

## **Orientalizing the Frontier: On Reading Relationally and Unsettling the Colonial Stage**

In this outmoded spot, on the margins of every dynamic, the tendencies of our modernity began to be detectable. —Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*

The euclidean utopia is mapped; it is geometrically organized, with the parts labeled *a*, *a'*, *b*: a diagram or model, which social engineers can follow and reproduce. Reproduction, the viral watchword. —Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be*

Edward Said's seminal *Orientalism* posits that a schematic and textual<sup>1</sup> rendering of the Orient as a 'set of values'<sup>2</sup> evocative of ancient European nostalgia, and additionally as a site of possessable data "totally accessible to European scrutiny,"<sup>3</sup> occurred before and alongside European invasion and conquest. These textual renderings, most significantly the archive accumulated after Napoleon's occupation of Egypt in 1798, did not limit Orientalism to a field of study; forms of representation codified a colonial process of constituting modern being—categorizing native populations as naturally abject from other forms of *human* being. The Oriental 'Other' serves as the foundation for rendering an ontological rubric of distinction and designation that readies the ground for violent dominance. In her essay "1492: A New World View," Jamaican cultural theorist and novelist Sylvia Wynter also interrogates the connective tissue of shifting rules of representation<sup>4</sup> on patterns of relation that informed and justified Columbus's expedition within the "subjective understanding"<sup>5</sup> of a new humanist world order. Said's and Wynter's methodologies, applied to key historic events of 1492 and 1798, are also

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, page 80

<sup>2</sup> Said, 85

<sup>3</sup> Said, 83

<sup>4</sup> Sylvia Wynter, "1492: A New World View", *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), page 11

<sup>5</sup> Wynter, 12

useful for interrogating the frontier imagination of Lewis and Clark’s U.S. commissioned expedition following the purchase of Louisiana territory from the French in 1803. Through contextualizing the schemes of representation that fortified the colonial imaginary, and the archived texts that emerged out of these colonial ‘discovery’ events, within speeches, letters, and journals from Christopher Columbus, Napoleon Bonaparte, to Lewis and Clark, an entangled genealogy of knowledge formation mediating subject relation emerges—connecting settler colonialism projects from the “Orient” to the Americas.

### **1492 and 1798: World Making as “Subjective Understanding”; Representation, Rupture, Return, Discovery**

“The central question,” writes Wynter in the opening pages of her essay on the 1492 event, is “which meaning, for what group, and from which perspective[?]”<sup>6</sup> These questions set up the scope of her analysis beyond a binary characterization of Columbus’s expedition as historic atrocity or achievement, and instead interrogates the cultural context that enabled Columbus’s invasion, including the forms of intermingling representation and relation that emerged before and in the wake of his conquest: “Columbus did indeed set out to discover, and what he did indeed ‘discover’ were conceived and carried out within a system of symbolic representations that were culturally different from our now hegemonically techno-industrial own.”<sup>7</sup> Portuguese expeditions that eventually succeeded in rounding Cape Bojador in 1441 punctured previously-held Christian geographic demarcations between ‘habitable’ and ‘inhabitable’ zones.<sup>8</sup> The precedent of these expeditions were both logistical—Columbus could visit the Portuguese-built trading fort at El Mina on the west coast of Africa in 1482—and *representational*: a successful

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<sup>6</sup> Wynter, 6

<sup>7</sup> Wynter, 12

<sup>8</sup> Wynter, 9

challenge to mainstream categorical models of the earth's geography.<sup>9</sup> Portuguese colonial expeditions provided a prelude to a shifting subjective understanding that combined knowledge acquisition with market expansion, and a "specific pattern of relations"<sup>10</sup> between Christian Europe and non-Christian subjects, a "juro-theological legitimation" that then readied the ground for the expansion of the African slave trade, the accelerated capitalist development of the Americas, and the "basis of the new social structure."<sup>11</sup> A key epochal shift that mediated transformations in subjective understanding, alongside a shifting ethico-behavioral system that enabled the event of 1492, was the advent of a new humanistic movement oriented towards goals of the state, including expansion, political stability, and rational redemption.<sup>12</sup> The goal of this new European humanistic movement, enacted through vehicles of statal-mercantile expansion and political rationality, was to map a new world in its own image:

Europe, by means of its return...was to make itself anew in all forms of existence... "men of the sea" like Columbus...was also to bring in, for all humans, a new image of the earth and conception of the cosmos...the revolution of humanism made it possible for these representations to be replaced with a scientific and transculturally verifiable image of the earth and conception of the cosmos.<sup>13</sup>

This new world-making that prioritized the good of the state above all else, in direct competition with other European powers, added urgency to an impetus for an ontological rubric of 'scientific' distinction that justified land expropriation and colonial occupation: "[A]ll non-Christian peoples and cultures became perceivable only in terms of their usefulness to the European states in securing their this-worldly goal of power and wealth."<sup>14</sup> Within this epochal shift of humanism, and its corresponding subjective understanding, Orientalism emerges.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Wynter, 11

<sup>11</sup> Wynter, 11

<sup>12</sup> Wynter, 14

<sup>13</sup> Wynter, 17

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

Said opens *Orientalism* with reference to another ‘world-making’ historic event, the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 under Napoleon’s rule. The invasion, contends Said, first enabled by a textual or imaginary rendering of the Orient, reproduced itself as a form of rational knowledge formation:

the “Orient,” that semi-mythical construct, which, since Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century, has been made and remade countless times by power acting through an expedient form of knowledge to assert that this is the Orient’s nature, and we must deal with it accordingly.<sup>15</sup>

Orientalism formed as an articulated set of relationships between a dominant culture and a colonized culture, while also retaining internal consistency.<sup>16</sup> Said’s Orientalism then echoes Wynter’s assertion that representation frames the dynamic of a set of relations, “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.”<sup>17</sup> While Said focuses his attention on the 1798 event, over 300 years after Columbus’s expedition, both Said and Wynter name a key paradox that served as a motivational force in Napoleon and Columbus’s voyages: European settlers wanted to create a new state-made cosmology and simultaneously *return* to an imaginary Greco-Roman European prestige. Values attached to the Orient were not simply based in modern realities and expansionist economic potential, but also in the nostalgic evoking of a distant European cultural past.<sup>18</sup> Even when invading ‘new’ land sites, previously deemed out of reach, Europe was always looking for itself. The internal consistency that Said refers to can be surmised in the textual renderings of the ‘East’ that deeply influenced the imagination of Columbus and Napoleon prior to their state-sponsored projects, as providing the key to both a distant European era of dominance and its impending reiteration by exacting a set of relations to non-Christian (non-

