◆ CHAPTER 6

Black Lives Matter in Brazil

Cidinha da Silva's *#Parem de nos matar*

Eliseo Jacob

#Parem de nos matar (#Stop Killing Us), the focus of study for this chapter, is an anthology of 72 *crônicas* (chronicles) by the Afro-Brazilian writer, intellectual, and activist Cidinha da Silva.[1] Many of the *crônicas* were previously published online, including at the *Portal Geledés*, with other online publications, and on her own blog.[2] The book, published in 2016, is dedicated to the Black social movement Reaja ou será morta (React or Die), founded in 2005 by Hamilton Borges in Salvador, Bahia, which organizes marches against police violence, has a school to educate and empower Black youth, and engages in advocacy work both in Brazil and abroad. One *crônica* from the anthology, "Quanto mais negro, mais alvo!" (The blacker you are, the likelier you are to be a target!), encapsulates the overall theme of the book by capturing the crisis of state violence against Black communities in Brazil. In the *crônica*, Cidinha da Silva references the Afro-Brazilian contemporary poet Ricardo Aleixo's poem, "rondó da ronda noturna" (night patrol rondo):

q	uanto +
p	obre +
n	egro
q	uanto +

h	owever +
p	oor +
b	lack
h	owever +

q	uanto +
n	egro +
a	lvo
q	uanto +
a	lvo +
m	orto
q	uanto +
m	orto +
u	m

h	owever +
b	lack +
a	target
h	owever +
a	target +
d	ead
h	owever +
d	ead
o	ne +[3]

The poem, written with white letters against a black background, incorporates characteristics of a rondo, or a poem structured around a fixed pattern of repetition. It merges those characteristics with the aesthetics of Brazilian concrete poetry, which focuses on visual structures, or word-objects, such as the use of the plus symbol in place of the Portuguese word *mais* (more)—the word used in Portuguese in arithmetic equations. This allows the poet to use the classical structure of the rondo of four three-line stanzas, combined with the visuals of a math equation, to critique the logic of the Brazilian state apparatus that uses law enforcement to dehumanize Afro-Brazilians by targeting Black bodies. The poem ends with the simple, yet impactful phrase, "*mais um*" (one more), which tells us that the victim of violence will become one more number in the statistics compiled each year of the number of Black Brazilians killed by state violence. Aleixo's powerful words hearken back to the sobering statistics. According to the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, in their study *Atlas da Violência 2017*, of every four people murdered in Brazil, three are Black.[4] While the overall homicide rate that same year was 43.1 per 100,000, for non-Blacks it was 16 per 100,000, again illustrating what Ricardo Aleixo has observed: if you are Black, you are more likely to become a target of some form of violence and added as one more number in this sobering statistic.

Returning to Cidinha da Silva's *crônica*, she echoes Aleixo's words: "Engana-se quem pensa que somos vítimas de racismo, somos alvo do racism . . . Quanto mais negro, mais alvo, só seria dito assim por um poeta" (You are mistaken if you think we are victims of racism, we are targets of racism . . . However more Black, more a target. It could only be said in such a way by a poet).[5] The author's argument that Blacks in Brazil are the target of racism, and not merely victims, challenges the state's narrative that race is irrelevant to why certain citizens are frequently detained, harassed, or killed.[6] The author's comments also clearly indicate that

political policies have been enacted and certain social norms have developed that directly impact Black Brazilians in targeted and harmful ways.

The political work involved in discussing the value of Black life in *#Parem de nos matar* is evident throughout Cidinha da Silva's career as an activist and writer. In the preface of the book, Sueli Carneiro, one of the most important contemporary Afro-Brazilian woman intellectuals, asserts that da Silva's career as a writer has always coexisted with her path as an activist for human rights with a focus on race and gender. Carneiro notes how da Silva gave up the comfort of being a well-known activist with the Instituto Geledés to devote all of her attention to writing, thereby developing into a Black intellectual figure.[7] Just as she found success in her activist work, da Silva's career as a writer has had similar outcomes, with the publication of seventeen books that range from short story collections, poetry, theatrical pieces, to children's books, as well as edited volumes on affirmative action and anti-racism polices in the education system. Additionally, she has become a prolific writer of *crônicas*, having published seven collections: *Cada Tridente em seu lugar e outras crônicas* (2007), *Oh, margem! Reinventa os Rios!* (2011), *Racismo no Brasil e afetos correlatos* (2013), *Baú de miudezas, sol e chuva* (2014), *Sobre-viventes* (2016), *#Parem de nos matar* (2016), *O homem azul do deserto* (2018), and most recently *Exuzilhar: As melhores crônicas da Cidinha da Silva Vol. I and II* (2019). The unifying themes in these *crônicas* is Black culture, politics, and history, both in Brazil and in the larger African diaspora.

