

Raciontologies: Rethinking Anthropological Accounts of Institutional Racism and Enactments of White Supremacy in the United States

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ABSTRACT This article presents a theory of *raciontologies*—the fundamentally racialized grounding of various states of being—that sheds light on complex forms of institutional racism and white supremacy. We are interested in exploring not only how institutional contexts and processes function as sites or vehicles for the reproduction of white supremacy but more specifically how institutions become endowed with the capacity to act in their own right. This approach represents a raciontological perspective that attends to the central role that race plays in constituting modern subjects and objects in relation to particular states of being. Raciontologies powerfully shape how entities become endowed with the capacity to engage in particular acts, while also conditioning perceptions, experiences, and material groundings of reality. Our theorization of raciontologies combines anthropological analyses of institutional racism and ontologies beyond the human. These analyses point to the role of institutions in the reproduction of white supremacy and reimagine the range of entities capable of action, respectively. The broader goal is to suggest how new ways of understanding the raciontological nature of institutional enactments of white supremacy can inform antiracist theories of change. [*race, ontology, institutional racism, white supremacy*]

RESUMEN Este artículo presenta una teoría de raciontologías —la base fundamentalmente racializada de varios estados del ser— que arroja luz sobre las formas complejas del racismo institucional y la supremacía blanca. Estamos interesados en explorar no sólo las formas en que los contextos institucionales y los procesos funcionan como sitios o vehículos para la reproducción de la supremacía blanca, sino más específicamente cómo las instituciones llegan a estar dotadas de la capacidad de actuar en su propio derecho. Esta aproximación representa una perspectiva *raciontológica* que atiende al rol central que la raza juega en constituir sujetos modernos y objetos en relación a estados particulares del ser. Las raciontologías poderosamente dan forma a cómo entidades llegan a estar dotadas de la capacidad de involucrarse en actos particulares, mientras que también condicionando percepciones, experiencias y las bases materiales de la realidad. Nuestra teorización de raciontologías combina el análisis del racismo institucional y las ontologías más allá de lo humano. Estos análisis señalan el rol de las instituciones en la reproducción de la supremacía blanca y reimaginan el rango de entidades capaces de acción, respectivamente. La meta más amplia es sugerir cómo nuevas formas de entendimiento de la naturaleza raciontológica de las actuaciones institucionales de la supremacía blanca pueden informar teorías antirracistas de cambio. [*raza, ontología, racismo institucional, supremacía blanca*]

If race is only epiphenomenal, how does it continue to ground material reality?

—Visweswaran (1996, 73)

From extrajudicial killings and police brutality to migrant detention and mass incarceration, widespread debates about institutional racism and racial profiling are pressing features of contemporary US and global public discourse. Many of these discourses, and analyses thereof, consider how institutions—and their related bureaucratic structures, policies, and procedures—impact everyday life in significant ways, yet institutions' capacity to act often escapes analysis in favor of examinations of the individuals who populate, organize, and animate them. This article approaches institutional racism as a process that involves the construction, coordination, circulation, surveillance, and, frequently, overdetermination of racialized models of personhood and broader materialities. We are interested not only in how institutions structure actions but also in the processes through which institutions become actors in the reproduction of white supremacy in their own right. We conceptualize racial profiling as an institutionalized, semiotic process. Whereas racial profiling is often understood as a problem involving discriminatory behavior at the individual level, we focus on the institutionalized processes that shape and often overdetermine individual construals of profiled entities. Examining various incidents that can or have come to be articulated in relation to racial profiling, we show how the ontological statuses of bodies, practices, and various materialities are racially constituted in relation to the institutionalized modes of perception through which they are apprehended. Thus, apprehension in the context of racial profiling must be conceptualized both at the level of individual perception and institutional consequentiality. Our analysis points to the role of institutions in the reproduction of white supremacy, reconsiders the range of entities capable of action, and, crucially, highlights how race (trans)forms ontologies.

To understand the central role of race in constituting modern states of being, we propose the concept of *raciontologies*, which combines anthropological analyses of institutional racism and ontologies beyond the human. By synthesizing insights from these literatures, it becomes possible to understand institutions as actors, on the one hand, and various ontologies' fundamental anchoring in race, on the other. That is, while institutional racism has emerged as a crucial framework for conceptualizing racism as an endemic structural phenomenon and not simply a problem at the level of interpersonal bigotry or discrimination, we emphasize the ways that institutions operate not only as sites for but also actors in the reproduction of white supremacy. Relatedly, while anthropological engagements with the ontological turn have attuned ethnographic attention to human and nonhuman actors, we point to the need to reconceptualize race as a key element in constituting modern ontologies.

We examine instances of institutional racism and racial profiling drawn from ethnographic research and popular

accounts to demonstrate the potential benefits and limitations of various approaches to documenting and analyzing these phenomena; we also point to examples situated in a range of institutional and interactional settings to emphasize that racism is an endemic modern antagonism rather than a problem particular to any specific institution or individual. We illustrate part of what is at stake here by pointing to a particular instance of institutional racism tied to an example that emerged in the context of Hollywood-based fieldwork conducted by Díaz that resulted in the death of one of her research participants. Yet, we emphasize that it is not an unusual case. In fact, it represents the kinds of daily and deadly state-sanctioned institutional racism and white supremacy fundamental to the founding and continued reproduction of the United States as a settler-colonial project.

Our analysis of raciontological phenomena interrogates institutional processes that select what counts as evidence to purportedly discover particular things about targets of racial profiling and examines how these discoveries are often legitimated by the notion that such processes are unbiased or accidental in the conclusions they draw. We also consider how members of broader publics come to discover institutional racism and racial profiling as systematic rather than accidental and how they respond to problems that are (re)produced by institutions and not simply human actors—or how institutions come to be understood as actors in their own right. The broader goal is to suggest how new ways of conceptualizing the raciontological nature of racial profiling and institutional enactments of white supremacy, which challenge empiricist assumptions about shared perspectives on dramatically disparate racialized realities, can inform antiracist theories of change.

ANTHROPOLOGIES OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM ACROSS CONTEXTS

Analyses of institutional racism within anthropology and related disciplines have sought to disrupt Western liberal ideologies that frame “racism merely as interpersonal prejudice or discrimination” (Page and Thomas 1994, 110).¹ Such individualist framings suggest that racism is an exceptional, idiosyncratic phenomenon that can be eradicated through behavior-oriented interventions. In the context of racial profiling, this might look like antiracist police-training efforts. However, from an institutional perspective, changing individual behaviors does little in terms of transforming fundamental power structures. Indeed, institutions might implement various trainings in “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” but this is often merely a mechanism for nominal legal protection and the superficial cultivation of positive affect rather than an effort toward transforming institutional structures (Ahmed 2012). In contrast, Evelyn Barbee (1993, 349) argues that racism should be understood as a “system of structural inequalities” and a “historical process.” Enoch Page and Brooke Thomas (1994, 111) elaborate on this analysis by suggesting that racism should be understood in relation to “white public space” as a fundamental power structure that

was “created during colonial times” and “is still being created today, in its postcolonial forms” (see also Hill 1998). For Page and Thomas (1994, 111), US white public space, “in its material or symbolic dimensions,” comprises “all the places where racism is reproduced,” which “may entail particular or generalized locations, sites, patterns, configurations, tactics, or devices that routinely, discursively, and sometimes coercively privilege Euro-Americans over non-whites.”

