

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The rule is love.

SYLVIA WYNTER, *MASKARADE*

It is difficult to imagine this book as a complete and bounded work. While writing and reading and editing and sharing ideas—processes and conversations that have unfolded since about 2006 yet began well before this time—the text and its ideas have been consistently ajar. It has also witnessed, across the planet and with uneven responses, the Arab Spring and ongoing struggles in Syria, increasing man-made disasters and resource exploitation, wide use of unmanned drones, credit crises, the Occupy movements and student protests, the preventable deaths of Troy Davis, Michael Jackson, Mark Duggan, Whitney Houston, Trayvon Martin, and more, the election of Barack Obama, Idle No More, prisoner strikes in Atlanta, California. . . . Indeed, in Toronto, Ontario, where I write from and dwell, and in Kingston, Ontario, the prison-university town where I teach, and across Canada, prisons are, quietly and not, proliferating fictionally benevolent geographies. The 2012 Marikana (Lonmin) strike—the protest of a variety of appalling work conditions—resulted in miners being threatened and killed, reminiscent of, but not twinning, the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. I hope these kinds of events, and the many more unlisted—and it is worth underscoring the asymmetrical time-place reverberations of the events noted and unspoken and yet-to-come—in some small way *connect to* this work, thus drawing attention to the ways in which the ideas put forth are incomplete and unbounded and grounded and, to use Sylvia Wynter’s phraseology, correlational. Our work is unfinished.

Any engagement with Sylvia Wynter demands openness. And without the support, conversations, words, creativity, hospitality, commitment, and energy of Sylvia Wynter—her openness to my ideas and this book, and her willingness to return to many conversations left ajar—this project would not have materialized and with this found spaces to critically examine and imagine the unlisted and the unspoken, the yet-to-come, and our unrealized futures. More than this, Sylvia’s generosity, coupled with her prodigious knowledge and commitment to meticulously mapping out big ideas in very particular ways, tore up and tore open my mind and my heart as our conversations provided, at least for me, a new context within which to envision radical collaborative and correlational narratives. More specifically, the dialogue, formalized in the chapter “Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?” but underlying the text as a whole, not only is founded on Wynter’s invaluable intellectual mentorship and call-and-response but also signals the difficult task of situating our intellectual questions outside our present system of knowledge in order to historicize and share our futures differently. I learned and continue to learn a lot from Sylvia—about reading, writing, and friendship, about the high styles and the low styles, about the intellectual *life* her generation of Caribbean intellectuals amassed, about the science of the word, and about the difficulties of waiting and the pleasures of anticipation. This editor, then, ajar, extends warm appreciation to Sylvia for her ongoing friendship and conversations.

Wading through the openness of not quite arriving at the yet-to-come, and arriving again and again—stopping, too—in our unfinished histories, as these time-space processes are generated from the perspective of the ex-slave archipelago: many colleagues and friends have interrupted and stopped and dwelled on the ideas put forth. The essayists, I thank, for sharing their ideas and for writing challenging pieces that will enhance how we read the work of Wynter and engage decolonial scholarship.

Rinaldo Walcott has worked on this book with me, inside and out, since I began dreaming it. In addition to contributing his ideas within, he was an early interlocutor with Wynter, in Oakland, California, in 2007. This project would be very different if Rinaldo, a stalwart intellectual and stellar friend, did not imagine it with me. I appreciate Rinaldo’s critical engagement, his thoughtful insights, and his willingness to engage the creative-intellectual-physiological contours of black life with me. His ideas inspire, and he made this work believable for me, in a world where blackness is an unbelievable and surprising wonder.

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In addition to Wynter's writings, the work and ideas of Edouard Glissant, Rinaldo Walcott, Hazel Carby, Prince, Alexander Weheliye, Richard Iton, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, TV on the Radio, Hortense Spillers, Betty Davis, Nas, Achille Mbembe, Homi Bhabha, David Scott, Michael Jackson, Robin D. G. Kelly, Paul Gilroy, Saidiya Hartman, Frantz Fanon, Octavia Butler, Kanye West, M. NourbeSe Philip, Zadie Smith, Ebony Bones, Christina Sharpe, Clyde Woods, Stevie Wonder, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Roberta Flack, YellowStraps, PJ Harvey, Nina Simone, Kara Walker, Chandra Mohanty, Marvin Gaye, Willie Bester, Aimé Césaire, Lil' Kim, Audre Lorde, Chimamanda Adichie, Simone Browne, Edward Said, Donny Hathaway, Mark Campbell, Millie Jackson, Kara Keeling, Angela Davis, Etta James, Gayatri Gopinath, Fred Moten, W. E. B. DuBois, Lisa Lowe, Dionne Brand, Jimi Hendrix, Drexicya, and Stuart Hall, among many others, have allowed me to think big about the intimacies among social justice, creativity, writing, and racial politics. What newness and strangeness and love and sadness and soul so many creative-intellectual ideas bring forth again and again!

Friends, family, and colleagues, too, who have had an eye on this project since it began and have brought their spirited support to the work within—in essay form and not: Alexander Weheliye, Demetrius Eudell, Lisa Lowe, the McKittricks and Zillis, across nomenclatures, and my mother, Valerie Brodrick, who insists we cherish the conviviality of recipes. Mark Campbell, Jack Dresnick, Johanna Fraley, and Nick Mitchell each contributed to different portions of the long conversation between Wynter and McKittrick—transcribing, editing, listening, responding, translating. I can only describe this work as heavy work—difficult, thick, grave. The long conversation has had many, many versions and several iterations, and all of these scholars generously shared their time and ideas with both Sylvia and me between 2007 and 2014. Katherine Mazurok, Stephanie McColl, and Joanne Farall also assisted with some tediously significant bibliographic details, which I thank them for, immensely. Nick Mitchell and Jack Dresnick especially, have been my constants-in-California, working closely with Sylvia but also lending me their ears and ideas and inspiration. During his research at the Institute of the Black World Archives at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Nick also—to his surprise—came across the photograph of Wynter that is used for the cover of this text. Ned Morgan, trusted long-time friend, assisted with early copyedits.

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The insights and support of the already and yet to be listed—Simone Browne, Walcott, and Ray Zilli—have been especially relevant to my ongoing preoccupation with the writings of Sylvia Wynter, and each has differently lived with the discursive and affective outcomes that continue to emerge as I read, write, and think the futures she offers. Zilli has, too, made me at home with these and other difficult ideas by encouraging me to keep unraveling and working them out—which, after many years and a

long-standing mistrust of the real and imagined geographies of home, provides a kind of comfortable but unsettling intellectual clarity that demands unexpectedness. Ellison McKittrick Zilli witnessed the final stages of the book and will, I hope, as dedicatee, keep the text, and the ideas Wynter imparts, ajar.