

# THEORIZING QUEER INHUMANISMS

## THE SENSE OF BROWNESS

**José Esteban Muñoz**

*M*y recent writing has revolved around describing an onto-poetics of race that I name the sense of the brownness in the world. Brownness is meant to be an expansive category that stretches outside the confines of any one group formation and, furthermore, outside the limits of the human and the organic. Thinking outside the regime of the human is simultaneously exhilarating and exhausting. It is a ceaseless endeavor, a continuous straining to make sense of something else that is never fully knowable. To think the inhuman is the necessary queer labor of the incommensurate. The fact that this thing we call the inhuman is never fully knowable, because of our own stuckness within humanity, makes it a kind of knowing that is incommensurable with the protocols of human knowledge production. Despite the incommensurability, this seeming impossibility, one must persist in thinking in these inhuman directions. Once one stops doing the incommensurate work of attempting to touch inhumanity, one loses traction and falls back onto the predictable coordinates of a relationality that announces itself as universal but is, in fact, only a substrata of the various potential interlays of life within which one is always inculcated.

The radical attempt to think incommensurate queer inhumanity is a denaturalizing and unsettling of the settled, sedimented, and often ferocious world of recalcitrant anti-inhumanity. Queer thought is, in large part, about casting a pic-

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ture of arduous modes of relationality that persist in the world despite stratifying demarcations and taxonomies of being, classifications that are bent on the siloing of particularity and on the denigrating of any expansive idea of the common and commonism. Within the category of human intraspecies connectivity, we feel the formatting force of asymmetrical stratifications both within humanity and outside it. The incommensurable thought project of inhumanity is the active self-attunement to life as varied and unsorted correspondences, collisions, intermeshings, and accords between people and nonhuman objects, things, formations, and clusterings. In trying to render a sense of brownness, a term that is indebted to the histories of theorizing blackness and queerness, it is incumbent to attempt to attune oneself to the potential and actual vastness of *being-with*.

## DECOLONIZING THE NON/HUMAN

**Jinthana Haritaworn**

I am approaching the call in this special issue, to think through the “promises or limitations of the nonhuman,” at several crossroads. First, as a recent settler of color who moved to Turtle Island at a time of Indigenous resurgence, I am challenged to fundamentally revisit European paradigms of race, gender, and the non/human. Here, the oft-invoked binaries of male/female and human/nonhuman are more than post-structuralist textbook conundrums. There is a keen awareness of how colonial attempts at dispossession, displacement, and genocide have targeted Indigenous peoples in their apparent failure to subjugate land, women, children, and gender-nonconforming people, and in their lack of proper distinctions between genders and species.<sup>1</sup> Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes: “You use gender violence to remove Indigenous peoples and their descendants from the land, you remove agency from the plant and animal worlds and you reposition aki (the land) as ‘natural resources’ for the use and betterment of white people.”<sup>2</sup>

Refusing a view of colonialism as in the past, Indigenous feminist, queer, transgender, and Two Spirit thinkers have traced the shifting manifestations of gender violence and environmental violence, from reservation and residential school systems to contemporary regimes of adoption and foster care, policing, and

the epidemic rape and murder of Indigenous women, Two Spirit, and LGBT people, which are in turn linked to resource extraction and ongoing land theft.<sup>3</sup> Besides highlighting the significance of cis-heteropatriarchy and anthropocentrism to settler colonialism, they have underlined the defense of the land and the revaluing of traditional gender relations as central strategies of decolonization.<sup>4</sup>

Second, as a result of both chance and choice, my disciplinary investments have shifted from queer studies to environmental studies (my new institutional home) and critical ethnic studies (an emerging formation that has produced interesting interventions on the intersection of gender, race, and the nonhuman).<sup>5</sup> All these epistemic formations have privileged some genres of the in/human over others. For example, environmental studies often foregrounds nonhuman beings as proper environmental objects. Humans appropriately remain in the background, as the protectors of a “nature” that is decidedly nonhuman and must, if anything, be protected from humans that are marked as environmentally destructive.<sup>6</sup> Injecting a good dose of humanism into my teaching, and placing the *interhuman*—as Katherine McKittrick (following Sylvia Wynter) characterizes the relationship between “Man and his human Others” alongside the inhuman, seems crucial in such an institutional context.<sup>7</sup>

The antihumanism of my field is of course not neutral but part of a protectionist narrative that remaps “nature” or “the wilderness” colonially. This colonial landscape at some times ignores, at others actively paves the way for, the dehumanization of improperly environmental actors who are profiled through their lack of proper appreciation of and respect for nature. Writers on environmental racism have highlighted how poor people of color, Indigenous people, and people in the global South are punished and pathologized for their improper engagement with nature/animals, namely, for survival and sustenance rather than recreation or companionship.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, these populations are forced to bear the harmful effects of the extraction of resources, the siting of hazardous facilities, the dumping of toxic wastes, and other forms of environmental violence. For Indigenous peoples in particular, this ironically reflects a lesser segregation from the land and a greater proximity to nonhuman beings. The need to go beyond a simple analytic of anthropocentrism is highlighted by the fact that Indigenous peoples have had to fight to stay on and live off their lands, to continue to hunt and fish, for example, against both developers and environmentalists.<sup>9</sup> The costs and benefits of uneven development are thus distributed unequally: those whose subjugating and overconsumptive stance to “nature” causes the greatest pollution are not the ones who pay its price.<sup>10</sup> Those who are paying it, meanwhile, are labeled anti-environmental.

In making sense of this “greening of hate,” I am struck by its parallels with

gay imperialism or queer regeneration, as I describe the confluence of formerly degenerate bodies with formerly degenerate times and places, whose “recovery” coincides with the expulsion of populations that inhabit space pathologically.<sup>11</sup> Just as racialized and colonized populations have been targeted as (then) too queer and (now) not queer-friendly enough, they have also been targeted as (then) too close to nature and (now) destructive of it. Indeed, the moral deficiencies of the global poor are conceived sexually and environmentally, according to neoliberal cosmopolitan standards of “progress” and “diversity.” Thus, in contexts of racism, colonialism, and genocide, “anti-environmental” populations are profiled and controlled through their excessive fertility and failed heterosexuality.<sup>12</sup> It seems important, then, to forge accounts of the nonhuman that actively interrupt the creation of deficient and inferior surplus populations that are distinguished by their monocultural, criminal, patriarchal, homophobic, and anti-environmental dispositions.<sup>13</sup>

In thinking through queer inhumanism, I am struck by the celebratory uptake of the nonhuman in queer scholarship, where morbidity, monstrosity, and animality have become objects of queer regeneration and nostalgia for more murderous times and places.<sup>14</sup> This is complicated by writings on racism and colonialism that highlight starkly uneven life chances and vulnerabilities to “premature death.”<sup>15</sup> How do inhuman “orientations” intersect with different proclivities toward life and death?<sup>16</sup> For whom might identifying with the nonhuman be too risky a move? It once again seems important to consider the uneven terms on which bodies interpellated as “queer” or as “racialized” are sorted into various biopolitical and necropolitical molds.<sup>17</sup> For example, the ability to embrace death presumes an ascendant subject already anchored in the realm of life.

It is thus essential to interrogate the nonhuman alongside the dehumanization of “Man’s human Others” and to understand what disposes them to becoming animal’s other (or object’s other). There is a certain temptation to scapegoat critical race theorists as anthropocentric, correlationist dupes of the species binary with an irrational investment in humanity and a lack of acknowledgment that objectification and animalization remain necessary objects of investigation.<sup>18</sup> How do we steer clear of yet another loop of “vulgar constructionism”?<sup>19</sup> To quote an anonymous grad student, the turn to animal studies at times reflects a desire for an “Other that doesn’t talk back.”

Meanwhile, as Zakiyyah Jackson shows, theories of posthumanism and animal studies have much to learn from critical race studies.<sup>20</sup> Black people in particular have been treated as both animalistic and cruel toward animals. Reviewing Michael Lundblad’s *Birth of a Jungle*, and drawing on Aimé Césaire, Frantz

Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, and others, Jackson discusses how nineteenth-century humane discourse understood “blackness as inferior to both ‘the human’ and ‘the animal.’”<sup>21</sup> Contemporary variations on this theme include Morrissey’s statement that “the Chinese are a subspecies” given their “treatment of animals,” and current moves to ban halal slaughter as especially inhumane.<sup>22</sup>

A more productive entry point might be to interrogate anthropocentrism as a colonial discourse that in turn requires decolonizing. There is now a resurgence of methodologies that open up possibilities for relating to nonhuman objects and beings beyond strict spatial and categorical separations.<sup>23</sup> If we are interested in recovering things and beings that are continually rendered disposable as a result of colonial capitalism and cis-heteropatriarchy, why not start with anti-colonial accounts of the world that have a long history of resisting both human and nonhuman erasure? Such a nonhuman turn—which would naturally be allied to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination—would have the potential to tackle anthropocentrism and dehumanization simultaneously, as relational rather than competing or analogous paradigms.<sup>24</sup> Following objects around this way may well lead us to altogether different objects, and worlds.

## IN/HUMAN WASTE ENVIRONMENTS

### Myra Hird

The major concern of my research is waste and environments. The plural *environments* calls us to both the delineations required to understand ourselves as exterior to others (whether human or inhuman, organic or inorganic) and to imagine spaces and times in, and of which, we are part. For the past decade or so, I have been interested in, and writing about, bacteria.<sup>25</sup> In important ways, bacteria push humanist suppositions further than studies of animals. Animals, as Lynn Margulis liked to remind us, are “big like us” and are more easily amenable to anthropogenic ways of apprehending and assimilating them into lifeworlds that we recognize. Bacteria trouble our familiar forms of communication, identity, sociality (community organization), reproduction, sexual reproduction, movement, metabolism, and just about everything else. But what is perhaps most disquieting (and

therefore interesting) is that we remain utterly dependent on these ancestors who not only created us but also now sustain our environments. After all, it is the relationships that bacteria formed with earth's original nonlife that mark the shift from Hadean to Archean and precipitated what we now call "the environment."