This spatial analysis emphasizes the totalizing nature of white supremacy as well as its capacity to structure hierarchical relations across institutional contexts. However, there is a slippage in the distinction between the institutional and individual (re)production of racism and white supremacy. At times, white public space is positioned as an inanimate site—as the “places where racism is reproduced” (Page and Thomas 1994, 111). In other instances, white public space is an actor that is “transformative in its capacity to reshape its racial control practices” (111). That is, while analyses of institutional racism seek to challenge ideologies of individualism, there is variability in the ways that embodied individuals are positioned as the locus of action within such analyses.

Bornstein’s (2015) examination of institutional racism in the context of zero-tolerance policing in New York City focuses on “policies of administrative systems” rather than “cognitive racial bias.” For Bornstein, whereas cognitive racial bias highlights “conscious and unconscious associations, negative and positive, about things and people in the world” (52), “institutional racism characterizes a system in which policies that do not necessarily refer to race nevertheless reproduce and sometimes intensify racial disparities and hierarchies” (53). Bornstein also analyzes how purportedly colorblind policies and technologies organize policing in relation to the accumulation of statistics and crime mapping. These policies, technologies, statistics, and maps work in concert to naturalize the criminalization of racialized populations and communities. Statistical crime measures, visual mappings of criminalized activity, and zero-tolerance policies that criminalize particular populations co-articulate with related forms of marginalization (e.g., residential segregation, socioeconomic structures) to enact white supremacist policing practices. In addition to examples of institutional racism in the criminal justice system that disproportionately target African Americans and Latinxs,² such as zero-tolerance policing and disparate federal sentencing guidelines for crack versus powdered cocaine, Bornstein identifies patterns in housing policies that (re)produce segregation and socioeconomic stratification, as well as education policies that structure school funding in relation to local property taxes and impose high-stakes assessments. In all of these cases, “institutional policies operate with or without conscious or unconscious bias, although there is a reinforcing connection between the two” (54). This is similar to the suggestion that “rules, regulations, and norms [can be] ‘set up in such a way that they automatically operate to the disadvantage of some racial groups’ despite the absence of deliberate intent”

(Harrison 1997, 395; quoting Drake 1987, 34), which is characteristic of forms of “colorblind racism” (Bonilla-Silva 2014) and “racism without races” (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Harrison 1995) across institutional settings.³

The notion that institutional policies, rules, regulations, and norms “operate” emphasizes the ways nonhuman entities’ capacities for action are not simply derivative of human practices. Thus, rather than absolving or condemning individuals for the racist acts in which they engage, a focus on institutional enactments of racism makes it possible to understand not only the orchestration of such behaviors but also how they co-articulate with forms of racism that supersede the individual. The following section takes up questions surrounding relationships between individuals and institutions as actors, as well as broader conceptualizations of entities endowed with the capacity to act, by turning to a discussion of race and the ontological constitution of things.

RETHINKING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM AND THE “ONTOLOGICAL TURN”

In 1955, the Caribbean philosopher Aimé Césaire wrote, “My turn to state an equation: colonization = thingification” ([1955], 2001, 42). Insofar as the emergence of modern racism can be conceptualized as a justification for colonialism, we must also analyze the relationship between racialization and thingification. This relationship was illustrated during the 2013 trial of George Zimmerman for the killing of Trayvon Martin, a fifteen-year-old African American boy. During his closing arguments, Mark O’Mara, Zimmerman’s defense attorney, disputed the prosecution’s claim that Martin was an unarmed teenager. O’Mara carried a slab of concrete into the courtroom and displayed it before the jury. He suggested that Martin was in fact armed with the sidewalk, which he allegedly used to bludgeon Zimmerman during their altercation, thereby constituting Zimmerman’s use of a firearm as a legitimate form of self-defense. Zimmerman went on to be acquitted.

Seemingly objective things were fundamentally and consequentially transformed in the encounter between Zimmerman and Martin, as well as the legal recontextualization thereof. Zimmerman perceived the can of juice and pack of skittles Martin carried as potential weapons or drug paraphernalia, his hooded sweatshirt as thug wear, his slight stature as threatening; meanwhile, Zimmerman’s attorney argued that Martin’s very presence weaponized the sidewalk. Thus, *things*, including candy, soft drinks, sweatshirts, sidewalks, cellphones, and cameras are only constituted as such when they are inhabited and animated by—that is, indexically grounded in—normative whiteness.⁴ It should come as no surprise, then, that for those who perceive the world through what Du Bois (1903) formulated as a racial veil that produces experiences of double consciousness, there is significant question as to whether they are experiencing the same *things* as those who are not.⁵

Thinking back to Césaire's equation of colonization with thingification, it is crucial to reconsider the fundamental role of racial domination in constituting the modern order of *things*. In fact, we might examine the interplay between racial thingification and anthropological empiricism—how white supremacy constitutes things without being recognized as functioning in such ways. Following Kamala Visweswaran (1996, 73), we ask, "If race is only epiphenomenal, how does it continue to ground material reality?" This is not simply an important consideration for societies rooted in histories of chattel slavery and Indigenous genocide, such as the United States, but rather across a modern world that has been profoundly shaped by the global imposition of colonial distinctions and hierarchies. In her analysis of these white supremacist configurations, and contestations thereof, Christina Sharpe (2016, 21) notes that anti-Blackness is a "total climate," which she formulates as "the Weather."

