

## Maurya Wickstrom

### M. LAMAR: SINGING SLAVE INSURRECTION TO MARX

This essay is about a performance by the musician, singer, and performance artist M. Lamar, who describes himself as a “Negrothotic Devil-worshipping free black man in the blues tradition.”<sup>1</sup> I saw the piece, *Destruction*, in the American Realness Festival at Abrons Art Center in New York City in January 2016. During the seventy-minute-long performance, the countertenor sang and played the piano, and appeared in mediated form in a complexly assembled film montage. In both live and filmed form his performance was a labor to resurrect the dead into an insurrectionist revolt, an army of all the black people whose lives have been taken—from slavery to lynchings, to incarceration, to police shootings. The lush, sometimes heart-stopping sound environment was both live and recorded, a mix, mash-up, and collage of sounds and sources the core of which was Lamar’s singing of fragments of slave spirituals. In what follows, I am prompted by Lamar’s work to explore my own ongoing commitment to Marx through what I read as the work’s temporal innovations. These innovations, I suggest, supplement Marx’s failure to imagine a revolutionary strategy through anything but the standard progressivist notion of time and history. In so doing, I claim Lamar for an affiliation to Marxism and materialist thought by identifying in his work a material immortal.

We can begin by pairing Eric Williams and Friedrich Engels, just for a moment. Williams, early on in his still important book *Capitalism and Slavery*, details the slave and goods trade among cities in England, ports in Africa, and the Caribbean and mainland colonies. He writes, “What the building of ships for the transport of slaves did for eighteenth century Liverpool, the manufacture of cotton goods for the purchase of slaves did for eighteenth century Manchester. . . . The capital accumulated by Liverpool from the slave trade poured

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into the hinterland to fertilize the energies of Manchester.”<sup>2</sup> By the early nineteenth century, as new industrialized techniques for the production of cotton cloth were implemented, especially in Manchester, Manchester capitalists (with money from the slave trade) bought more and more cotton from American plantations dependent upon slave labor, up to four-fifths of total cotton between 1846 and 1850, “clothing the world” as Williams says.<sup>3</sup> They exported the cloth around the world, including to Africa, and significantly, to provide plantation capitalists with cheap clothes for the slaves. Writing many years earlier of the same period, strolling into Manchester circa 1844, Engels, in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, notes that Manchester is “the heart of industry in the United Kingdom.” Its Exchange, he says, “is the thermometer which records all the fluctuations of industrial and commercial activity.” With the cotton industry in the lead, “the division of labor” Engels writes, “has been pushed to its furthest limits,” and here it is possible to see with the greatest clarity “the degradation into which the worker sinks.”<sup>4</sup> Of the many markers of that degradation to which Engels paid attention were the workers’ clothes. He remarks that most of them were in rags, especially since their clothes were made from the flimsy cotton fabric they themselves were making. Engels marks the disappearance from the workers’ lives of the wool that kept out cold and wet. By contrast, he says, “Members of the middle classes nearly all wear flannel [wool] vests next to the skin, cummerbunds round the stomach and flannel scarves and shirts.”<sup>5</sup>

I offer this brief hint of the mutual materiality of immiseration by cotton, by cloth, by slavery, by wage labor in the early to mid-nineteenth century as a gesture to the potential alliances, contradictions, false starts, and political inventions that characterize the uneasy relationship between a Marxist-informed revolutionary politics, and the condition of slavery and the enslaved. For why should I write about a black performance artist whose eye is always on slavery in the context of the special issue of a journal concerned with the ongoing relevance of Marxism to performance, or vice versa? It is well known that in *The German Ideology* Marx traces the development of productive forces through a linearized history of forms of the division of labor, which include various ancient forms of slavery. When he gets to feudalism, the slave is replaced by the serf and seems to disappear from the narrative. Clearly he does not connect the vast industry in slaves of his own time to the development of capitalist productive forces and its working-class antagonists.

Marx did eagerly follow the news of the Civil War and wrote several brief articles on it. He corresponded with Abraham Lincoln. He had an extended correspondence with Engels, who was on the ground in the United States, following the situation closely. These letters communicate some of the excitement the two held in the unfolding events. In a letter to Engels, written on 11 January 1860, almost three months after the white abolitionist John Brown raided the town of Harper’s Ferry, Marx writes:

In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America started by the death of John Brown, and on the other the movement of the serfs in Russia. . . . I

have just seen in the *Tribune* that there has been a fresh rising of slaves in Missouri, naturally suppressed. But the signal has now been given. If things get serious by and by, what will then become of Manchester?

Engels answers:

Your opinion of the significance of the slave movement in America and Russia is now confirmed. The Harper's Ferry affair with its aftermath in Missouri bears its fruit: the free Negroes in the South are everywhere hunted out of the states, and I have just read in the first New York cotton report . . . that the planters have hurried their cotton on to the ports in order to guard against any probable consequences arising out of the Harper's Ferry affair.<sup>6</sup>

Both correspondents here seem to acknowledge, at least in passing, the crucial role of slave labor in if not circum- than at least trans-Atlantic capitalism. The slavers rush their cotton to the ports, fearful of losing their profits to uprisings and seizures. Marx asks, "what will become of Manchester?" What will become of the profits of the cotton capitalists in Manchester without the slave-produced cotton that their wage laborers turn into cloth? And yet, the slave does not figure as a form of the laborer called "the worker." When slavery ends, the former slave circulates without class identification, without integration into wage labor in the growing industrial base of the United States. The post-Civil War "Negro" has a political potential but remains exogenous to the central political force, the white working class. In a letter to Engels from 1877, Marx begins by asking, "What do you think of the workers of the United States?" He very briefly proposes that the "eruption against the oligarchy of associated capital which has arisen since the Civil War" might be the source of a "serious workers party," while "The policy of the new President will turn the Negroes into allies of the workers."<sup>7</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley notes that members of the nascent post-Civil War socialist movement were largely unwilling to forge solidarity with black laborers or to invite inclusion (partly fearing competition for jobs), and also that for these socialists, racial violence and oppressions based on race were only a symptom of capitalism, rather than a structuring element.

