Taypis of Racist Imaginaries and the (Ir)repairable in Denied Narratives of Black Women

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Nayara Luiza de Souza iD

Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation, visualisation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing

Carlos Alberto de Carvalho iD

Conceptualisation, investigation, funding acquisition, project administration, supervision, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing

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Nayara Luiza de Souza

https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1347-5208

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação Social, Departamento de Comunicação Social, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation, visualisation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing

Carlos Alberto de Carvalho

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8433-8794

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação Social, Departamento de Comunicação Social, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Conceptualisation, investigation, funding acquisition, project administration, supervision, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing

The racial and sexual oppression of Black Brazilian women is, as Lélia Gonzalez (2020) argues, one of the most perceptible yet consistently denied colonial legacies in the country. One of the myths perpetuating the erasure of Brazil's history of enslavement has established an official narrative portraying the nation as a racial paradise. However, when examining records of femicide, intimate partner violence and sexual abuse, it becomes evident that Black women are the most victimised. Faced with the impossibility of repairing the damage caused by the historical legacy of enslavement, which subjected Black women to multifaceted forms of violation, it falls upon us to eradicate all the structural conditions that

perpetuate them as the primary targets of violence and dehumanisation. In this article, we delve into what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) describes as "taypi", a "middle-world" and an intermediate space where it is possible to witness the interaction between contrasting forms without the boundaries between them disappearing. These contact zones, however, can be permeated by violence when the opposites brought into contact are hierarchised by the colonial context, as Blacks, Indigenous and Whites were racialised in Brazil. Drawing inspiration from the displacements of times and spaces that are reinformed, the proposal of the *taypis* of racist imaginaries brings into contact images of racist erasures that, when evidenced through sociological methodology, point to Brazilian "racism by denial" (Gonzalez, 2020), present in national institutions, including journalism.

Keywords: racism, reparation, journalism, Black women

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A opressão racial e sexual das mulheres negras brasileiras é, como defende Lélia Gonzalez (2020), uma das heranças coloniais mais perceptíveis e mais denegadas no contexto do país. Um dos mitos responsáveis pelo apagamento da história da escravização no Brasil instituiu como história oficial que esta nação seria um paraíso racial. Contudo, ao recorrermos aos registros de feminicídio, violência íntima e abusos sexuais, verifica-se uma repetição das mulheres negras como as mais vitimizadas. Diante da impossível reparação dos danos causados pelo passado de escravização que violentou as mulheres negras das mais variadas formas, cabe, no presente, eliminar todas as condições estruturais que as mantêm como alvo preferencial de violências e desumanização. Neste artigo recorremos ao que Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) descreve como "taypi", um "mundo-do-meio" e um espaço intermediário onde é possível observar o contato entre formas opostas sem que os limites entre elas desapareçam. Essas zonas de contato, entretanto, podem ser permeadas por violência quando os opostos colocados em contato foram hierarquizados pelo contexto colonial, como Negres, Indígenas e Branques foram racializades, no Brasil. Inspirados nos deslocamentos de tempos e espaços que se reinformam, a proposta dos taypis de imaginários racistas coloca em contato imagens de apagamentos racistas que, ao serem evidenciadas por meio da metodologia sociológica, apontam para o "racismo por denegação" (Gonzalez, 2020) brasileiro, presente em instituições nacionais, incluindo nos jornalismos.

Palavras-chave: *racismo, reparação, jornalismo, mulheres negras*

Introduction

Taypi is the space of margin and border, drawn from Aymara's knowledge by sociologist and activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) in order to propose decolonial practices of understanding the world. For the Aymara, the Amerindian population that occupies the territories of present-day Peru and Bolivia, the

taypi represents a space-time where past, present, and future meet, forming the meanings of what is learnt, lived and experienced. Or, in the words of Cusicanqui (2015), who also has Aymara origins, the *taypi* would be "an arena of antagonisms and seductions" (p. 226), which the author uses as a strategy to unveil colonial forms of concealing women's and Indigenous bodies from official Bolivian history.

Observing the similarity of this dynamic of metaphoric and literal erasure of bodies with the practices of genocide towards Black people in Brazil, a direct result of colonial strategies, we propose in this article to expand the notion of the Aymara *taypis* to encompass the erasure identified in the Brazilian context. This action seeks, if not a reparation, that is still possible to propose ways of determining how Brazilian journalism perpetuates colonial violence when it reports on gender violence involving Black women (including cisgender and transgender women).