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<sup>15</sup> Said, xviii

<sup>16</sup> Said, 22

<sup>17</sup> Said, 3

<sup>18</sup> Said, 85

human subjects) and yet to be made productive lands. In addition to the discipline by which the Orient is/was systematically approached, Orientalism according to Said is “that collection of dreams, images, and vocabularies available to anyone who has tried to talk about what lies east of the dividing line.”<sup>19</sup> In engaging the precedent to Orientalism, Wynter references medieval Islamic accounts of non-Islamic peoples of black Africa as operating outside of human recognition, and the resulting cultivation of “stereotyped images,” whose function was to “induce the specific mode of perception needed by a culture-specific order.”<sup>20</sup> Because as Wynter contends the modes of cognition of medieval Islam’s rules of representation and operational strategies were still functioning,<sup>21</sup> Columbus could similarly apply images as ‘boundary markers’ of the ‘transgressive chaos’ that lay outside of the subjective understanding mode of behavioral norms.<sup>22</sup> Orientalism emerges as a useful frame that can be read within and alongside Wynter’s writing of human orders, “the status-organizing principle of a represented difference of the ontological caste substance between noble and nonnoble,”<sup>23</sup> in the case of shifting subjective understanding the substance between Christian and non-Christian, or within Orientalism’s ‘classificatory schema:’ Orient and Occident.

In *The Imaginative Landscapes of Christopher Columbus*, historian Valerie Irene Jane Flint examines and speculates on how Columbus’s religious fervency and the texts and mythologies he had access to impacted his spatial understandings and personal development: “His ideas were patterned with geographical pictures and descriptions, some drawn from the Bible, some from...stories. He drew energy from the parts faraway Eastern countries had

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<sup>19</sup> Said, 73

<sup>20</sup> Wynter, 20

<sup>21</sup> Wynter, 21

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Wynter, 22

previously played (or were thought to have played) in the encouragement of Christians, and...past and present threats posed by Christianity's enemies."<sup>24</sup> It was Columbus's reading of Marco Polo's account of the East that made possible his belief that Asia could be reached,<sup>25</sup> and Columbus would always believe he had landed on "the West Indies." Even in his disruption of pre-existing geographic cosmogonies, Columbus's journey can be contextualized within an Orientalist fantasy. Napoleon too had been attracted to the East since his youth: "it is evident from all his writing and conversation that he was steeped...in the memories and glories that were attached to Alexander's Orient generally and Egypt in particular."<sup>26</sup> Napoleon's fantasy of 're-conquering' Egypt as a new Alexander provided a key motivation alongside the economic and military benefits of invading Egypt in competition with Britain. Additionally, Napoleon felt confident in his ability to conquer Egypt because of his *textual* knowledge of it, representations of the Orient through classical texts were thus utilized as a "useful substitute for any actual encounter with the real Orient,"<sup>27</sup> or as Wynter writes, "before being 'discovered,' their existence had to be made conceptualizable."<sup>28</sup> In his letter to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1493 following his contact with the Caribbean, Columbus wrote:<sup>29</sup>

So too for pieces of hoops, jugs, jars, and pots they bartered cotton and gold like beasts. This I forbade, because it was plainly unjust; and I gave them many beautiful and pleasing things, which I had brought with me, for no return whatever, in order to win their affection, and that they might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen and Princes and all the people of Spain; and that they might be eager to search for and gather and give to us what they abound in and we greatly need.

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<sup>24</sup> Valerie Irene Jane. Flint, *Imaginative Landscape of Christopher Columbus* (Princeton University Press, 2017), xiii

<sup>25</sup> Wynter, 23

<sup>26</sup> Said, 80

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>28</sup> Wynter, 24

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Columbus. "The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History." 'Columbus Reports on His First Voyage, April 1493'. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/content/columbus-reports-his-first-voyage-1493>.

In July of 1798, Napoleon gave the following “Proclamation to the Egyptians:”<sup>30</sup>

People of Egypt: You will be told by our enemies, that I am come to destroy your religion. Believe them not. Tell them that I am come to restore your rights, punish your usurpers, and raise the true worship of Mahomet. Tell them that I venerate, more than I do the Mamelukes, God, His prophet, and the Koran. Tell them that all men are equal in the sight of God; that wisdom, talents, and virtue alone constitute the difference between them. And what are the virtues which distinguish the Mamelukes, that entitle them to appropriate all the enjoyments of life to themselves? ... God is just and merciful, and He hath ordained that the Empire of the Mamelukes shall come to an end.

Both Napoleon’s “Proclamation” and Columbus’s letter echo what Wynter calls the “counterpoetics of the *proper nos*,”<sup>31</sup> which make possible a rule-governed model of divine creation.<sup>32</sup> Both Napoleon’s reference to state power as accountable to God but within the agency of man to wield, and Columbus’s expectation that he had the right and duty to train the native populations—Lucayan, Tainos, Arawaks—in his own image<sup>33</sup> underscore what Wynter calls a “post-theological mode” of subjective understanding. This mode of understanding, in turn, allows for European settlers to see the Orient/world at large as knowable: “On the margin of one of his notebooks Columbus jotted ‘Totum navigable;’ that is all seas are navigable.”<sup>34</sup> ‘Discovery’ within the context of crusading Christianity granted privileges to those who could claim to be the ‘first’ to land on non-Christian territory and expropriate it.<sup>35</sup> Though still operating in the textual imaginary, the desire to systematize knowledge of the East, or land deemed beyond modern civilization, became another sanctified state action. Said argues, “in

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<sup>30</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte, “Proclamation to the Egyptians, 1798”, *Napoleon's Addresses: Selections from the Proclamations, Speeches and Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*. Edited by Ida M. Tarbell. (Boston: Joseph Knight, 1896.)