In previous writing, I have tried to challenge the heteronormativity (among other things) that plagues neo-Darwinism. Specifically, I have examined neo-Darwinism's assertions about the origins of sexual difference and the "place" of sex, gender, and sexuality in nature. We may push heteronormativity quite far by paying attention to animal practices of sex, sexual difference, and sexuality, but when we attend to the bacteria that (literally) make up our bodies, we are hard-pressed to sustain the categories or vocabularies on which discussions of queer or other studies depend. As such, queer studies may want to consider how focused on sex, sexual difference, and sexuality it needs, or desires, to be. Perhaps, indeed, sexual difference, sex, and sexuality are not the main story of life or the geo-bio world of which we are a part.<sup>26</sup>

Elsewhere I have argued that the inhuman may be put to work in queering Western cosmologies, but is not in itself (devoid of relationality) queer.<sup>27</sup> This dovetails Jin Haritaworn's important suggestion in this special issue that we learn more about and reflect upon black studies, indigenous studies, and environmental racism to challenge neoliberal governance and the assimilation of identities and lifeworlds that do not conform to Western forms of neocapitalism, including heteronormativity's rejection and/or assimilation of queer. In my current research, I am exploring the complexities of neoliberal southern Canadian and northern Inuit lifeworlds as they intersect through waste issues in Nunavut's capital, Iqaluit. Iqaluit's waste is a rich example of Donna Haraway's "world-making."<sup>28</sup> Prior to European contact, Inuit produced little, if any, material waste. Now, Iqaluit is the highest waste-producing community in the north of Canada (Canada is the highest waste-producing country in the world).<sup>29</sup> A unique set of structures and practices govern Iqaluit's waste landscape: neocolonialism, government policies, treaty rights, corporate interests, socioeconomic issues, climate change, language, globalization, and the material characteristics of waste and the northern landscape.

For the most part, waste in Canada's southern municipalities is managed in terms of what Isabelle Stengers calls a "validating," "verifying," or "engaging" public who are invited to participate in consultation exercises with industry and government aimed at approving one or another waste management technology.<sup>30</sup> Stengers describes the move from an "ignorant public" in need of educating to "consensus building" and other forms of public engagement as an "Empty Great Idea" that "will not work" because this public is always already contained and managed around capitalist, neoliberal, and scientific parameters.<sup>31</sup> Stengers sug-

gests that the “small, precarious” possibility of an “objecting minority” who “in the very process of their emergence” produces “the power to object and to intervene in matters which they discover concern them.”<sup>32</sup> Although there are certainly long-standing plans afoot to engage Inuit people as a public, so far they have failed, and waste in Iqaluit, and other communities in Nunavut, is left in plain sight on the landscape. Still in its infancy, this case study responds to Haritaworn’s provocation to engage other knowledges with queer theory. I have much to learn from a cosmology uniquely oriented to time and space, from in/human animal generation and transformation, and from a public for which, perhaps, waste is not a metaphor for colonialism but *is* colonialism.

## **OUTER WORLDS: THE PERSISTENCE OF RACE IN MOVEMENT “BEYOND THE HUMAN”**

**Zakiyyah Iman Jackson**

It is now common to encounter appeals for movement beyond “the human” in diverse scholarly domains, yet the temporal and spatial connotations of this “beyond,” let alone destinations, are often underexamined. Perhaps the precipitous resurgence of the “beyond” in recent years is precisely owed to its performative gesture and routinized deployments having become a beguiling habituation, a seductive doxa effectively eluding the imperative of renewed reflexivity.<sup>33</sup> Contra the beguiling appeal of the “beyond,” I would ask: What and crucially *whose* conception of humanity are we moving beyond? Moreover, what is entailed in the very notion of a beyond? Calls to become “post” or move “beyond the human” too often presume that the originary locus of this call, its imprimatur, its appeal, requires no further examination or justification but mere execution of its rapidly routinizing imperative. In the brief space I have here, I want to caution that appeals to move “beyond the human” may actually reintroduce the Eurocentric transcendentalism this movement purports to disrupt, particularly with regard to the historical and ongoing distributive ordering of race—which I argue authorizes and conditions appeals to the “beyond,” maybe even overdetermining the “beyond’s” appeal.

I have argued elsewhere that, far too often, gestures toward the “post” or

the “beyond” effectively ignore praxes of humanity and critiques produced by black people, particularly those praxes which are irreverent to the normative production of “the human” or illegible from within the terms of its logic. Rather than constitute a potentially critical and/or generative (human) outer world to that of Man, potentially transformative expressions of humanity are instead cast “out of the world” and thus rendered inhuman in calls for a beyond that take for granted Man’s authority over the *entire* contested field pertaining to matters “human.”<sup>34</sup> Thus praxes of humanity illegible from *within* the logic of Man are simply rendered void or made to accord with Man’s patterned logics by acts of presupposition—any excess or remainder disavowed.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, one cannot help but sense that there is something else amiss in the call to move “beyond the human”: a refusal afoot that could be described as an attempt to move *beyond* race, and in particular blackness, a subject that I argue cannot be escaped but only disavowed or dissimulated in prevailing articulations of movement “beyond the human.” Calls for movement “beyond the human” would appear to invite challenges to normative human identity and epistemic authority; one might even say that they insist rather than invite, calling into question intransigent habits of identification—at least when these challenges are posed in the name of the nonhuman. However, given that appositional and homologous (even co-constitutive) challenges pertaining to animality, objecthood, and thingliness have long been established in thought examining the existential predicament of modern racial blackness, the resounding silence in the posthumanist, object-oriented, and new materialist literatures with respect to race is remarkable, persisting even despite the reach of antiblackness into the nonhuman—as *blackness conditions and constitutes the very nonhuman disruption and/or displacement they invite*.<sup>36</sup>

What “the beyond’s” rising momentum largely bypasses is a more comprehensive examination of the role of race in “the human’s” metaphysics, or the philosophical orientation of Man. Given Man’s historical horizon of possibility—slavery, conquest, colonialism—the Western metaphysical matrix has race at its center in the form of a chiasmus: the metaphysics of race (“What is the ‘reality’ of race?”) and the racialization of the question of metaphysics (“Under whose terms will the nature of time, knowledge, space, objecthood, being, cause and effect come to be defined?”). In other words, the question of race’s reality has and continues to bear directly on hierarchies of knowledge pertaining to the nature of reality itself. According to Man’s needlessly racially delimited terms, the matter of racial being purportedly does the work of arbitrating epistemological questions about the meaning and significance of the (non)human in its diverse forms, including animals, machines, plants, and objects. Though the notoriously antiblack pro-



nouncements of exalted figures like G. W. F. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, or Thomas Jefferson (for instance) mark neither the invention of metaphysics nor its conclusive end, the metaphysical question of race, and that of blackness in particular as race's status-organizing principle, marks an *innovation* in the governing terms of metaphysics, one that would increasingly purport to resolve metaphysical questions in terms of relative proximity to the spectral figure of "the African female."<sup>37</sup> Whether machine, plant, animal, or object, the nonhuman's figuration and mattering is shaped by the gendered racialization of the field of metaphysics even as teleological finality is indefinitely deferred by the processual nature of actualization or the agency of matter. Thus, terrestrial movement toward the nonhuman is simultaneously movement toward blackness, whether blackness is embraced or not, as blackness constitutes the very matter at hand.

The question of the "beyond" not only returns us to the racialized metaphysical terrain of orders of being, temporality, spatiality, and knowledge — it reveals that we have never left. Put more directly: precisely what order of metaphysics will we use to evaluate the being of "the human," its temporal and spatial movement, absence or presence? The "beyond" marks (racial/ized) metaphysics' return, its *longue durée* and spectropoetics, such that race, particularly blackness, is precisely tasked with arbitrating fundamental questions of orientation.<sup>38</sup> This is the case even when we turn to mathematics and science for adjudication. I argue that to suggest otherwise disavows both Western mathematics and science's *discursivity* and the (imperial) history of these idioms' iterability *as discourse*.<sup>39</sup> While I would not argue that a "physical law," for instance, could be reducible to the machinations of human language, I am arguing that when one mobilizes the language of "law" or "properties" it says much about the location of the speaker and the discursive terms of the meeting of matter and meaning.<sup>40</sup> Thus, a call for movement in the direction of the "beyond," issued in a manner that suggests that this call is without location, and therefore with the appearance of incognizance regarding its situated claims and internal limits, returns us to a Eurocentric transcendentalism long challenged.

"Movement beyond the human" may very well entail a shift of view away from "the human's" direction; however, accomplishing this effort will require an anamorphic view of humanity, a queering of perspective and stance that mutates the racialized terms of Man's praxis of humanism, if it is to be movement at all. Such movement demands a redirection of the euro(andro)(anthro)centric terms through which perspective is understood, necessitating a disruption of (certain) humans' efforts *to direct and monopolize the internally divided field of perspective*. Here perspective would not arise from beyond the imperatives of viewpoint and

judgment, but *as position* or the entanglement of judgment and viewpoint. This alternative movement, a transvaluation of the human, will require a change in the underlying structure of Man's being/knowing/feeling "human" in a manner such that we no longer make any reference to the transcendentalist conception that many are eager to move beyond.<sup>41</sup>

## **INHUMANIST OCCUPATION: PALESTINE AND THE "RIGHT TO MAIM"**

**Jasbir K. Puar**

Contemporary geopolitics of colonialism, occupation, and warfare challenge a conventionally humanist life/death opposition and elucidate the need for inhumanist analyses to make sense of what is biopolitically at stake, especially because war machines already work by manipulating the registers of the inhuman. I have been tracing the use of maiming as a deliberate biopolitical tactic on the part of Israel in the occupation of Palestine, especially as it manifested during the 51 days of Operation Protective Edge during the summer of 2014. Medical personnel in both Gaza and the West Bank reported mounting evidence of "shoot to cripple" practices of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), noting an increasing shift from using "traditional means" such as tear gas and rubber-coated metal to disperse crowds to "firing at . . . knees, femurs, or aiming for their vital organs."<sup>42</sup> The (illegal) use of flechettes and "dum dum" bullets that fragment and splinter in bones, often causing crippling for life; the policy of calorie restrictions; the bombing of numerous hospitals and a disability center; the destruction of the main electric power plant in Gaza; the flattening of homes, schools, and mosques; the targeting youth and children; and the likely use of white phosphorous, all have added greater dimension to the tactic of debilitating both bodies and infrastructures.