To this end, it is important to revisit the past, which is still present today, and the colonial subjugation of the territory we know as Brazil, starting with the Portuguese invasion in 1500. This event established racism as the foundational social construct shaping the nation that emerged from then on, dubbed "Brazilian-style racism" by Lélia Gonzalez (2020, p. 80), with its own articulation characteristics based on denying the existence of racist practices and imaginaries, while simultaneously seeking to efface the non-White people who are the target of this discrimination from society.

By taking journalism(s) as both a place for the reproduction of this racism and as a space for observing how it operates in Brazilian society, we propose to discuss the structural contours and colonial continuities specifically concerning the bodies of Black women. This discussion embodies the aspiration that, by re-discussing the dynamics behind the construction of racist imaginaries within journalism, we can move towards new approaches to teaching and producing this field of knowledge and professional practice so that this colonial cycle of Black and Indigenous genocide, which is still in force in Brazil, can be interrupted. In this way, we can also envision proposals for reparations.

To this end, we initially propose to understand this distinctive aspect of Brazilian racism. This condition has been denied for years through the "myth of racial democracy", disseminated by Brazilian intellectuals and politicians at various times in the country's history (Munanga, 2019). This particular trait of Brazilian racism, denying its existence, as denounced by Black[1] activists such as Lélia Gonzalez (2020), Sueli Carneiro (2023), and Abdias Nascimento (1978), among others, was only acknowledged by the Brazilian State recently, in 2001, following

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[1]The original version of this article uses the term "negres", adopting the gender-neutral language of (Brazilian) Portuguese to avoid the masculine form as a universal representation. This textual demarcation is significant given the nature of the research that led to this article, which pertains to phenomena of violence against individuals identifying with the feminine gender, including non-binary and transgender individuals.

the "United Nations World Conference" in Durban[2], South Africa. By admitting to being a racist country in the context of this conference, the Brazilian State recognised the need to implement strategies to combat racial discrimination.

However, as Kabengele Munanga (2019) argues, the dynamics for perpetuating the notion of a prejudice-free country keep being reinvented by White elites who want to secure the privileges ensured by this distorted perception of racial dynamics in Brazil and Brazilian racism.

In this context, we propose the *taypis* of seeing racist imaginaries as tools for exposing racist practices disguised in public discourses, notably in journalism, specifically in news coverage of gender violence involving Black women in Brazil.

"Brazilian-style racism" imposes the urgency of debates and actions related to historical reparations, understanding its complexity even in areas deemed irreparable, such as the restitution of Black lives violently taken in the past. As the genocide of Black people has not ceased in Brazil, reparation policies must prioritise halting ongoing harm in the present, with an eye toward creating new futures.

Methodological Note

To implement this proposal, which we refer to as "*taypis* of seeing racist imaginaries", within the framework of journalistic coverage of gender-based violence against Black women, we organised an archive of journalistic narratives inspired by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's (2015) proposal. This image archive consists of 1,017 stories collected from two Brazilian legislative appointments.

The two weeks were intentionally chosen to focus on gender violence, including the dates of the enactment of the "Lei Maria da Penha"[3] (Maria da Penha Law; August 7; Lei nº 11.340, 2006) and the "Lei de Feminicídio" (Feminicide Law; March 9; Lei nº 13.104, 2015). These legal codes refer respectively to combating violence against women and recognising gender-motivated homicide as a "heinous crime". Aware of the dynamics of journalistic newsrooms to address issues on days surrounding a specific date, the collection was extended to include the three days before and after the ephemeris. Thus, the data was collected between August 3 and 10, 2021 and March 6 and 12, 2022. Following the compilation of the archive, inspired by the content analysis procedure (Bardin, 1977/2016), the

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[2]The "United Nations World Conference" in Durban established, through a declaration, the diagnoses, definitions and main populations affected worldwide by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. It also formulated an action plan to combat these occurrences worldwide. Brazil was one of the signatories of the Durban Declaration (Nações Unidas Brasil, 2001) and has pledged to undertake measures to protect the discriminated population and combat racism and racial discrimination in all its forms.

