.

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21. *Capital*, 273, emphasis added.
22. *Grundrisse*, 326.
23. Ibid., 489.
24. *Capital*, 260.
25. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value, Part II* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), 302–3.
26. Ibid.
27. *Grundrisse*, 513, original emphasis.
28. Ibid., 288–89.
29. Ibid., 101.
30. See Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancioğlu, "The Poverty of Political Marxism," *International Socialist Review* 94 (2014): http://isreview.org/issue/94/poverty-political-marxism.
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36. *Capital*, 925 and 414.
37. *Grundrisse*, 101.
38. Alfred Schmidt, *History and Structure: An Essay on Hegelian Marxist and Structuralist Theories of History*, trans. Jeffrey Herf (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 99.
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47. See Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 27–30.
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49. *Grundrisse*, 891 and 464.
50. Ibid., 164, original emphasis.
51. Ibid., 459.
52. Werner Bonefeld, "The Permanence of Primitive Accumulation: Commodity Fetishism and Social Constitution," *The Commoner* 2 (2001): 1–15, at 1–2 and 9.
53. *Grundrisse*, 164.
54. Sylvia Wynter, "Black Metamorphosis," Unpublished Manuscript, 582.
55. *Capital*, 724.
56. *Capital, Volume 2,* trans. David Fernbach (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 555.
57. See Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 31, and Ned and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave Breeding Industry* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2016).
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61. *Capital*, 102.

62. *Black Marxism*, xxxi.

63. Ibid.

64. See Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

65. Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 66.

66. *Grundrisse*, 107.

67. *Capital*, 375.

68. See Marx's invocation of "Negroes" in the fields in Cuba in "Economic Manuscript of 1861–63," *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, *Volume 30* (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 182–3.

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76. Lucia Pradella, "Crisis, Revolution and Hegemonic Transition: The American Civil War and Emancipation in Marx's *Capital*," *Science & Society* 80 (2016): 454–467, at 462.

77. See *Capital*, 580, 920, and 940.

78. Ibid., 91.

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83. See Eugene Genovese, *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (New York: Pantheon, 1971), 327 and David Norman Smith, "Abolition and Social Theory: Slavery, 'Wage Slavery,' and the Visibility of Oppression," *Social Theory* 21 (2002): 143–81, at 164.

84. See *Capital*, 91.

85. Marx, "The North American Civil War, *Die Presse*, October 25, 1861," in *On America and the Civil War*, 76.

86. Marx, "Address of the International Working Men's Association to President Lincoln, November 29, 1864," in *On America and the Civil War*, 237.

87. Marx, "The Election Results in the Northern States, *Die Press*, November 23, 1862," in *On America and the Civil War*, 231.

88. *Capital*, 414. This quote continues to be invoked as an index of Marx's early insights on class and race and a precursor to Du Bois's "wages of whiteness." See August H. Nimtz, Jr., *Marx, Tocqueville, and Race in America: The 'Absolute Democracy' or 'Defiled Republic'* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 146.

89. *Capital*, 414.

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93. Quoted in Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom*, 180. See W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* [1935] (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1962), 9–11.

94. See Cunliffe, *Chattel Slavery and Wage Slavery*, 4–7.

95. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 30.

96. George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South or, The Failure of Free Society* (Richmond, VA: A. Morris, 1854), 118.

97. Marx, "The Civil War in the United States," 93; original emphasis.

98. Ibid.

99. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 54.

100. Wynter, "Black Metamorphosis," 372.

101. See Evgeny Pashukanis, *Law and Marxism: A General Theory*, trans. Barbara Einhorn (London: Ink Links, 1978), 181.

102. See Read, *The Micro-Politics of Capital*, 103–151.

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106. Rinehart, "The Man That Was a Thing," 41–42, original emphasis.

107. Ibid.

108. See Anthony Paul Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* 36 (2004): 221–51.

109. Or in Frantz Fanon's words: "This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem," *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 5.

110. Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 171 and 317.

111. See Fred Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 112 (2013): 737–80.

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