

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910811231403321
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Titolo	The logic of slavery : debt, technology, and pain in American literature / / Tim Armstrong, Royal Holloway, University of London
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, [UK] ; ; New York, : Cambridge University Press, 2012
ISBN	1-107-23207-4 1-139-50836-9 1-283-52179-2 1-139-51804-6 9786613834249 1-139-17725-7 1-139-51897-6 1-139-51454-7 1-139-51546-2 1-139-51711-2
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (x, 252 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Collana	Cambridge studies in American literature and culture
Classificazione	LIT004020
Disciplina	810.9/355
Soggetti	Slavery in literature American literature - 19th century - History and criticism American literature - 20th century - History and criticism American literature - African American authors - History and criticism Slavery in art Slavery - United States - History Slavery - Psychological aspects Slavery - Economic aspects Commodification Reification
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Machine generated contents note: Illustrations; Acknowledgments; Introduction; 1. Slavery, insurance, and sacrifice: the embodiment of capital; 2. Debt, self-redemption, and foreclosure; 3. Machines inside

the machine: slavery and technology; 4. The hands of others: sculpture and pain; 5. The sonic veil; 6. Slavery in the mind: trauma and the weather; Notes; Index.

Sommario/riassunto

In American history and throughout the Western world, the subjugation perpetuated by slavery has created a unique 'culture of slavery'. That culture exists as a metaphorical, artistic and literary tradition attached to the enslaved - human beings whose lives are 'owed' to another, who are used as instruments by another and who must endure suffering in silence. Tim Armstrong explores the metaphorical legacy of slavery in American culture by investigating debt, technology and pain in African-American literature and a range of other writings and artworks. Armstrong's careful analysis reveals how notions of the slave as a debtor lie hidden in our accounts of the commodified self and how writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Rebecca Harding Davis, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison grapple with the pervasive view that slaves are akin to machines.