[3]The law bears the name of Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes, a biochemical pharmacist who endured years of abuse at the hands of her ex-husband, Marco Antonio Heredia Viveros, leaving her quadriplegic. This law acknowledges her advocacy for justice for victims of gender-based violence (Instituto Maria da Penha, n.d.).

narratives were indexed and catalogued. Subsequently, images were collected, selected, and, when video content, clipped into frames to facilitate their analysis.

For the analysis, we focused on the FrontPage or "latest news" sections of the G1 (https://g1.globo.com) and UOL (https://noticias.uol.com.br/) news portals, considering them as contact zones or *taypis*. These news portals were selected because they are the most accessed in Brazil.

Not Saying and the "Peculiar Function" of Words in Colonialism

Examining the works of Melchor María Mercado and the *Album de la Revolución* (Album of the Revolution) in the construction of a meaning about the "Bolivian republic", Cusicanqui (2015) identifies how the words and images intended to document a Western Bolivian civilisation concealed women and Indigenous people from their references. The author discerns that these individuals were either removed from the scene or placed in a position of inferiority in works that purported to depict the nation in the making, thus identifying a strategy to anonymise these peoples as members of Bolivian culture.

The official works recorded the bodies of that nation as exclusively made up of White people and the mestizo elite, deeming them the most fitting to illustrate the new civilisational order that would replace Bolivia's colonial past. This dynamic was paralleled by the erasure of Indigenous people and women from history, imposing on them "a cultural package of colonial and civilising pedagogy that subjugates bodies and consciences to a fate of collective anonymity" (Cusicanqui, 2015, pp. 155-156). This obliteration extended from the graphic record of Bolivian national history to the public speeches that narrated and constructed a new version of colonialism, projecting Western civilisation as the destination.

In order to erase the violence committed against the original peoples from historical records, colonialism adopted, as Cusicanqui (2015) observes, a language with a "peculiar function": the concealment of bodies and records of the original culture. The author describes: "words do not designate, but conceal, and this is particularly evident in the republican phase when it was necessary to adopt egalitarian ideologies and deny citizenship rights to the majority of the population" (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 175). In this context, this trait of veiling reality extended to the public discourses that constitute social imaginaries, which became modes of not saying.

Lélia Gonzalez (2020) identifies a similar pattern of denying the past, noting that the formation of Brazilian society was shaped by the "myth of racial democracy". Gonzalez (2020) posits that "like any myth, that of racial democracy hides something beyond what it shows" (p. 80), suggesting that in the Brazilian case, the denial of the slave-owning and rapist past would be the main motivation behind the proclamation of the paradise of races in the country. Drawing from the

example of language, the author focuses her attention specifically on explaining the attempt to conceal the sexual exploitation endured by Black African women who were brought to Brazil as slaves, an enduring legacy of the country's colonial formation.

Gonzalez (2020) uses the Portuguese language dictionary *Aurélio* as a space for recording public imaginaries and discourses mediated by language to demonstrate this erasure. She selects from the dictionary the definition of the word "mucama", which reads as follows: "mucama. (From the Kuimbundo *mu 'kama* "slave mistress") S.f.Bras. A young, pet Black slave chosen to help with household chores or accompany family members and who *sometimes* [emphasis added] served as a wet nurse" (p. 81).

In her analysis, Gonzalez (2020) underscores the etymological roots of the word "mu' kama" from the Kuimbundo language (a Bantu language), which translates to "slave mistress". She argues that because it is "an African name, given by Africans" (p. 81), it offers the closest interpretation of the reality experienced by these women. The author further contends that the historical version that the one immediately erased, since the definition provided by the dictionary — a euphemised version of the term that transforms "slave mistress" into "house slave" — expunges from official records the violence to which these women were subjected, including sexual violence.

In proposing an analysis of Brazilian racism and sexism, Gonzalez (2020) raises questions about how the imaginaries constructed about Black women during the slavery period have been perpetuated in Brazilian society, including through the press, which, as the author notes, portrays racism as natural. "The first thing we notice about racism is that everyone thinks it is natural (...). Black women, *naturally* [emphasis added], are cooks, cleaners, servants, bus fare collectors or prostitutes. All we have to do is read the newspaper, listen to the radio and watch television" (Gonzalez, 2020, p. 78).

