Impossible Privacy

Black Women and Police Terror

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> My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him. If I went out for a breath of fresh air, after a day of unwearied toil, his footsteps dogged me. If I knelt by my mother's grave, his dark shadow fell on me even there. —Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)[1]

Black women have never known the luxury of privacy in the Americas. Impossible privacy is one of the tormenting dimensions of slavery and its afterlives.[2] White supremacy meets us at every turn. Our every move is stalked and surveilled. Our bodies, our homes, our children, even our graves are not our own; able to be raided, poked, prodded or stolen at any moment.[3] Harriet Jacobs describes this torment (quoted above) in her account of her enslavement. The constant specter of her slave master was one of the agonizing dimensions of her experience as an enslaved woman. White supremacy stalks us. Haunting our interior and exterior lives, leaving us no moment of respite or peace—no *breath of fresh air*. Living under the constant physical and metaphysical gaze of whiteness is more than just inconvenience; it is terrorizing.[4] This terror manifests itself acutely in policing across the Americas.

On May 29, 2020, just four days after police officers brutally and publicly asphyxiated George Floyd in front of a convenience store, someone broke into Atatiana Jefferson and Yolanda Carr's home in south Fort Worth, Texas and ransacked it.[5] Their neighbor, James Smith, knew something was amiss when he saw a vacuum cleaner thrown into the back yard. He found the back window broken and clothes and personal items strewn all over the house. Mr. Smith had been checking on the Carr home ever since that fateful day when he called 911 to ask police to make a well check on the Carr family on October 12, 2019. Officers responded to his call, but instead of checking on the family's well-being, they shot and killed Yolanda Carr's daughter Atatiana Jefferson, through her back window—the same recently-replaced back window that now lay broken in the back yard from the break-in. Atatiana was playing video games with her eight-year-old nephew when Officer Aaron Dean shot and killed her. Less than one month later Atatiana's father, Marquis Jefferson, died of a heart attack.[6] Two months later, her mother Yolanda Carr died of congestive heart failure.[7] Police terror kills us at every turn, in the moment with bullets and slowly over time with disease (*sequelae*).[8] In response to the break-in, Smith stated to the media:

> Myself as well as the Carr children are dealing with post-traumatic stress. We're still dealing with the Minneapolis situation. We're still dealing with other situations similar to Atatiana's … This was just on top of the trauma that we're already experiencing.[9]

Even our gravesites—like the house where Atatiana Jefferson and Yolanda Carr "took their last breath"[10]—are not safe from

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invasion and perusal. Black women are not so much as allowed privacy in death. We need only remember Harriet Jacobs visiting her mother's gravesite. "My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him … "[11]

The ransacking of Yolanda Carr's home, and the re-traumatization it produced, are bitter reminders of the gendered dimensions of anti-Black policing. Invasion of privacy operates as a node of police terror against Black women.[12] When we think about anti-Black policing in the Americas, we typically envision public violence. The words "police violence" lead many of us to almost immediately think of the names of a litany of Black men who have been spectacularly killed by the police outside, in full vision of the world and often on camera. Indeed, Black scholars have written extensively about the spectacularization and public consumption of Black death, its pornographic appeal, its videographic archiving, its widespread circulation and its perversity.[13] Yet, Black women are often erased from spectacular narratives of police violence. Our deaths are rarely video recorded and circulated widely on the internet and in the news media, even when those recordings exist. Our faces are rarely the ones emblazoned in the public mind. Nevertheless, Black women are undeniably the targets of police terror.[14] This erasure is indubitably the result of misogynoir.[15] However, *where* Black women are killed also makes our deaths invisible. Police violence against Black women often happens out of sight, in homes and in what should be private places.