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1967) established race as a fundamentally ontological problem.⁶ He writes, "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects" (109). Fanon articulates a theory of race as ontological overdetermination. Building on Fanon's thinking, Afropessimist thought insists that the nature of race, and Blackness in particular, must be understood not in terms of a conflict that can be resolved by redistributing rights and resources in prevailing political and economic orders but rather as an ontological problem that is the foundation of modern governance and subjectivity (Sexton 2016; Wilderson 2010). That is, modern governance is institutional racism.⁷

In some ways, this framing of institutions as actors can be understood in relation to the move toward an anthropology of the posthuman and the study of ontological logics that differentiate human and nonhuman entities. However, in our analysis of institutionalized forms of racial profiling, we highlight the ironic avoidance of race, racism, and racialization in recent anthropological accounts of ontology that seek to examine and expand the range of entities understood to be endowed with the capacity to act. Karen Brodtkin, Sandra Morgen, and Janis Hutchinson (2011) argue that this race avoidance is endemic within anthropology. Indeed, a statistical analysis of anthropological texts demonstrates that anthropologists actively avoid the topic of race relative to other forms of difference, such as gender and class (Ahearn 2013). While the "ontological turn" has received a great deal of attention in anthropological literature over the last decade (de la Cadena 2015; Kohn 2013), and while studies in Indigenous contexts are often the reference point for alternative ontological realities (Todd 2016), race has largely been absent from these analyses. In fact, one of the most central and compelling components of race is its capacity to transform particular subjects into objects—or, in the context of institutionalized modes of profiling, into targets of surveillance, measurement, management, remediation,

expulsion, and extermination. How might the "ontological turn" be disrupted if we understood that modern ontologies are profoundly anchored in race?

More than twenty years ago, Sylvia Wynter (1994) theorized the institutional transformation of particular racialized persons into nonpersons. In the aftermath of the Rodney King beating, the acquittal of the officers involved, and the subsequent public rebellion, Wynter analyzed the use of the category "No Human Involved" within the City of Los Angeles's criminal justice system to refer to alleged African American and Latinx gang members who were shot or killed by police. Wynter argued that the category "No Human Involved" was part of broader institutional logics that sanctioned police officers' use of chokeholds that killed multiple young Black men. At the time, Police Chief Darryl Gates attributed these killings to Black men's abnormal windpipes (Wynter 1994).

In a more recent case, New York City police officer Daniel Pantaleo used a similar chokehold to kill Eric Garner, an unarmed African American man who was selling loose cigarettes.⁸ Video recordings of both the Rodney King beating and the killing of Eric Garner prompted widespread public outrage, yet none of the officers involved were convicted of criminal charges (in the case of Garner, no criminal charges were filed; in the King case, two of the officers were eventually found guilty of violating King's civil rights). The inability of these recordings to legally delegitimize police officers' actions reflects the need for a reconsideration of a racialized semiotics of visibility. As Charles Goodwin (1994, 606) notes in his analysis of the institutionalized "professional vision" through which the King recording was interpreted, "the ability to see a meaningful event is not a transparent, psychological process but instead a socially situated activity accomplished through the deployment of a range of historically constituted discursive practices."⁹ It is now customary for police officers to wear body cameras to document their actions, and yet videos of police officers assaulting and killing unarmed and compliant individuals continue to surface regularly; thus, Goodwin's insights help us to understand the limitations of these body cameras as a check on police violence.

These cases demonstrate how institutionalized perceptions of racialized persons transform their ontologies. Rodney King was described as a "PCP-crazed giant," even though he never tested positive for consumption and was huddled in a ball on the ground throughout the beating. This is similar to Officer Darren Wilson's description of Michael Brown, the unarmed African American teenager he shot and killed in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. In the grand jury hearing, Wilson referred to Brown as "it," characterized him as a "demon," and said that he "felt like a five-year-old holding onto Hulk Hogan," even though he and Brown were the same height (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). Twelve-year-old African American Tamir Rice was illegible as a child playing with a toy gun when Cleveland police shot and killed him within two seconds of encountering him.¹⁰ Institutionalized perceptions of racial difference can

overdetermine what kind of a thing one is and authorize extreme, indeed existential, measures.¹¹ The sections that follow demonstrate the implications of the co-constitution of race and ontology—*raciontologies*—across a range of interactional and institutional contexts.

RACIONTOLOGIES AND INSTITUTIONALIZED DISPOSABILITY

Analyses of institutional racism and white supremacy must grapple with the ways various institutions—even those seemingly unrelated to one another—work in tandem to reproduce formations of power. The concept of *raciontologies* can provide insight into this interinstitutional coordination by drawing connections among systematic, racialized perceptions and attributions of deficiency and disposability across contexts. Díaz encountered these racialized perceptions and attributions in her fieldwork with celebrity photographers, centering on Hollywood as a major cultural and institutional force that wields larger systemic power. Over the last two decades, the demographics of the Los Angeles paparazzi transitioned from a labor force predominated by white men to men of color—mostly Latino. In the wake of this shift, figures across Hollywood industries characterized the new paparazzi as unprofessional and dangerous.¹² This critique was often framed in explicitly racialized terms, focused on *whose* bodies were producing this media content and how that devalued the work and potential professionalism inherent in the work itself (Díaz 2014). It quickly spread into public discourse, with news articles referring to paparazzi as “untrained,” “corner-cutting” “foreigners working on . . . questionable visas,”¹³ and online reader comments calling them “bottom feeders”¹⁴ and “illegals”¹⁵ who should “be deported.”¹⁶ The unique positions paparazzi occupy, demographically and professionally, within the labor chain of celebrity media production, have made them convenient, if problematic, scapegoats for the current climate of celebrity obsession in the United States.

In October 2012, Díaz was introduced to Chris Guerra by paparazzi photographer Galo Ramirez—one of the main collaborators involved in Díaz’s Los Angeles–based fieldwork, which focused on race and gender in the production of celebrity media, and specifically on the work of and relationships between the predominantly Latino paparazzi photographers and predominantly white women celebrity reporters who produce content for celebrity magazines. Guerra was an aspiring paparazzo who had only recently begun working on a freelance basis for the same agency for which Ramirez worked. Ramirez was instructed to mentor Guerra, and Díaz photographed one of their training sessions as they waited near Heidi Klum’s Pacific Palisades mansion. Guerra simultaneously practiced his photography using Díaz as a subject. Her photos of his training were shown during his memorial service.

Guerra was struck by multiple cars and killed on New Year’s Day in 2013 as he followed a California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer’s orders to return to his car after trying

to photograph Justin Bieber’s Ferrari in Los Angeles. Guerra was twenty-nine years old. According to witness testimony and dashcam transcriptions,¹⁷ the Ferrari was pulled over for speeding. When the passenger of the Ferrari told the officer that Guerra was videotaping the stop, the officer focused his attention on Guerra and let the car’s occupants go, despite having stopped them for speeding and questioning them about the scent of marijuana in the car.¹⁸ Mainstream news outlets reported that when the officer ordered Guerra to return to his car, he did not look both ways before crossing and was therefore hit.¹⁹ In official statements, the officer and investigator declared that Guerra’s death was his own fault. The dashcam transcription tells a more complicated story. After releasing the individuals stopped in the Ferrari, the officer asked Guerra, “What the hell are you doing?” When Guerra explained that he was a photographer and a member of the press, the officer asked, “Do you have any credentials other than you just standing there?” As the officer’s tone became more aggressive, Guerra exclaimed, “OK, alright! Relax!” The officer then scolded Guerra, explaining that the paparazzi should not hassle people and demanded that he return to his car, which was parked across four lanes with no nearby crosswalk. Guerra’s last words were, “All right, brother.” Guerra was hit by one SUV and then by a second car as he attempted to return to his vehicle in accordance with the officer’s command.²⁰ The officer then stopped traffic, eventually calling for help. There was no attempt to revive Guerra, despite the CHP officer’s training in CPR. The dashcam later recorded the officer talking to his partner, “Dude I was just like, I just told him he couldn’t stand there. Fucking idiot, man.”