In this context, we propose that the persistence of Black women as those who historically suffer the most femicides in Brazil is directly related to the naturalisation of violence associated with Black bodies and the erasure of Black individuals as recordable and visible images. This concealment is echoed in official discourses such as women's protection laws and journalism, institutions we observed in a combined approach in this section to illustrate the political and institutional abandonment suffered by Black women victims of violence in Brazil.

The Brazilian Cultural Neurosis and Black Women

Data from Amnesty International indicated that 62% of the victims of femicide in Brazil in 2022 were Black women (Amnesty International, 2023). Besides the

international report, national reports monitoring incidents of violence against women and femicide in the country have presented similar data, highlighting the persistent vulnerability of Black women in the country. In this framework, we propose, to provide context, a brief examination of Brazilian legislation, particularly laws on the protection of Black women, or rather, the absence of legislation and specific public policies seeking to address this historical pattern of violence leading to their deaths.

Brazilian laws find their roots in the Manueline (1512) and Philippine (1603) ordinances, which were the prevailing codes of conduct in Portugal during the early colonial period in Brazil. These early texts did not contain records about enslaved Black women but rather considerations about how women should behave in order to be considered "honourable" and worthy of the kingdom's protection.

In the legal text, there were also considerations about how Blacks (in the masculine sense) were perceived as privately owned "semi-mobile goods". Historian Ynaê Lopes dos Santos (2022) explains that "because they were goods that were also persons, enslaved individuals were 'semi-mobile goods', meaning human beings treated as objects and thus devoid of rights" (p. 69). Moreover, although it was not recorded verbatim, this notion extended to enslaved Black women, who would only be mentioned in Brazilian legal codes in 1871, with the "Lei do Ventre Livre" (Law of the Free Womb), which made any child born to an enslaved woman free from 1871 onwards.

This brief historical review highlights some particularities of Brazilian laws that persist in contemporary legal codes, as Santos (2022) explains: that the unspoken extends to national society through ways of concealing racism. For instance, there was never a law permitting enslavement in Brazil, but at the time of the first Brazilian Constitution in 1824, enslaved and freed Blacks were denied the right to own property and to vote. In this same code, concerning women's rights, it is possible to highlight the abolition of prison sentences and banishment in cases of adultery, with exceptions made for cases involving White men having a public affair, or concubinage, as described in the text of the law, with Black women. This law can be interpreted as an attempt to prevent both interracial relationships and the recognition of Black women as wives in the heteropatriarchy colonialist order.

The replication of codes of conduct is also reflected in how security and justice institutions receive Black women in Brazil. For Carla Akotirene (2019), the death of women victims of femicide represents a complete cycle of desertion by the State, whose public security apparatus is one of the main obstacles to protecting the lives of Black women. The author suggests that the colonial imprisonment and violence imposed on Black skin during slavery continue to dismiss the complaints made by these women to the social, police, health and legal authorities.

> Machismo further enables women's aggressors, police officers, judges and human rights activists to convene on an equal footing because the

> same police officers who kill men in public spaces are the ones who
> let women die inside their homes – the dismissal of Black women's
> tears cancels the political, epistemological and police call for help.
> (Akotirene, 2019, p. 69)

For Akotirene (2019), Black women face double criminalisation by the State: when law enforcement agencies dismiss their attempts to file complaints due to a perpetuation of racist imaginaries within these institutions, and even before that, when, also as a result of institutional racism, this same State centralises the Specialised Women's Police Stations in the capitals and South and South-east regions of Brazil, in upper-middle class neighbourhoods, with reduced opening hours. In this context, it is worth noting that the specialised police stations are an achievement instituted by Law No. 11.340 (Lei nº 11.340, 2006), the "Lei Maria da Penha", to combat violence against women.

We can see that before this legislation, crimes of aggression against women in Brazil were treated lightly. It was only with the enactment of specific legislation, the result of significant political pressure from women's social movements, that public policies were adopted to coerce and combat violence against women. With less than 20 years in force, the "Lei Maria da Penha" textually punctuates the rights of Brazilian women to a life without violence, marking a contrast to the initial legal codes, which, until 1822, still in the vein of the Portuguese codes, allowed the husband to physically punish his wife and even kill her if he found her committing adultery.