This idea of the "alvo," or target, found in Ricardo Aleixo's poem, which serves as inspiration for *#Parem de nos matar*, hearkens to the historical nature of violence against Black Brazilians. Importantly, the *crônicas* in the volume demonstrate that the violence in contemporary society can be traced back to a Brazilian state rooted in necropolitics, a term understood by Achille Mbembe as the "ultimate expression of sovereignty [which] resides, to a large degree, in the power and capacity to decide who may live or must die."[8] The theory of necropolitics builds on Michel Foucault's notion of biopower and Giorgio Agamben's ideas related to the state of exception. However, Mbembe questions whether biopower is sufficient to explain how the political, under the guise of war and fight against terror, makes murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective.[9] In the context of Brazil, those who must die, as determined by the state, are disproportionally individuals and communities of African descent. Therefore, for this chapter, I will use the framework of necropolitics to undertake an analysis of Cidinha da Silva's *#Parem de nos matar* and to understand how an analysis of Black genocide in Brazil raises questions regarding citizenship for Afro-Brazilians who continually face the threat of social and physical death. While Cidinha da Silva covers

a wide range of social issues in her book, including police brutality, poverty, and black beauty, all of her essays center around the question of the social, cultural, and political value of Afro-Brazilians in contemporary society. The volume thus engages with discussions on the possibility of political mobilization and social empowerment in the face of state violence and repression.

This chapter discusses the instances of violence—from the murder of Black youth by police to Afro-Brazilian celebrities targeted by online racist attacks—captured in da Silva's *crônicas*. I argue that the mechanisms of necropolitics manifest through two forms of violence, symbolic and material, which provide a way to understand why and how genocide is being enacted against Afro-Brazilians. I use the definition of genocide adopted by Black scholars, who apply the term to cases involving Afrodescendant peoples in the Americas, and in line with William Patterson's *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People* (1951). Patterson draws on the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of December 9, 1948, which defines genocide as:

> Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious groups as such:
>
> a) Killing members of the group;
> b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group;
> e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.[10]

In the context of Brazil, João H. Costa Vargas provides an additional definition regarding the complex ways genocide can manifest in Brazilian society, which builds on Abdias do Nascimento's concepts in *Brazil, Mixture or Massacre?: Essays in the Genocide of a Black People* (1989): "Black genocide in Brazil is multifaceted and is part of a continuum. The various dimensions of Black genocide can be schematized into two sets of events—all of which are perpetrated and (at least tacitly supported) by the wider society: material and ideological."[11] While there are debates about how genocide should be defined and enforced, the focus of this chapter demonstrates that Cidinha da Silva provides the reader with an archive of the accumulation of different violent acts against Black Brazilians, both symbolic and material, to illustrate that anti-Black racism and violence are indeed a reality that needs to be recognized and addressed in the public sphere.

Material Violence: Killing the Black Body

Cidinha da Silva documents in her book the current crisis unfolding in Brazil regarding the high rate of homicides among Afro-Brazilians, in particular young adult males from Brazil's major urban centers, like São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Salvador. In 2017, Brazil recorded over 65,000 homicides, with 75 percent of those killed being Black citizens, and over half of this number were individuals between the ages of 15 and 29.[12] In *#Parem de nos matar*, da Silva transforms these sobering statistics into detailed accounts on high profile cases to discuss how and why Black youth are being targeted for death at high rates by the police, private citizens, and vigilantes.

Of all the stark images tied to the legacy of slavery and racial violence, lynching is a powerful metaphor, which da Silva uses to address the targeting of Black citizens on Brazil's city streets. In the *crônica* "O recado dos linchamentos" (Memo on Lynchings), the author begins her text by noting the recent rise in the number of Black Brazilians killed by *justiceiros*, or vigilantes: "recolham-se ao lugar de negros ou serão vocês o próximo alvo" (return to your proper place as Blacks or you will be the next target).[13] She calls upon Ricardo Aleixo's imagery of the target, as framed by his poem and used as the epigraph to this chapter, to emphasize how these deaths are not accidental or random but intentional. Extrajudicial killings have become frequent practices in Brazilian society and have been justified by elected officials, conservative media pundits, and parts of civil society as necessary due to a failed justice system.[14] The targets of these executions are disproportionately Black males, and the persistent killing of these youth is enacted by a "system that works by devaluing the lives of non-Whites and perceiving their autonomous and legitimate organizations as threats."[15] Da Silva argues that modern day lynchings extend beyond vigilantes to actions by individuals from Brazil's rich, upper-class society, many of whom are rarely featured in the media for their criminal behavior. Rarely are they publicly disclosed as agents of physical violence enacted on working-class, Black bodies, seen as less than human and as a threat to the safety and order of civil society. The actions of rich, young, white men—called by the well-known Brazilian term *playboys*—whose careless driving results in the killing of innocent Black pedestrians and Black workers are reframed by the author as perpetuations of the violent history of lynching against Brazil's Black population. "O recado dos linchamentos" features three instances in which young Black men are targeted by these drivers. In the first, a son of a multi-millionaire runs over a black cyclist. In the second, a drunk playboy runs over a worker riding home on his bicycle, resulting in the cyclist's arm being torn from his body

and stuck to the car. The driver eventually stops his vehicle and throws the arm into a creek as if to discard evidence of the crime. In yet a third case, a medical school student runs over a *gari* and flees the scene without rendering aid.[16] Da Silva's decision to label these three cases "lynching" brings attention to the long history of white individuals and mobs killing Black individuals in public spaces with little or no legal consequences.