Despite Guerra’s position as the victim in this situation, the discourse surrounding his death—from the officer who was present at the scene to celebrities and the public—treated him as a nuisance and his death as a relief. Reacting to the incident, Miley Cyrus posted a series of tweets in which she called the paparazzi “fools,” also stating:

Hope this paparazzi/JB²¹ accident brings on some changes in ’13. Paparazzi are dangerous! . . . It is unfair for anyone to put this on to Justin’s conscious as well! This was bound to happen! Your mom teaches u when your a child not to play in the street! The chaos that comes with the paparazzi acting like fools makes it impossible for anyone to make safe choices.

Comments from viewers of online video reports of Guerra’s death echoed many of these sentiments, declaring such things as: “It’s sad when people die. Paparazzi, not so much”; “Paparazzi don’t count as human beings, so it’s ok to laugh when one gets flattened”; “Poor Justin. I feel so bad for him. Fuck you, paparazzi”; and “More paparazzi need to die. If I see one on the road, I will swerve to hit the mother fucker.”²²

As part of her online tirade against paparazzi in the context of Guerra’s death, Cyrus tweeted at then E! News correspondent Ken Baker: “@kenbakernow you can have a big part in making that change if the photos stop

being made entertainment. There's plenty of news without paps!" Cyrus, a rich white celebrity whose career has benefited from the circulation of paparazzi images taken of her, ridiculed and insulted a deceased working-class person of color who lost his life doing the work that promotes and sustains the celebrity culture that creates the platform for Cyrus's wealth. Baker, a white man who has also worked for *People* magazine and *Us Weekly*, agreed with Cyrus and condemned paparazzi work, despite the dependency of mainstream celebrity media outlets on this labor: "@MileyCyrus honestly, I can't believe this hasn't happened before. So many super sketchy street ambushes, all for stupid pics."²³ These popular discourses are also invoked in scholarly accounts that reference the male-dominated nature of paparazzi work but do not reconcile the ways race, ethnicity, and perceived migration status factor into the characterization of paparazzi as "illegal," "amateurs," and "aggressive and frightening," among other highly stigmatizing and often racialized characterizations (McNamara 2016, 1, 5, 42). Thus, the new generation of paparazzi is often represented as unskilled deviants, echoing the problematic way they are frequently deprofessionalized and criminalized in the industry their labor (re)produces (McNamara 2016).

Instead of being seen as an integral part of Hollywood and broader media industries, paparazzi work is popularly derided and framed as disposable. Still, Guerra's position as a photographer on whose labor the entertainment industry relies, and yet ridicules, implicates him in fraught modes of surveillance and the reproduction of hierarchies linked to this monitoring of celebrity figures. Paparazzi photography tends to focus on white celebrities, mostly women; it renders predominantly white celebrities vulnerable and worthy of empathy and humanization while systematically erasing people of color and dehumanizing the paparazzi of color whose labor exploitation perpetuates this system (Díaz, forthcoming). The gendered and racialized media patterns that led to Guerra's death are intimately linked to broader dynamics that problematically position particular victims of racial profiling and institutional racism as more grievable than others.²⁴

Guerra's story highlights the disparate treatment and (im)mobilities of particular laborers within the Hollywood-industrial complex, but such realities are not unique to these laborers or this industry; rather, they are representative of institutional structures that produce dramatically disparate and highly consequential experiences based on the racialized ways various entities come to be perceived and positioned. We are interested in exploring not only the ways institutional contexts and processes such as mass media, the criminal justice system, racialized labor (trans)formations, and gentrification function as sites or vehicles for the reproduction of white supremacy but more specifically how institutions become endowed with the capacity to act in their own right—that is, institutions as subjects, profilers, and even killers. This view of institutions as actors in (rather than simply sites or vehicles for) the reproduction of white

supremacy represents a raciontological perspective that attends to the central role that race plays in constituting modern subjects and objects, including forms of embodiment and broader material realities. Raciontologies powerfully shape how entities are endowed with the capacity to engage in particular acts, while also conditioning perceptions, experiences, and material groundings of reality.

RACIONTOLOGIES AND SOCIAL DEATH

Guerra's story illustrates how, from a raciontological perspective, we can understand the intertwined nature of various socio-historical, individual, material, and institutional entities and processes. When institutional racism and white supremacy are enacted, it is often presupposed that these phenomena can only be produced by racist white individuals. This logic obviates institutional culpability and re-centers interpersonal interaction and embodiment. In cases such as the killing of unarmed African American Florida teenager Trayvon Martin, the self-identified mixed-race Latino man who killed him—George Zimmerman—was labeled by outlets like the *New York Times* and CNN as "white Hispanic" to enhance the narrative of interpersonal racism.²⁵ When Philando Castile, an African American man, was killed in Minnesota by a Latino police officer, Jeronimo Yanez, numerous articles presupposing a mutual exclusivity between Blackness and Latinidad pointed to Yanez as embodying anti-Blackness among Latinxs. Indeed, anti-Blackness is endemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, and their diasporas, as it is in the United States, but also throughout the modern world. However, narratives focused on interpersonal, as opposed to institutional, racism prevent us from understanding cases such as the three Black officers who were involved in the killing of Freddie Gray in Baltimore. Similarly complex racial politics were at play in the death of Chris Guerra. We suggest that the *institutional* position of these officers (and those functioning as ad hoc police subsidiaries, as in the case of Zimmerman), regardless of their race or interpersonal prejudice, allows them to enact white supremacy as agents of the state. Thus, simply diversifying an institution such as the criminal justice system does not eliminate racism or the broader raciontological realities through which it is enacted and reproduced.