Although the text of Law No. 11.340 (Lei nº 11.340, 2006) states in Article 2 that "every woman, *regardless of class, race, ethnicity* [emphasis added], sexual orientation" has the right to access the public policies provided for in the legislation, this provision does not translate into an effective right for many of these women. In the *Dossiê Mulheres Negras: Retrato das Condições de Vida das Mulheres Negras no Brasil* (Dossier Black Women: Portrait of the Living Conditions of Black Women in Brazil; Marcondes et al., 2013), dedicated to the racial contextualisation of incidents of violence involving Black women and the gender dynamics at play, researcher Jackeline Romio (2013) elaborates on instances of institutional racism that hinder Black women access to such policies.

Romio (2013) notes that Black women, cognisant of the discredit their complaints often face, are the ones who most often give up reporting cases of violence when they have no witnesses, a scenario common in cases of crimes driven by gender relations. Data from the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios* (National Household Sample Survey; Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2009), which investigated victimisation rates among men and women in Brazil, confirms and sheds light on this scenario. Among women surveyed, 1,071,913 admitted to having suffered or currently being in a situation of violence; among them, 603,731 self-identified as "Black" and 468,182 as "White". Out of this total, Black women reported that the police refused to register a complaint in 27.8% of cases, compared to 21.6% when the victim was a White woman.

In terms of not approaching the police due to fear of reprisals, Black women mentioned this impediment 16.4% of the time, compared to less than half (7.4%) when they were White women in a situation of violence. Similarly, in 1.5% of cases, Black women chose to report to a body other than the Civil and Military Police, compared to 1.2% of White women. Overall, Romio (2013) argues that "these particularities show different perceptions of authorities and suggest that improving public policies to assist victims must deconstruct racist practices that prevent Black women from claiming their rights" (p. 154).

Despite the significance of the "Lei Maria da Penha", continually updated, and the "Lei de Feminicídio" in combating violence in Brazil, there are still no formal initiatives that before diagnoses such as the one made by Romio (2013), address the institutional racism imposed on these bodies. It is in this context that we evoke Gonzalez (2020), who sees racism as a "symptom characterising Brazilian cultural neurosis" (p. 84), since without this interpretive lens, it is not possible to fully name or understand the dynamics of oppression experienced by populations descended from enslaved people.

Ana Flauzina (2018) highlights another weakness regarding the effective implementation of the "Lei Maria da Penha" (Lei nº 11.340, 2006), pointing to the racist profile of Brazilian justice, which leads to the incarceration of Black adults and children in the country, while strategies of greater tolerance are observed with White people. It is also due to legislation that fails to consider racism as an element of violence within the context of gender-based violence.

> While for White women, the interaction with the criminal justice system entails dilemmas associated with violence marked by its omission, for Black women, this interface with the path of punishment is particularly brutalised. The process of the racialisation of this demographic has fostered an interpretation that distances them from the feminine ideal, approving the intensification of their oppression in the private sphere and more aggressive attacks in the public sphere. (Flauzina, 2018, p. 154)

The particular violence experienced by Black women (Flauzina, 2018; Gonzalez, 2020) prompts us to inquire about the approach taken by national journalism in covering gender-based violence.

Colonial Practices and Reparation

Discussions on "historical reparation" are complex, and there seems to be no consensus on what it actually means or enables in practical terms. Achille Mbembe (2020/2021), in the context of the return of artworks stolen from Africa, questions whether such actions might suggest European nations are evading responsibility for other harms caused by colonisation. The complexity deepens with the impossibility of restoring lives taken from the slave-owning past or, in the contemporary Brazilian, the lives of Black women taken by femicide.

According to Maria da Glória de Oliveira (2022),

> within historical reparation movements, what is required of the State is the recognition of a debt that can never be converted into material and monetary values, and even when represented in these terms, it is not just financial compensation but historical responsibility that is at stake. Therein lies, according to Scott (2020, p. 77), the pivotal significance of reparations movements: "they call upon history (defined as human action in the past, present, and future) to be accountable". The crux of the matter, therefore, is not so much a judgement to relegate wrongdoing to the past, but the demand for recognition that the past has not passed, that progressive linear narratives are untenable be cause they misrepresent history" (p. 72)

While the difficulties of implementing reparation policies lie in legal nuances, these are only a fraction of the reparation challenges. Foremost among these is the obvious impossibility of restoring Black and Indigenous lives — in Brazil's case — who were taken by beatings, gruelling forced labour, diseases introduced by the European colonisers, inadequate nutrition and a myriad of other atrocities. For those abducted in Africa and enslaved, the ordeal of death and its horrors began in the unwholesome holds of the slave ships, where they endured disease, hunger, thirst, suffocation, and childbirth under dire conditions and the grim practice of bodies being thrown overboard to lighten the vessels' load (Sharpe, 2016/2023).