The leniency with which the criminal justice system dealt with these three young, white men raises questions regarding the privileged rights of white citizens in contrast to Black citizens. Cidinha da Silva unequivocally categorizes the three drivers as criminals but observes how they are protected by the law rather than being subjected to it. James Holston would classify her observations of these cases as a form of "differentiated citizenship," or immunity from the law. For Holston, all Brazilians are citizens of the nation state; however, categories of rights are applied differently depending on a person's race, social class, gender, and education. Therefore, the white drivers are afforded more rights and protections than the Black victims due to their privileged social status in Brazilian society. Holston argues that Brazilians "always promote the person at the expense of the individual. Thus, the person demands that the law be bent especially for him, that he obtain a singular application of law."[17] The law is adapted to the needs of the individual defendant, with particular regard to said person's origins and phenotype. In return, the victims, the three Black men, have their rights sacrificed as exceptions to the rights given to the drivers. This immunity from the law can be seen in the case of the drunk playboy who discarded the victim's arm in a creek. Originally given a sentence of six years in a *semiaberto* (semi-open) prison,[8] a suspended license for five years, and damages in the amount of sixty minimum salaries to the victim[9], the judge reduced the driver's sentence to two years of house arrest, a suspended license for eight months, and payment of damages in the amount of ten minimum salaries.[18] The judge's actions—issued after the publication of the *crônica*—strongly reinforce da Silva's argument that Afro-Brazilians are denied rights as legal persons and as human beings because the legal recourse they are entitled to as citizens insufficiently addresses the violence perpetuated against them, which is in itself not fully acknowledged by the legal system.

The genocide of Black youth, however, is not limited to the actions of private citizens. Most of the *crônicas* included in *#Parem de nos matar* address the pressing issue of the genocide of Black Brazilians and find the state to be the main perpetrator of violence via the police. For Jaime Alves, killings carried out by the police in Brazil reflect broader state ideologies that deal with domination, crime, order, justice, and "value judgements on who deserves to live."[19] The necropolitical

logic of the state regarding who should live and who should die disproportionately impacts Black youth from Brazil's urban, working-class peripheries and *favelas,* or shantytowns. As previously noted, João Vargas observes that Black youth are viewed by the state and the ruling class as non-human and a threat to the existing social order when they decide to organize or congregate.

The right to life and impartiality before the law are questions that Cidinha da Silva raises in the *crônica* "Os meninos do Morro da Lagartixa" (The Boys from Gecko Hill), which critiques the police massacre of five Black teenagers and how the state handled the ensuing controversy. On November 28, 2015, Roberto, 16 years old, along with four of his friends, decided to celebrate his first paycheck from his job in a local supermarket at Madureira Park. That same evening, as they returned home to Morro da Lagartixa, in the *Zona Norte* of Rio de Janeiro, they came upon a squad of four military police officers who were searching for a group of assailants who had robbed a truck transporting beer.[20] Even though the five teenagers obeyed the police order to stop and identify themselves as residents of the neighborhood, they were still fired upon, with the police firing 111 bullets at the five unarmed youth. The police initially claimed self-defense, even though none of the young men were armed, none had criminal records, and all worked and studied in the local area.[21] In the conclusion to this *crônica*, Cidinha da Silva makes a scathing observation about this *chacina,* or police massacre: "Ocorre que discutir a violência, apenas, não resolve. É preciso problematizar o racismo estrutural da sociedade brasileira que gera violência e avaliza o extermínio de jovens negros, comemorado por governantes como gols de placa" (It so happens that merely discussing violence does not solve the problem. It is necessary to problematize the structural racism of Brazilian society that generates violence and guarantees the extermination of Black youth, celebrated by politicians like goals on the scoreboard).[22] The metaphor of the scoreboard has a poignant effect as soccer plays a central role in Brazilian society. Instead of players compiling records and accolades, it is the state recording another number to add to its sobering statistics in its war against poor communities of color. For da Silva, white supremacy is the root of state violence because, using the framework of Mbembe's necropolitics, it places certain individuals under the category of those who must die, which in the framework of modernity is non-white persons not seen as fully human and not given the same civil rights as other citizens.

The *chacina* is also a reflection of the state of exception, as defined by Giorgio Agamben. Achille Mbembe builds on Agamben's concept that the state of exception is not limited to atrocities like the Jewish Holocaust and that the first manifestations of biopower and state of exception in modernity occurred with the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. For Mbembe, the "slave condition results

from a triple loss: loss of a 'home,' loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status."[23] Scholars like João H. Costa Vargas and Jaime Alves argue that this loss on multiple fronts of a person's existence still occurs today in Brazil and other nations with significant Afrodescendant populations. This state of exception for the Black body, therefore, continues as a legacy of post-slavery societies, as Afro-Brazilians were never seen as fully human. Therefore, state institutions and their agents frequently suspend the rule of law when dealing with Afrodescendant communities.