The CHP officer who policed Guerra to death was Black. Guerra is the son of a Mexican father and an African American mother. In fact, Guerra's mother, Vicky Guerra, questioned the racialized nature of her son's encounter with law enforcement, "It was a Black officer. And Chris looked white. I'm Black and people don't always see me as Black. It was a class thing. Nobody cares about this because Chris was poor."²⁶ Vicky Guerra's emphasis on class rather than race in efforts to understand her son's killing aligns with her valorization of Chris's efforts toward upward socioeconomic mobility. While race was not something that Vicky Guerra, her husband, Juan Guerra, or their son could control, they understood class as a variable, a particular circumstance that she declared Chris was trying to get himself out of. She said

Chris was doing paparazzi work for the money, but “being a paparazzi wasn’t going to be a full-time forever job. Eventually, he wanted to go back and do his own business. He had his own landscaping business before. He wanted to maybe open up a pizza place.” Vicky suggests that Chris was simply attempting to fulfill the American dream—trying to pull himself up by his paparazzi bootstraps to improve his life. In her theorization of social death and accompanying attempts to humanize those who are not positioned as such, Lisa Cacho (2012) notes that tropes of the American Dream and the “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” narrative are commonly invoked in efforts to render racialized populations worthy of empathy. However, Cacho suggests that such efforts run up against racialized populations’ fundamental disposability. Vicky Guerra pondered a similar logic in a dialogue with Díaz in which she reconsidered how Chris’s racialization might have affected the way he was policed. She explained:

It never occurred to me how Chris looked. He usually didn’t wear a hoodie on shoots, but it was January and cold. He had a baseball cap under the hood also. The more I pictured what he must have looked like, the more . . . it makes even more sense that this officer thought Chris was a Hispanic nobody from the “hood,” similar to Trayvon [Martin], who was perceived as trouble as he was just innocently walking home from the store. But I do think it was a power trip and rage also . . . [it] double hurts if that makes sense. Almost like he had no chance to survive even if the cop didn’t lose his temper because he thought Chris was just a lowly Mexican. And that was why he never helped him in any way and had so much hate for him even after he was hit.

Vicky Guerra sought to reconcile racialized perceptions of Chris—including his position as a paparazzo, regardless of physical characteristics, such as his perceived light skin—with the notion that her son’s killing was the product of an exceptional instance of police rage. Cacho’s analysis of this interplay between individual characteristics and institutional processes in her theorization of everyday life for people of color, specifically Black and Latinx people, echoes Vicky Guerra’s sentiment: “We learn that the ‘facts’ of people’s behaviors have little significance for determining whose deaths are tragic and whose deaths are deserved” (Cacho 2012, 150). Even if in interpersonal encounters it was possible for Guerra to be perceived as white, his racialized reality left him in a state of being what Cacho characterizes as “permanently criminalized,” “ineligible for personhood” and, thus, experiencing social death (Cacho 2012, 6–7).

In previous cases, the race of agents of the state in relation to those who are killed under their watch or by them has been used to assert that racism was not a factor in the targeting of particular individuals. For example, the legal defense team of a Latino US Marine successfully argued that their client, who shot and killed a Latino teenager on the teen’s family property in Texas, “could not have possibly racially profiled” because the perpetrator and victim were both Latino and phenotypically similar (Márquez 2012, 498).²⁷ As John Márquez argues in his theorization of a racial state of expendability, examples like these serve as reminders “of how expendability is not derived from

the perceptions and/or consent of white people and is also not reducible to corporeal signifiers of racial difference” (498).²⁸ Thus, regardless of their racial identities, agents of the state participate in the maintenance and reproduction of white supremacy. The death of Chris Guerra reflects the limitations of understanding race, racial profiling, and institutional racism exclusively in relation to the body; Guerra’s body could be racially identified in different ways, but in this particular encounter, he inhabited a racialized structural position that rendered him disposable.

The importance of not limiting one’s analysis of race to perceived bodily features is underscored by Barnor Hesse’s (2016, viii) “colonial constitution of race thesis,” which holds that “race is not in the eye of the beholder or on the body of the objectified,” but instead “an inherited western, modern-colonial practice of violence, assemblage, superordination, exploitation, and segregation . . . demarcating the colonial rule of Europe over non-Europe.” For Hesse, race must be understood as a historically situated and institutionalized process that creates the conditions of possibility for perceptions of bodies and the consequences thereof. These structuring, institutionalized preconditions for perception were reflected in the comments of paparazzi, who frequently told Díaz that when debating how to respond to someone chastising or harassing them, how to defend themselves, or how they might behave in a way that would appease others, “We’re already hated, so it doesn’t matter.” When conceptualized in relation to raciontologies, it becomes clear that overdetermined processes of mattering and non-mattering are not unique to paparazzi.

This raciontological overdetermination is reflected in a 2016 story in *The Guardian*, titled “Death By Gentrification: The Killing that Shamed San Francisco,” which recounts the 2014 police killing of Alex Nieto, the conditions of possibility for this event, and the public response to it.²⁹ On the evening of March 21, 2014, Alejandro “Alex” Nieto, a twenty-eight-year-old Latino man born and raised in the Bernal Heights neighborhood of San Francisco, was eating dinner at Bernal Hill Park before his scheduled shift as a bouncer at a local nightclub. While eating, Nieto was aggressively approached by an unleashed dog whose distracted owner stood approximately forty feet away. After jumping onto a bench in an effort to distance himself from the barking dog, Nieto called to the dog’s owner and removed the Taser he was licensed to carry for his job, pointing it at both the owner and the dog. The dog’s owner, a white man who later testified that he used a racial slur while yelling back and forth with Nieto, sent a text message to a friend shortly after the incident explaining, “in another state like Florida, I would have been justified in shooting Mr. Nieto that night.” This is likely in reference to Florida’s “stand your ground” law, which was used to justify George Zimmerman’s aforementioned 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin.

Following this altercation, a couple passed by Nieto while walking their dogs. They had not seen the incident between Nieto and the other dog or its owner, but they noticed

that he had his hand on the Taser, which they perceived as a gun. One of the men in the couple called 911 and reported that a Hispanic man was walking and eating and had his hand on a gun on his hip. In contrast, other witnesses described Nieto as “just sitting there eating a burrito.” Less than five minutes later, as Nieto walked down the trail toward the entrance of the park, San Francisco police arrived. They fired fifty-nine gunshots at Nieto, fourteen of which struck and killed him.

In a familiar pattern, police and eyewitness civilian accounts regarding Nieto’s killing diverged sharply. Officers identified Nieto as a “guy in a red shirt,” which “could be related to gang involvement” because “red is a Norteño [gang] color.” They claimed that after officers ordered Nieto to show his hands, he responded by telling them to show their hands. Subsequently, Nieto purportedly drew his Taser and tracked officers with the red laser dot used to aim it. According to the police account, officers feared for their lives and began shooting at Nieto, who then fell to the ground yet allegedly continued to tactically track the officers with the red laser while they fired at him until he succumbed to the gunshot wounds. In contrast, eyewitnesses claimed that officers surrounded Nieto, ordered him to stop, and then immediately began firing at him. These witnesses stated that Nieto neither grabbed at any object nor pointed anything at the officers and that the officers continued firing at Nieto after he was incapacitated on the ground. In the civil trial initiated by Nieto’s family, which took place two years after the killing, the police account prevailed. The eight jurors—five white and three Asian—decided unanimously in favor of the four police officers who shot and killed Nieto.