Maria da Glória de Oliveira (2022) argues that any reparations policy must grapple with the enduring legacies of coloniality, which entails developing strategies to confront racism and other forms of dehumanisation.

> Thus, coloniality as the latent logic (and here it would be important not to confuse latency with presence) that organises the conditions of our present should serve as an operative category for the politicisation of time, which, rather than trapping us in a world of "retroactive reparations", could perhaps allow us, as Frantz Fanon (2008, p. 189) suggests, to leap towards the invention of other futures. (Oliveira, 2022, p. 74)

Therefore, our proposal of the "the *taypis* of seeing racist imaginaries" methodology emerges as a means to overcome the enduring journalistic coloniality in Brazil, shedding light on the racism veiled beneath the guise of the "myth of racial democracy". The need to politicise time and end the silencing of Black, Indigenous and other people who have historically been the target of various forms of oppression must be at the heart of any reparations project. In fact, it is about implementing strategies to address present-day inequalities stemming from a lengthy past towards a future free of hierarchies and dehumanisation. Black feminist scholars have been instrumental in the invention of other futures, free from the conditions perpetuating racism and the ongoing femicides of Black women, rooted in the past yet persisting in the present.

Denial Journalism and Racism in Brazil

Journalism, as Nayara Luiza de Souza's (2023) research has demonstrated, has historically been complicit in the institutions that violate Black women. For Souza, the so-called "racism by denial" (Gonzalez, 2020) can be identified in journalistic coverage of gender-based violence involving Black Brazilian women through four primary methods: omission, erasure, repression and what Wilderson (2020/2021) describes as the "spectacle of Black death" (p. 255).

In this context, omission appears to be related to the construction of the myth of "racial democracy", which manifests as "racism by denial" (Gonzalez, 2020) within the journalistic narratives, as there is persistent oblivion, whether intentional or not, in representing images and stories of Black women in situations of violence, even when they are the focus of the stories. Another manifestation in this context is that this "oblivion" also materialises in the selection of experts to provide commentary in news stories, with a consistent preference for White individuals as the supposed authorities on the subject matter.

This first dynamic is compounded by erasure, evident in the systematic concealment of the bodies of Black women in situations of violence through the operation of racism when cases addressing gender violence ignore the victims' race and prioritise incidents involving White women, which was the case in the majority (77.5% or 257 incidents) of the reports analysed by Souza (2023). Moreover, there is a visual erasure of these women, apparent in the editorial decisions made during news coverage. When summarising reports, editorial selections consistently prioritise stories illustrated by White women, effectively erasing Black women from the narrative.

Recalcitrance, a media practice for expressing racism also identified by Muniz Sodré (2015), lies in the resistance to acknowledging the "positive identity aspects of symbolic manifestations of Black origin" (p. 279). This resistance is evident in the press and historical narratives where Black personalities who achieved remarkable deeds are not racially identified. Regarding the reporting on violence driven by gender relations, this was once more reflected in the selection of media cases that garnered significant attention from the press: the lack of follow-up on the stories and Black women accomplishments for their personal and professional achievements, both personal and professional, aside from situations of violence (Souza, 2023).

The "spectacle of Black death" (Wilderson, 2020/2021) is related to this imprisonment of imaginary Black bodies to enslavement and thus to pain, death and suffering. Frank B. Wilderson III, advocating for the notion of "Afropessimism", highlights that Black death serves a useful purpose in civil society because it represents the ongoing social control exerted over Black people. The author contends that the visibility of the Black genocide continues, without ever being complete, as a tool of integration for White society. "We are being genocided, but genocided and regenerated, because the spectacle of Black death is essential to the mental health of the world— we can't be wiped out completely, because

our deaths must be repeated, *visually* [emphasis added]" (Wilderson, 2020/2021, p. 255).