<sup>31</sup> Wynter, 27

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Katherine McKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 168

<sup>34</sup> Wynter, 28

<sup>35</sup> Wynter, 24

such efforts...Europe discovers its capacity for Orientalizing the Orient...the triumphant technique for taking the immense fecundity of the Orient and making it systematically, even alphabetically knowable.”<sup>36</sup>

Much has been written about Napoleon’s use of scholars during his Egypt mission: over 150 savants were enlisted to build a living archive for the expedition, housed within the Institut d’Egyte that Napoleon founded.<sup>37</sup> “The Institut, with its team of chemists, historians, biologists, archaeologists, surgeons, antiquarians, was the learned division of the army. Its job was no less aggressive: to put Egypt into modern French.”<sup>38</sup> Interactions with the natives, and all other observations of the land, were rigorously recorded and catalogued into the *Description de l’Egypte*, published between 1809 and 1828 in twenty-three enormous volumes.<sup>39</sup> In the historic preface, written by Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Fourier, the greatness of ancient Europe within the theatre of the Orient is invoked again, “Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras, and Plato all went to Egypt to study the sciences, religion, and the laws. Alexander founded an opulent city there, which for a long time enjoyed commercial supremacy and which witnessed Pompey, Caesar, Mark Antony, and Augustus deciding between them the fate of Rome and that of the entire world.”<sup>40</sup> The *Description* as a text mediated the gradient of entanglements between mythologized European nostalgia and the inception of a new state performance: the ‘rational’ subsumed mode of knowledge formation as a key role of empire. “Egypt was the focal point of the relationships between Africa and Asia, between Europe and the East, between memory and actuality.”<sup>41</sup> Colonial humanist formations of the counter-poetics of the *proper nos*, the shifted

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<sup>36</sup> Said, 65

<sup>37</sup> Said, 81

<sup>38</sup> Said, 84

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Said, 84

<sup>41</sup> Said, 84

mode of subjective understanding that added dimensions of divine-state value to ‘discovery,’ and Orientalist tools for systematizing and archiving knowledge made possible the cultivation of an explorable and knowable ‘frontier’ in the Americas. Following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which transferred land from France to the recently formed settler colony of the United States, U.S. soldiers would employ similar methods to classify the land and subjugate native populations.

### **Orientalizing the Frontier: The Lewis and Clark Expedition**

Cultivators of the earth make the best citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most virtuous and the most independent. They are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests with the most lasting bonds. —Thomas Jefferson letter to John Jay, Paris, 1785

On December 29, 1803 a crowd gathered in New Orleans to watch the ceremony of the U.S. acquiring the Louisiana Territory.<sup>42</sup> Over half a billion acres had been purchased from the French for \$15 million. Less than six months later, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark would begin their mission of exploring and documenting the newly expanded territory.<sup>43</sup> Camp Dubois, a military camp established near the mouth of the Missouri River, would provide a key training ground for the crew, with a selected group of soldiers fashioned into the “Corps of Discovery.”<sup>44</sup> Echoing Napoleon’s desire for ‘textual’ expertise of the Orient that Said elucidated, “[Thomas] Jefferson wanted for the expedition...a person ‘perfectly skilled in botany, natural history, minerology, astronomy...habits of living in the woods & familiarity with the Indian character.’”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Charles Wilson. *Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1934, 1

<sup>43</sup> Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Gary E. Moulton, *The Lewis and Clark Journals: An American Epic of Discovery* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), xiii

<sup>44</sup> Lewis, Clark, xiii

<sup>45</sup> Lewis, Clark, xiv

According to Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis possessed enough of these attributes to make him a qualified leader for the expedition, which would officially begin in May of 1804 and last until September 1806. A key ‘subjective understanding’ present in the Lewis and Clark journals, echoing Wynter’s analysis of Columbus, was the use of stereotyped images of natives as ‘boundary markers’ of ‘transgressive chaos’ that delineated the ‘habitable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ areas of the earth.<sup>46</sup> Lewis and Clark, like Columbus, saw the prior native-inhabited ‘wilderness’ as part of their divine/state ordered duty to puncture and catalog for its potential productive usage. As they crossed the Great Plains, Clark remarked on the land’s fertility in the context of a site for knowledge acquisition, “What a field for a Botents [botanists] and a natirless [naturalist].”<sup>47</sup> Documentation and demarcation of the land into fields of study coincided with rendering natives as ontologically distinct yet also simultaneously natural, a facet of the scenery, within expanding U.S. state sovereignty: “So magnificent a Senerey in a Country thus Situated far removed from the Sivilised world to be enjoyed by nothing but the Buffalo Elk Deer & Bear in which it abounds & Savage Indians.”<sup>48</sup> Situating these writings within the ‘juridical classificatory schema of the modern state’ reinforces the usage of a “discover-and-gain” pattern that enabled and framed Columbus’s categorization of native peoples.<sup>49</sup>

In August of 1805, celebrating his thirty-first birthday, Lewis wrote the following passage in his notebook, a pledge to “live for mankind, as I have heretofore lived for myself.”<sup>50</sup> While Lewis uses the term “mankind,” it is clear he is only referring to fellow white men of the burgeoning new settler colony, echoing Columbus and the behavioral script of the *proper nos*,

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<sup>46</sup> Wynter, 21

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, Clark, xx

<sup>48</sup> Lewis, Clark, xxi

<sup>49</sup> Wynter, 29

<sup>50</sup> Lewis, Clark, xxxii

“whose primary reference was that of securing the well-being of himself and his fellow Christians. At the same time, as the represented universality of his Christian apocalyptic millenarianism, as well as of the new statal, yet still Judaeo-Christian concept of *Man*...enabled him to perceive the well-being of himself and fellow Judaeo-Christian statal subjects, as if this well-being were isomorphic with that of mankind.”<sup>51</sup> The counter-poetics of the *proper nos* also made possible the advances of the scientific and cartographic methods used by Napoleon’s surveyors of Egypt, technologies that Lewis and Clark also utilized, “Like Lewis and Clark, who consulted Arrowsmith’s and King’s composite maps of North America, at least one of the French surveyors carried D’Anville’s ‘office compilation’ of Egypt with him in the field, despite the fact that it had been drawn and published in Paris forty years before.”<sup>52</sup> In his analysis of the Lewis and Clark expedition, *Passage Through the Garden*, published in 1975, John Logan Allen situates the expedition within its scientific contribution, “a progressive shift from the hearsay of Natives and traders, to speculative mapping, and finally to scientific geography.”<sup>53</sup> In his historic explanation Allen creates a hierarchy of levels of geographic knowledge, the least reliable including “desires, ambitions, myths,” with the most desirable being that of ‘field survey,’ including “accurate data and scientific observation.”<sup>54</sup> Lewis and Clark in this historic rendering are the interlocutors between “Native lore” and reporters of “real knowledge,” the latter defined by Allen as “actual information obtained through active commercial, diplomatic, military, or scholarly enterprises...evaluated in the light of what is presently accepted as geographic