The story in *The Guardian* referenced above poses provocative questions about the broader processes that led to the killing of Alex Nieto. Specifically, the author suggests that, in addition to a discussion of police-based racial profiling, it is crucial to consider the three recently arrived white male San Francisco residents who perceived a life-long Latino resident as a threat that evening, as well as the powerful wave of tech-driven gentrification of which these newcomers were a part. The journalist provocatively questions whether gentrification killed Alex Nieto. However, the outcomes for Nieto, Guerra, and so many others are not idiosyncratic products of isolated institutions, individuals, or interactions. Guerra was obedient. He followed directions, complied with officers, and was blamed for his own death due to his alleged stupidity. Officers suggested Nieto was aggressive and pointed a Taser at them. He was executed. Guerra and Nieto were characterized as stupid and aggressive, respectively; yet, in each case, these racialized men were framed as culpable for the outcomes they faced. Even when physical death is not the outcome of this systematic policing, the disposability of the racialized underscores their social death.³⁰ These racialized incidents reflect the intimate interplay between social death as an existential phenomenon and disposability as realized interactionally

and institutionally. This dynamic interplay is enacted through raciontologies that constitute statuses of being and regimes of value across institutional contexts.

BEYOND ANTHROPOLOGICAL EMPIRICISM IN THE ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

The ubiquity of cases such as those discussed in Díaz’s ethnographic data and throughout this article points to the shortcomings and problematic nature of demanding ethnography first before theorizing everyday life regardless of whether one is engaged formally in what typically constitutes fieldwork. It is important to interrogate the tendency toward privileging anthropological empiricism, which presumes that ethnographic data are the most reliable evidence of phenomena like institutional racism, racial profiling, and white supremacy. To the extent that these phenomena are often perceived in dramatically disparate ways based on the racial positions of the actors involved, we might reconsider the limits of anthropological empiricism in relation to alternative systems of knowledge production. These include intersectional feminist conceptions of theory in the flesh, which situate embodiment as a historically mediated process that can simultaneously facilitate particular insights and obscure others. Rather than presuming that knowledge emerges primordially from marginalized identities, theory in the flesh foregrounds embodiment as one among many legitimate ways of knowing. Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981, 23) suggest that “a theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity.” Relatedly, the ability of many racially minoritized anthropologists to understand daily encounters with racism in marginalized communities emerges from necessity rather than simply ethnographic curiosity. Their lives quite literally depend on the ability to understand these realities as scholars and theorists of race, racism, and racialization regardless of whether they are situated in a stint of fieldwork. Yet mainstream disciplinary skepticism of theory in the flesh, coupled with the privileging of anthropological empiricism, too often prevents scholars of color—particularly those writing about communities close to home—from being viewed as legitimate theorists or even legitimate anthropologists and instead consistently relegates their conceptualizations to the “savage slot” (Trouillot 2003).

Anthropological empiricism and ethnographic exceptionalism must also be interrogated in relation to hegemonic notions of scholarly authority. Mainstream conceptions of intellectual expertise are rooted in institutional racism and white supremacy through which many academic institutions are built and sustained. Any attempt to develop counter-hegemonic approaches to the synthesis of theory and ethnography must grapple with the anchoring of these forms of knowledge production in white supremacist institutional structures. Countless ethnographies reproduce exoticizing and stigmatizing tropes that naturalize or obscure colonial histories and racial hierarchies. More specifically, there is a

long and complex history of ethnographers working with and on behalf of the state itself (e.g., Benedict 1946), contributing more directly to the reproduction of institutional and structural inequalities. This history further underscores the importance of challenging assumptions about ethnographic authority and anthropological empiricism (Loperena, forthcoming).

As both the ethnographic and popularly mediatized examples of state-sanctioned violence against people of color we have examined in this article demonstrate, these issues do not reduce to single cases that we might observe ethnographically. Ethnographic moments are part of larger systemic patterns that are readily recognizable in sites beyond fieldwork encounters. That ethnography should inspire theory is an anthropological given. That theory grounded in everyday life experiences, particularly the lives of people of color, might not require a two-year stint of fieldwork is apparently, though should not be, a more radical proposal.

UNSETTLING RACIONTOLOGIES

It is remarkable yet predictable that in anthropological discussions of thing theory, the posthuman, and the ontological turn, questions of race have been largely avoided or ignored altogether. However, those who study race and racialization have always been confronted with the question of what it means to be institutionally defined as a particular kind of thing endowed with the capacity to act in particular kinds of ways—faced not simply with the ontological turn as a conceptual issue but rather the everyday consequences of having one's ontology twisted and turned, contorted in ways that produce not only Du Boisian double consciousness but also Batesonian double binds.

In an indictment of the failure to grapple with the foundational ontological status of race in widespread scholarly invocations of concepts such as bare life and biopolitics, Alexander Weheliye (2014, 3) suggests that “race, racialization, and racial identities,” should be construed as:

ongoing sets of political relations that require, through constant perpetuation via institutions, discourses, practices, desires, infrastructures, languages, technologies, sciences, economies, dreams, and cultural artifacts, the barring of nonwhite subjects from the category of the human as it is performed in the modern west.

These experiences of being positioned outside the category of the human necessitate strategies for institutionally navigating racial disembodiment and reembodiment, as Uri McMillan (2015) and Aimee Cox (2015) argue in their respective analyses of Black women's and girls' performances and presentations of self. Insofar as raciontologies involve long-standing colonial distinctions that differentiate legitimate human actors from nonhumans or subhumans, this line of thinking and critique can also be applied to the universalizing indictment of humanity associated with the theorization of the Anthropocene. This indictment neglects the fact

that very specific modern Western political and economic lifeworlds, rather than humanity as a whole, produced this geological period, such that it might be better framed as the raciopocene.

If, as Povinelli (2016) argues in her conceptualization of geontologies, we must reconsider the institutional and epistemological logics through which the life/nonlife divide is constituted, we might take our cue from race theorists who have long been grappling with such divides. This could include James Baldwin's (1963) celestial characterization of white views of racial integration as “an upheaval in the universe” that “is out of the order of nature,” in which the “black man,” who “has functioned in the white man's world as a fixed star” shakes heaven and earth to their foundations “as he moves out of his place”; or Christina Sharpe's (2016, 21) recent geological and meteorological theorization of anti-Blackness as “the ground on which we stand,” “a total climate,” “the weather,” and the target of “an insistent black visualsonic resistance to that imposition of non/being”; or Anzaldúa's (1987, 86) ecopolitical analysis, in which abject populations “count the days the weeks the years the centuries the eons until the white laws and commerce and customs will rot in the deserts they've created, lie bleached,” and in which racialized populations will persist, “walk[ing] by the crumbling ashes as we go about our business.” Thus, the stakes of raciontological and raciopocentric perspectives, which seek to denaturalize hegemonic semiotic differentiations between being and nonbeing, are nothing short of a reimagination of alternative lifeworlds, forms of institutionality, and modes of governance.