And yet, at least into the 1970s, black Marxists have been active theoreticians and practitioners of a radical politics, including (as in Eric Williams) an insistence on slavery as a foundation of developing capitalism. I am here focusing very quickly on a revision of revolutionary temporality in this thought, and know that in so doing I do little justice to a vast, complex, vital, and necessary history. Many of these thinkers and activists, while not necessarily rejecting the proletariat as revolutionary subject, worked on and against traditional revolutionary thought to show that black people (and colonized peoples across the world) were central to the battle against capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. Importantly for Lamar's sense of an avenging resurrection/insurrection/insurgency, some black thinkers and activists found differences from Marx's progressivism that, as Kelley says, "proved to black folks the world over that they need not wait for 'objective conditions' to make revolution."<sup>8</sup> Finding a special affinity in Mao's differences

from Marx, these people thought that revolution need not rely on a long preparation of a proletarian class, or on a proletarian class at all, but could have the self-organizing and more spontaneous sense of the revolt instead. Speaking of the fierce consolidation of the anticolonial movement of the 1950s, which found its inspiration and theory in texts by authors with long histories of Marxist thought, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, George Padmore, Richard Wright, Aimé Césaire, and of course Frantz Fanon, Kelley speaks of anticolonial insurrections and says “revolt was in the air.”<sup>9</sup> *Destruction* ends, as I have said earlier, in a revolt, made by an army not of the proletariat but of the murdered. The spirituals that materialize the revolt are, Lamar says, songs of “uprisings” and “rebellions.”<sup>10</sup> He says, “in this new phase in my work, I’m trying to create a revolutionary impulse, what Cornel West calls a ‘black prophetic fire.’”<sup>11</sup> He seems exemplary of an ongoing practice of what Jeremy Matthew Glick, in his wonderful book *The Black Radical Tragic*, calls “black radical dramatic performance.”<sup>12</sup>

Of course on some level Lamar also positions himself in relation to black socialist thought through his direct integration into *Destruction* of W. E. B. Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk*, especially the “Sorrow Songs,” which is Du Bois’s beautiful tracing of the slave songs, the spirituals, and what they express about the heart of slave life, and ultimately about black experience and America itself. The structuring text and image of *Destruction* comes from the spiritual Du Bois uses as the prologue to his essay, “Lay This Body Down.” (I have more to say about Du Bois and the spirituals later on.) However, regardless of the degree to which there may be a kind of hidden, internal kinship between Lamar and especially black Marxism or socialism, there is no overtly stated Marxist thought per se in *Destruction*. And yet, I think that *Destruction* invites Marx back into the room, into the theatre, creating a site for an ongoing exploration of a Marxist constellation of thought for the twenty-first century. This is possible I think, in the first place, through the entry point of the spirituals, which locate Lamar’s work in *Destruction* not only in histories of lynching, incarceration, and ongoing police murders, but in slavery recouped as a founding structure of global capitalist accumulation, means of production, and development.

But to explore this further, other steps need to be taken, other steps made to determine what might be the terms of this analysis, what are the terms that enrich it from within for this early part of the twenty-first century. It is my suggestion that *Destruction* suggests ways of enriching contemporary materialist analysis with temporal thought, of a kind that Marx himself could not imagine (although Walter Benjamin certainly did, as he knew that Marx had not developed a temporal theory adequate to his historical theory).<sup>13</sup> Let us return to Marx, who, as I have said, incorporates ancient forms of slavery into his developmental history of the division of labor (and of private property) but does not include North American and Caribbean plantation slavery. Not only displaced through his economic theory, the enslaved contemporaneous to his own life were also temporally displaced by Marx from a privileged position inside his teleology. What *Destruction* helps us to imagine is that the enslaved have no need of inclusion to be insurrectionary or revolutionary. Instead, slavery may have been (and continues to be, as in Lamar’s performance) something alive with its own temporalities, ones that had forced

and were forcing the hand of Enlightenment, bourgeois, secular thought, at least since the Haitian revolution and its complicated interrelation to the French Revolution. Lamar's performance continues this temporal imagination through a relation to slavery and the infinite number of black lives taken that moves materialism through a temporal immaterialism, one that only makes a Marxism for the twenty-first century more imaginable.

In the first place, Marx's opinion of the historical importance of the dead gets an important reversal. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx discusses a nightmarish reinstallation of empty figureheads of long-ago pasts in order to valorize and invigorate "revolutions," so as to create "the self-deceptions that they [the revolutionaries] needed in order to conceal from themselves the bourgeois limitations of the content of their struggles and to keep their passion at the height of the great historical tragedy."<sup>14</sup> He writes that, by contrast,

The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself, before it has stripped off all superstition in regard to the past. Earlier revolutions required world-historical recollections in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. . . . Society now [following "the *coup de tête* of December 1851"] seems to have fallen back behind its point of departure.<sup>15</sup>

By contrast, it is precisely in a temporal undoing, in some swirl of what happens back there before the point of departure, where Lamar puts us, that we might want to be.<sup>16</sup>

Lamar, precisely, draws his poetry from the past. But it is different from the poetics of hauntology, ghosting, returns, and reperformances. Those dead he conjures arise as an army in revolt, as insurrectionists.<sup>17</sup> What moves me is not moving from materialism (as to immaterial labor) but to move materialism with the temporal innovation of which Marx, in his own time, was incapable.<sup>18</sup> I use the word "move" here because I was moved by M. Lamar's performance, moved emotionally because moved into temporalities beyond my everyday use, outside of my usual political dreams.

At this point I want to describe the performance as best I can; this description will be followed by theoretical work through which more description of the work will circulate.

As the performance begins, we, the spectators, are sitting in a bare basement theatre. It is dim. There appear to be mists swirling in the space, but they are actually on a long but relatively narrow screen that is in front of us. There is a grand piano stage right. Through the mists onscreen we are gradually able to discern what seems to be a coffin. It is in nineteenth-century style, short, oddly shaped, with what seems to be an opening where the head of the corpse would be, perhaps a "safety coffin." Smoke, mist, clouds, and mystery keep drifting around it.

Lamar enters house right and begins to walk toward house left, in the direction of the piano. He is in a full-length black leather coat, high black boots, black

makeup, long, long straight black hair—recognizably and substantially “goth.” It is all rather dramatic. There are sounds as he goes. A loud and reverberant kind of *thunk*, like a weight hitting down with each of his steps, and on each he bends his knee a little and rocks—as if the weight is hitting him each time. He looks straight ahead. Highly self-conscious. Not a little stagey. We have no idea what to expect. He walks to the piano. Sits. Adjusts a knob on a sound gadget placed to the right of the piano bench. Raises his hand—an expressive hand, which will be ever more expressive, agile, delicately communicative, as the performance goes on. There is a large silver ring on his forefinger. He wears an upside-down cross.