These practices indicate the extension of the "right to kill" claimed by states in warfare into what I am calling the "right to maim." Maiming as intentional practice expands biopolitics beyond simply the question of "right of death and power over life"; maiming becomes a primary vector by which biopolitical control is operated in colonized space, modulating not only the foldings between life and death but also human and inhuman. I am not arguing that Israel claims the

actual “right” to maim in the way they claim a right to self-defense and a right to kill in warfare. I am arguing instead that by ignoring international protocol regarding medical neutrality (which Israel is bound to by the Geneva Conventions), bombing hospitals, emergency vehicles and medical personnel, preventing timely transport for ill and injured patients to medical care, and attacking crucial civilian infrastructures that provide ministrations, food, water, and electricity, Israel is covertly enacting the right to maim even as it promotes itself as attempting to avoid civilian casualties. As the death toll of Palestinians soared this summer in comparison to Israeli deaths, with 2131 Gazans killed, 501 of them children, much less spectacular and rarely commented upon yet potentially more damaging were the number of injured civilians, totaling over 10,918.<sup>43</sup> If slow death is conceptualized as primarily through the vector of “let die” or “make die,” maiming functions as “will not let die” and “will not make die.”

This relation of death to debilitation is signaled in this statement from Maher Najjar, the Deputy General of Gaza’s Coastal Municipalities Water Utilities (CMWU):

There is no water reaching any of the houses right now. We’re facing a real catastrophe. Sewage pumps cannot work because the power plant has been destroyed, so we have sewage flooding the streets of Gaza. We can’t assess the extent of damage as we can’t even go out without risking our lives right now. . . . We have the total collapse of all essential services and there’s nothing we can do about it. Believe me, it would be better if the Israelis just dropped the nuclear bomb on Gaza and get done with it. This is the worst ever assault on the Gaza Strip.<sup>44</sup>

Expressed here is the conviction that debilitation is a fate worse than death—death is preferable to disability—a stance that contravenes the human rights model of disability. Why maiming is especially striking in this historical moment is because in the face of the rise of disability as a recognized vulnerable identity in need of state and global human rights protections, seeking to debilitate or to further debilitate the disabled, contrasts heavily with the propagation of disability as a socially maligned condition that must be empowered to and through a liberal politics of recognition.

What kind of sovereignty is being articulated when the right to kill is enacted as the right to disable, to target both bodies and infrastructure for disablement? In part by masquerading as a “let live” vector (the IDF policy of we shoot to maim, not to kill, is often misperceived as a preservation of life), biopolitical maiming also poses as “let die” when in fact it acts as “will not let die.” In this

version of attenuated life, neither living nor dying is the aim. Instead, “will not let die” replaces altogether the coordinate “make live” or “let die.”

This shoot to maim but not kill vector meshes well with the principle of “collateral damage,” which condemns yet does not punish the unintentional killing of civilians. Nadia Abu El-Haj writes that Israeli allies “say that the Israeli army wages war with moral integrity. It doesn’t target civilians. It never intends to kill them. It even warns Gazans when an attack is coming so they can get out of harm’s way.”<sup>45</sup> Abu El-Haj probes the question of “unintentionality,” arguing that “most civilian deaths in urban counterinsurgency warfare may be ‘unintentional,’ but they are also predictable.”<sup>46</sup> But the discussion on intentionality leaves another possibility unspoken: while the intent behind civilian deaths may be indiscernible, debatable, or absolutely transparently obvious, what may well be intentional is the activity of maiming—injuries leading to permanent debilitation that remain uncalculated within the metrics of collateral damage. As a term that emerges in 1961, and signals the “debt” of war, that which should be avoided and must be paid back, why does collateral damage disarticulate death from debilitation?

Maiming thus functions not as an incomplete death, or an accidental assault on life, but as the end goal in the dual production of permanent disability via the infliction of harm and the attrition of the life support systems that might allow populations to heal. Disablement is used to achieve the tactical aims of colonialism, not just a by-product of war, of war’s collateral damage. Disablement functions on two levels: the maiming of humans within a context that is completely resource-deprived and unable to transform the cripple into the disabled; and the maiming of infrastructure in order to transform the able-bodied into disabled through the control of calories, water, electricity, health care supplies, and fuel.

The productivity of maiming—will not let/make die—is manifold. This vector, “will not let/make die” keeps the death toll numbers seemingly low on Israel’s side while still depopulating the territory, as the dying after the dying, perhaps years later, would not count as a war death alongside the immediate and quick administration of war deaths. Where do the numbers of “collateral damage” end and the demarcation of “slow death” begin? As it loops into the “make live” vector, for example, debilitation becomes extremely profitable for the humanitarian aid sectors that will take on the “rehabilitation” of Gaza in the aftermath of war; many who stand to profit are Gulf states and NGO actors who are embedded in corporate economies of humanitarianism, and certainly, it must be said, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. As a public health crisis, Gaza now represents an extension, perhaps even a perversion, of Foucault’s management of health frame, as the crisis feeds into models of disaster capitalism. Thus one interpretation here

is that the debilitation of Gazans is not simply capitalized upon in a neoliberal economic order that thrives on the profitability of debility, but that Gazans must be debilitated in order to make (their) life (lives) productive. In this regard, along with the right to maim, Israel is exercising a sovereign “right to repair.”

## IMPROBABLE MANNERS OF BEING

**Eileen Joy**

Although, like many scholars, I have drawn on and been inspired by the thought of many scholars working in the humanities (in different disciplines and varied theoretical modes, ranging from ethical philosophy to deconstruction to queer studies to posthumanism to critical antihumanisms to speculative realism, and beyond), one piece in particular has haunted my study and, for better or worse, has provided the impetus for all my work—on the posthuman, on the queer, and on reforming institutional life and developing practices to hopefully help to sustain intellectual misfits and vagabonds not always readily welcomed within the academy: an interview that Michel Foucault gave to the French gay press in 1981, titled “Friendship as a Way of Life.” In this interview, Foucault wondered aloud if our problem today was that we had “rid ourselves of asceticism,” yet “it’s up to us to advance into a homosexual ascesis that would make us work on ourselves and invent . . . a manner of being that is still improbable.”<sup>47</sup> In David Halperin’s formulation of Foucault’s thinking at this time, this project of ascesis would be a continual process of becoming-queer: “an identity without an essence, not a given condition but a horizon of possibility, an opportunity for self-transformation, a queer potential,” which I would also name as a posthuman potential—one that resonates with the late thought of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick when she was thinking about intermediate ontologies (such as the weather) in Marcel Proust and how his novels produce and comment on surprise, refreshment, and new (“celestially nourishing”) relationalities.<sup>48</sup>

This work on the self that one “happily never attains,” which is also a concern for and care of the self, importantly has something to do with freedom as well—a term not often associated with Foucault’s thought, especially by those who oversimplify his entire oeuvre as being only about the ways in which various structures

and techniques of power produce knowledge and individuals, with apparently no escape route out of the power-knowledge nexus. Yet much of Foucault's late writings were precisely concerned with "the definition of practices of freedom" and ethics as "the conscious practice of freedom"—with freedom here to be distinguished from the idea of liberation (the setting free of selves that have supposedly always been there and were simply repressed, in hiding, etc.). For Foucault, freedom was "the ontological condition of ethics," and ethics is "the form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection."<sup>49</sup> And what this also means is that, for Foucault (as well as the late classical writers, such as Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, whom he was reading at the time), ethics is a practice (an ascetics, or set of *exercises*) of freedom that revolves around the fundamental imperative: "Take care of yourself." One of the tragedies, I would argue, of social and cultural life in the present (and of gay life, more narrowly), is that we have never really taken up, collectively, Foucault's call to work on ourselves in order to invent improbable manners of being, new modes and styles of living, polymorphous affective intensities, and new relational virtualities and friendships. Some of us have devoted much of our lives to cultivating new relational modes and the company of misfits (an agnostic yet joyful venture, to be sure, in which we exult in the exquisite difficulties of becoming-with-others), but when I reread Foucault's 1981 interview, as I often do, I mourn that, as Adam Phillips has written, we have "not had the courage of [our] narcissism"—we have not found "a version of narcissism that is preservative at once of survival and pleasure," which "would be to have the courage of one's wish for more life rather than less."<sup>50</sup> Thus, in my own career, I have tried to answer Foucault's call, both by delineating the traces of and possibilities for these "improbable modes" in literary and historical texts, and also by developing new para-institutional modes for intellectual, cultural, and social work.

For myself, the posthuman and the queer are, and always have been, importantly enmeshed with, and even coeval to, each other. As a medievalist (and one whose work has often been concerned with intellectual history), I am very interested in tracing what might be called the fragmentary and incomplete documents of the fractal archives of thought, and I think that the homosexual, the gay, the queer, and the posthuman have been dancing with each other for a long while, in different ways, and this is probably because historically (and as is also true with other categories of supposed "difference," such as race, gender, ethnicity, class, etc.), so many marginalized groups have always been "less than human," and there are two ways (well, really more, but for discussion's sake . . .) to deal with this: one is the activist path where you fight back for more rights as a fully fledged human, and the other is the (perhaps) more theoretical-academic (and risky het-

erotic) path where you decide to take the marker of “less than human” as an opportunity to finally bid the human adieu and start inventing those “improbable” virtualities and “diagonal lines” that Foucault talked about in his 1981 interview (this also accounts for some of the antagonisms within and beyond the academy for those working on rights-based activism and those who are supposedly living in some theoretical aerie of posthuman thought—a simplification, of course, and also, there go a whole series of woefully missed encounters). It is worth noting the article by Jeffrey J. Cohen and Todd R. Ramlow in *rhizomes*, published in 2005–6, “Pink Vectors of Deleuze: Queer Theory and Inhumanism,” where they wrote that Gilles Deleuze’s “greatest challenge to queer theory is something that seems almost recidivist in his work: his animism, his belief that the entire world constitutes a non-anthropomorphic, infinitely connective machinery of desire.”<sup>51</sup> But why, more particularly, is this a challenge to queer theory? For Cohen and Ramlow, it is because (at least at the time that they wrote their essay) queer theory has sometimes been circumscribed within a “merely human frame,” but I would suggest, again, that the queer and the nonanthropomorphic have always been importantly entwined and that the queer is always pushing against the limits of not just the “merely” but also the “overdetermined” human.