In the context of racial profiling and the institutions implicated in it, intuitions of systemic processes, conspiracy theories, and so-called urban legends emerge from repeated institutional encounters that cumulatively point to broader configurations of power. However, there are also particular historical moments, modes of knowledge circulation, and semiotic practices that render institutional structures and patterns perceivable. These various phenomena shape contemporary perspectives from which police-based racial profiling and extrajudicial violence can be recognized as institutionally systemic rather than accidental acts.

The criminal justice system is particularly deceptive in that its nature and function is often discursively articulated in relation to fairness and equality at the same time that it plays a profound role in the (re)production of disparities. However, these disparities are typically recognized as the products of individual actors—whether those representing or “served” by the institution—rather than the institution itself. Part of the ongoing struggle faced by social movements that seek to question the nature of these institutions is the difficulty of generating evidence that might create a broader institutional legitimacy crisis and the demand for institutional abolishment or comprehensive reconstitution rather than modest reforms (e.g., better training, equipment, resources). Following Povinelli, a critical anthropology of the

otherwise could aspire to contribute to the reimagination, reconstitution, or abolishment of institutions like the criminal justice system.

Many critiques of US-based racial profiling focus on the need to ensure equal access to democratic processes and secure the integrity of the nation's fundamental institutions. Rather than simply seeking to secure or recuperate these institutions, we would be well served by a careful reconsideration of what, exactly, they have been doing to people like Chris Guerra, Alex Nieto, Stephen Clark, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, Vanessa Marquez, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Esequiel Hernández, Freddie Gray, Rodney King, and millions of others.

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NOTES

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1. But there is also a need to explore the institutional racism within anthropology. While Franz Boas, a founding figure in American anthropology was a staunch antiracist, the discipline was still firmly grounded in and reproductive of the exploitation of people of color. It also systematically excluded people of color from being seen as legitimate anthropologists, a pattern

that persists today. Even his own Black student, Zora Neale Hurston, is often praised as a fiction writer, as her career in anthropology is frequently overlooked, due in no small part to the fact that she was a Black woman who studied Black people.

2. Throughout this article, we use the term "Latinx" as a gender nonbinary alternative to Latina and Latino in reference to US-based persons of Latin American descent. We use "Latino" and "Latina" in direct quotations and when referring specifically to self-identified men and women, respectively.
3. As we explore later, mainstream media outlets can also be understood as sites in which racialized institutional, interpersonal, and intersectional dynamics are powerfully regimented and enacted. For example, in the recent #MeToo movement, mainstream media amplified stories of predominantly famous, wealthy white women holding famous, wealthy white men to account for sexual harassment and assault. These mediatized figures illustrate the disparate gendered and racialized ways in which vulnerability is popularly and institutionally attributed. Mainstream media institutions feed racist ideologies taken up interpersonally even if in distinctive ways depending on targeted audiences. See: Michelle, Lecia. 2017. "Time Magazine Centers White Women With Its #MeToo Cover." *Medium*, December 7. <https://medium.com/@LeciaMichelle/time-magazine-centers-white-women-with-its-metoo-cover-d2a0b65b3927>.
4. Relatedly, in our discussion of Chris Guerra's position as a racialized paparazzo later in this article, we show how his camera became weaponized; the officer felt the need to protect celebrities from both Chris and his camera at the expense of Chris's life. Indeed, promotional merchandise for one of the main antipaparazzi lobbying groups, The Paparazzi Reform Initiative, includes a shirt with an image of a camera and the slogan "Weapon of Mass Destruction." This organization and other related organizations also use language in their informational materials that mimics anti-immigrant slogans by characterizing the paparazzi as unwanted invaders.
5. These racially distinctive perspectives can be conceptualized in relation to John Jackson's (2008) notion of "racial paranoia" produced through the juxtaposition of alleged legal racial equality with vastly disparate racialized realities. Racial paranoia circulates widely across societal settings, including the contemporary academy, in which diversity, equity, and inclusion discourses, committees, and offices are presented as responses to emergent challenges rather than recognition of endemic racism that has characterized institutions of higher education since their inception. This performative chagrin—a sort of Columboing of the ongoing significance of racism—perfectly illustrates Mill's (1997, 17–19) point that, "on matters of race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions . . . producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made. . . . Part of what it means to be constructed as 'white' . . . is a cognitive model that precludes self-transparency and genuine understanding of social realities. . . . One could say then, as a general rule, that white mis-

understanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to race are among the most pervasive mental phenomena of the past few hundred years, a cognitive and moral economy psychically required for conquest, colonization, and enslavement.”