Home is a place of refuge. We most often think of home as where we live, but it is also the place to which we retreat for safety. In this sense, "home" has multiple meanings, particularly for Black women.[16] Home is our bodies, our family, our residences. Home can be any place where we feel safe and secure; tucked away from danger. Police terror against Black women is therefore a kind of spiritual terror—an attack not only on the body but also the psyche and the refuge of the soul.[17] It disturbs our spiritual peace; our attempts to live unfettered and unperturbed. Policing haunts us *at every turn*. At times, it is a violation of our bodily homes. In 2015, former police officer Daniel Holtzclaw was found guilty of sexually assaulting 13 Black women over six months.[18] At times, the places where we live are violated. Police shot and killed Korryn Gaines in front of her five-year-old son in her apartment, just outside of Baltimore on August 1, 2016. We do not even find refuge asleep: Breonna Taylor was sleeping in her bed when police officers invaded her home in Louisville, Kentucky in March 2020 and shot and killed her.[19] When police kill Black women, it often happens hidden away from sight and unrecorded; playing video games with our nephews, taking care of our children, sleeping. We are not safe in our homes because there is no such thing as privacy for Black women, at least in the eyes of the state. Ours is an impossible privacy.

Police terror is a stalking master—the constant surveillance of white heterosexist, neoliberal, imperial and patriarchal supremacy (to follow bell hooks).[20] Like the shadow of Harriet Jacob's slave master *at every turn*, the state, via the police, allow Black women no private place of seclusion. The violation of privacy as a node of police violence is a

uniquely intersectional terror that targets Black women specifically; an un/gendering. We need only recall the reflections of Hortense Spillers, who writes,

> in the vestibule of a colonized North America … the African female subject is not only the target of rape—in one sense, an interiorized violation of body and mind—but also the topic of specifically externalized acts of torture and prostration that we imagine as the peculiar province of male brutality and torture inflicted by other males … This materialized scene of unprotected female flesh—of female flesh 'ungendered'—offers a praxis and a theory, a text for living and for dying, and a method for reading both through their diverse mediations.[21]

Black women have been un/gendered by the spiritual terror of white supremacy in the Americas—the "interiorized violation of body and mind" alongside "externalized acts of torture"—torture that operates by terrorizing the Black female body so to "unprotect female flesh."[22] This unprotection—the violation of the mind and body in order to strip Black women of the possibility of female subjectivity (idealized as white womanhood)—depends on the denial of privacy. Privacy, like modesty, is a privilege in this sense, and policing is the enactment of unprotection; the "materialized scene of unprotected female flesh" that robs Black women of refuge.

Luana

Since 2003, I have been researching and writing about police terror against Black communities in Brazil. This work has led me to think critically about the transnational dimensions of police terror and the unique impact state violence has on Black women. The (un)gendering dimensions of police terror, and their refusal of Black women's privacy, are transnational. The following is a brief reflection on one story from Brazil.

On Friday April 8, 2016, Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, Brazil, Military Police (PM) officers invaded Luana Barbosa's neighborhood, Jardim Paiva II. She was on her red Honda motorcycle in front of the school across the street from her house. Her 14-year-old son was riding on the back. Three officers approached Luana and commanded her to open her legs and stand on the wall with her hands behind her head. She refused, insisting she was not a man. Stopping and frisking people in the streets by asking them to stand spread against a wall is gendered police protocol for stopping and frisking *men* in Brazil. Luana, a masculine presenting lesbian who nevertheless identified as a woman refused to be mis-gendered, arguing with the officers and even, allegedly, removing her shirt to prove she was not a man. They refused to believe her (or did they believe and not care?). They forced her to open her legs against the wall by kicking her and punching her in the abdomen and crotch. She fell, got back up, turned around and punched one of the officers in the face. The police officers pushed her to the ground and handcuffed her, and then lined up to kick and hit her with their fists and batons. Luana's sister, Roseli, and her mother ran out of the house and plead with the police officers to stop. The officer with the bloody lip pointed a

gun at the two, sister and mother, and said, "enter in the house or I will kill you."