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<sup>51</sup> Wynter, 30

<sup>52</sup> Barbara Belyea, "Mapping The Marias The Interface Of Native And Scientific Cartographies," *Great Plains Quarterly* 17, no. 3/4 (1997), 182

<sup>53</sup> Belyea, 166

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*

reality.”<sup>55</sup> This “real knowledge” was distinguished from “perceived knowledge” of Native people’s reports.<sup>56</sup>

If Orientalism emerges as a useful mechanism of empire within what Wynter calls the subjective understanding of *proper nos* and its enabled pattern of ‘discover-and-gain,’ one of the most significant expressions of power within this scheme is the management of native translation into knowledge formation. “The specialist does the immediate translation of mere Oriental matter into useful substance.”<sup>57</sup> This kind of knowledge formation, calcified into a colonial archive, solidifies what Wynter calls, “the limits of a specific mode of symbolic conspecificity” that therefore limits “a specific system of symbolic representation and mode of subjective understanding.”<sup>58</sup> To this day, rationally sanctioned cartographic technologies, inherited from European imperialists/Orientalists, manufacture the most commonly understood ‘origin’ stories of the United States. This origin narrative socializes us towards a cosmogony with a rubric of representation that makes impossible a ‘genuine co-identification’<sup>59</sup> with indigenous peoples and other modern actors rendered ‘non-human,’ across the majority of the world, where U.S. and European imperialist projects continue to unfold. Thus, a key task of contemporary resistance to settler colonialism and the continued hierarchies of our present global order remains to challenge the legitimized classification structure and the stage of representation.

### **Unsettling the Stage: An After-poetics on Representation and Fugitivity**

“For it is by means of the strategies of representation alone that each human order and its culture-specific mode of empirical reality can be brought into being as such a ‘form of life’ and third level of human, and therefore languaging existence.” –Sylvia Wynter

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<sup>55</sup> Belyea, 167

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Said, 44

<sup>58</sup> Wynter, 32

<sup>59</sup> Wynter, 32

“The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West.” –Edward Said

If Columbus’s “apocalyptic fantasy” or “counter-cosmogony” began by breaking with the arbitrary demarcations of medieval Christian geography, what breaks within modern schemes of rationality are necessary for us to imagine another world order? A counter-poetics of the *improper nos*—a subjective understanding which no longer divides the world between discoverer and discoverable. As both Wynter and Said reveal, state captivity and ethnography are always/already deeply intertwined. Said writes,

Knowledge of the Orient...in a sense creates the Orient...In Cromer’s and Balfour’s language the Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual)...in each of these cases the Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks.<sup>60</sup>

The logistics of liberation then require a new language, a language fugitive to empire, operating outside of the “foundational difference” upon which the world of modernity instituted itself.<sup>61</sup>

“The time will come again” Aimé Césaire, wrote in his talk titled “Poetry and Knowledge,” “when the study of the word will condition the study of nature.”<sup>62</sup>This ‘science’ of the word that Césaire suggests, hints at a new mode of cognition, the basis of another kind of episteme, an entanglement of co-functioning relations. In a section of *Poetic Relation* titled “For Opacity,” poet and theorist Édouard Glissant writes<sup>63</sup>:

If we examine the process of "understanding" people and ideas from the perspective of Western thought, we discover that its basis is this requirement for transparency. In order

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<sup>60</sup> Said, 40

<sup>61</sup> Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--An Argument." *The New Centennial Review* 3, no. Fall 2003, 260

<sup>62</sup> Aimé Césaire, “Poetry and Knowledge” (1945), quoted within *Black Knowledges/Black Struggles: Essays in Critical Epistemology*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015, page 209

<sup>63</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 189-190

to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgments. I have to reduce... But perhaps we need to bring an end to the very notion of a scale. Displace all reduction. Agree not merely to the right to difference but, carrying this further, agree also to the right to opacity that is not enclosure within an impenetrable autarchy but subsistence within an irreducible singularity.

Perhaps instead of petitioning for inclusion in the world of man, we must first act by becoming irreducibly *unknowable*, beyond the rubrics of caste difference, then find a way to represent ourselves. As critical race theorist Denis Ferreira Da Silva once asked, “Do we want to be a some-body under the state or no-body against the state?”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Denise Ferreira da Silva, “Standing in the Flesh | Hortense J. Spillers & Denise Ferreira” <http://arika.org.uk/events/episode-7-we-cant-live-without-our-lives/programme/standing-flesh>.

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## **Naturalization**

There was occupation, a market for tracing, clouded October and open fire, there was text flattened into macabre telescope, an orchestra of stolen petrified skulls, tombs made civic, there was hand drawn cattle splayed in spectrums of gray, there was afterword—New World Order of sunsets, a sugar plantation and a French slave master’s son, there was a fixation of birds, there was a hobby of arranging murdered muses with wire to be painted *exactly like this*, there was a book of the dead named *Birds of America*, an incident of canon, there was grove air, there was turpentine, orange and harvest and piles and piles of indentured coiling, there was Syrian Christians petitioning against Yellow to better own houses, there was stacks of pledges and dictionaries without song, a refugee crisis and a father with a flag pin, there was a daughter and her pages of class mobility, there was hours of wrists and balconies and inadequate protest, there was an inquiry into how the green lawn occurred, there was a poet trying to retrace a book of the dead, she entered many cities portending a crow in spring, wearing a dress glimmering of sweatshops, she asked the tarot reader in New Orleans for clues: “The corpses in you are damaged, but they have a lot to say”.

## Reading Darwish in Vermont

Though to the quarry I seem foreign,  
everything dying is relative,

or dialectically elegant as marble  
in acid rain. Where one sees evidence  
of erosion, others see God's revenge.

Every window is a writer of fiction  
plotting us an outside: a threat of moonlight,  
coniferous precedent for a future tense.

Meriwether Lewis also shed tears at a bluff's lips, yellow lining  
the source. At the scene's edge, the people who were here beforebefore

a flicker of ghosts, or translators, or birds in his Euclidian notes.  
I am trying to understand how theft becomes marvelous.

If language can hybrida, anemone, ever be enough  
to repair, begin again. I imagine the sculpture assemble me

into slab, an effigy of clay. The birds watch me  
through distant glass, whistling a mnemonic flute,  
assigned in a field guide.

