Zakiyyah Iman Jackson
Outer Worlds: The Persistence of Race in Movement “Beyond the Human”
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.”

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 Haritawon’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. 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.” 34 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.35

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.36

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.”

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. 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.

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. 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)(anthropo)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.41

**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.”42 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


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.


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-


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.


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).


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.