Badly wounded, the officers took Luana to the police station and forced her to sign a waiver saying that she was responsible for her own injuries, and that she took responsibility for injuring the officer whose lip she bloodied. When Roseli, Luana's sister, went to pick her up from the police station, she found her disfigured. Her right eye was almost out of its socket. She had vomited blood. She was only semi-conscious and her speech was slurred. She could not walk. Barely lucid and weak, Luana walked out of the police station only to sit down on the sidewalk outside in exhaustion. Roseli recorded her sister's story outside on the ground—a deliberate, political act of defiance. Her face bloody, her speech slurred, she put her head in her hands, spoke for a while and then asked her sister to turn off the camera.

Five days later Luana died in the hospital from a stroke precipitated by multiple traumatic blows to the head.

I have been haunted by Luana's story since I learned of her death. Although she was not killed in her home, her killing began in front of the wall that sits at the end of her quiet street, just outside of her house. Police officers invaded her neighborhood to stop-and-frisk residents—a terrorizing tactic that plagues poor Black people hemispherically.[23] The location where she was beaten (near her home) was not the only invasion of her privacy, however. The officers also violated her interiority; stopping and frisking her "like a man."[24] This act of ungendering—coercing her to strip in front of them in order to "prove" her gender identity to try to avoid physical abuse—was also a violation of privacy. Invoking, Spillers, Luana's beating was a "violation of body and mind—but also the topic of specifically externalized acts of torture and prostration that we imagine as the peculiar province of male brutality and torture inflicted by other males."[25] Luana's beating was a "materialized scene of unprotected female flesh."[26] It was Luana's insistence on her right to privacy—the right to sit on her motorcycle on the corner of the street in front of her house, the right to take her son to school unhindered, the right to cover her body any way she liked—that in part precipitated her beating and killing. Privacy for Black women is much more than just being left alone, it is a right to breathe. Recall Harriet Jacobs's words, "If I went out for a breath of fresh air, after a day of unwearied toil, his footsteps dogged me."[27] The more that Black women attempt to barricade themselves from white supremacy's gaze, the more violable we become.

The Anthropologist's Dilemma

When I first visited Luana's neighborhood I found it eerily quiet. It was a Sunday, and I had driven from São Paulo city with a student to map what happened the night that she was killed. When we arrived on the street and got out of the car, a young woman and her small daughter were sitting outside in front of the wall in front of Luana's house, listening to music. The young woman was braiding the young girl's hair. They looked at us—seemingly recognizing us as strangers—and quietly and calmly packed up their things and went inside.

> The white man is always trying to know into somebody else's business. All right, I'll set something outside the door of my mind for him to play with and handle. He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind. I'll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll say my say and sing my song. – Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men*, 1935[28]

Anthropology is a colonial discipline—a science of telling and revealing. Zora Neale Hurston made a sharp critique of this when she wrote the aforementioned quote. Anthropology is "the white man … always trying to know somebody else's business."[29] As an anthropologist, I was trained in the traditions of Franz Boas and Clifford Geertz to deeply embed myself into "other" cultures to gather information and share it with the world—the deep practice of white supremacy's need to know. Chronicling the transnational terror of antiblack policing in the Americas has therefore been, and continues to be, a delicate and contradictory task. On the one hand, I have sought to subvert the colonial impetus of my discipline by engaging in activist anthropology, using my research in the service of Black liberation.[30] On the other, "anthropology for liberation"[31] is an ever elusive quest, one that brings me constantly back to a reckoning with the discipline's incessant white supremacy and the legacy of anthropology's history of invading Black people's privacy.[32] How do we chronicle our stories without violating, yet again, Black women's privacy? In conducting my research, I constantly grapple with a fraught tension. Rigorous qualitative research, at least within the bounds of traditional anthropology, seems to require that we (ethnographers) journey into the communities of the dead to peel back the layers of people's lives and sentiments in order to discover the truths of the past and present. Yet, there is something deeply unsettling to me about disturbing Black women's graves.