I trace muses from a balcony, pretending to doula  
flocks of wet green

while the women who share my face  
sleep under Shatila's wire canopies.

There is so much at stake in a landless archive that sometimes  
intoxicated with the fantasy of cruelty, I build settlements  
in stained bedrooms, to genre the swarm.

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Though I have mastered mimesis,  
a white mistress emanating gardenias, I mourn myself  
by disappearing without prompt.

Could you understand love as a wooded absence?

The azaleas photograph the grove of me, a gaze of organs,  
trembling in the breeze. What is place?

Oh, how badly my language shows American—densely haunted  
and subtitled. I have not called my mother in weeks,

though her kitchen is my only country;  
a crowded exile, we catacomb in lost scent.

I, parallax of I,

only fluent in spectator, continue to pray  
facing the graves and the grease.

## Description de l'Égypte

One morning a charred ink line  
in the botanist's notebook:

after the invasion, a garden planted in Cairo.  
The French army recording the distance

between beast and cotton seed.  
Napoleon had wings, flew as Mercury above the pyramids

a sprig of blue inventing atmosphere.  
The text speaks it and so it becomes

image and imagine and the people beneath;  
pool of staves beating *know known know known.*

One morning my birth is an ink line  
in the language of plantations.

I grow to watch the memory assemble me:  
a fiction of poppies and idolatry,

gradient in supernumerary fervor,  
bloody at the footnote. There is a door that between

me and then, the authors say the door is always open,  
the ghosts say the door is not for us.

## Species-Being free-write

*The whole character of a species ... is contained in the character of its life activity ...  
Life itself appears only as a means to life.*

—Karl Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*

I live in the second century of world wars.  
A collage of startling images oversees breakfast,  
recurring pails of stones, dimly auratic,  
the Sisyphus hologram in my head.  
I take the stones to the privatized river  
to remember an incentive of music,  
palimpsest of still-alive. On one of my digital feeds  
an old man listens to a record  
in his destroyed Aleppo apartment.  
'Man as the tool-making animal', writes Franklin.  
I could not touch the song in the photograph,  
so I share the still as a gesture of feeling.  
An animal who still listens.  
Beneath my eyes I shake the pail harder and harder,  
then order two books on Amazon:  
*A History of Flowers* and *Empathy: Why It Matters*.  
Do you recall the floating city? Unbuilt,  
it remains an archaeology of another possible future.  
A projection of flag-claimed moons offers  
more evidence: the workers need an elsewhere.

What I really want is to collaborate with the dead,  
to appear briefly graphic, acquire only  
a hermeneutic deserting.

## **On Longing**

An exaggeration that exaggerates. A smile that eats the mouth.  
Sediment or beloved, the hanged terrarium. Want never comes  
without atonement. Even the fates must share  
an eye and a tooth while stroking Apollo's thread. Ask the Sufis how  
to find God: buried. Beneath the ink breath of otherwise; moaning  
*is is is* in circumference. Faith was easier before sex became involved.  
Who will touch me in the middle of this war.

## Self-Assessment

In my experience of writing *A Theory of Birds* I learned a lot about the connections between species classification and settler colonialism. The literature courses I took while at UM were invaluable to the work of this manuscript, especially the class I took with Dr. Donette Francis and Dr. Joel Nickels, I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to have studied with them both. I was also very effected by my own upbringing as a daughter of the Palestinian diaspora, which provides the basis of much of my fascination with the ripple effects of settler colonialism, and how communities in diaspora re-imagine themselves away from and in spite of the colonial gaze.

A key site that aided me in the writing of this thesis included La Salle des Espèces Menacées et des Espèces Disparues, or the “Room of Endangered and Extinct Species” within the Grande Galerie de l’Évolution, a natural history museum in Paris, France, with a collection of 257 specimens from the plant and animal kingdom of endangered and extinct species. My writing is deeply influenced by a growing body of work labeled “eco-poetry”, or poetry that reckons with the land. The work of Black writers, artists, and scholars, including Sylvia Wynter, Carrie Mae Weems, Fred Moten, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Wangechi Mutu, Amiri Baraka, Édouard Glissant, and Romare Bearden, has also been integral to this research and my writing practice and to their scholarship and art I owe a great debt. I am grateful for having had this experience and for having the time to invest in my writing practice.

## Annotated Bibliography

1. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Said examines the development of Orientalism as a field of study, and paradigm of distinction, developed by Europeans and applied onto colonized populations particularly those geographically demarcated as 'East' in oppositional subjectivity to the Occident or West most notably following Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. Said's *Orientalism* is useful for reading alongside Sylvia Wynter's "1492" in that it provides another example of shifted 'subjective understanding' that Wynter describes as underlying the 1492 event of Columbus's invasion of the Caribbean. Also useful for understanding modern knowledge formation, and the entanglements of the colonial archive.

2. Scott, David. Prologue of *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Scott's prologue attempts to conceptualize the theoretical problems of our post-colonial present, with a particular emphasis on examining how romanticized renderings of revolutionary anti-colonial movements fail to situate them within their unique historic context. Scott criticizes what he finds to be an essentialist error of applying contemporary expectations and concerns to sets of questions that anti-colonial nationalists of decades past may not have been asking/considering. Scott then writes towards a 'tragic' lens of modernity that he claims gives more room for contingent possibilities, "A 'problem-space' in my usage, is meant first of all to demarcate a discursive context, a context of language...a context of argument and, therefore, one of intervention".

3. Wynter, Sylvia. "1492: A New World View", *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

In this essay Sylvia Wynter attempts to contextualize the paradigmatic shifts of representation within colonial movements towards humanism that enabled a set of relations/rubric of dehumanization and domination, that led to the 1492 event of Columbus landing in the Caribbean and subsequent 'new world order' that accelerated violent economic development of the Americas and the expansion of the African slave trade. Wynter is interested in developing a human-specific and cultural specific narrative of history that avoids binary value assignment.

4. Brathwaite, Kamau. *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. London: New Beacon Books, 2011.

Brathwaite's *History of the Voice* attempts to catalogue and archive the site specific linguistic and literature formations that arose within the modern Caribbean. In the text Brathwaite distinguishes between 'dialect' and 'nation language': "Nation language is the language which is influenced very strongly by the African model, the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean

heritage. English it may be in terms of some of its lexical features. But in its contours, its rhythm and timbre, its sound explosions, it is not English...an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility...It is what I call nation language. I use the term in contrast to dialect...Dialect is thought of as bad English...Dialect has a long history coming from the plantation where people's dignity is distorted through their language and the descriptions which the dialect gave to them. Nation language"

5. Césaire, Aimé, Clayton Eshleman, and Annette Smith. "Poetry and Knowledge" in *Lyric and Dramatic Poetry, 1946-82*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990.