The image on the screen changes, or rather the camera now looks into the viewing hole of the coffin. Inside are the face and upper shoulders of a young black man, black hat, black covering his chest. Lamar begins with a low gravelly sound into the mic, briny and phlegmatic. He pounds a few chords on the piano. We don’t know if he can actually play or not. But then he begins to play in earnest. Hard to describe adequately in words, the sound is a rolling, spinning, disorienting wave of lush and rich sound. An audio recording, in which dripping water is nearly always present, creates another layer of density to the live sound of the piano. His voice is startling when he begins to sing. Lamar describes himself as coming from the black metal scene, and that influence is there, but he is also singing soprano. He is singing not only in an operatic style, but sometimes in the nineteenth-century ornate operatic style of *bel canto*. It is interesting to note that *rubato*, one of the techniques of *bel canto*, refers, literally to “robbed time” and was one of romanticism’s forms for freedom with emotion, intuition, and rhythm.<sup>19</sup> He notes:

Opera was my first sort of love with singing. With me the opera was never bougie. It was Leontyne Price, Marian Anderson, Jesse Norman, this divineness that the voice had. I always felt the spirit deeply when they were singing and those singers, more than any others I think, are so connected to the U.S. African tradition. Especially Leontyne, even when she’s singing Verdi you can still hear her Lowell, Mississippi accent.<sup>20</sup>

At first, the sounds and the words are secular, immediate, personal. They seem to relate to the young man in the strange old coffin. (The words are hard to understand as Lamar sings them, but each line is projected on the screen, and the lines usually repeat several times. The text I have recorded here is from my notes, and may contain some inaccuracies, although I believe they are in the main part correct.) He sings, “They took you from me / that white man with his white hand / on his law arms / fire arms / [*repeat*] / with evidence of things not seen / the gun cried / GUILTY! GUILTY!” (These last words flash over and over as all caps, almost comic-book style.) “Stand down those firing squads / This state-sanctioned genocide / is GUILTY!” Onscreen, again, there is the young man’s face in the coffin. Then M. Lamar appears onscreen; it must be him, but we see just the back and shoulders of a black man with very long black hair. He is dragging a pinewood coffin by thin, hemp ropes stretched across his naked shoulders. He walks, in images that are close-ups of shoulders, boots, never the full picture, in a gothic world where the moon rises and mists and clouds

float across it. It is all in grays and black and white. The image becomes a mix, an interappearing with the young man, apparently out of the coffin, looking out from behind wooden bars. The image is insistent and mysterious. Lamar drags the coffin in mud, in sludge, through a gothic night, a Charles Dickens night. He has come to a graveyard, or has been there all along. Trudging, pulling the burden, keeping on going, into a world where the dead may rise. He is not necessarily moving forward but over and over in this gothic night, as if the graveyard were the same but goes on and on, or as if it were always the same under each step. Mists swirl. Ontology loosens its parameters. There is a sense that what is appearing, what is acquiring force, is the immaterial. He joins himself to death and the dead. What he is doing is outside the range of the specificity of the material world. It has to do with that which cannot appear (including ghosts, souls), which perhaps does not exist, but is nevertheless brought into a mysteriously cotemporaneous existence in this dragging, this singing, this performance.

At the piano, Lamar sings, "Since they took you from me, your death has become my life / I have walked this earth / for centuries, millennia / carrying your coffin on my back / my grieving will never tire / since your death will become my life / until you come back to me." Onscreen, still the mix of the young man, wooden bars, strange phantasms, mist, Lamar dragging. He sings more about "A life in death / death in life." Onscreen now a crowd of white, pixelated coffin shapes shimmer and pulse while smoke rises. A little further on he sings, "I want to bring you back from the dead / to a world destroyed / destroyed in flames / destruction." There is a dramatic, zero-count blackout. Then, on the screen a strange white cranial shape morphs into a cloud-shrouded moon, and the sound of water gets louder. It is at this point that the piece pivots into the world of the spirituals. His own dragging (he is there again onscreen, walking in front of the moon, his naked back bent with the coffin) is attached to the spiritual "Lay This Body Down."<sup>21</sup> He sings it in fragments, adding his own words, and shaping existing text: "I'm walking through de graveyard / lay dis body down / oh your soul / oh your soul / oh your soul / lest they slay me in dis graveyard / I can't lay your body down." He begins to blend and mix into this spiritual another, "Somebody's Calling My Name."<sup>22</sup> It happens dramatically. Quite suddenly he raises his hands from the piano to his mouth. He says, "Hush, hush," he says, "somebody's calling my name." In the quiet the young man's head, in the opening of the coffin, begins to move, his eyes move from side to side. The "hush, hush" in the song may be reference to slaves quieting each other to listen for when the "'Drivers' of the Underground Railroad would come. Freedom was calling their name."<sup>23</sup> The young man, who is also onscreen a constant fugitive, is awakening. But he never seemed much dead, not a ghost, not a skeleton, not the interred, but a full, fleshy, healthy young black man, the man on the street, sliced down, but also the generations, the millennia of the bodies of the dead. On the screen, but not sung, appear the words, "The Dead Sing."<sup>24</sup> Lamar then sings their words: "I'm worth saving / [we are] awaiting and awakening." Onscreen the moon, in the sound mix a strange robotic frisson, onscreen a gathering of various strange, animated, digital images, sometimes faces. Lamar at the piano is now near screaming. "Wake the dead!" Onscreen—crowds, nearly indistinguishable