Zora Neale Hurston begins the introduction of *Mules and Men* (1935) with what is now an infamous glimpse into her methodological approach to fieldwork: careful, calculating, tactical cunning and concealment. Hurston's ethnographic, autobiographical, essayist and fictive writing weaves together truth, lies, half-truths and fictions that both reveal and conceal the intricacies of African-American culture in the US South. Yet, when she writes, "The Negro offers a feather-bed resistance," we, the reader, cannot help but wonder if she herself is that "Negro," or is she merely referring to Black people writ large.[33] Hurston has been fiercely criticized for her "lying" and "embellishment" throughout her writing career. However, her methodological approach to (un)revealing Black culture for her majority white audience brings us back to a deeper and serious question of Blackness and privacy in the face of the "white man's need to know" (to paraphrase the aforementioned Hurston quote). As Black researchers, what role do we, or should we, play in protecting Black privacy? As an anthropologist, I am acutely aware of the colonialist, anti-Black genealogy of my discipline and its epistemic repercussions. I am also aware that my research—regardless of my motivations and desire to use it to contribute toward Black liberation—can and is always readily consumed by white audiences still invested in the "white man's need to know

somebody else's business." This is especially dangerous when we research Black women's experiences with police terror, an experience that is often the source of trauma and deep pain to the very witnesses that we as anthropologists seek out for information.

Towards Ethnographic Redaction

When I first saw the spray painted word "Lua" on the wall by the school in Jardim Paiva II in Ribeirão Preto (São Paulo, Brazil), I knew it was for her, even though it was incomplete. *Lua*—the moon, and the first three letters of her name. Her memory floated passed me almost immediately. It was unfinished enough to be ambiguous, leaving me to wonder if I was just imagining her or if she was really there, unspoken along the wall at the intersection where the story of her death began—*Luana*.

What happens in the aftermath of police killings? Where do our names and memories go against the backdrop of the Black geographies that mark the territories of our death? To follow Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods (2007), how does the unknowable figure into the production of space?[34] There was once blood on this corner. And yet, when I went to see the place where Luana was killed, the only thing that I found left of her was the faint and partial scrawling of her name—remembering to forget.

When we talk about police violence, we often insist on the need to both see and remember. Lingering behind this insistence

Figure 1. Image taken by me of a wall with a partial spray painting of Luana's name, "Lua."

is also the desire to forget. This desire to forget brings me back to the question of privacy. At what point do we stop our prying and prodding in search of truth and justice and allow the dead—and the family and loved ones they leave behind—to simply refuse to be spoken about or to speak? When the young woman and the little girl packed up their things and went inside after seeing me that day, I was struck: did she leave because she was ready to go inside or did she leave because after so many seasons of the questioning and prodding of strangers, she simply did not want to speak anymore?

I have been taught to go to do extensive field research, ask questions, conduct interviews and deeply engage with people and places in order to reveal some deep truth. However, as a Black woman whose life is also haunted by the constant specter of white supremacy, and deeply invested in preserving and respecting the sanctity of Black life, I recognize that keenly digging into the lives of the communities of the dead—particularly those who have been killed by the police—often feels like continuing the violation of Black women's privacy. This privacy is one that Black families and communities—like Yolanda Carr and James Smith—often long for in order to heal.

The graffiti at the corner where Luana began to die not only haunts us but also causes pause. By making the familiar unfamiliar in ways that are unpredictable, it is possible that we come to see the subject with greater relief than we might had we looked intensely. The concept of redaction is helpful for reading the word/name *Lua* scrawled on the wall on Luana's street. Christina Sharpe considers the possibilities for a methodology of redaction, noting the relationship between redaction, Black death and the wake:

> The orthographies of the wake require new modes of writing, new modes of making-sensible … so much of Black intramural life and social and political work is redacted, made invisible to the present and the future, subtended by plantation logics, detached optics, and brutal architectures. There is, in the Black diaspora … a long history of Black life, of Black lives being annotated and redacted. There is, as well, continuous resistance to and disruption of those violent annotations and redactions.[35]

Redaction and annotation both obscure and sub-scribe Black life. Redaction, by definition, seeks to obscure, limiting, abbreviating and censoring. Police terror redacts Black life; abbreviating it, blocking it out, censoring it. This means, however, that writing about it—particularly ethnographically—requires a new mode of writing that can disrupt this terror in order to restore, to the extent possible, the sanctity of Black peace, unraveling impossible privacy. How can we employ, "Black annotation together with Black redaction, not as opposites, but as trans*verse *and* coexistensive ways to imagine otherwise"?[36] What possibilities might this hold for Black life?