It is precisely the intersection—or is it a fractal coastline?—between connective desire, the queer, and what might be called the space of posthuman inter-being where I locate my own desires, professionally and personally. Especially in my para-academic activist work with the BABEL Working Group (since 2004) and now also with punctum books and punctum records (since 2011), the key has been in crafting a queer and posthumanist politics that is fully intent on creating new para- and out-stitutional spaces in which anything at all might unfold that otherwise could not find a means, mode, or space for expression. My projects connected to these groups aim for queer natality, monstrous births, and all manner of becomings. This is to labor for new spaces beyond the traditional human (and humanist) spheres (such as the humanities or the university), but that are still tied to those spaces if we believe, and I do, that so-called humanistic inquiry is still critical to the projects of freedom and becoming-otherwise, and that the human, however partially, still remains as an important and highly localized site of awareness and articulation, and also as a platform for new forms of love and affection that might be generative of new modes of being, not just for ourselves, but for others who are wayward, lost, abandoned, and so forth. In terms of my written scholarship—especially lately, to craft new modes of “weird reading” under the aegis of object-oriented and speculative realist thought—the queer and the posthuman are fully operative as well, because a large part of my project is to produce readings of

literary texts outside humanist-centered, historicist frames of reference in order to (hopefully) unleash any literary text's potential for becoming-otherwise. Part of my interest in speculative realism and object-oriented ontology is precisely because I see the (acid trip) modes of thought opened in these intellectual realms as possible allies in rewiring the sensorium of reading with an eye toward increasing the pleasures and enjoyment of not just reading but of a heightened contact with the world itself, in all of its extrahuman (yet still co-implicate) vibrations. This is to ultimately affirm a pluralism of being and worlds—a move both queer and political, human and beyond the human at once.

## OBJECTHOOD, AVATARS, AND THE LIMITS OF THE HUMAN

**Uri McMillan**

New materialists' calls to upend the hierarchical orderings of humans, nonhuman objects, and things has, unfortunately, not held as true for a truly radical "reorder of things" in the balkanized academy; this is especially true of the bounded disciplinary cells that continue to separate much of posthumanist thought from theories of racial embodiment.<sup>52</sup> In this vein, I concur with Zakiyyah Iman Jackson in her critique of the failure to interrogate critical race studies in much of new materialist thought and the resultant and ongoing violence of such an occlusion, particularly when theorizing blackness has long required considering existential questions of life and death, the limits of humanity, and a stultifying thingness. After all, as Alexander G. Weheliye notes in his discussion of Jamaican writer and cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter, "Within the context of her work, it is the human—or different genres of the human—that materializes as the object of knowledge in the conceptual mirror of black studies." Thus, in Wynter's work (as well as that of Hortense Spillers), the dismantling of Man as the universal human—a distinction that gains traction through its very barring of those designated as nonhumans or not-quite-humans (particularly black subjects and especially black women)—surfaces as *sine qua non* to the praxis of black studies.<sup>53</sup> The deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown at the hands of (at the time of this writing, unindicted) police officers—on July 17, 2014, and August 9, 2014, respectively—belie all



too clearly the effects of these cleavages to those denied the spoils of full personhood. Meanwhile films and novels grouped under the rubric of Afrofuturism consider questions of blackness, space, and time (and repeatedly, science)—while also rebuking the primacy of Western civilizations, they offer striking possibilities for pushing new materialisms into questions (both earth-based and interplanetary) of diaspora, nation, and futurity.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, building on all this work, Hershini Bhana Young elegantly pushes posthumanism into the realm of the sonic and visual art, via the nineteenth-century performer Thomas Wiggins (a.k.a. “Blind Tom”) and the “fungible cyborgs” of the artist John Jennings. She argues that the sonic enables “a staging of the black subject as both within and outside of modernity, as excluded from traditional liberal discourses of the human and therefore having a special relationship with the category of post-human.”<sup>55</sup> In this way, she suggests, the black subject—made, historically, to be both object and person—is prosthetic and human, flesh and machine. In short, theories of “object life” are at their most fecund, productive, and expansive when considered *with*, rather than *instead of*, black cultural studies.<sup>56</sup>

Objecthood, like queer theory itself, slips across several disciplinary genealogies. Objecthood is emerging as a concept in queer theory through its intertwining with material culture. Scott Herring, in a recent essay on hoarding, and Drew Sawyer, in an essay on Crisco, provocatively fuse queer studies and thing theory. The former’s attention to sexual nonconformity and the latter’s focus on material objects combine to produce a *queer objecthood*, attuned to matter gone deviant.<sup>57</sup> Thus queer objecthood here encompasses the queer object relations inherent in excessive accumulation as well as the perverse uses of Crisco’s viscosity for frying *and* fucking. In a much different register, the writings of Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Hortense Spillers, while distinct, coalesce in their suggestion that the most brutal effects of chattel slavery and colonization were their joint efforts to deny black diasporic subjects full access to “being.”<sup>58</sup> While none of the three foreground the term *objecthood*, the terms that they *do* use, most explicitly Césaire’s *thingification*, index the forceful disciplining of these subjects into a different type of humanity, a lesser-than-human. It is this legacy of black abjection and the abhorrent queering of subjectivity that both Darieck Scott and Christina Sharpe take up.<sup>59</sup> While Scott recuperates Fanon, both make use of queer theories of shame and pleasure’s interwindings to discuss the “monstrous intimacies” of slavery and the pleasures-in-abjection that very well may be the wellsprings of what it means to be postslavery subjects.<sup>60</sup>

In my own work, I seek to bridge the chasm between a dehumanizing objecthood, on the one hand, and an embodied self-possession, on the other, by

reimagining objecthood as a performance-based strategy that challenges notions of what constitutes black subjectivity. *Performing objecthood*, I argue, is a process that enables black women to transform themselves into art objects. Performing objecthood is a world making, one that envisions the capacity for agency in, paradoxically, becoming and performing as an object.<sup>61</sup> The performers I discuss in my forthcoming book *Embodied Avatars* activate objecthood in several ways across time: in collaboration with prosthetic technologies and freak show theatrical conventions in the nineteenth century, conceptual art-based performance works and art world activism in the twentieth, and black camp and video art in the twenty-first.<sup>62</sup> Performing objecthood, whether in the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London or in the streets of 1970s New York City, is not the negation of art (à la Michael Fried) but a potent leitmotif of black performance art.<sup>63</sup>

If these black women performers seem ancillary to our discussions here, I caution that they are not; they are indeed participants, albeit overlooked, in the dense relationalities and ecologies that these new materialisms seek to point us toward. I want, in other words, to push past the too-easy assertion that a vital materialism will act as a safety net for those at the very bottom of personhood.<sup>64</sup> I ask us to consider these performers as actors who work with the proverbial muck of these queered object relations; they create sets of performances with high political stakes, whether to escape from the grasp of chattel slavery in 1849 or to subversively critique the racism of white feminists in 1980. And they persist in doing so via the provocative use of avatars. *Avatar*, a term from Hindu mythology, is derived from the Sanskrit word *avatara*; its translation denotes the descent of a deity to earth in order to be reincarnated in a human form. Entering the English language at the end of the eighteenth century, it eventually acquired a much more banal, technological meaning. The word *avatar* was first used in 1985 to describe virtual persona, specifically a graphic representation of a person—a humanlike figure, usually—controlled by a person via a computer.<sup>65</sup> Taken together, these two seemingly divergent meanings gesture toward how avatars both duplicate and *displace* the human.

I redeploy both connotations of avatar—spiritual reincarnation and second selves—in the use of black performance art; I use it as an analytic that, at once, captures the shared manipulation of alterity by these cultural subjects, the transubstantiation of these performances across different representational forms and their abilities to shift across time.

Avatars suggest a slippage between the “other” and us, a reaching beyond the limits of where our bodies supposedly end. In this formulation, the “subject” is not a bounded entity but a permeable one. Ann Weinstone terms this an *avatar*

*body*, or a “zone of relationality” in which “the categories of self and other are rendered undecidable.”<sup>66</sup> I describe the manipulation of avatars by black women as a repeated tactic of multiplying the self, circumventing limits on how and where to *do* one’s body. And their porousness, across the subject-object line as well as time itself, is useful for our discussion of queer inhumanism. They are utile in thinking through what it means to be (and to partially reject) “human,” and they pivot in directions (be they disciplinary or ontological or temporal) not yet possible to map, let alone perceive. Exceeding delineations between the past and the present, slipping between the real and the virtual, and violating zones between objecthood and subjecthood, avatars suggest the paradoxical powers inherent in willfully alienating oneself from the limits of the human.

## TRANSING THE QUEER (IN)HUMAN

**Susan Stryker**

My very first article, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix,” published here in *GLQ* twenty years ago, addressed questions of transgender embodiment and affect through the figuration of (in)human monstrosity. I have stayed close ever since to the themes and approaches laid out in that initial work, and have noted with interest how current queer critical attention to the non-human world of objects, and to the weird potential becomings of vital materialities and matterings, resonate with the concerns I addressed back then.

At the time, my goal was to find some way to make the subaltern speak. Transsexuals such as myself were then still subordinated to a hegemonic interlocking of cissexist feminist censure and homosexual superiority, psycho-medical pathologization, legal proscription, mass media stereotyping, and public ridicule. The only option other than reactively saying “no we’re not” to every negative assertion about us was to change the conversation, to inaugurate a new language game. My strategy for attempting that was to align my speaking position with everything by which “they” abjected us. It was to forgo the human, a set of criteria by which I could only fail as an embodied subject. It was to allow myself to be moved by the centrifugal force pushing me away from the anthropocentric, to turn that expulsive

energy into something else through affective labor, and to return it with a disruptive difference. I embraced “darkness” as a condition of interstitiality and unrepresentability beyond the positive registers of light and name and reason, as a state of transformable negativity, as a groundless primordial resource. As I said then, “I feel no shame in acknowledging my egalitarian relationship with non-human material being. Everything emerges from the same matrix of possibilities.”<sup>67</sup> Speaking as-if Frankenstein’s monster—an articulate, surgically constructed (in)human biotechnological entity—felt like a clever, curiously cognizable, strategy for speaking as a transsexual, for talking back to hegemonic forces and finding a way around.

I like to put parentheses around the “in” in (in)human because what appeals to me most about monstrosity as I have lived it is its intimate vacillation with human status, the simultaneously there-and-not-there nature of a relationship between the two. (In)human suggests the gravitational tug of the human for bodies proximate to it, as well as the human’s magnetic repulsions of things aligned contrary to it. It speaks to the imperiousness of a human standard of value that would measure all things, yet finds all things lacking and less-than in comparison to itself; at the same time, it speaks to the resistance of being enfolded into the human’s inclusive exclusions, to fleeing the human’s embrace. (In)human thus cuts both ways, toward remaking what human has meant and might yet come to be, as well as toward what should be turned away from, abandoned in the name of a better ethics.