shapes, but human figures, white silhouettes, raggedy around the edges, electronic pointillism— maybe the risen. “The dead sing.” They are “trying to put ourselves back together we’re in pieces / dismemberments, re-memberments.” Here Lamar adds in fragments from the spiritual “Great Getting Up Morning.” Lamar, as male chanteuse of the spiritual in digital remix at the concert piano, sings the end day into view, the rising, the marching back, “we rise / we rise / we’re gonna tell you bout the coming of the Judgment Day.” And they’re putting their pieces back together, manhoods, fingers and toes, reassembling their whole materiality, “you’ll hear the slavers shout / because a new day’s coming about / you’ll hear the trumpets sound / it woke the dead up from the ground.” There are sounds of trumpets on organ. Here Lamar adds a final spiritual, “My Lord, What a Morning.” Piano and sound score are full and gorgeous, as drums are added in. Finally, they’re coming for us, that army of bodies on the screen, we spectators, cast here as those who are the guilty. Lamar takes the words of Darren Wilson, who killed Michael Brown, justifying his action by saying that Brown looked like a demon coming for him. Lamar sings, “we’re demons coming at you / scarecrow Jim Crow / and we will end it all / the end is all.” In the finale of the piece (as onscreen we move back to the bars, and a bar breaks as the young man slips through), Lamar sings “destruction” over and over, like an unending insurrection or revolt. There are sounds of things breaking, metal, glass, crazy stuff onscreen, maybe images of cities, pixilated. And then, “None of you will make it out alive,” and there is one last pounded chord on the piano, and all sound out. Lamar stands abruptly, and blackout. We are left in a room with a sense of resounding materiality, a thingliness, an announcement of a lineage of people returned to existence, if in the ashes of what was.

I borrow this idea of “thingliness” from Ian Baucom’s *Specters of the Atlantic*.<sup>25</sup> Baucom begins with a theorization of generic forms that originate in one century but make other, heightened, appearances in a different century. Here he uses as example Benjamin’s seventeenth-century allegory, which appears again in the nineteenth as the commodity form, in that the commodity is “allegory in the sphere of social practice” (18).<sup>26</sup> Both allegory and the commodity operate through a disavowal of the thingliness of the object to which they refer. That is, neither allegory nor the commodity is attached to a thing, but rather to a value (discursive meaning or exchange) that operates independently of that thing. The point is, though, that “return” is not an adequate word for a reappearance in another century, because allegory, for instance, does not come back as a kind of residue or haunting, but in the extreme, intensified form of the commodity. As such “the transition from the prior to the subsequent moment is not one in which a once dominant mode survives in residual form but one in which the once emergent restages itself as the now dominant” (21). Baucom’s project, in this regard, is to read the speculative finance of the twenty-first century (and what he calls the long twentieth) as the extreme, intensified form of speculative capital in the late eighteenth, particularly as it arose in the new insurance companies that allowed slave-dealing capitalists to protect their slave investments as long as they were in transit across the ocean: England to Africa to the Caribbean, and to the mainland colonies. For Baucom, it is the inauguration of finance capital that made

the cross-Atlantic slave trade possible. Slavery was predicated on “the finance culture that preceded, enabled, and secured this circuit of cross-Atlantic commodity exchange; the bank, stock, credit, insurance, and loan driven money forms of value that underwrote this cycle of accumulation” (53). Slaves were dematerialized,

treated not only as a type of commodity but as a type of interest-bearing money. They functioned in this system simultaneously as commodities for sale and as the reserve deposits of a loosely organized, decentered, but vast trans-Atlantic banking system: deposits made at the moment of sale and instantly reconverted into short-term bonds. This is at once obscene and vital to understanding the full capital logic of the slave trade. (61)

Baucom’s case study is the *Zong* massacre of 1781, but even more so the ensuing trial and appeals hearing in 1783. The *Zong* was a slave ship owned by the Gregson Syndicate of Liverpool. It set sail, overloaded with slave “cargo,” 440 in total, in September of 1781, en route from West Africa to Jamaica. In the course of the voyage many slaves died or became ill. The Captain, Collingwood, sailed on past Jamaica, evidently claiming later to his crew that he thought it was Saint-Domingue. Once past Jamaica, in open ocean, Collingwood informed his crew that the ship did not have enough drinking water to transport all of the slaves to Jamaica. He ordered that 132 of the sickest be thrown overboard. This initiated three days during which slaves were, one by one, drowned. The logbook inexplicably disappeared when the ship finally arrived in Jamaica. Importantly, all of Gregson’s property, the slaves, were insured. Two years later, with only one eyewitness (Collingwood having died shortly after the ship’s arrival in Jamaica), the case came to trial in London—not as a murder trial, but as a disputation and adjudication of insurance claims, a laboratory for testing forms of value arising from the new insurance industry. The Gregson Syndicate argued that they were owed the insurance on the drowned slaves according to a maritime law known as the Average Value, which specified that cargo could be jettisoned in extreme conditions in order to save what remained on the ship, and in that case insurance claims could be made on that cargo. The jury decided in favor of the slave ship owners. The insurers filed an appeal, and a hearing was held, with the decision this time in favor of the insurers. It is not clear whether there was ever a second trial. During the first hearing, a freed slave and abolitionist, Olaudah Equiano, told the English abolitionist, Granville Sharp, about the massacre. Sharp wrote and rewrote what became fourteen different documents that he presented to the court in order to press, unsuccessfully, for a murder trial. Sharp presented a one by one by one, thingly account of the slaves’ deaths. For Baucom, his repetitive insistence on driving home the extreme violence of the scene was to influence the (Kantian) disinterested spectators of both sides toward “a universal and *interested* sympathy, an exactly melancholy sympathy for the entirely real, entirely not abstract, entirely not ‘typical,’ entirely singular human beings thrown one by one by one into the sea” (131). During the appeal, the insurers claimed that Collingwood had not suffered from adverse maritime conditions

but had made a mistake in sailing past Jamaica and that, due to a heavy rain after the second day of the slaughter, had refilled barrels of water sufficient to get all remaining slaves back to Jamaica. They argued that he knew that the sickest of slaves would not receive market value in Jamaica, that they would not be insured if they died on land in Jamaica, and that therefore the best way to retain the profitability of the voyage would be to treat the slaves as insured cargo and jettison them.

The language and terms of the trial, Baucom argues, show the extent to which, accompanying speculative capital, a discursive “‘theoretical realism’” emerged as foundational to supporting “‘abstract,’ or ‘exchangeable’ types of character, object, and social encounter . . . the financial revolution’s new world of speculative transactions and mobile property” (32). At the same time—and this is most germane for thinking about M. Lamar’s work—Baucom identifies in the challenges brought by Sharp to the court an accompanying, internal, romantic counterdiscourse of melancholy. The “actuarial type” (46) abandons the thingliness of things for their abstract, theoretical forms. In contrast, the melancholic type exemplified in Granville Sharp, and then in instances of the abolitionist movement to follow, “implicitly resists the exchange of life for death by seeking to return dead things to life and insisting on the affective reality of the exemplary ghosts it calls from the vasty deeps” (46).