6. Anthropologists, too, have taken up questions about race and ontology. Virginia Dominguez (1997, 93) suggests that “the ontology of ‘race’ refers to the claims, premises, habits of thought, and other socially learned cognitive operations that support and underwrite the objectification of ‘race,’ that is, the often unconscious learned habit of treating ‘race’ as a thing in the world.” Thus, Dominguez locates the objectified ontology of race in people’s “socially learned cognitive operations.”
7. The implications of these insights have yet to unsettle prevailing conceptions of race within anthropology. Too often, race is framed as a historical accident, an unfortunate side effect of the emergence of modern political economies, the exploits of which are frequently positioned as the true universal barriers to freedom, equality, and justice. Thus, we are led to believe that race is a distraction or mystification that prevents the 99% from coming together in a collective struggle against late modern capitalism. However, as Frank Wilderson (2003, 230) notes in his sweeping takedown of socialist theorizing that is ignorant or dismissive of race, “the slave makes a demand, which is in excess of the demand made by the worker. The worker demands that productivity be fair and democratic (Gramsci’s new hegemony, Lenin’s dictatorship of the proletariat), the slave, on the other hand, demands that production stop; stop without recourse to its ultimate democratization.” For Wilderson, racism and colonialism are conditions of possibility for rather than epiphenomena of the joint governance of markets and difference.
8. Goodman, J. David, and Michael Wilson. 2014. “Officer Daniel Pantaleo Told Grand Jury He Meant No Harm to Eric Garner.” *New York Times* website, December 3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/04/nyregion/officer-told-grand-jury-he-meant-no-harm-to-eric-garner.html>.
9. Perhaps more pointedly, Haraway (1988, 585) notes, “vision is always a question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted?”
10. This police violence in the United States affects those beyond US borders as well. In the numerous examples of extrajudicial killings of Mexican adolescents and young adults at the US-Mexico border by US Border Patrol Agents, the US Border Patrol has justified these killings by arguing, without evidence, that those killed were holding rocks. The director of the US Border Patrol Agent union has argued that the alleged rocks in these individuals’ hands qualify as “a deadly force encounter. . . . One that justifies the use of deadly force” (Márquez 2012, 490).
11. The author of a story in *The Guardian* analyzed later in this article notes officers’ depiction of the racialized victim of a police killing as a “superhuman or inhuman opponent, facing them off even as they fired again and again, then dropping to a ‘tactical sniper posture’ on the ground, still holding the Taser with its red laser pointing at them.”
12. For more on this history, see Díaz (2014).
13. Halbfinger, David M., and Allison H. Weiner. 2005. “As Paparazzi Push Harder, Stars Try to Push Back.” *New York Times*, June 9, 2005.
14. Pearson, Ryan. 2008. “‘Britney Beat’: Paparazzi Are No Longer Faceless Pack Animals.” Associated Press, April 3, 2008. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,346212,00.html>.
15. Winton, Richard, and Tonya Alanez. 2012. “Paparazzi Flash New Audacity: As Competition Grows, Photographers Trailing L.A.’s Celebrities Become More Aggressive.” *Los Angeles Times*, *Nation*, October 16, 2005. <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/oct/16/local/me-paparazzi16>.
16. See also: “Photographers Sue!: Bachelor Wedding Airstream Exploits Security’s Attack on Photographers.” X17 online, March 8, 2010. http://www.x17online.com/celebrities/the_bachelor/photographers_sue_bachelor_wedding_airstream.php#mp52AAI935IRhkH.99. PE: Should these be moved to the reference section?
17. Dashcam transcriptions were provided to Díaz by Guerra’s family, who hired a forensic specialist to analyze and transcribe the footage.
18. Velasco, Juan. 2013. State of California, California Highway Patrol Traffic Collision Report 13-08-04052. Los Angeles. January 1, 2013; Walton, Charles. 2013. State of California, California Highway Patrol Narrative/ Supplemental Report 13-08-0452. Los Angeles. May 2, 2013.
19. Brumfield, Ben, and K. J. Matthews. 2013. “Paparazzo Killed by Oncoming Traffic after Photographing Justin Bieber’s Ferrari.” *CNN* website, January 2. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/01/02/showbiz/california-bieber-paparazzo-death/index.html>.
20. The driver of the first car who hit Guerra was stopped, questioned, and sent on her way with no charges. In fact, per the police report, the CHP officer told the driver that “the accident was not her fault.” The second driver was a hit and run, which is a felony, but no investigation followed.
21. “JB” refers to Justin Bieber.
22. Nicolini, Jill. 2013. “Celebrity Photographer Killed while Following Justin Bieber’s Car.” *Fox News* website, January 2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPNqmcybU4>.
23. Finn, Natalie. 2013. “Miley Cyrus: Justin Bieber Paparazzo Death Was Bound to Happen, Encourages the Biebs to Get Involved.” *E! News*, website, January 2. <http://www.eonline.com/news/375318/miley-cyrus-justin-bieber-paparazzo-death-was-bound-to-happen-encourages-the-biebs-to-get-involved>.
24. There are countless examples of state-sanctioned violence against people of color. Yet, only certain examples become mediated to the point of humanizing victims of said violence. The constant humanizing of and sympathizing with white celebrities that celebrity media—and paparazzi work by extension—promote contributes to the failure to humanize all victims of state-sanctioned violence. For example, the extrajudicial killing of Latina actress Vanessa Marquez in her own Los Angeles home during a police wellness check was reported in an ambiguous

fashion that reflects racialized hierarchies of humanity and vulnerability. The arrest and subsequent death of Sandra Bland, a Black woman, under the watch of law enforcement was treated in a similarly ambiguous fashion in media representations. Intersectional power structures position women of color in ways that deny their humanity, vulnerability, and worthiness of sympathy.

25. Bouie, Jamelle. 2014. "Will Today's Hispanics Be Tomorrow's Whites?" *Slate* website, April 15. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2014/04/americas-future-racial-makeup-will-todays-hispanics-be-tomorrows-whites.html>.
26. While Vicky Guerra initially suggested that Chris was profiled based on his perceived socioeconomic class rather than race, she also pointed to the racialization of Chris's speech. She explained, "I'm from Oakland, and Chris talked like that. If you talked to him, I think Chris sounded Hispanic or ethnic." Despite the police report classifying Guerra as Caucasian, there are many signs of his racial markedness in this situation, including the racialization of the paparazzi generally, a stereotypically Hispanicized last name, and coded racialized language used in the police report, including a note that "the man was wearing dark clothing and a hoodie." Following his death, the most widely circulated photos of Guerra show him looking stern, wearing a backwards cap and/or a hooded sweatshirt, paralleling the kinds of imagery on social media during the emergence of the hashtag #IfTheyGunnedMcDown, which included African American and Latinx youth juxtaposed with stereotypically tough, intimidating, or deviant pictures of themselves that might be misused in attempts to justify their hypothetical killing (Bonilla and Rosa 2015).
27. US Marine Clemente Buñuelos, who killed teenager Esequiel Hernández on Hernández's family's property, was not indicted based on his defense's argument that Hernández's death could not have been a result of racial profiling (Márquez 2012, 498).
28. Referencing recent extrajudicial killings in which the names of US Border Patrol Agents who killed people have been kept confidential by the state, Márquez asserts that "the namelessness of the agent reflects how he is transformed from a person who killed into a mechanism of the sovereign state, programmed to perform a duty that has been normalized as routine, just, and necessary" (492).
29. Solnit, Rebecca. 2016. "Death by Gentrification: The Killing that Shamed San Francisco." *The Guardian* website, March 21. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/21/death-by-gentrification-the-killing-that-shamed-san-francisco>.
30. One recent example is the case of Puerto Rican Hector Medina-Peña, whose head police kicked while Medina-Peña was on his hands and knees, complying with officers in Allentown, PA. He was then body-slammed and further assaulted. This resulted in numerous injuries, including a fractured jaw and three dislodged teeth. While one might conclude that he did not *actually* die, the institutionalized nature of the police violence inflicted on him reflects the broader structure of social death that conditioned his experiences. See: Jacobo, Julia. 2016. "Pennsylvania Police Officer Used Excessive Force when Kicking a Man During Arrest: Lawsuit." ABC News. October 21, 2016. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/pennsylvania-police-officer-excessive-force-kicking-man-arrest/story?id=42969381>.

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