To redact is to edit, revise or create a new version of source material. Here, I want to draw particularly on the fourth definition entry in the Oxford English Dictionary for "redaction," which reads,

> The action or an act of censoring a document by removing or blacking out certain words or passages prior to publication or

release, esp. for legal, security, or confidentiality purposes; (also) a piece of text that has been removed or blacked out in this way.[37]

Many of us associate redaction with the black marks that government agencies put over sensitive text when they are forced to release documents to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. We typically redact, in this sense, to block out information that we do not want to have shared, known, seen or would like to keep secret. Is it also possible, then, to use redaction as an ethnographic method that seeks to reclaim Black women's privacy rather than reify its violation?

The partially scrawled graffiti of Luana's name along the wall in front of her house, like her life, is unfinished and it is this incompleteness that haunts us. *Lua* refuses to let us see her completely. Instead, she lays a trail of breadcrumbs marking her gravesite, forcing us to remain uncomfortable in the absence of full disclosure of her life story—an unfinished life. To be a Black woman and anthropologist is to sit at the crossroads of telling and not telling, recognizing that my impossible privacy is also implicated in my mandate to tell. Ethnographic redaction—refusing to tell the finished story and reveal the totality of what is not known—is, then, one way to engage in a politics of refusal. In my work, I imagine this method as a possibility of telling the stories of the dead without digging up their gravesites: upturning their lives and the lives of their families to mine artifacts and information rather than seek healing. Tell me the story that you want to tell and I will write it as you have told it. It is for you, not for me. Incomplete, on a featherbed of resistance.

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Notes

1. Harriet A. Jacobs and Lydia Maria Child. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself ... Edited by L. Maria Child* (Boston: Pub. for the Author, 1861).

2. Here I draw on Saidiya Hartman's notion of the afterlives of slavery. Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

3. Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 65–81; Sowande M. Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016); Daina R. Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation*. Beacon Press, 2017.

4. This definition of privacy comes from the New American Oxford Dictionary: *New Oxford American Dictionary Online*, 2020.

5. John Howland, "For Atatiana Jefferson's Neighbor, Break-in at her Fort Worth Home is Another Tragedy," *Fort-Worth Star Telegam*, May 30, 2020, https://www.startelegram.com/article243116921.html#storylink=cpy

6. Marquis Jefferson died on November 8, 2019.

7. Yolanda Carr died on January 9, 2020.

8. In my research on the gendered impact of anti-Black policing on Black women, I use the term *sequelae* to describe the "gendered, reverberating, deadly effects of state terror that infect the affective communities of the dead." The word "sequelae" literally means "a condition that is the consequence of a previous disease or injury."

Police violence, like a nuclear bomb, not only kills immediately but also gradually and over time through the diseases its fallout causes: Christen Smith, "Facing the Dragon: Black Mothering, Sequelae and Gendered Necropolics in the Americas," Transforming Anthropology 24, no. 1 (2016): 31–48; *New Oxford American Dictionary Online*, 2020.

9. James Smith interviewed by the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* on May 30, 2020; Howland, "For Atatiana Jefferson's Neighbor."