In this piece Césaire posits poetic knowledge as transgressive to and schematically different from 'scientific knowledge'. According to Césaire, scientific knowledge, or rational knowledge rooted in a colonial framework, has "impoverished humanity." Césaire urges towards a poetic scheme of knowledge that disrupts scientific categorization and distinction across time/species/being, echoing Sylvia Wynter's critiques of modern humanism. "This is the right occasion to recall that the unconscious that all true poetry calls upon is the receptacle of original relationships that bind us to nature." (xlviii)

6. Belyea, Barbara. "Mapping The Marias The Interface Of Native And Scientific Cartographies." *Great Plains Quarterly* 17, no. 3/4 (1997): 165-84.

Belyea's article examines how Lewis and Clark's Journals and maps have been rendered and archived, as well as how settler cartographic practices as 'scientific method' encountered and interacted with Native populations' records and testimonies. Belyea's article is useful for reading in relation with Sylvia Wynter's "1492" in that it helps contextualize knowledge formation from intermingling indigenous and settler relations. **Key terms:** *Real knowledge* (knowledge acquired from colonial sources, and confirmed by Lewis and Clark applying "scientific" field methods, some learned from Napoleon's survey of Egypt) and *Perceived knowledge* (information based on Native reports).

7. Glissant, Édouard. "For Opacity" in *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009.

In this section of his larger text on poetics, Glissant explores the usages and radical potentiality of 'Opacity', or writing away from explicit colonial/rational modalities of coherence and transparency, towards multiplicities and generative capacities of linguistic subversion, "Agree not merely to the right to difference but, carrying this further, agree also to the right to opacity that is not enclosure within an impenetrable autarchy but subsistence within an irreducible singularity." I am interested in the theoretical stakes that Glissant creates, inviting inquiry into the revolutionary potential of poetic abstraction and its possible effect(s) on subject relation(s)

8. Philip, Marlene Nourbese, and Setaey Adamu. Boateng. *Zong!* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011.

Philip's experimental poetic text derives all of its language from a public legal document, the decision rendered in *Gregson vs. Gilbert* in which the slave ship Zong order around 150 Africans to be murdered by drowning so that the ship owners could collect insurance money. Written as a series of numbered iterations, prayer like, meditative, Philip is able to cultivate a simultaneously epic exploration of the immense violence of the colonial archive while also subverting English into an almost unintelligible strain of mere symbols, infinitely inadequate. I see Philip's text as embodying Sylvia Wynter's desire for literature that is in constant "revolutionary assault" against reality.

9. Quashie, Kevin Everod. *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012.

Quashie's text explores "quiet"—intricacies of the subdued and intimate, within black representation as an under-recognized modality and generative site of resistance. Chapter 4 of the text explores the concept of quiet as applied to black collectivity and theories of black nationalism. "[I]s it possible for nationalism to give up its desire for a name that is complete, singular, and coherent; is it possible for nationalism to endure a name that is more reflective of the inner life, one that disarrays more than coalesces, one that turns away from the troubles and limits of publicness?" (89)

10. Kaiser, Birgit, and Kathrin Thiele. "What Is Species Memory? Or, Humanism, Memory and the Afterlives of '1492'." *Parallax*, 2017, 403-15.

In this article Brigit and Thiele explore a concept of 'species memory' inspired by the theoretical stakes posed by Sylvia Wynter's essay "1492: A New World View". The authors explore the possibility of developing a 'species-inclusive' relationship to memory that moves beyond the historically violent forms of colonial categorization that 'have dominated memory-claims and political collectives' within normalized conceptions of humanism and memory

11. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press, (reprint) 2005.

Fanon's masterpiece criticizing the psychological effects of colonialism, as well as the social and political ramifications, on its subjects; along with a call for global resistance as a sustained armed struggle for survival and recognition, integral to writing my poem "Violence". "The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native. Perhaps we haven't sufficiently demonstrated that colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today."

12. Soldier, Layli Long. *Whereas*. Graywolf Press, 2017.

Layli Long Soldier's *Whereas* was a significant resource for developing models of decolonial poetics that challenge the root assumptions of colonial language, and origin stories. Many of the experimental pieces in this text were instructive for my own writing practice.

13. Harris, Francine J. *Play Dead*. Alice James Books, 2016.

Francine J. Harris' poetry collection *Play Dead* combines sonic experimentation, with challenging and vibrant imagery in response and rebuttal to gendered violence. Many poems in my thesis were inspired by her experimental forms and unique language choices.

14. Tawadros, Gilane, and David Bailey. *Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art*. Institute of International Visual Arts), 2003.

Incorporating the voices of numerous contemporary artists, many of whom originate from majority Islam practicing countries but live and work in Western countries, this book seeks to interrogate the contemporary use of the veil in artistic and cultural representation. The *Veil* project was first initiated by artist and curator Zineb Sedira and then developed by Jananne Al-Ani, also, an artist and curator. David A. Bailey also served as a curator and writer for the book that corresponds with the touring exhibit. The exhibition attempts to present the work of a wide range of international artists and film-makers. It addresses the cultural significance of the veil and tries to interrogate the veil in all its complexity and ambiguity, challenging any single or fixed cultural interpretation. *Veil* includes photography, film, video and sculpture. The book that corresponds with the touring exhibit includes the essays of several artists, writers and critics.

15. Sharif, Solmaz. *Look: Poems*. Graywolf Press, 2016.

Solmaz Sharif's debut collection invents a poetics that incorporates language from U.S. military memos and documents. In poems like "Vulnerability Study" Sharif demonstrates a means of interrogating the self as part of a larger imperial framework and project. I have attempted to follow a similar logic and methodology in the thesis.

16. Adnan, Etel. *The Arab Apocalypse*. Post-Apollo Press, 2008.

In Etel Adnan's landmark epic poem *The Arab Apocalypse* she produces poems that refuse chronological logics of time and space, and utilize symbols and layered syntax for an experimental collection that attempts to mimic the chaotic nature of violence and war itself with special attention to the ravages of empire in The Middle East and Lebanon in particular.

17. Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. Harper & Row, 1989.