Over two decades, I have worked to establish transgender studies as a recognized interdisciplinary academic field by editing journals and anthologies, organizing conferences, making film, conducting historical research, training students, hiring faculty, and building programs. My goal has been to create venues in which trans-voices can be in productive dialogue with others in ways that reframe the conditions of life for those who—to critically trans (rather than critically queer) Ruth Gilmore’s definition of racism—experience “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” because of their gender nonnormativity.<sup>68</sup> This, for me, has been an “other conversation” that becomes possible when monsters speak. I consider working to enable more felicitous conditions of possibility for more powerful acts of transgender speech to be vital work that nevertheless carries many risks: it can bring too much that might better remain wild to the attention of normativizing forces, produce forms of gender intelligibility that foreclose alternatives and constrain freedom, consolidate identities in rigid and hierarchized forms, police discourses through institutionalization, and privilege some speakers over others. Yet I still believe that advancing transgender studies within the academy is a risk

worth taking, if we bring our most radical visions of justice with us as we try to create something new, something better than the past has bequeathed us. I see the positive work of building transgender studies as one way to address half of the (in) human problematic: to abolish what “human” historically has meant, and to begin to make it mean otherwise through the inclusion of what it casts out (without, of course, abjecting something else in the process).

At the same time, in the (in)human problematic’s other dimension, I am eager to make work with as much distance from the anthropic as possible. This is what I have tried to explore in the other half of my working life, through my involvement with the Somatechnics Research Network. Coined by a group of interdisciplinary critical and cultural studies scholars at Macquarie University in Sydney who were inspired by Nikki Sullivan’s brilliant deconstructive work on body modification, *somatechnics* emerged as a shorthand label for a robust ontological account of embodiment as process.<sup>69</sup> Its conversations draw on Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the body as sedimented habitual practices, as well as on rich Australian traditions of feminist philosophies of the body, and critical studies of whiteness, race, and (post)coloniality.<sup>70</sup> Its ethical stance draws much from Jean-François Lyotard’s *differend* and Emmanuel Levinas’s stranger at the door, while its welcoming of strangeness owes much to queer and crip sensibilities.<sup>71</sup>

As a portmanteau word (*soma*, body, + *technics*, tools or techniques), somatechnics seeks to name the mutually constitutive and inextricably enmeshed nature of embodiment and technology, of being(s) and the means or modes of their (or its) becoming. Like Donna Haraway’s “natureculture,” somatechnics dispenses with the additive logic of the “and” to signify the nonseparateness of phenomena that are misrepresented as the conjunction of separable parts.<sup>72</sup> It plays alongside the Derridean “always already” of embodiment’s technologization, as well as Bernard Stiegler’s notion of the body’s “originary technicity.” At the same time, somatechnics provides a name for the “whole intermediary cluster of relations” that Michel Foucault tells us traverses the capillary spaces linking the anatamopolitical and biopolitical poles of biopower, that constitute a nexus of techniques of subjective individualization and techniques of totalizing control of populations.<sup>73</sup> It is the circuitry, and the pulse, through which materiality flexes itself into new arrangements.

Jami Weinstein is right to point out that somatechnics can carry forward a humanist remainder to whatever extent it concerns itself solely with people. But why must our interest in bodies be confined to human bodies alone? Following Giorgio Agamben, we can acknowledge that within the metaphysics of Western biopolitics, the human emerges precisely where bare biological life (*zoe*) is simultaneously cap-

tured by the political order (*polis*) to potentiate as the *good life* while also being excluded as *mere life*, the life shared with animals and other entities in the kingdom of the living.<sup>74</sup> The threshold of biopolitical viability thus opens in two directions. Somatechnics, as a frame of reference in which body+milieu+means-of-becoming are constantly trading places and trying on each other's clothes, has the capacity to render the human nothing more than a local instantiation of more fundamental processes under special conditions. If transgender looks back to the human with the goal of making it something else, somatechnics faces a posthuman future.

In these repeated trans-movements across the cut of (in)human difference, we find a potential for agential intra-action through which something truly new, something queer to what has come before, begins to materialize itself.

## AN INDIGENOUS REFLECTION ON WORKING BEYOND THE HUMAN/NOT HUMAN

**Kim TallBear**

The multiple projects within my knowledge production repertoire are constituted of threads of inquiry woven and looping in multiple directions, away from and back into the growing fabric. A new project always begins inside the coming together of another. It is thus difficult to name discrete research efforts. But let me attempt to describe a few of them as they might cohere under the label “queer (in)humanisms.” Although to be clear, from an indigenous standpoint, my work should not be seen as queering indigenous practice. Rather it should be seen as a twenty-first-century indigenous knowledge articulation, period.<sup>75</sup> I produce knowledge in concert with other indigenous thinkers both inside and outside the academy with the goal of supporting expanded notions and practices of indigenous self-determination. This is not to say that all indigenous thinkers will agree with my particular indigenous knowledge claims. We are diverse thinkers. On the other hand, my intellectual work might be seen to queer whitestream disciplinary thinking and ontologies in the United States.

My work, which is also newly intelligible within a “queer inhumanisms” framework, stretches back to 1994–2001. During those years I worked as an envi-

ronmental planner and policy specialist for US tribal governments, national tribal organizations, and federal agencies on projects related to waste management at the federal nuclear weapons complex. In addition to funding technical and policy work related to nuclear waste cleanup, the Department of Energy had begun funding human genome mapping research around 2000. The indigenous peoples' research institute I worked for at that time won a DOE grant to facilitate workshops with tribal program managers and community members to assess the implications for US indigenous peoples of human genome mapping. Via work related to remediating contamination of nonhuman communities by humans during the Cold War, I stumbled into forms of inquiry that I continued in graduate school and which involved "purity" and "contamination" narratives involving not "the environment" but human bodies and populations.

Of course my new fields of inquiry related to human genome research on indigenous peoples' bodies cannot sustain a separation between human and non-human. But at that moment in 2000, I saw myself shifting from working on projects related to human-on-less-privileged-human and human-on-nonhuman relations (the contamination of tribal communities and their lands by white-controlled corporations and federal facilities) to a project related to the objectifying and exploitation by a more powerful group (scientists and colonial universities and federally funded researchers) of a set of less powerful humans (indigenous peoples) in the course of human genome research. I remember being confused as to why and how I was making such a transition. I was terribly fascinated with the mapping of the human genome and implications for indigenous peoples. Perhaps, I asked myself, I was not sufficiently directed or committed in my previous work as an environmental planner? I wanted to be a committed environmental thinker, a form of work that combined both pragmatic, sometimes approaching activist, sensibilities with scientific and theoretical knowledges. Perhaps I was a humanist (human exceptionalist?) after all. Doubts in hand, I could not stop myself from taking what I thought was a new intellectual path. But from my vantage point in 2014, I see but one circuitous path through multiple intellectual cultures and communities to arrive at a place where the line between human and nonhuman becomes nonsensical. I work at these complex intersections.

1. The coconstitution of human genome diversity research concepts and practices with concepts of race, indigeneity, and indigenous governance of science. This is my longest-standing project and resulted in a monograph, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*, published in September 2013 by the University of Minnesota Press. The book treats the politics of race and "population" that

inform contemporary genome research on indigenous populations, particularly how different parties (scientists themselves, DNA test consumers, and family tree researchers) use DNA concepts to rescript concepts of Native American identity and history. The book ends with a look at how Native American tribes and Canadian Aboriginal peoples have sought to govern genome science research, thus producing some of the world's most innovative bioethical interventions. I also advise multiple scientists and biomedical ethics centers on genomics and indigenous peoples' governance. I hope to expand my advising work to indigenous communities that are grappling with DNA testing for enrollment and with potential genome research involving their citizenries. I recently advised, for example, the Constitutional Reform Committee of the Red Lake Nation (Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians) in Minnesota. In addition to the book, this research has also resulted in a half-dozen peer-reviewed publications and several policy commentary and op-ed pieces. In addition, I have presented several dozen talks on this research at universities and science museums; at humanities, social science, and genome science conferences; and to indigenous governance and genome policy audiences in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. I have also done nearly two dozen media interviews on radio and television in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Sweden.

2. Pipestone materiality and relations. Ceremonial pipes—called “peace pipes” in US popular culture—are sacred to Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota peoples (often called “Sioux”). Pipes and other objects are carved from pipestone, or “catlinite,” as it was named by science, a soft yet durable stone that is deep red in color. Indigenous carvers have longed viewed the quarries in southeastern Minnesota as a prime source of the stone. In 1937 the US National Park Service created Pipestone National Monument in response to white settler encroachment on the quarries. Today, the US Park Service governs quarrying at the site, allowing only Native Americans belonging to federally recognized tribes to quarry there. It also operates a visitors' center with public access where Dakota carvers of pipes and other objects demonstrate their skills for park visitors daily.

My previous work on the cultures and politics of Native American DNA research paves the way for an examination of pipestone, a material with, as I describe below, legendary status as an artifact of “blood” of a people. A shared narrative, that of the vanishing or dying Native, has framed the response to mul-



tiple literal and figurative bodies—indigenous bodies, the land, and the indigenous body politic—by the state. Like bioscientists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with their imperative to bleed indigenous peoples before it was too late, a nineteenth-century Euro-American painter and early twentieth-century geologists and government agents saw the place where the red stone lies as an artifact of a waning culture and time. They produced a “National Monument” to conserve it. US Park Service pamphlets from the Pipestone quarry represent pipes as artifacts, as craft objects, and detail the history of white incursion in the area and the regulatory response of the US government. They also reference the site’s geologic uniqueness. Such regulatory and material histories are important to our contemporary understanding of the Pipestone site.

But like producing indigenous biological samples that come to stand for living peoples, making monuments and doing science risk deanimating the red stone. From a Dakota standpoint, the pipestone narrative is one of renewed peoplehood. A flood story tells of the death of a people and the pooling of their blood at this site, thus resulting in the stone’s red color and its description as sacred. The stone is sometimes spoken of as a relative. Unlike with blood or DNA, pipestone does not possess a cellular vibrancy. Yet without it, prayers would be grounded, human social relations impaired, and everyday lives of quarriers and carvers depleted of the meaning they derive from working with stone. Just like indigenous people who insist on their continuing survival and involvement with their DNA, indigenous quarriers and carvers, medicine people, and everyday people who pray insist on living with the red stone daily. And they make decisions—some of them seen as compromised—about how to best work with the vibrant objects of their attention. Just as some indigenous people agree to engage in research or commercial activities related to DNA, others sell pipestone jewelry and craft pieces to earn a living while also holding the stone and pipes carved from it as sacred. In this research, which I have just begun, I investigate via archival research, interviews, and participant observation in the visitors’ center and in the quarries (I am a member of a federally recognized tribe) the extent to which the blood red stone and indigenous relationships with it have been frozen in time or facilitated in more lively ways by both the state and by indigenous peoples’ ongoing engagement with the site into the twenty-first century. The book produced from this research will engage the Pipestone site and the stone itself from multiple standpoints and narratives: indigenous, regulatory, and scientific.