The loss of home and life becomes a salient point for da Silva as she questions whether these five young men, representative of Black youth throughout Brazil, can freely move about their own community in Rio de Janeiro. In the opening section of the *crônica*, the author references the hit song from the mid-1990s that has become a classic in the *funk carioca* genre, "Rap da Felicidade" (Happiness Rap).[24] Recorded by Wilton Esteves and Wesley Castro Rodrigues in 1995, the song's refrain offers a powerful message from the perspective of a young, Black man from the *favela*:

> Eu só quero é ser feliz
> andar tranquilamente na favela onde eu nasci
>
> e poder me ogulhar
> e ter a consciência que o pobre tem seu lugar.
>
> *I just want to be happy / walk calmly in the favela where I was born / and be proud of myself / and be aware that the poor has a place too.*

Roberto and his four friends, all killed by the police, were walking through their own neighborhood and having a good time, echoing the sentiment of the song. Its lyrics contain an important political message relating to urban space and who is permitted to move in, through, and out of certain spaces of the city. The *favelas* in the *Zona Norte* of Rio de Janeiro are heavily policed, with frequent shootouts and blitzes, or checkpoints, that commonly result in excessive force by the police as residents try to leave and return to their homes. In the face of state-sanctioned surveillance and violence, the narrator of the song has one simple request: to be able to live in peace like anyone else and enjoy the banality of everyday life that is missing from his community. The final line of the refrain is particularly important. Here, the singer puts forth the argument that *favela* residents have a right to the city, a right that has been denied to them since these makeshift communities started to emerge soon after the abolition of slavery in 1888. Cidinha da

Silva echoes the sentiments of the lyrics by observing that "a liberdade de ir e vir não é facultada aos jovens negros sequer na favela onde nasceram" (the freedom to come and go is not given to Black youth, including in the favela where they were born).[25] This loss of home then translates into an increased likelihood of a loss of citizenship and, ultimately, the loss of one's life.

The massacre of the five Black youth is not only a material genocide but a symbolic one as well. The symbolic genocide here is rooted in the state's attempts to exonerate itself from any responsibility for the action taken by the police. Da Silva notes how the state government of Rio de Janeiro made every effort to blame the massacre on the individual officers instead of on the institutionalization of racism in the police force: "O Secretário de Segurança do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, José Mariano Beltrame se pronunciou e eximiu a Corporacão Militar de responsabilidades, haja vista que em sua opinião não se trata de um problema de despreparo professional dos responsáveis pela matança. Trata-se de um problema de caráter dos matadors" (The Secretary of Security for the State of Rio de Janeiro, José Mariano Beltrame made a public announcement absolving the Military Police Force of any responsibility, because in his opinion it's not a problem of professional unpreparedness of those responsible for the killing. It is a problem to do with the character of the killers).[26] The argument that the police who committed the heinous act of killing the five Black youth did so because of a moral defect serves as a strategy to remove all blame from the state. The secretary's explanation echoes a pattern by Brazilian state authorities to argue that the causes of societal violence are linked to the crime, drugs, and poverty found in margins of society. Marilena Chauí categorizes this meta-narrative as the myth of non-violence in Brazil. However, Chauí argues, the state is in reality the main source of violence in contemporary society, enacted through policies that increase socio-economic inequality and legitimize the use of force to control the general population.[27] Jaime Alves builds on Chauí's framework by making a direct connection between police terror in Brazil's major cities and the interests and policies formulated and enacted by politicians, state institutions, and powerful individuals with direct access to the state. Ultimately, these theories explain da Silva's use of the image of the police as the "armed hand of the state."[28]

Symbolic Violence: Silencing Black Women in the Public Sphere

As João H. Costa Vargas has stated, genocide is not only material but ideological as well. In the case of Brazil, the ideology of racial democracy perpetuates the belief that racial miscegenation and flexible racial categories leads to a post-racial

society where no one sees race. Thomas Skidmore has argued that the Brazilian white elite has promoted racial democracy throughout the twentieth century as a strategy to obscure real forms of racial oppression.[29] This ideology works to appropriate pieces of Black culture and repackage it as part of Brazil's national identity, reinforce the unspoken social contract that everyone lives in harmony as long as people know their place, and ultimately espouse *branqueamento,* or racial whitening. Cidinha da Silva documents in her *crônicas* the visceral reactions Brazilians express when Afro-Brazilians not only occupy highly visible spaces in the media but do so in a way that challenges the social norms that have developed due to the ideology of racial democracy. Da Silva focuses in particular on attacks made in the public and digital spheres against successful Black women, namely the actress Taís Araújo and the news anchor Maria Júlia Coutinho, and what these episodes of anti-Black racism uncover about the relationship between race, gender, and class. The racially charged and misogynistic posts shared by participants in online forums and the strategies employed by media conglomerates to discount and ultimately silence Maju and Taís are attempts at a symbolic violence—defined by Pierre Bourdieu as a gentle or invisible violence meant to reinforce relations of domination—which, in the context of Brazil, relates to the mythos of racial democracy and to social relations rooted in cordiality.[30]