In *The Death of Nature* Carolyn Merchant looks into the ways extractive colonial science and the relationship to land as conquerable and discoverable mirrors the treatment of the bodies of women and their relationship to scientific analysis.

18. Huidobro, Vicente, and David M. Guss. *The Selected Poetry of Vicente Huidobro*. New Directions Publ. Corp., 1981.

Vicente Huidobro's avant garde poetics, particularly his poetic philosophy of *creacionismo* evokes a radical imagination rooted in his role in Chilean anarchist politics. In his poems time, subjecthood, and reality are all challenged through surrealist imagery and metapoetics.

19. Dib, Mohammed, and Louis Tremain. *Who Remembers the Sea*. Lynne Reinner, 1997.

In Mohammed Dib's novel *Who Remembers the Sea* the effect of anti-colonial revolution on intimacy and interior lives is beautifully laid bare by the Arab Francophone writer. Dib, who lived through the Algerian Revolution, describes the intensity of violence and its effect on the psychologies mainly of a main character whose wife becomes heavily involved with a group that echoes the FLN. Dib's careful interrogation of violence, even the violence of self-determination is complex and lyric.

20. Correia, Clara Pinto. *Return of the Crazy Bird: the Sad, Strange Tale of the Dodo*. Copernicus Books, 2003.

In *Return of the Crazy Bird* the often mentioned but less excavated story of the Dodo bird is given a more rigorous treatment. Of particular importance for my collection was the ways in which the Dodo bird was almost exclusively an invention of the colonial imagination, that both created and destroyed it, becoming extinct within less than a hundred years of the Dutch turning the bird's native island, Mauritius, into a penal colony.

21. Weheliye, Alexander G. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Duke University Press, 2014.

The essays in *Habeas Viscus* interrogate the conceptions of the human, relying heavily on and in dialogue with the texts and scholarship of Sylvia Wynter. I was particularly invested in thinking about how biopolitics emerges within a racialized landscape and how colonial conceptions of who gets to be human can be circumvented.

22. Rankine, Claudia, et al. *The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind*. Fence Books, 2016.

In *The Racial Imaginary* a variety of poets, writers, and thinkers take interrogate aspects of race, language, and domination. I was particularly influenced by essays by Rankine and Banu Khapil.

23. Moten, Fred, and Stefano Harney. *A Poetics of the Undercommons*. Sputnik & Fizzle, 2016.

In this lecture Moten touches on far reaching subjects from Object-Oriented Ontology, to Martin Heidegger's phenomenology, Franz Fanon, and Frank Wilderson, particularly Wilderson's notion of Black non-subjecthood. "There's something in the nothing" Moten writes. Moten's metaphysics was of particular interest throughout my thesis work.

24. Moten, Fred. *The Service Porch*. Letter Machine Editions, 2016.

In this poetic collection Moten provides experimental highly sonic poetics that tells the story of black life, love, and what it means to make art in the wake. His poem "laugh outside" provides abstraction intermingling with a tender musicality and expansive diction.

25. Matthews, Aireal D. *Simulacra*. Yale University Press, 2017.

Aireal D. Matthews debut collection is full of lyric inventiveness and poetic examinations of psychosis, race, womanhood, and communing with literary figures who no longer exist. I was particularly interested in her inventive forms often incorporating lists and unusual vocabulary to create refreshing poetry.

26. Kapil, Bhanu. *Schizophrene*. Nightboat Books, 2011.

Tracing the intersections between displacement and mental illness, with an emphasis on post-Partition communities living in diaspora, *Schizophrene* takes a non-chronological approach to narrative, exploring trauma, history, violence, and identity through psychological poetics as a form of inquiry.

27. Kapil, Bhanu. *Ban En Banlieue*. Nightboat Books, 2015.

Bhanu Kapil's highly inventive text exists outside of genre but primarily serves as an entry point to examine a violent incident in which a Brown/Black girl was assaulted on her way home from school. Testing out various experiments in the attempt to arrive at meaning, *Ban* offers testimony both of the intention and the methodologies of the author, in addition to an archive of attempting to tell a story that can never be fully told.

28. Helal, Marwa. *Invasive Species*. Nightboat Books, 2019.

Marwa Helal's debut collection *Invasive Species* provides a re-imagining of migration and borders, drawing on her years as a journalist and her experience as an immigrant from Egypt. Marwa Helal breaks apart rules of English to cultivate a new kind of lens, subverting orientalist tropes and fantasies. I used her new poetic form "the Arabic" for one of the pieces in my thesis.

29. Said, Edward W. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. Granta, 2012.

Edward Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, drawing on the works of Nietzsche and Vico, among others, examines "beginning" not necessarily as a position of time or the outset of a chronology but as a reoccurring aspirational intent—I am seeking to begin. It was a highly inspiring theoretical text for my writing and serves as the basis for the poem "On having begun" in the thesis collection.

30. Rankine, Claudia. *Plot*. Grove Press, 2001.

In an avant-garde meditation on pregnancy and childbirth Claudia Rankine's complex form and sweeping language provide a helpful model of genre-bending writing that combines theory with prose and poetry. The poem "Abortion Fantasy" in the thesis collection was inspired by reading *Plot*.

31. Basquiat, Jean Michel., and Larry Warsh. *Basquiat: the Notebooks*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Basquiat's notebooks contain a number of poetic fragments such as "Arab Singing" and "What About Yellow?" that became epigraphs or lines in a few poems in the thesis. While best known for his visual art, Basquiat's notebooks provide inventive language and spatial resonances that influenced ideas for what work can look like on the page.

32. Baraka, Amiri. *S O S: Poems, 1961-2013*. Grove Press, 2016.

A foundational figure in the Black Arts Movement, Amiri Baraka's musical and militant poetics were of significant importance to me when crafting this thesis. In particular his controversial poem "Somebody Blew Up America" provided me with the refrain "who, who, who" that I used in my poem "Arab Making", naming explicitly colonial violences and their residual consequences.

33. Jordan, June, and Jan Heller Levi. *Directed by Desire the Collected Poems of June Jordan*. Copper Canyon Press, 2007.

June Jordan's expansive poetics in this sweeping collection touch on various topics from Black womanhood to imperialism to solidarity. Her extensive writing in solidarity with Palestinians and oppressed peoples across the Global South has been profoundly inspiring to my writing and has also influenced essays I have written on Black and Palestinian solidarity.