3. Indigenous, feminist, and queer theory approaches to critical “animal studies” and new materialisms. The Pipestone project is set within this broader research agenda in which I have recently begun to theorize in the

area of indigenous, feminist, and queer theory approaches to animal studies and the new materialisms. In 2011 I co-organized with the Science, Technology, and Society Center at UC Berkeley a symposium on indigenous and other new approaches to animal studies, an already critical field in which thinkers dismantle hierarchies in the relationships of “Westerners” with their nonhuman others. I was also part of another UC Berkeley symposium in 2012 on the new materialisms where I did a talk on the role of indigenous thought. Both symposia helped mark a space for the role of indigenous thought in these related and burgeoning areas of contemporary social theory and new ethnographic practices. They also helped network me with other scholars who likewise see the advantages of inserting indigenous thought and practices into these academic conversations. The recent move to “multi-species ethnography” applies anthropological approaches to studying humans and their relations with nonhumans—beings such as dogs, bears, cattle, monkeys, bees, mushrooms, and microorganisms. Such work is both methodologically and ethically innovative in that it highlights how organisms’ livelihoods are coconstituted with cultural, political, and economic forces. But the field has starting points that only partially contain indigenous standpoints. First of all, indigenous peoples have never forgotten that nonhumans are agential beings engaged in social relations that profoundly shape human lives. In addition, for many indigenous peoples, their nonhuman others may not be understood in even critical Western frameworks as *living*. “Objects” and “forces” such as stones, thunder, or stars are known within our ontologies to be sentient and knowing persons (this is where new materialisms intersects with animal studies). Indigenous approaches also critique settler colonialism and its management of nonhuman others. These and other newer approaches clearly link violence against animals to violence against particular humans who have historically been linked to a less-than-human or animal status.

4. Indigenous thought and the politics of nature and sexuality. Following conversations with critical animal studies and new materialisms scholarly communities, I have most recently become interested in the overlap between constructions of “nature” and “sexuality.” This includes a foray into “queer ecologies” literature (which will increasingly inform my graduate teaching) that queers environmental scholarship and, conversely, greens queer theory. I throw into the mix a greening of indigenous queer theory. As I challenge Western politics of nature, it has become clear that I cannot avoid a similar analysis of sexuality. Nature and sex have both been defined according to a nature-culture divide. With the rise of scientific authority and management

approaches, both sex and nature were rendered as discrete, coherent, troublesome, yet manageable objects. Both are at the heart of struggles involving ideas of purity and contamination, life and death, but which only scientifically trained experts or rational subjects (read historically white, Western men) have been seen as fit to name, manage, and set the terms of legitimate encounter. There are common challenges to democratizing the science and representations surrounding both concepts. Again, indigenous thought has something to offer. I plan to conduct humanities-based and ethnographic inquiry around this topic. I am interested in how indigenous stories—I may start with Dakota stories—speak of social relations with nonhumans, and how such relations, although they sometimes approach what we in the West would call “sex,” do not cohere into “sexuality” as we know it in Western modernity. Our traditional stories also portray nonhuman persons in ways that do not adhere to another meaningful modern category, the “animal.” They feature relationships in which human and nonhuman persons, and nonhuman persons between themselves, harass and trick one another; save one another from injury or death; prey on, kill, and sometimes eat one another; or collaborate with one another. Our stories avoid the hierarchical nature-culture and animal-human split that has enabled domineering human management, naming, controlling, and “saving” of nature. I expect that such theoretical work in indigenous environmental and sexuality studies will link back to support applied thinking about how to democratize environmental science practices and regulation in much the same way that my social theoretical work around the genome sciences links back to applied thinking on how to construct new bioethical frameworks that incorporate indigenous thought, both “traditional” and “modern.”

5. Constituting knowledge across cultures of expertise and tradition: indigenous bioscientists. With National Science Foundation (NSF) funding, in 2011 and 2012 I conducted anthropological fieldwork with indigenous bioscientists to examine how they navigate different cultures of expertise and tradition, both scientific communities and tribal communities. I also focus on scientists-turned-regulators and other policymakers in government agencies and in professional organizations who act as culture and policy brokers between indigenous and scientific knowledge communities. I am particularly interested to see if there are cross-fertilizations of genomics and indigenous knowledges and values as the field and laboratory are made more diverse. Do new research questions, theories, methods, and governing arrangements emerge when indigenous peoples act as researchers and not simply as subjects?

## POSTHUMOUSLY QUEER

Jami Weinstein

Critical Life Studies (CLS) strikes at the heart of the dilemma that contemporary critical theory has been circling around: namely, the negotiation of the human, its residues, a priori configurations, the stubborn persistence of humanism in structures of thought, and the figure of life as a constitutive focus for ethico-political and onto-epistemological questions. Despite attempts by many critical theorists to demonstrate the inadequacy of the concept of the Human to account for and respond to ongoing social injustices and global crises, hasty attempts to repudiate humanism (and organicism) *tout court* and devise more adequate theoretical concepts have overlooked the fact that the humanistic concept *life* is preconfigured or immanent within the supposedly new conceptual leap. The concept life is maintained as an unchallenged premise and a non-negotiable given—above all, life itself is valued and must be preserved and protected.

In a clever articulation that evokes the emphasis on purity, Elaine L. Graham formulates these universals under the guise of “ontological hygiene.”<sup>76</sup> This concept underscores the extent to which, as Jin Haritaworn argues, we must “forge accounts of the queer non-human that actively interrupt the creation of deficient and surplus populations” (p. 6 Dossier), those contaminated or impure identities that fall outside the purview of the humanist subject. This subject is, of course, the one positioned as the (imagined, unmarked) norm, the barometer against which all others are measured in order to determine the extent to which they would be considered human. In other words, the Other gets figured as an immutable, *a priori* alterity. Since what is deemed human is only such in virtue of being positioned as a negation in that binary alterity schema, humanism delineates a normative standard of legibility by which all others are read, assessed, controlled, disciplined, and assigned to fixed and hierarchical social statuses. And this administration of norms is the justificatory linchpin of often violent practices of exclusion, discrimination, and oppression.

Purity discourses have been deployed in many an oppressive politics and to a certain extent provide the motivation for moving from identity politics to queer politics. Likewise a plethora of theorists have endeavoured to re-envision the ontological binaries that reinforce these discourses. Donna Haraway, for example, strives to figure this difference differently by reconceptualizing multiplicity out-

side binary configurations and challenging “the ‘sanctity of life’” concealed in the “anxiety over the pollution of lineages.” She argues that purity claims are xenophobic and are “at the origin of racist discourse in European cultures as well as at the heart of linked gender and sexual anxiety.”<sup>77</sup> Similarly, in my recent work, I refer to what I call *The New Wild West* in order to gesture toward how the underlying ontological assumptions about the human and the life that allegedly constitutes it is a particularly Western model. The phrase is also meant to capture how vital risk management strategies have transformed alongside politics and ontologies of the human. The current focus on microbes, hygiene, sanitizing, purity—for example, children being doused with hand sanitizer dozens of times a day—epitomizes this shifting landscape. In other words, hand sanitizing becomes the new “duck and cover” in tandem with modulations that both transfigure biopolitics into micro-biopolitics and control societies, and refashion notions of the bounded, autonomous, penetrable human into a human that is porous, invisibly invaded, and itself a potential biological threat. This New Wild West motif resonates both with the sanitized, pure, hygienic vision of the 1950’s North American housewife and with the tropes of so many racist, colonial, and missionary programs. Consider the “one drop rule,” anti-miscegenation/racial purity campaigns, and any number of so-called “civilizing” practices of colonizers and missionaries.

Microbes, like queers, women, and people of color, both disturb and reinforce established notions of purity and ontologically hygienic portraits of the human and its handmaiden, life. However, as Myra Hird argues, bacteria are not: “amenable to anthropogenic ways of apprehending and assimilating . . . into lifeworlds that we recognize. Bacteria trouble our familiar forms of communication, sociality (community structure), reproduction, sexual reproduction, movement, metabolism, and just about everything else” (p. 8 Dossier). It is partly following Hird that I have shifted my focus to the remnants of humanism buried in the concept *life itself*. We could say that life as we know it is a habit—one that strictly frames the limits of who gets interpreted as Human, and one that must be nervously reiterated in order to reinforce those limits. As such, it may be more apt to talk in terms of the *posthumous* than posthuman, inhuman, or nonhuman, thus deframing the manifold investments in life, breaking the habit, and refuting humanism more exhaustively. Posthumous life pushes the envelope by exposing the legacies of humanism still haunting us in the specter of life—even in our posthuman theories and analyses.

We must, however, heed Zakiyyah Iman Jackson’s caution, “that appeals to move ‘beyond the human’ may actually reintroduce the very Eurocentric transcendentalism [we] purport to disrupt” (p. 11 Dossier). Bearing this in mind, it is important to highlight that, while the concept of posthumous adds “death of life”

to the lineage of pronouncements that include the “death of God” and “death of Man,” it does so in order to inflect the vestigial humanism lingering in the shared, and often veiled, allegiance to a nonnegotiable, proto-figure *life*, even among non-Eurocentric, non-heteronormative critical positions (i.e., the ontological turn, the affective turn, new materialism, neovitalism, somatechnics, and women, gender, feminist, trans, queer, critical race, postcolonial, posthuman, and animal studies). Further, by adopting the assemblage I have named *critical life studies*, we can effectively queer those very academic identities (turns and studies) that have in effect become the “LGBTQI” of academe. By refiguring the notion of life critically—outside the orbit and primacy of the human and vigilante to its inheritances and organic forms—critical life studies aims to thus foster a more expansive, less sectarian, *queer* engagement with critical theory.