The function of the token minority figure in silencing Black women and perpetuating the myth of racial democracy comes up in the title of the *crônica*, "Uma Michelle incomoda muita gente, duas Michelles incomodam muito mais. . ." (One Michelle Makes a Lot of People Uncomfortable, Two Michelles Even More So. . .). Michelle refers to Taís Araújo's character in the 2015 Globo series *Mr. Brau*, which she portrayed alongside her real-life husband Lázaro Ramos.[31] In the TV show, Araújo and Ramos portray a Black power couple, a famous singer and choreographer/businesswoman. The second Michelle in the title refers to Michelle Obama, a powerful Black woman that Michelle, the character, emulates. The question of how many non-white actors or other successful public figures will be allowed to inhabit these normative white spaces is the real question that da Silva is trying to address. The author describes the impactful image Araújo has in the show: "Taís Araújo radicalizou no visual para caracterizar o poderio professsional e econômico da personagem. Abusou do volume, das cores, e do brilho de um cabelo crespo que lhe emprestou o ar felino que seu rosto delicado desconhecia, e que deve deixar os racistas em pânico" (Taís Araújo radicalized herself through the visual to characterize the professional and economic force for the character. She overdid volume, colors, and the shine of a frizzy hair that gave her a catlike vibe unfamiliar to her delicate face, and that probably put the racists in a panic).[32] As the author notes later in her text, not only did the role of a powerful

successful woman make people uncomfortable, but using hair styles rooted in an Afro-centric aesthetic also caused many Internet users to react negatively.

On October 31, 2015, the actress's Facebook page was the subject of racist comments. In response, she stated in a post: "I will not be intimated, I will not lower my head either."[33] The hashtag #SomosTodosTaísAraujo (#WeAreAll-TaísAraujo) became a trending topic on the morning of November 1. The social media attacks against Taís Araújo could be interpreted as a form of violence meant to silence her and other Black women wanting to publicly express their identity. Yet, da Silva problematizes this incident by critiquing the politics of representation as dictated by the media, which prefers the token Black actor that makes white spectators comfortable and does not disrupt the legacy of Brazil's racial democracy.

Cidinha da Silva closes the *crônica* by commenting how both the real success of Taís and the portrayal of a successful Black women on TV reignited the never-ending debate about the subservient place of the Black woman in Brazilian society: "Nada de novo no front. Só a velha reificação do lugar da mulher negra no discurso e no imaginário da casa-grande recalcitrant e ressentida" (Nothing new on the front lines. Only the old reification of the place of the Black woman in the discourse and imagination of the recalcitrant and resentful casa-grande [big house])."[34] The reference to the *casa grande* points to the legacy of slavery, which Vargas observes as the symbolic violence of racial democracy, as outlined in Gilberto Freyre's study *A Casa Grande e a Senzala*, where racial relations in Brazil remain in harmony with each other at the expense of those in subaltern roles, namely Black women. Additionally, this dynamic of race and gender in relation to servitude has been critiqued by Kia Lilly Caldwell, who observes that, throughout the twentieth century in Brazil, Black women have been viewed in the main role of domestic workers who serve the powerful and are not considered capable of being in positions of power themselves in larger Brazilian society.[35] As the author argues in "Mr. Brau e Michelle, o casal odara" (Mr. Brau and Michelle, the Odara Couple), the *crônica* that serves as a sequel to the aforementioned piece, there is not necessarily a problem of Black actresses interpreting roles as maids or other menial labor positions.[36] The issue, instead, is the preponderance of Black characters without a voice, who are seen but not heard in scenes and who are only there to serve and clean in the background but are never able to articulate their own experiences, their feelings, and what their lives are like beyond white, hegemonic spaces. There exists a violence in that silence, she observes, which leads to the social death of Black women who are not seen as full citizens or even human. This is, as Jaime Alves observes, the double negation of Black life.[37]

The specter of the *casa grande* haunts other successful Black women in Brazil, in particular Maria Júlia Coutinho, a weather anchor for Rede Globo. Cidinha da Silva devotes four *crônicas* in her book to analyze the anchorwoman's experiences with racism in the workplace and in the public sphere. In April 2015, Maria Júlia Coutinho, also known as Maju Coutinho, was hired to be the weather anchor on *Jornal Nacional*, the most popular evening news program on Brazil's most powerful TV Network, Rede Globo. In July of that same year, like Taís Araújo, Maju was subject to racist attacks on Facebook. Da Silva uses the metaphor of the *casa grande* in the *crônica* titled "O espírito dos ataques raciais à jornalista Maria Júlia Coutinho" (The Spirit of Racist Attacks Against Maria Júlia Coutinho) to describe the online attacks: "A casa-grande desconfiada acende o sinal amarelo. Os ataques racistas são iniciados, sempre ardilosos e escancarados, mas em menor número. Querem intimidá-la. É a primeira parte da estratégia. A casa-grande dá o sinal vermelho. Recomenda-se lançar mão de piadas, granadas sórdidas, armas químicas de desagregação molecular da humanidade de uma pessoa negra" (The suspicious big house signals the yellow light. The racist attacks commence, always underhanded and blatant, but in few numbers. They want to intimidate her. It's the first part of the strategy. The big house gives the red light. It recommends to hurl jokes, sordid grenades, chemical weapons for the molecular disintegration of Black person's humanity).[38] Da Silva's allusions to war tactics parallel Achille Mbembe's argument that the state's ultimate goal is the extermination of peoples and communities it considers to be an enemy. In the cases of Maju and Taís, both are categorized as threats to the existing social order by positioning themselves as symbols of Black excellence; therefore, the symbolic violence tied to white supremacy taking place in cyberspace has the intended effect to discredit and invalidate the ontological selves of these women.