As with the resurgence and intensification of finance capital in our own time, so too there is a resurgence of the counterdiscourse of melancholy. I would like to suggest that M. Lamar and his lamentation for the dead can be situated within the resurgence and intensification of a discourse of melancholy that counters the intensified forms of speculative capital, which are themselves the intensified reemergence of the finance capital through which slavery could become the source of a monumental accumulation of capital in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>27</sup>

If, as Baucom says, the specific contribution that insurance made to finance capital was “its insistence that the real test of something’s value comes not at the moment it is made or exchanged but at the moment it is lost or destroyed” (95), then Lamar’s labor to raise up the lost and destroyed, the dead and dismembered, is to create a countervalue that is lodged in a force, a demon, intent on the uninsured destruction of hypercapital and its ongoing forms of enslavement. The threat is precisely that there will be no insurance guaranteeing the rebuilding of the perished scene of capital’s accumulation. The theoretical realism that installs the validity and meaning of abstraction, exchange, commensurability, and speculation (a language of justifying death by virtue of necessity—i.e., it was necessary to throw the slaves overboard to save the ship) has its tongue torn out by the language of melancholic lamentation sung in a twenty-first-century key. It has no purchase for a crowd of the newly undead, the awakened, bent on tearing the known world apart. Insurance (and finance capital more generally) separates value from any body that otherwise might be supposed to bear it, removing from the object its “thingliness” (18). The army of the awakened (the enslaved, the lynched, the incarcerated, the victims of the police) that populates Lamar’s screen, reassembling itself from its dismemberments, bears its “thingliness,” its materiality, back into

existence. The populations of that army are invaluable, in the sense that, in Baucom's terms, they are "beyond all value because outside all possibility of substitution, surrender, or exchange" (225).

Baucom invites Adam Smith into the discussion, citing his commendation of a melancholic relation to the dead. Baucom writes that for Smith, melancholy "is not a practice of survival (a way of securing the afterlife of the dead and of testifying to our own continued existence). It is, instead, a way of living in death," just as Lamar sings, "your death has become my life / until you come back to me." Baucom again: "It is not the dead that the elective melancholic keeps alive . . . it is instead their own melancholy that his melancholy subjects seek to sustain, their way of [and here he is quoting Smith] 'lodging . . . [their] own living souls in . . . [the] inanimated bodies' of the dead" (258–9). Lamar stands in as the Gothic necromancer, working in "the type of the dead" (278), which is, in the work of that early nineteenth-century Gothic novelist Sir Walter Scott, "the romantic type (subject of resuscitation) . . . disinter[ed] from a buried past" (279).<sup>28</sup> We can say—if tracking Lamar's work as a correlative of a reawakened and intensified romantic melancholy accompanying an intensified speculative capitalism—that, like some of the literature Baucom examines, it creates an "accumulated" temporality (29), as Baucom calls it, or that Lamar's work is an artistic expression, a genre formed in response to the perception of an accumulated temporality. The form of action in an accumulated temporality is to awaken the dead to be among us, the living (and of course this reminds us of Benjamin also) as the singular thingliness of that which will counter the speculative abstractions of late eighteenth- or early twenty-first-century finance capital. And yet, Lamar refers to himself as Negrothotic. Certainly, the romantic melancholy in the Gothic vein that Baucom is talking about is a white European genre. What else does Lamar do, what does he add to, or elaborate further, in his adaptation of the Gothic and romantic melancholy? What else can we see in his work that guides us to innovations in temporal thought with which we can adjust materialist analysis?

Well, there is theology. The limit case for Marxism. The no-no, not only for Marxism but for all the inheritors of the secular Enlightenment, many of whom, even as they identify modernity's construction as predicated on separating the superiority of the rational, secular man from the superstitious, religious savage, remain sometimes vehemently opposed to the inclusion of religious thought in scholarly discourse or artistic work. Lamar calls himself a devil worshiper. And yet, in response to *Destruction*, we replace mourning, ghosting, hauntology with a dangerous word, dangerous because it reeks of Christianity for the adamantly secular scholar: resurrection. Marx's own secular thought will not allow such a thing. The dead are dead, and only the bourgeoisie wish to bring them back. Lamar says about *Destruction* that "It happens in a kind of futuristic Easter, because Easter is all about resurrection."<sup>29</sup> The temporal thought needed today, the adjustments to the shortcomings of Marx's temporal thought, perhaps needs the room to walk the edge of the theological. Lamar takes from the spirituals he sings, or mixes, in *Destruction*, in particular "My Lord, What a Morning," the force of this resurrection. This song, a "song of the End and of the Beginning"<sup>30</sup> so central to *Destruction*, is the seventh of the ten "master songs"

that W. E. B. Du Bois says are “peculiarly characteristic of the slave,” “the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment [that] tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways.”<sup>31</sup>

Du Bois, especially through the reading of Alexander G. Weheliye, reverberates in and through Lamar’s performance. With the exception of the fourteenth and final essay in *The Souls of Black Folk*—“Of the Sorrow Songs,” from which the preceding quotations are taken—Du Bois begins each essay with strangely elliptical references to the spirituals. He provides a few bars of music, only a fragment of the whole spiritual, making the spiritual hard to recognize. Above these bars Du Bois places a verse from a canonical poem, usually by nineteenth-century European writers, so that the poems get reread, mixed, into the spiritual fragment in a way that Weheliye describes as releasing the “Afro-entelechy”<sup>32</sup> of the poems: they realize the potential of the spiritual. Weheliye contextualizes Du Bois’s use of the spirituals by noting that those adhering to what Jon Cruz calls the “romantic antimodernism” (328) of the nineteenth century—a group that included many abolitionists—turned to the spirituals as artifacts of a true “black humanity” (328), one that could counter Western rationality. The effort to transcribe them into notation began: a complicated project that challenged and changed the notational system and one that, Weheliye argues, attached the spirituals to a specific historical context. Du Bois, by contrast, in separating the spirituals from their supposed artifactual purity by combining them with European poetry—which in turn strips the European poetry of its canonical, geographical, and emotional purity—and by providing only fragments of notation from unidentified spirituals, allows the souls of black folk to be heard through a temporal undoing of fixed histories, where the spiritual’s potential as something that undoes modernity’s time is released. The spiritual travels around and through and in remix with past, present, and future, defying its earlier, notational, artifactual lodging in the nineteenth century. Lamar, with his sampling and mixing, is like Du Bois in using the spirituals through an alteration that “shapes the spirituals into future-oriented artifacts that sound an opaque and fragmented African-American past” (329).