Claire Colebrook explains that theory, “far from being an academic enterprise that we can no longer afford to indulge, is the condition and challenge of the twenty-first century or age of extinction: ‘we’ are finally sensing both our finitude as a world-forming and world-destroying species, and sensing that whatever we must do or think cannot be confined or dictated by our finitude.”<sup>78</sup> Indeed, in the face of this sense of annihilation, there is a resurgence of research directed toward issues of life—albeit a *bios theoretikos*, or theories of particular lives. Might we not gesture instead to a *zoe theoretikos*, or theories of life itself not locatable in particular bodies or objects, not pluralizable, as we are propelled to consider the world without humans, without life?

In conclusion, and following José Esteban Muñoz’s astute diagnosis, I argue that thinking beyond and outside the habit of the Human (and life), is a relentless struggle. It is the necessary but impossible challenge of striving to carve out a “something else” that might never be ultimately ascertainable. However, despite the incommensurability of posthumous (queer) life, untangling and theorizing it is a fundamental step toward providing avenues of escape from, and resistance to, the recalcitrant, contemporary praxes of life and the mechanisms deployed for controlling it. We must continue to destabilize our life comfort zone, remain impure and contaminated, and direct our efforts toward the posthumously queer—the queer futurity foreclosed by humanisms, vitalisms, and identity politics of all stripes. Only then may we hope to furnish an aperture into new and queer futures and the prospects for living that constitute them.

## IN/HUMAN—OUT/HUMAN

**Jack Halberstam**

1. 1969. A man landed on the moon. One small step and all that. I remember it well, I was eight years old and it was the first significant interaction I had with television, with the planetary, with awe, with skepticism, with the outer edges of the human.

2. If you remember when you got your first smart phone or smart tablet, or even if you remember when we all began using e-mail or the Internet, you will recall that, at first, it was just not obvious what this equipment was for—when the iPad came out, many people posted online that they loved the smooth, shiny gadget, but they had no idea what to do with it. TV was a bit like that in my youth. It was an alluring piece of equipment crouching in the living room, promising to entertain you (“here we are now . . .”) but, in England in 1969, not making a very good return on that promise. But the moon landing, that was when it all began to come together—that is when it became clear, to me at least, that the TV could deliver the world to you and even what lies beyond. For me, *Dr. Who* (which was in its fifth season by 1969) and the moon landing seemed continuous with each other, and together they offered access to a wild landscape populated by all kinds of extraterrestrial and extrahuman beings.

3. I hold on to the significance of the moon landing despite the fact that it is now believed by many to be a hoax (in the images from the moon, as American astronauts walk on it, the flag does not wave, the stars do not shine, strange objects like Pepsi cans make their way into the frame). And I do so not only because it was such a widely shared moment, but more because it did mark the end of something, perhaps the end of man, the end of white men in particular, the end of the human.

I know, I know . . . claims about the end of this or that are so tired, so last decade, so dedicated to the myth of humanity. And yet, if ever there was an ending, it was surely this exploration of outer space by humans who could only seem diminished by the vastness they found there and by the implied failure of their colonial enterprise— “space, the final frontier.”

Space *was* a final frontier and one that has proved resilient to Russian and American attempts to corral it, settle it, to tame it.

4. In a *New Yorker* article from 1969 on the moon walk, E. B. White commented: “The moon, it turns out, is a great place for men.”<sup>79</sup> There are so many ways to respond to that, and I am sure either Dorothy Parker or Valerie Solanas (whose *SCUM Manifesto* was in circulation on the streets of New York by 1969) would not have let it pass!<sup>80</sup> White meant simply that the gravity-free zone looked like so much fun for the bouncy astronauts whom he promptly dubbed as earth’s universal ambassadors who should have been planting not an American flag but a “limp white handkerchief . . . symbol of the common cold which, like the moon, affects us all, unites us all.”<sup>81</sup> This white flag which White would have liked to see on the moon could certainly symbolize the vulnerability of the human body to bacteria, a vulnerability, we might add, that has become more and more pressing as we develop new drugs to combat bacteria even as they mutate to resist the new medication. The white handkerchief could also symbolize, as he intended, a kind of blank slate, a universal human, a planetary banner; it could also stand for a voracious and colonizing whiteness with its desire for territory, power, and control; and in its “limp” state it waves feebly for emasculation, and signals a homophobic connection between manhood and loss even as it signifies surrender, resignation, and the end of the human.” The bouncy men on the moon made one small step for man and . . . well, just that, one small step for one small man.

5. *Mad Men* ended the first half of its final run this season with the whole world, or at least the United States and its Cold War allies, watching the remarkable and the unthinkable. Another version of the moon walk, another ending. For the puny ad wo/men who, just a few seasons back, seemed poised to rule the world, this landmark event evoked sadness, a sense of loss, a moment of true regret about the world they had built with money, marketing, and magic. And as quickly as that regret came, it was almost as quickly transformed, beautifully and seamlessly by Peggy, into a new narrative with which to sell hamburgers—the moon landing reminds us, she calmly explains in a bedtime story voice to the stolid clients for Burger Chef, how important it is to remain connected. Never mind that this connection will come in the form of fast food served in an impersonal environment and on the road to a national epidemic of obesity. And so the most recent ruination of the human begins, in 1969, with a (probably false)



moment of human communion that becomes a metaphor, by 2014, for the commodification of human desire itself.

Strangely, we are not completely disappointed by Peggy's alchemy—her transformation of gold (man on the moon) into gold (marketable products) is, after all, the new mode of capitalism she commands. But, like Peggy, we still hanker for something that lies outside the magic circle of commodification. This something is named by Roland Barthes in his extraordinary collection of College de France lectures from the late 1970s as “the neutral”—a space that cannot be bought or sold, gendered, raced, known, marketed, made, or fixed. He writes: “I define the Neutral as that which outplays (d  joue) the paradigm or rather I call the Neutral everything that baffles the paradigm.”<sup>82</sup> Finding a space in language between oppositional forces, outside binaries, a space that refuses to be defined in relation to what it is not, Barthes proposes that the desire to find such a space is “non-marketable” and “unsustainable.” And he unpacks its form through a series of randomized figures like “weariness,” “silence,” “the damp,” “banality,” “stupidity.” With an archive made up of simply the books he has on hand and a method that is part dream, part intellectual drifting, part emphasis—his goal, he says, is to make “the neutral twinkle.”

This kind of method allows us to find our way through the thick material of the universal to queer theoretical spaces of possibility, moon walks if you like, real and imagined. And the “twinkling” is important in terms of thinking about *who* can find themselves in a term as innocuous as “neutrality.” Since, all too often, spaces of neutrality have served as covers for capitalist theft (Switzerland), for racial domination (whiteness), for normativity (heterosexuality), we need the neutral to “twinkle,” to absorb and give off light, to make clear that its intermittent glow depends on everything around it, in darkness and in light.

6. In “To the Planetarium” (1923), Walter Benjamin, a well-known prophet of the end of the human, not to mention an exceptional narrator of the anatomy of the inhuman, noted that the difference between the modern world and the ancient world may well reside in our diminished relation to the cosmos—while we have reduced our relation to the stars to an individualized, romanticized, and visual experience, for the ancients, stargazing was ecstatic, communal, transporting. Benjamin writes: “For it is in this experience alone that we gain certain knowledge of what is nearest to us and what is remotest from us and never of one without the other. This means,

however, that man can be in ecstatic contact with the cosmos only communally.”<sup>83</sup>

7. And so, it is not a matter of whether the moon landing is real or fake, a hoax or transcendent, American imperialism or Cold War rhetoric; it is a question of the waning of the communal, its disappearance into the romanticized “I”—an I that is seduced, offended, wounded, bored, marketed to on a daily basis. The communal is the new wild, a place where the human ends and an inhuman or even an outhuman begins as a dream of ecstatic contact that we continue to seek out in life, in love, in dreams, in material objects, in the neutral, and in the skies. The question for now remains whether the human, in all its brutal, colonial, racist glory, can give way long enough to allow for other in/ and out/ human forms to emerge, evolve, appear, perhaps like a new planet in the night sky, twinkling, as Barthes might say, and transmitting new messages of an out/human future.

### Notes

1. Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End, 2005).
2. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, “Not Murdered, Not Missing,” *Leanne Betasamosake Simpson*, leannesimpson.ca/page/2/ (accessed May 1, 2014).
3. Native Youth Sexual Health Network/Families of Sisters in Spirit/No More Silence, “Supporting the Resurgence of Community-Based Responses to Violence,” March 14, 2014, [www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/march142014.pdf](http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/march142014.pdf); Simpson, “Not Murdered, Not Missing.”
4. This chimes with the challenge that Zakiyyah Iman Jackson poses in her recent question: “Is it possible that the very subjects central to posthumanist inquiry—the binarisms of human/animal, nature/culture, animate/inanimate, organic/inorganic—find their relief outside of the epistemological locus of the West?” (*Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Posthumanism* [Ann Arbor: MPublishing, University of Michigan Library, 2013], 673.)
5. Denise Ferreira da Silva, “What Is *Critical* Ethnic Studies?” panel of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association Summer Institute, University of Maryland, June 26–28, 2014.
6. Smith, *Conquest*.
7. Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—an Argument,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–37.