Da Silva notes that Rede Globo is also guilty of espousing white supremacist ideas. João Vargas argues that the hyperconsciousness of race in Brazil is a way to negate racism and racial inequality. This, in turn, contributes to the mobs of people online who are upset that Black women now occupy more visible roles in the news and media. In particular, the author targets the head of Rede Globo's news division for contributing to the myth that affirmative action policies and other equality laws means racism is no longer an issue: "E agora Ali Kamel? Os ataque racistas à jornalista e às atrizes deixaram a Rede Globo de calças na mão, pois colocaram em cheque sua posição de inexistência do racismo, expressado no livro *Não somos racistas* do diretor de jornalismo do corporação" (And now what Ali Kamel? The racist attacks against the journalist and the actresses caught Rede Globo with their pants down, because they put in check their own positioning

of the inexistence of racism, expressed in the book *We Are Not Racists*, written by the network's news director).[39]

The book *We Are Not Racists* (2006) is not an academic study, though it attempts to present itself as such by collecting articles published in the *O Globo* newspaper since 2003, with the central thesis that racism is not a characterizing trait of Brazil because there no longer exists institutional barriers for the progress and social ascension of Black Brazilians. Kamel does not completely reject the assertion that racism exists in the country but diminishes its impact by arguing that there exists far more prejudice due to social class than race. Therefore, the ensuing attacks on Maju Coutinho, a successful Black woman, can be connected to the ideas of the non-existence of racism in Brazil, which her employer had promoted for many years.

How Rede Globo and Maju's fellow anchors decided to respond to the attacks points to the symbolic violence of Black women who are seen but rarely heard. The hashtag #SomosTodoMaju (#WeAreAllMaju) started to circulate, with notable anchors like William Bonner going on air during *Jornal Nacional* to hold up a handwritten sign with the hashtag. The act of supposed solidarity by the anchors generated controversy, which Cidinha da Silva aptly describes as she considers such a public act by a white anchor: "A pergunta reverbra: Somos todos Maju ou não somos? Sim, somos! O problem são eles! Ou seja, nós somos Maju porque vivemos e enfrentamos a discriminação racial cotidiana, em diversos níveis. Da morte simbólica que tentaram impingir à jornalista, ao extermínio físico imposto a Cláudia Ferreira e a 82 jovens negros por dia no Brasil" (The question reverberates: Are we all Maju or are we not? Yes, we are! They are the problem! Or, in other words, we are Maju because we live and face daily racial discrimination, on multiple levels. From the symbolic death that they attempted to impose on the journalist, to the physical extermination imposed on Claúdia Ferreira and the 82 Black youth per day in Brazil).[40]

The author explains that the hashtag represents the experiences of Black women and aims to problematize the violence imposed on them, whether symbolically, in the case of Maju, or physically in the case of Claudia Ferreira, a mother of four who was caught in police crossfire, subsequently placed in the back of a police SUV, and dragged by the vehicle for several blocks when the back door flew open as the police were taking her to the hospital. When William Bonner used the hashtag, he was engaging in what da Silva categorizes as: "pessoas que escolhem uma mulher negra única para respeitar, até para endeusar. Isso é muito comum entre os discípulos brancos e suas mestras negras: Iyalorixás, professors, regentes de grupos, companheiras de trabalho, como Maju" (people who choose a single

Black woman to respect, even to deify. That is very common among the white disciples and their Black female masters: Iyalorixás, professors, group leaders, work colleagues, like Maju).[41] Such Black women are objectified and come to serve the interests of a white, hegemonic society. They are not allowed to speak their truth, which becomes evident when Maju went on air to address the racists attacks and could only use the terms like prejudice, rather than accurately describe what truly happened to her, which were acts of anti-Black racism.

Cidinha da Silva closes one of the *crônicas* with an important question: "Toda vez que vejo a Globo fazendo coisas que parecem avanço, me pergunto o que eles querem com isso?" (Every time that I see Globo doing things that seem like progress, I ask myself, what do they really want with that?). The author's self-reflective interrogation on the controversy surrounding Maju points to the illusion of progress dictated by the metaphor of the *casa grande* that is referenced frequently throughout the book. This episode of online racist attacks directed at Maju again points to the lingering symbolic violence surrounding racial relations in Brazil, as institutions with power, like Rede Globo, lead discourses of "progress" in the workplace.