For Weheliye the fragments of the spirituals sound throughout Du Bois’s text a “sonorous ignition” (319). In the medium of performance rather than literary text, Lamar is able to push this idea to its fullest, singing, sounding from the spirituals (unnamed and fragmented, as in Du Bois) the fullest potentials of their secular meanings underpinned by the strength of their theological poetry. In sound, sounding, with us in that room *hearing*, he gathers a temporal firestorm. We have resurrections and the fugitive, the graveyard where the Judgment Day comes, where the dead arise, where the slavers will not get out alive; temporal sites awash in one another in the Gothic mist, where time and history are deliberately left vague; an illogic, an opening to the supernatural as a complication of life and death, a distinct world of the imagination, where the mix of spirituals in the soprano key, in the scream, in both the live and recorded score creates “a sonic aperture that shifts the rules of the game altogether” (324).

Chapter 1 of *The Souls of Black Folk* begins with two verses of an Arthur Symons poem, one of which contains the line, “And the fire of the end begin

[sic] to burn in the west.” Weheliye notes that combining this poetic fragment with the paired fragment of the spiritual “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen” changes the eschatological presumption of the apocalyptic end of time so that it will not be “precipitated by biblical sins, at least not in any strict sense, but by the secular crimes of the West (the specters of slavery, racism, and imperialism)” (331). Lamar, not so much secularizing the theological content of the spirituals as bringing the full force of theological imagination to a secular situation, sings about the end of the world, the Apocalypse, and a resurrection that brings rage and counterdestruction. Lamar shares the practice of Du Bois in which, as theorized by Weheliye, “a more nuanced theory of temporality materializes that takes notice of the complex relations of domination and subordination linked to the inscription of history as it pertains to black people in the United States and the global oppressed” (322). A Negrothotic indeed.

And yet, where Weheliye seems to want to err on the side of the secular, Lamar’s Gothic melancholic sounding of lamentation and rage retains and remixes important aspects of theological thought, and in particular, the thought of the immortal. When we travel with Lamar through the sonic aperture he creates, we encounter an immortal in the sense that before and after, as in Weheliye’s distinct frames for the past and the future, dissolve. In Lamar resurrection/insurrection is, always, again and again: both immortal and deeply grounded in the materiality of “domination and subordination,” belonging to slavery as a foundation of capitalism but also to all of capitalism’s subsequent phases.

Let us continue to follow the thought of the immortal into the second step in walking the edge of the theological. Let us go back to Lamar’s description of *Destruction* as a “futuristic Easter” in which an “army of people” is resurrect [ed] “who can destroy finally the world order of white supremacy.” Lamar also speaks of himself, the figure of the man dragging the coffin, as carrying the coffin “across centuries.” He says, “The futuristic element is about having one single figure who can exist across different time periods who will carry these coffins, who will carry these memories with them, until that one moment that one day when all the souls can rise again.”<sup>33</sup> Again, there is a kind of material immortal temporality implicit in this idea, one that coordinates both with romantic melancholy’s relationship to living with the dead, and with what Corey Walker describes in his essay on Howard Thurman as a relation to the ontology of death that is specific to slavery, black thought, and black spirituals.<sup>34</sup>

Thurman was an African American scholar, philosopher, theologian, and activist, raised by a grandmother who had been a slave. In 1947 he gave an Ingersoll Lecture on Human Immortality at Harvard University, “The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death.” In this lecture, Thurman wants to see what the spirituals have to say about life and death and immortality. In explicating Thurman, Walker cites Nathan Scott’s work on Heidegger to note “[T]he terrible dread” we feel in the face of “the oblivion that ultimately awaits us” (146),<sup>35</sup> a sense of ultimate oblivion that makes the world seem insignificant. Thus death, as extinction of being, the finitude of existence, takes on, for the nonenslaved modern, “exalted meaning . . . as *the* absolute limit condition of humanity” (145).

By contrast, for the slave, as Thurman argued, death is everywhere, always at hand, ordinary. As opposed to the experience of death as “the ultimate threat” (146) to existence and meaning, Thurman suggests it is the precondition of the slave’s existence—the condition of life itself. Lamar sings, “your death is my life, an endless loss, a life in death, a death in life.”<sup>36</sup> The words of the spiritual under consideration by Thurman read, “Oh Freedom! Oh Freedom! / Oh Freedom, I love thee! / And before I’ll be a slave, / I’ll be buried in my grave.” Thurman says that for the slave, death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person. Death is here, and it can be and is the site of an existence that wins out over slavery, which is the worst thing that can happen. The spiritual “disclose [s]” this (death) as an *affirmation of being* that exists prior to “the condition of slavery.”<sup>37</sup> It is an elemental affirmation to say that I will accept death before I will be a slave.

This is not to suggest a passive submission to death on the part of the slaves. As Thurman writes, “Here is something more than a mere counsel of suicide. It is a primary disclosure of an elemental affirmation having to do directly, not only with the ultimate dignity of the human spirit, but also with the ultimate basis of self-respect.”<sup>38</sup> This is not a directive toward death, or passivity in face of its inclusive and unremitting presence in the slaves’ world. In Lamar’s twenty-first-century key, in his mix of the spiritual, there is also an affirmation that life can and does exist in and after death, exceeds the death dealing, revolts against it. The life of the slave can be in death, the spiritual encourages, a philosophy of strength that declares existence before slavery, lynching, incarceration, shootings. Thurman writes, “[T]he great idea about death itself is that it is not *the master of life*. It may be inevitable, yes: gruesome, perhaps; releasing, yes; but triumphant, NEVER.”<sup>39</sup>