34. Hammad, Suheir. *Born Palestinian, Born Black*. UpSet Press, 2010.

Written partially inspired by June Jordan's poetry, Suheir Hammad's *Born Palestinian, Born Black*, offers inventive and vivid testimony to the experiences of Palestinian diaspora and displacement while also making room for imaginative solidarities.

35. Said, Edward W., and Jean Mohr. *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*. Columbia University Press, 1999.

Edward Said's *After the Last Sky* mixes personal memoir with a broader meditation on Palestinian identity within and outside of exile. His writing of notions of "inside" versus "outside" within Palestinian identity, and the collective imagining of what Palestinian identity transforms into within diaspora is of particular significance in this text.

36. Villarreal Vanessa Angélica. *Beast Meridian*. Noemi Press, 2017.

In *Beast Meridian* Vanessa Angelica Villarreal speaks to multiple intersecting identities: from queerness to the borderlands to daughterhood to clinical psychology. By using footnotes and experimental form Villarreal subverts notions of belonging and civilization, and makes room for working-class immigrants to be seen as experts in their own memories and dreams. I was particularly influenced by her form which incorporated archival texts with space and listing on the page.

37. Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung. *Dictee*. University of California Press, 2009.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's landmark text, that focuses on various Korean revolutionary women was deeply influential to the poetics in this thesis, particularly her experimentation with textualizing inaccessibility to language and her emphasis on revolutionary women subjects in the third world.

38. Wang, Jackie. *Carceral Capitalism*. Semiotext(e), 2018.

Jackie Wang's *Carceral Capitalism* examines the political economy of the carceral state, with a particular emphasis on extractive policing as a means to practice extreme racialized social control and fill budget shortfalls from neoliberal austerity. The book ends with a series of abolitionist poetics that were inspiring to my writing practice, imagining what lay at the other side of the carceral system—freedom.

39. Bryant, Tisa. *Unexplained Presence*. Leon Works, 2007.

Tisa Bryant's *Unexplained Presence* meditates on Black subjects within film and literature, narrowing in on minor subjects and filling in the gaps. I gained a lot from her careful and rigorous treatment of subjects at the margins while writing the thesis and using museums and visual art as the basis for many of the poems.

40. Rivera, Raquel Salas. *The Tertiary = Lo Terciario*. Timeless, Infinite Light, 2018.

Raquel Salas Rivera's *The Tertiary* reads Marx's Capital through the lens of the Puerto Rican debt crises. She also infuses queer femme and genderfluid poetics into the materialist analysis of

the ravages of capitalism on her home island. I was particularly invested in her connecting personal narrative with ideological construction in her poetics.

41. Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Progress Publishers, 1982.

Of particular interest in Marx's Manuscripts was his conceptions of "Species-Being" or a kind of metaphysics in relation to labor and theories of consciousness. This concept influenced one of the poems in the thesis titled "Species-Being free-write", meditating on the ways in which our interaction with production produces our sense of existence.

42. Bowman, John L. *Arabidopsis: an Atlas of Morphology and Development*. Springer-Verl., 2011.

*Arabidopsis* is a small flowering plant that has been used as an important source in analysis and research in genetics and molecular biology. Because part of its name has its roots in relation to "Arab" I used this text to find ways to insert my analysis of species categorization and colonial cartography with contemporary research on genetic coding.

43. Gibson, Jasmine. *Dont Let Them See Me like This*. Nightboat Books, 2018.

Jasmine Gibson's militant debut collection examines different forms of intimacy layered upon and in dialogue with state violence and resistance to state violence and anti-Blackness. I was particularly interested in how Jasmine Gibson animates dense critical theory in her poetics, drawing upon the Black radical tradition and revolutionary street tactics as a source of inspiration and inquiry.

44. Césaire Aimé. *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*. Bloodaxe Books, 2014.

Césaire's epic poem was particularly instructive in terms of its dialectics of feeling both distant from and wholly accountable to a motherland. Infusing a combination of radical despair and revolutionary aspiration, *Notebook* also includes wildly inventive and spectral language, that expanded my vocabulary and frame of analysis.

45. Fanon, Frantz. *A Dying Colonialism*. Braille Jymico Inc., 2010.

In Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* he examines pre-Revolution Algerian culture and occupation under French forces. For this thesis I was particularly interested in his examining the interior and psychological elements of occupation and the different relationships that emerge from that dynamic and violence.

46. Trevino, Wendy. *Cruel Fiction*. Commune Editions, an Imprint of AK Press, 2018.

Wendy Trevino's *Cruel Fiction* bridges poetics and mass work to create hyper-political poems as a call to action. In particular her series of sonnets echoes Diane di Prima's *Revolutionary Letters*. Her interrogation of movement work within poetry was of particular interest to me.

47. Néret Gilles, and Napoleon. *Description of Egypt: Napoleon and the Pharaohs = Description De LEgypte*. Taschen, 2001.

During Napoleon's occupation of Egypt scientists and researchers collected enormous amounts of information, (alongside outright theft and military domination), on Egyptian society and history. This colonial archive was then collected into volumes known as The Description of Egypt. This form of settler categorization as a wing of military occupation was an essential historic event I sought to challenge in my thesis.

48. Lewis, Meriwether, et al. *Original Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*. Digital Scanning, Inc., 2001.

I used the journals of Lewis and Clark to examine the language of American settlers around "discovery" after the Louisiana Purchase. I put this discovery event in conversation with other discovery events in Egypt and other parts of the Global South. The diaries also reveal an inheritance of colonial cartographic technologies and conceptions of "the human" from Europe.

49. Sujida Sultana Alvi. *The Muslim Veil in North America, Issues and Debates*. Toronto: Women's Press, 2003.

*The Muslim Veil in North America* amalgamates the ethnographic and historic research and corresponding commentary of a four year project focused on the conditions, issues, debates, and discourse on the *hijab* in North America and specifically in Canada. The book is split into two parts, Part I: Veiling Practices in Everyday Life in Canada and Part II: Women Revising Texts and the Veiling Discourse. In order to contextualize the role of artistic representation of the veil, this book provides research on discourses and scholarship that challenge the perpetuation of Orientalist conceptions of the veil as static. Part of this book includes interviews with women in Canada who wear the veil, as well as an examination of public perceptions of the veil in Canada.

50. Metres, Philip. *Sand Opera*. Farmington, 2015.

Phil Metres' documentary poetics exploring various state violences and atrocities experienced by Arabs post 9/11 allows for interrogating how experimental poetic form can work with and alongside political education and bearing witness to the consequences of war and empire.