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This project represents the confluence of several interdisciplinary areas of research that I have explored throughout my undergraduate career: the ways geographers inscribe hierarchy onto lands and the people who occupy them, literary manifestations of and interventions into dialectics of selfhood/otherness, and the power of discourse to impact identity. This broad scope of academic inquiry allowed for the possibility of my using texts that were obliquely or not at all related to seventeenth and eighteenth century colonial literature. However, the paper guidelines required that I mainly conduct primary source analysis of works included on the course syllabus, bringing in outside references only when necessary. This brought the scope of my writing into a reasonably limited frame while still allowing engagement in cross-disciplinary questions and theories. My thoughts and discussions about the course texts were influenced by my previous exposure to postcolonial theory, so from early in the planning process I intended for my research to incorporate Edward Said's theory of orientalism, bringing it into conversation with the two primary sources I chose. In addition to Said's foundational work in the field of postcolonialism, I used outside sources whose authors' analysis centered on my primary sources, ensuring that my research would be grounded firmly in their respective literary and historical contexts.

I focused on Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Castaways* and immediately realized that I would have difficulty finding sources that dealt directly with Cabeza de Vaca's work. Being a sixteenth century translation, *Castaways* is fairly obscure. However, after conducting database searches using the text's Spanish name *Nafragios*, I was able to find sources that critically examined Cabeza de Vaca's narration of the colonial exploits he carried out in the interest of empire expansion. Another obstacle arose when Professor Miller returned early draft commentary suggesting that Said's *Orientalism* is a fairly old text and that it may be beneficial to search for more recent scholarly work that builds upon his theory in a contemporary framework. I decided to rewrite my paper with this suggestion in mind, agreeing that a great deal of work has been done in postcolonial theory since the publication of *Orientalism*, and my analysis would be made stronger by taking these developments into account. Considering that Said's intellectual contributions have proven so influential in numerous academic fields, I had little trouble finding relevant postcolonial sources whose authors cited Said. My final work is a result of impressions that took root throughout the semester in class discussions, insightful comments given by my professor, and consistent reworking throughout the brainstorming and drafting processes.