8. Andil Gosine and Cheryl Teelucksingh, *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction* (Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, 2008).
9. Smith, *Conquest*; Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012).
10. Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Justice: It's More Than Waste Facility Siting," *Social Science Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (1996): 493–99.
11. Betsy Hartmann, "Population, Environment and Security: A New Trinity," *Population, Environment and Security* 10, no. 2 (1998): 113–28; Jin Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places* (London: Pluto, 2015).
12. Andil Gosine, "Non-white Reproduction and Same-Sex Eroticism: Queer Acts against Nature," in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 149–72. See also Gosine and Teelucksingh, *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada*.
13. Jodi Melamed, "Reading Tehran in Lolita: Seizing Literary Value for Neoliberal Multiculturalism," in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Radicalization*, ed. Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
14. Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*.
15. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
16. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
17. See Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntzman, and Silvia Posocco, eds., *Queer Necropolitics* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
18. Discussions of the objectification and animalization of blackness in particular are many and long-standing. For example, see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Markmann (New York: Grove, 1952); McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*.
19. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99.
20. Jackson, *Animal*.
21. Jackson, *Animal*.
22. Alexandra Topping, "Morrissey Reignites Racism Row by Calling Chinese a 'Sub-species,'" *Guardian*, September 3, 2010, [www.theguardian.com/music/2010/sep/03/morrissey-china-subspecies-racism](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/sep/03/morrissey-china-subspecies-racism).
23. Smith, *Conquest*; Naomi Klein, "Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson," *Yes! Magazine*, March 5, 2013, [www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson](http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson); Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland*.
24. As Leanne Simpson puts it, "bringing in indigenous knowledge" this way must nec-

- essarily be “on the terms of indigenous peoples” and go beyond an appropriative or “extractivist approach.” See Klein, “Dancing the World into Being.”
25. See, for example, Myra Hird, *The Origins of Sociable Life: Evolution after Science Studies* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2009).
  26. Myra Hird, “Digesting Difference: Metabolism and the Question of Sexual Difference,” *Configurations* 20, no. 3 (2012): 213–38.
  27. Myra Hird, “Animal Trans,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 21 (2006): 35–48.
  28. Donna Haraway, “The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others,” in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Tredichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 295–337.
  29. J. Van Gulck, “Solid Waste Survey in the Territories in Northern Territories Water and Waste Association. 2012. Solid Waste Management in the North,” *Journal of the Northern Territories Water and Waste Association* (September 2012); Conference Board of Canada, “Environment: Municipal Waste Generation” (2013), [www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/environment/municipal-waste-generation.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/environment/municipal-waste-generation.aspx) (accessed October 18, 2012).
  30. Isabelle Stengers, “Deleuze and Guattari’s Last Enigmatic Message,” *Angelaki* 10, no. 2 (2005): 151–67.
  31. Stengers, “Deleuze,” 159–60.
  32. Stengers, “Deleuze,” 160.
  33. Jacques Derrida’s critique of apocalypticism informs my skepticism of the “beyond.” Relatedly, in some theoretical quarters, it has become customary to presume the stability of the term “human” and suggest that this ought to be a subject we should move beyond, but it is precisely the casualness of this practice that I want to question. The quotation marks around “beyond” and “the human” throughout the piece suggest that my aim is to examine the implications, particularly the racial implications, of the casual dismissal of the category human. See Derrida, “No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives),” trans. Catherine Porter and Philip Lewis, *Diacritics*, 14, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 20–31; and Derrida, “On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy,” in *Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*, ed. Peter Fenves (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 117–71.
  34. David Scott, “The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter,” *Small Axe* 8 (September 2000): 120. I use the term *Man* in light of its development in the thought of Sylvia Wynter, a term that Wynter evokes to provincialize Renaissance and Enlightenment-based humanism, challenging its claims to universality. The term suggests that Man is a “genre” and not the human itself. “Out of the world” references a chapter in Achille Mbembe’s *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 173–211.
  35. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, “Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Posthumanism,” *Feminist Studies* 39 no. 3 (2014): 669–85.

36. High-water marks include (a list representative but not exhaustive): Lewis R. Gordon, *Existential Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*; Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 65–81; Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. C. L. Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967); Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Knopf, 1987); W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1903); Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality." Thus I concur with Uri McMillan's assessment that "theories of 'object life' are at their most fecund, productive, and expansive when considered *with*, rather than *instead* of, black cultural studies" (in this issue). And as Jin Haritaworn has similarly noted, "tackl[ing] anthropocentrism and dehumanization simultaneously, as relational rather than competing or analogous paradigms," will likely "lead us to altogether different objects, and worlds" (in this issue).
37. For key writings by the aforementioned, see Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1997).
38. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
39. For a discussion of the racialization of mathematical knowledge, see Ron Eglash, *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999).
40. The turn to idiomatic exercises of science and mathematics in speculative realism, object-oriented approaches, new materialism, posthumanism, and animal studies without flagging or examining the politics of such idiomatic expression will likely be troubling for students of the racial, gendered, sexual, and colonial history of science, particularly when mathematics and science are relied upon as precepts to settle the question of 'reality' or evaluate truth claims rather than remaining objects of continual critique and intervention.
41. A number of thinkers have argued that the objective of our critique should not be predicated on an attempt to go "beyond" the human, or beyond ourselves, but a reorientation of the terms through which the human is understood. Their insights have been crucial to clarifying my own (Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality"); Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be Black," *Hispanic Issues* 23 (2001): 30–66; Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," *Cultural Critique* 53, no. 1 (2003): 10–27; Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Jacques Derrida and David Wills, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," *Criti-*

- cal Inquiry* 28, no. 2 (2002): 369–418; R. L. Rutsky, “Mutation, History, and Fantasy in the Posthuman,” *Subject Matters: A Journal of Communications and the Self* (2007): 99–112.
42. See [www.alternet.org/world/evidence-emerges-israeli-shoot-cripple-policy-occupied-west-bank?page=0%2C0](http://www.alternet.org/world/evidence-emerges-israeli-shoot-cripple-policy-occupied-west-bank?page=0%2C0) (accessed August 15, 2014).
  43. See [www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/09/gaza-crime-crimes-201492664043551756.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/09/gaza-crime-crimes-201492664043551756.html) (accessed October 1, 2014).
  44. See [www.facebook.com/karl.schembri/posts/10152139900211595](http://www.facebook.com/karl.schembri/posts/10152139900211595) [www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=137704959660345&story\\_fbid=606670669430436](http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=137704959660345&story_fbid=606670669430436) (accessed August 10, 2014).
  45. See [www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2014/07/29/nadia-abu-el-haj/nothing-unintentional/](http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2014/07/29/nadia-abu-el-haj/nothing-unintentional/) (accessed September 15, 2014).
  46. See [www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2014/07/29/nadia-abu-el-haj/nothing-unintentional/](http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2014/07/29/nadia-abu-el-haj/nothing-unintentional/) (accessed September 15, 2014).
  47. Michel Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life,” in *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1961–1984)*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 309–10.
  48. David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 79; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Weather in Proust*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
  49. Michel Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,” in *Foucault Live*, 433, 434, and 435. For Foucault, as for the ancient Greek writers he was studying, an *ethos* named modes of being and behavior—of *living*—as opposed to naming some sort of prescriptive morality.
  50. Adam Phillips, “On a More Impersonal Note,” in Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips, *Intimacies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 98.
  51. Jeffrey J. Cohen and Todd R. Ramlow, “Pink Vectors of Deleuze: Queer Theory and Inhumanism,” *rhizomes* 11–12 (Fall 2005–Spring 2006), [www.rhizomes.net/issue11/cohenramlow.html](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/cohenramlow.html).
  52. I am riffing here off of Roderick Ferguson’s trenchant work. Ferguson’s recent remarks on posthumanism, as a potential keyword to dispose of, comes to mind: which posthumanism are we talking about? And does posthumanism become a vanguard production that is a way not to talk explicitly about race? Roderick Ferguson, remarks presented at the annual American Studies Association convention, “Kill This Keyword” session, Los Angeles, California, November 8, 2014. See also Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
  53. Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 21.
  54. This woefully incomplete list includes John Akomfrah, *The Last Angel of History* (Icarus Films, 1996); Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (New York: Warner Books, 1998); Sun Ra, *Space Is the Place* (1974); Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972; rpt.

- New York: Scribner, 1996); George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1931; repr. New York: Dover, 2011).
55. Hershini Bhana Young, "Twenty-First-Century Post-humans: The Rise of the See-J," in *Black Performance Theory*, ed. Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 56, 47.
  56. Mel Chen, *Animacities: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 5.
  57. Scott Herring, "Material Deviance: Theorizing Queer Objecthood," *Postmodern Culture* 21, no. 2 (2011); Drew Sawyer, "Crisco, or How to Do Queer Theory with Things," [www.columbia.edu/~sf2220/TT2007/web-content/Pages/drew2.html](http://www.columbia.edu/~sf2220/TT2007/web-content/Pages/drew2.html) (accessed July 4, 2014).
  58. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe." The white gaze's reduction of the black man into a negative sign in the field of vision renders him, in Fanon's words, *an object among objects*. See Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; repr. New York: Grove, 2008), 89.
  59. Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955; repr. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 42.
  60. Christina Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Darieck Scott, *Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).
  61. This echoes Jinhana Haritaworn's claim that following objects may well lead us to altogether different objects and worlds.
  62. Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars* (New York: New York University Press, forthcoming).
  63. See Michael Fried's infamous essay "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (1967): 12–23.
  64. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 13.
  65. In 1985 the video game *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar* was released, in which the player's quest was to become an "Avatar." The same year, Chip Morningstar, a designer of Lucasfilm's *Habitat*, a role-playing game released a year later, first coined the current use of avatar to describe a virtual representation of a player.
  66. Ann Weinstone, *Avatar Bodies: A Tantra for Posthumanism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 41.
  67. Susan Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, eds. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 244–56.
  68. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28.
  69. Nikki Sullivan and Samantha Murray, *Somatechnics: Queering the Technologicalisation of Bodies* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2009).



70. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2002 [1945]).
71. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005).
72. Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, Humans, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).
73. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume One: Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978).
74. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1–5.
75. See James Clifford, “Indigenous Articulation,” *Contemporary Pacific* 13, no. 2 (2001): 468–90; and Kim TallBear, “Genomic Articulations of Indigeneity,” *Social Studies of Science* 43, no. 4 (2013): 509–33.
76. Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 35.
77. Donna Haraway, *Second\_Millennium.FemaleMan©\_Meets\_OncoMouseTM™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 60.
78. Claire Colebrook, “Extinct Theory,” in *Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Vol. 1* and *Sex After Life: Essays on Extinction, Vol. 2*. (Open Humanities Press, 2014), 32.
79. E. B. White, “Notes and Comment,” *New Yorker*, July 26, 1969, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/1969/07/26/comment-5238](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1969/07/26/comment-5238).
80. Dorothy Parker’s sharp tongue often took masculinity as its target. To wit: “I require only three things of a man. He must be handsome, ruthless and stupid.” Valerie Solanas eschewed witticisms for manifestos, and she wrote and self-published her *SCUM Manifesto* in 1967. It was eventually published in 1968 by Olympia Press and then reissued more recently by London and New York’s Verso Press in 2004. The manifesto described a man as “completely egocentric, trapped inside himself, incapable of empathizing or identifying with others, or love, friendship, affection or tenderness.” She continues: “He is a half-dead, unresponsive lump, incapable of giving or receiving pleasure or happiness; consequently, he is at best an utter bore, an inoffensive blob, since only those capable of absorption in others can be charming.”
81. [www.newyorker.com/magazine/1969/07/26/comment-5238](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1969/07/26/comment-5238).
82. Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the College de France (1977–1978) (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 6.
83. Walter Benjamin, “To the Planetarium” (1928), in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings: 1913–1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 486.