There are deep temporal consequences in this radical adjustment to the paradigm of death as that which is the ultimate end or after of life. Thurman says that, for the enslaved, immortality is not something out there, transcendent, to be attained after death. This version of immortality can be imagined, according to Walker, only as something “independent of human existence.”<sup>40</sup> Immortality in this view is ontologically separate from life, independent of history. For the slave, for whom death is effectively taken in hand as an affirmation of being, death is something that the slave can observe affecting her, with what Thurman terms an “element of detachment for the human spirit,” as a “spectator.”<sup>41</sup> Thurman is developing, says Walker, an “*immanent* notion of immortality” made possible because the rich meaning of the slave’s life becomes intelligible in this spectating, in his own “(pre)reflective disclosure of death.”<sup>42</sup> There is a strong sense of the young man in the coffin participating in, even creating his own death, of his spectating of it and most certainly his affirmation, over and over (immortally) of life, as he slips, fugitive, out of cell-cage after cell-cage. Lamar, who Thurman might call a time binder, calls the affirmative rage of life/being into existence in and because of the presence of death everywhere, across the temporal stretch from slavery to now. Life and immortality, usually thought of as a “before and after” of death, respectively, converge in life–death.<sup>43</sup> When Lamar imagines his labor as dragging the coffin across centuries, until the dead are resurrected, when therefore the destruction of white supremacy

will be at hand, he is not suggesting a successive passing of time, an after of death in which such a resurrection will come. He is already in the dead, of the dead, carrying the dead. His life is in the dead, and the meaning of their life is their ongoing insurrectional resurrections. The insurrections, the “re-memberments,” are in digital form on the screen, endlessly appearing, reconstituting, indistinct, flickering, insubstantial, perhaps the spirit of the immortal itself, always in our time, life itself. What we see is not the evacuated abstraction, the slave, or those dead since then, the object of speculation, that which has no meaning, that which had not been designated as living, as life. Instead we see an incommensurable thingliness, an affirmation of life in capitalism’s very graveyard, a temporal disjunction and discoordination from the times of speculative finance, then and now.

Lamar uses performance as a medium for the resurgence of romantic melancholy, perhaps simmering everywhere within our collective anxiety. While scholars often discuss the live in performance, in *Destruction* it is not so much “liveness” that is at issue as “thingliness.” Undoubtedly the spectatorial shock of his voice, the shock of the kind of sound he sounds from the piano, could not have occurred without living contact with the performance. But the (contested) value of the live in performance is here supplemented, or even displaced, by Lamar’s identification with the dead; his live body is alive only in its alliance with death. In place of the live is his thingliness. This materiality, the thingliness that specifically contrasts with abstraction and its monetary equivalences, this materiality, along with its immaterial and immortal conjugation, is here the work, the ability, of performance. Immortality itself has a thingliness here.

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In Baucom’s work on romantic melancholy, he carefully studies what he calls Adam Smith’s “schizophrenic text” (253), *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. On the one hand Smith creates a spectatorial (bourgeois) type, a type for whom “melancholy sympathy” (281) for the struggling protagonists of a situation changes to disinterestedness in the specificity of particular suffering, and exchanges the “experiment in interestedness for a more properly liberal habit of historical disinterestedness” (280). The disinterested spectator is moved primarily by the spectacle of her own sympathy and thus can, as Baucom puts it, “abandon the damaged past (and the melancholy it induces) and claim full liberal citizenship in the present (and its futures to come)” (281). We are, I would suggest, often addressed by theatre and performance events that primarily conjure for us the pleasing spectacle of our own sympathy, our liberal humanity, our *humanitarianism*. M. Lamar, in contrast, uses performance to regain that other side of Adam Smith’s consideration of melancholy, to which I have already referred. Smith, according to Baucom, offers melancholy, as opposed to mourning, as “the cultivation of an alarming, even a suicidal, vulnerability” (258). In that theatre, Lamar cultivated performance, and its temporal flexibility and suggestiveness, as a means by which spectators were summoned to that counterdiscourse internal to hyperspeculation and abstraction—melancholy’s “exorbitant passions” (262) for living in and through the dead, in their full and specific suffering, until resurrection and revolt discover their time. Strange indeed to liberal, secular, spectatorial sensibility. It is a challenge that brings Marx, unexpected, back into the room,

although we may not notice him. He is curious, and pleased by what he sees as the performer's nearly unbearable passion for the resumption of the overthrow of capitalism's barbarity by those in whom Marx had, however briefly, sensed the initiation of a revolutionary key different from his own. He is pleased to be in the room, in a theatre, the place dedicated for spectators of both the living and the dead, and of the thingliness of things, where the spectator can be summoned outside of liberalism's spectatorial sensibility, summoned through a sonic aperture to the imagination of new forces of revolt, appearing again and again. Marx comes back into the room because Lamar finds in the specificity of voice, body, and passionate rage available to performance the means to counter what Baucom describes as the *Zong*'s Captain Collingwood's "step-by-step determination to treat the slaves aboard his ship as bearers not simply of a commodified exchange value but of an utterly dematerialized, utterly speculative, and utterly transactable, enforceable, and recuperable pecuniary value" (139).

And finally, what medium other than performance can open itself to the challenge made by a wish to put before spectators the immortality of the insurrectionist necessity? Performance and theatre, as we all know, are afflicted with the tantalizing complexities working between thingliness and the immaterial, working in the materialization of the immaterial and vice versa, and working with an immortal existence appearing again and again in mysterious time (as Tadeusz Kantor believed of characters), as mysterious as the graveyard in the moonlight.

We have moved, then, from an attempt to see how Marx viewed slavery, how it is necessary to perceive slavery as constitutive of capitalism, and of its financialization, and through a brief look at how black radical thinkers have adjusted the traditional temporality of Marx's revolutionary thinking toward the kind of revolt/insurrection/rebellion that Lamar materializes in *Destruction*. I have suggested that I wished to argue that there are temporal innovations in Lamar's work that can help reinvigorate Marxist or materialist thought for the twenty-first century. To this end, we have taken an in-depth look at the emergence of a romantic melancholy as a counterdiscourse to modernity in the nineteenth century—one that emerges with more intensity in Lamar's Gothic romanticism, alongside forms of speculative capitalism intensified since their emergence in the late eighteenth century. This appearance of something from one period in another is an accumulative temporality, in that it is not a return but an intensification. Lamar's piece has that kind of accumulative temporality, in which the thingliness that is evacuated and abstracted by the commodity form (with slave as commodity form) appears back into material existence. I then argued that we might risk a turn to theological thought, and we looked at Weheliye's sonic aperture, his work on the spirituals and Du Bois, and temporal mixes that begin to create a sense of the material immortal. And finally, we looked at Walker's work on Thurman and his theories of immortality, of the affirmation of life made at the heart of a life lived in death. Here the spirit of the immortal is life itself, resurrected, a thingly materialization of those who realize revolt/insurrection as a revolutionary impulse that can and will happen, again and again, in the *Destruction* churned from the Gothic graveyard of Lamar's spiritual existence.