10. On a public Facebook post on May 29, 2020 Ashley Carr, Atatiana's sister, wrote of her indignation at the break-in and violation of her sister and mother's home, noting that part of her sense of anger and sadness was due to their home also being the place where they "took their last breath." See, https://www.facebook.com/ashley.carr.397

11. Jacobs and Child, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

12. Refusing privacy is a familiar strategy of state control. Khiara Bridges explores how the state denies poor people privacy in the United States through the legal realm, recognizing that people of color bear the brunt of this violation. Policing is one aspect of this. Khiara Bridges, *The Poverty of Privacy Rights* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

13. See for example, Elizabeth Alexander; "Can You Be Black and Look At This?: Reading the Rodney King Video(s)," *Public Culture* 7, no. 1 (January 1994): 77–94; Courtney Baker, *Humane Insight Looking at Images of African American Suffering and Death* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Karla Holloway, *Private Bodies, Public Texts: Race, Gender, and a Cultural Bioethics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Jennifer C. Nash, "Unwidowing: Rachel Jeantel, Black Death, and the 'Problem' of Black Intimacy," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 4 (2016): 751–74; Rebecca Ann Wanzo, *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised: African American Women and Sentimental Political Storytelling* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

14. The Say Her Name initiative researches, archives and chronicles police violence against Black women, including several incidents that have been video recorded. African American Policy Forum, 2015. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Andrea Ritchie, Rachel Anspach, Rachel Gilmer and Luke Harris, *Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women* (New York: African American Policy Forum, 2015). See also LaShawn Harris, "Beyond the Shooting: Eleanor Gray Bumpurs, Identity Erasure, and Family Activism against Police Violence," *Souls* 20, no. 1, (2018): 86–109; Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2017); Andrea Ritchie, *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017).

15. Misogynoir is the principle reason the police killings of Black women are overwhelmingly ignored in popular discourse on police violence. A notable exception is the recent case of Breonna Taylor, whose killing became a national issue on the heels of the killing of George Floyd. I borrow the term misogynoir from Moya Bailey and Trudy. Moya Bailey, "On Misogynoir: Citation, Erasure, and Plagiarism," *Feminist Media Studies* 18, no. 4 (2018): 762–8, doi:10.1080/14680777.2018.1447395.

16. See for example Barbara Smith's reflection on Black women and the meaning of home in Barbara Smith, *Home Girls a Black Feminist Anthology* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

17. I discuss the relationship between spiritual terror and police terror against Black women extensively in Christen Smith, *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence and Performance in Brazil* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

18. Madeline Holcombe and Elliott C. McLaughlin, "Oklahoma Ex-Officer Convicted of Raping Multiple Women is Denied an Appeal," CNN, August 2, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/02/us/holtzclaw-appeal-denied/index.html

19. Tessa Duvall and Darcy Costello, "Louisville Police Pursued 'No-Knock' Search Warrant in Fatal Shooting of ER Tech in Her Home," *Louisville Courier Journal*, May 12, 2020, https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2020/05/12/breonna-tay lor-louisville-emt-not-main-target-drug-investiga tion/3115928001/

20. bell hooks eloquently outlines white supremacist, heterosexist, neoliberal, imperialist patriarchy in her, Keynote, to the National Women's Studies Association Meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 14, 2014.

21. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 67.

22. Ibid.

23. Here I am again reminded of Khiara Bridges's discussion of the impact of stop-and-frisk policies on New York residents: Bridges, *The Poverty of Privacy Rights*, 95.

24. See Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

25. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 67

26. Ibid.

27. Jacobs and Child, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

28. Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990 [1935]), 3.

29. Ibid.

30. On African Diaspora anthropology and the struggle for Black liberation see Faye Venetia Harrison, *Outsider Within: Reworking Anthropology in the Global Age* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

31. I owe this phrasing to Keisha-Khan Perry who writes and researches this topic extensively: Keisha-Khan Perry, *Black Women Against the Land Grab* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

32. Anthropologists have a long history of questioning and recording Black people's cultures and traditions, measuring, dissecting and preserving our bodies. For a robust discussion of this history, see Lee Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). On the relationship between anthropology and white supremacy see also Aisha Beliso-De Jesús and Jemima Pierre, "Special Section: Anthropology of White Supremacy." *American Anthropologist* 122 (1): 65–75, 2020.

33. Hurston, *Mules and Men*, 2.

34. Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods. *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2007).

35. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 114.

36. Ibid., 115. I also draw inspiration from Saidiya Hartman's theory of critical fabulation: Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 26 (2008): 1–14.

37. *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2002, www.oed.com).

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