Conclusion

The genocide of Black individuals and groups continues today in Brazil through the manifestations of both material and symbolic violence. However, the use of necropolitics as a theoretical framework to explain how and why these different forms of violence have been directed at a demographic that constitutes over half of the population of the country is key to deconstructing the practice. Identifying the operative variables in such cases allows Cidinha da Silva in her anthology *#Parem de nos matar* to condemn the systematic destruction of Black communities. The author's work, therefore, contributes to current efforts by Black activists, community leaders, and public figures to affirm the existence of these violent experiences. Each *crônica* challenges the hyperconsciousness of race in Brazil, so well described by João H. Costa Vargas, as well as the Black necropolis of Brazilian cities, as identified by Jaime Alves. The timeliness and urgency of Cidinha da Silva in bringing attention to the *alvo* (target) of symbolic and physical violence directed at Black populations in Brazil—so poignantly visualized in Ricardo Aleixo's poem—reverberates in the Brazilian literary field.

NOTES

1. The *crônica* is a Brazilian literary genre like the American op-ed but which incorporates more creative writing elements, like a short story. *Crônicas* typically comment on cultural and political issues related to everyday life. Historically, they were published in newspapers and magazines, but now they are found in blogs and other online media outlets. Authors typically republish their *crônicas* as anthologies, which Cidinha da Silva did with the book *#Parem de nós matar*.
2. The *Portal Geledés* is an online portal managed by Geledés—Instituto da Mulher Negra (Geledés Black Woman Institute), an NGO founded in 1988 by Sueli Carneiro and one of the largest non-profits that focuses on Black feminism in Brazil. The *Portal Geledés* publishes articles, interviews, op-eds, and other information related to Black culture, politics, and history. For da Silva's blog, see Cidinha da Silva, *Blog da Cidinha*, accessed March 2021, http://cidinhadasilva.blogspot.com.
3. The author intentionally used all lower-case letters for the title of the poem. The poem can be found in the anthology Ricardo Aleixo, *Trívio: Poemas* (Belo Horizonte: Scriptum Livros, 2001). All translations from Portuguese to English in this chapter are my own.
4. Daniel Cerqueira et al., *Atlas da Violência 2017* (Rio de Janeiro: IPEA, 2017), 30.
5. Cidinha da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar* (São Paulo: Ijumaa, 2016), 166.
6. See Jaime Alves, *The Anti-Black City: Police Terror and Black Urban Life in Brazil* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); and João H. Costa Vargas, *Never Meant to Survive: Genocide and Utopias in Black Diaspora Communities* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010).
7. Sueli Carneiro, "Prefácio," in *#Parem de nos matar*, Cidinha da Silva (São Paulo: Ijumaa, 2016), 12–14.
8. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 11.
9. Ibid., 12.
10. João H. Costa Vargas, "Genocide in the African Diaspora: United States, Brazil, and the Need for a Holistic Research and Political Method," *Cultural Dynamics* 17, no. 3 (2005): 267–68.
11. Ibid., 280.
12. Cerqueira et al., *Atlas da Violência 2017*, 8.
13. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 21.
14. Alves, *The Anti-Black City*, 61–63. Alves categorizes the killing of black youth in the urban peripheries of Brazil's major cities as a form of domination and control known as the black necropolis. Alves provides examples of this macabre state logic, including local business owners and off-duty police officers being involved in many homicides, as well as former police offers being elected to city, state, and federal positions by promoting themselves as the "killers of bandits." Contemporary Brazilian literature from the 1990s was effective in problematizing the necropolitics of the Brazilian state. In Patricia Melo's 1995 novel *O matador* (The Killer), for example, the protagonist runs

a "security" business with full police cooperation to carry out extrajudicial killings throughout São Paulo.