ENDNOTES

1. Performance program.
2. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, [1944] 1994), 68.
3. *Ibid.*, 131.
4. Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. W. O. Henderson and W. H. Chaloner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 50.
5. *Ibid.*, 79.
6. Robin Blackburn, *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln* (London and New York: Verso, 2011), 189–90.
7. *Ibid.*, 210.
8. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 69.
9. *Ibid.*, 174.
10. Nina Mashurova, “Coffins across Centuries: M. Lamar’s Real Life Negrothotic Horror,” *Impose*, [www.imposemagazine.com/features/m-lamar-negrothotic-interview](http://www.imposemagazine.com/features/m-lamar-negrothotic-interview); posted 11 January 2016; accessed 14 May 2016.
11. Risa Puleo, “M. Lamar,” BOMB—Artists in Conversation, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/0984107/m-lamar>, posted 8 October 2015, accessed 14 May 2016.
12. Jeremy Matthew Glick, *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2016), 38.
13. See his “On The Concept of History,” in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 389–400.
14. Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx–Engels Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 438–9.
15. *Ibid.*, 439.
16. I am aware that for some people the use of the “we” (Who is the we?) is problematic. I use it primarily in the sense of intending to gather my readers into a shared imaginative frame, whoever they are. I also think that different, diverse, and unanticipated configurations of “we” and “us” can be presented by a text and, rather than universalizing or appropriating, can construct in some cases imaginative, imagined, called into being, temporary collectives.
17. Although this is not my frame for this essay, Lamar has been influenced by work on zombies. He speaks in particular of Jack Halberstam and Paul Farley, the latter of whom talked about the dead always singing to us, which means they can’t really be dead, they can only be asleep, and the thing about the dead being asleep is that one day they can wake up. See Mashurova; Puleo.
18. This glancing reference to immaterial labor may as well be the place where I indicate in the briefest of terms the influence of the *operaismo* (originally an Italian workers’ movement) and post-*operaismo* movement on contemporary radical thought—working through Marx from Negri, Deleuze, Virno, and others has offered rich resources, perhaps especially in consideration of the Black Radical tradition in the beautiful work of Fred Moten. It is especially important to note here Moten’s theorization of fugitivity as a mode of blackness (which doesn’t mean only black people), given the fugitive spirituals and the young man constantly slipping out of his bars in Lamar’s work. Although some of this work is fascinating and productive for me, I find it too often to lack a certain concretization or materiality, and too fascinated for my taste with the alleged creative productivity of capitalism itself. But working Lamar through the lens of Fred Moten is probably a more obvious choice, and in fact such an article is posted on Lamar’s website for any interested readers.
19. In addition to spirituals and black metal, Lamar is influenced by punk and goth, Diamanda Galas, and Nina Simone. See Mashurova. The reference to rubato is [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempo\\_rubato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempo_rubato).
20. Mashurova.

21. If the reader is interested, I would recommend this version of “Lay This Body Down,” played 2 December 2012 by the duo Collins and Dog at the Chaos Acoustic Club in Birmingham, UK: “Collins and Dog—Lay This Body Down,” [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nzyBIfVCE4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nzyBIfVCE4); accessed 14 May 2016.
22. For “Somebody’s Calling my Name” sung at the New Orleans jazz funeral for guitarist Snooks Eaglin, 27 February 2009: “Hush, Somebody’s Calling My Name—Memorial Jam Session and Second Line,” [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ik9vYKqul4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ik9vYKqul4); accessed 14 May 2016.
23. Explanatory text at “Hush, Somebody’s Callin’ My Name—Negro Spiritual,” [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DT7VwNyZYU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DT7VwNyZYU); accessed 14 May 2016.
24. This is a phrase from Paul Farley. See note 17 above.
25. Baucom gets the word from Richard Halpern’s parsing (*Shakespeare among the Moderns* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997], 11–12) of Walter Benjamin’s 1939 “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century.” Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 18, 338 n 23. Subsequent citations of this work appear parenthetically in the text.
26. Baucom is quoting Halpern, 12.
27. Nicholas Ridout has written about the value to communist thought in the theatre of a contemporary resurgence of romantic anticapitalism. See *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism, and Love* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).
28. Importantly, within that same literature the romantic type who “lays down in the grave of a dying people” is replaced by a second type who “exchanges a melancholy sympathy with the dying and the dead for the idea of the impartial spectator’s capacity to be moved (and moved into a liberal future) by the spectacle of its own display of sympathy” (Baucom, 280).
29. Mashurova.
30. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Signet Classics, 1995), 140. (Note: This little volume contains the original notations for the spirituals, along with the poems, at the beginning of each chapter. Some other editions do not.)
31. Du Bois, 140, 267. According to Du Bois, “The last master song is the song of songs —‘Steal Away’” (140). For a beautiful recording of this spiritual by the blind Reverend Pearly Brown, who learned it from his slave grandmother, and is accompanied by images of the fugitive. See “Steal Away—Reverend Pearly Brown,” [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J8f\\_IRYubw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J8f_IRYubw); accessed 14 May 2016.
32. Alexander G. Weheliye, “The Grooves of Temporality,” *Public Culture* 17.2 (2005): 319–38, at 330. Subsequent citations of this work appear parenthetically in the text.
33. Mashurova.
34. Corey D. B. Walker, “The Race for Theology: Toward a Critical Political Theology of Freedom,” in *Race and Political Theology*, ed. Vincent W. Lloyd. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 134–55.
35. Walker quotes Nathan A. Scott Jr., *The Poetics of Belief: Studies in Coleridge, Arnold, Pater, Santayana, Stevens, and Heidegger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 149.
36. Quoted from the text projected in performance.
37. Walker, 146.
38. Thurman, quoted in *ibid.*, 147.
39. Thurman, quoted in *ibid.*, 149.
40. *Ibid.*, 147.
41. Thurman, quoted in *ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*; italics his.
43. *Ibid.*, 150.