15. Vargas, *Never Meant to Survive*, 13.
16. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 21–22. *Garis* are sanitation workers responsible for cleaning the streets and removing trash from public spaces. They are recognized by their distinct orange suits.
17. James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 20.
18. In a sentence of *prisão semiaberto,* the condemned can study and go to work during the day but must report to the prison every evening, where they must sleep and reside at all other times. In Brazil, minimum salary refers to the national monthly minimum wage an individual may earn from an employer. In 2019, the monthly minimum salary was 998 Brazilian reais, or approximately $247.40. "Motorista Que Atropelou e Jogou Braço de Ciclista Tem Pena Reduzida," *G1 São Paulo,* May 4, 2016, accessed August 2019, https://g1.globo.com/sao-paulo/noticia/2016/04/motorista-que-atropelou-e-jogou-braco-de-ciclista-tem-pena-reduzida.html.
19. Alves, *The Anti-Black City*, 50.
20. Many *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro use the term *morro,* or hill, in their name since many *favelas* in the city are built on hills and other high points.
21. Cassiano Martines Bovo, "3 anos da Chacina de Costa Barros: 5 jovens mortos, 111 tiros," *Justificando*, November 9, 2018, accessed August 2019, https://www.justificando.com/2018/11/09/3-anos-da-chacina-de-costa-barros-5-jovens-mortos-111-tiros/.
22. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 36.
23. Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 21–22.
24. Funk music emerged in the mid 1980s in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro but did not gain mainstream traction until the 1990s.
25. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 34.
26. Ibid., 35.
27. Marilena Chauí, "A Não-Violência Do Brasileiro, Um Mito Interessantíssimo," In *1 Conferẽncia Brasileira de Educação* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Educação de São Paulo 1980), 3–5.
28. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 35.
29. Thomas Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 217.
30. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Malden, MA: Polity, 1991), 24.
31. The fact that *Mr. Brau* was a landmark TV series in 2015 for showcasing a lead cast of two Afro-Brazilian actors, Taís Araújo and Lázaro Ramos, highlights the continued symbolic violence of Brazil's racial hierarchies that Afro-Brazilians are not capable of occupying positions of importance in the public sphere. The actors are a married power couple, frequently drawing comparisons to African American power couples like Jay-Z and Beyoncé or Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith.

32. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 66.
33. "Taís Araújo Posta Desabafo Após Ser Vítima de Racismo Na Web: 'Não Vou Me Intimidar,' " *Extra*, January 11, 2015, accessed September 2019, https://extra.globo.com/famosos/tais-araujo-posta-desabafo-apos-ser-vitima-de-racismo-na-web-nao-vou-me-intimidar-17940557.html.
34. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 66.
35. See Kia Lilly Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil: Re-Envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).
36. Odara is a Yoruba word frequently used in Afro-Brazilian religions like Candomblé that means beautiful, good, positive.
37. See Alves, *The Anti-Black City*.
38. da Silva, *#Parem de nos matar*, 76–77.
39. Ibid., 88–89.
40. Ibid., 77.
41. Ibid., 77.

WORKS CITED

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

———. *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Aleixo, Ricardo. *Tŕivio: Poemas*. Belo Horizonte: Scriptum Livros, 2001.

Alves, Jaime. *The Anti-Black City: Police Terror and Black Urban Life in Brazil*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

———. "Neither Humans nor Rights: Some Notes on the Double Negation of Black Life in Brazil." *Journal of Black Studies* 45, no. 2 (2014): 143–62.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited by John Thompson. Translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Malden, MA: Polity, 1991.

Caldwell, Kia Lilly. *Negras in Brazil: Re-Envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Cerqueira, Daniel, Renato Sergio de Lima, Samira Bueno, Luis Iván Valencia, Olaya Hanashiro, Pedro Henrique G. Machado, and Adriana dos Santos Lima. *Atlas da Violência 2017*. Rio de Janeiro: IPEA, 2017.

Chauí, Marilena. "A Não-Violência Do Brasileiro, Um Mito Interessantíssimo." In *1 Conferência Brasileira de Educação*. São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Educação de São Paulo 1980.

da Silva, Cidinha. *Blog da Cidinha.* Accessed March 2021. http://cidinhadasilva.blogspot.com.

———. *#Parem de nos matar*. São Paulo: Ijumaa, 2016.

Freyre, Gilberto. *Casa-grande and senzala: Formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarchal*. São Paulo: Jose Olympio, 1977.

Holston, James. *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Kamel, Ali. *Não somos racistas: Uma reação aos que querem nos transformar numa nação bicolor*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2006.

Martines Bovo, Cassiano. "3 anos da Chacina de Costa Barros: 5 jovens mortos, 111 tiros." *Justificando*. November 9, 2018. Accessed August 2019. https://www.justificando.com/2018/11/09/3-anos-da-chacina-de-costa-barros-5-jovens-mortos-111-tiros/.

Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 11–40.

Melo, Patricia. *O matador*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995.

"Motorista Que Atropelou e Jogou Braço de Ciclista Tem Pena Reduzida." *G1 São Paulo*. May 4, 2016. Accessed August 2019. https://g1.globo.com/sao-paulo/noticia/2016/04/motorista-que-atropelou-e-jogou-braco-de-ciclista-tem-pena-reduzida.html.

Nascimento, Abdias do. *Brazil, Mixture or Massacre?: Essays in the Genocide of a Black People*. Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1989.

Skidmore, Thomas. *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.

"Taís Araújo Posta Desabafo Após Ser Vítima de Racismo Na Web: 'Não Vou Me Intimidar.' " *Extra*. January 11, 2015. Accessed September 2019. https://extra.globo.com/famosos/tais-araujo-posta-desabafo-apos-ser-vitima-de-racismo-na-web-nao-vou-me-intimidar-17940557.html.

Vargas, João H. Costa. "Genocide in the African Diaspora: United States, Brazil, and the Need for a Holistic Research and Political Method." *Cultural Dynamics* 17, no. 3 (2005): 267–90.

———. *Never Meant to Survive: Genocide and Utopias in Black Diaspora Communities*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010.