In journalistic narratives of gender violence involving Black women, this recurring portrayal of the mutilation of the Black body is also evident in the dissemination of videos and photographs where Black women are exposed, reifying and naturalising the Black body as the place where violence resides (or is intended to), as we will explore below. Rather than implementing reparation policies, what persists is the perpetuation of violence. This perception regarding the vilification of Black women who are victims of femicide was highlighted by Sanematsu (2011) and echoed in the narratives examined by Souza (2023). This underscores the pervasiveness of how journalistic narratives document the deaths of Black women who are victims of femicide. Both studies also note the omission of the racial aspect of the victims, which, in this article, we connect with "racism by denial" (Gonzalez, 2020).

In suggesting an examination of how the pervasive racial denial in Brazilian society extends to media narratives, we underscore that this pattern recurs beyond narratives concerning gender-based violence. The denial of racism stemming from White guilt, as highlighted by Grada Kilomba (2008/2019), is similar to Gonzalez's (2020) interpretation of denial as a mechanism for suppressing guilt, akin to neurosis. This same correlation is echoed by Sodré (2015), who includes denial as one of the factors that articulate racism in Brazilian media, exerted through subtler ways of upholding the "myth of racial democracy".

> The imaginary is an important category for understanding many of the negative representations of Black citizens when you consider that, since the 19th century, Africans and their descendants have been connoted by the elites and middle sectors of society as beings who do not fit the ideal image of the free worker, for reasons of Eurocentrism. The racist imagery conveyed by the traditional elites can today be reproduced logotechnically, more subtly and effectively, by the media-popular discourse, without critical distance from the fabric of techno-economic civilisation, where discrimination is ingrained at all levels. (Sodré, 2015, p. 278)

Racism, alongside misogyny, xenophobia, LGBTQIAPN+phobia, and other dehumanising prejudices, is recurrent in news coverage, forming part of a dynamics that Carlos Alberto de Carvalho (2023) identifies as manifestations of coloniality in the operations of journalism and journalists. In this manner, journalism operates according to the logic of colonisation by reproducing cultural, political, economic, behavioural and ideological structures, among others, that serve the interests of elites who uphold and promote hierarchies and inequalities. However, simultaneously, journalism and journalists themselves are also colonised by these very elites, who occupy privileged spaces to disseminate their thoughts across diverse media platforms. This colonisation is also evident in the language employed in narratives, such as those recounting femicide from the perspective of the police, which in Brazil means reproducing jargon that belittles the victims,

frequently portraying murdered women as culprits for their own deaths.

Taypis of Seeing Racist Imaginaries

According to Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015), *taypis* are like a "middle world" (p. 207), an intermediate space where it is possible to witness the interaction between contrasting forms without the boundaries between them disappearing. These contact zones, however, can be permeated by violence when the opposites brought into contact are hierarchised in the colonial context, as Blacks, Indigenous and Whites were racialised in Brazil. The act of cutting out, repositioning and bringing these images closer allows the violence hidden by the colonial version to become visible. Or, as she explains, they encapsulate an "interpretation of the society of their time, in its heterogeneous and conflicting dimensions" (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 74).

Building upon what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015) identifies as a mode of semiotic displacement and translation of unspoken discourses by colonialism, she introduces the concept of "pasha", where past-present-future converge as they are linked in an idea that challenges notions such as "development" and "progress" proclaimed by Western ideologies. When examining how Brazilian racism operates in journalism, based on denial veiled as journalistic objectivity stemming from Eurocentric and colonial ways of knowing (Moraes, 2022), we propose observing one of the mechanisms through which this racial discrimination manifests.

By adopting the concept of "taypis", we contend that the phenomenon under scrutiny focuses on the difference between Black and White women and how these are reported in journalistic narratives. This comparison is one of the main orientations of Ch'ixi epistemology, which seeks to challenge colonial binarisms that are inherently structured as opposites centred on violence when they interact.

In this context, we can see that the prevalence of the *taypis* space as a zone of encounter fraught with violence does not stem solely from the term's origin in the Aymara context. Rather, it arises because the difference was strategically used for the subjugation of Black and Indigenous individuals, whose humanity was denied within the colonial sphere. Thus, instead of being viewed as complementary opposites, these pairs were depicted as extremes of "positive" and "negative": the dark, for example, became associated with evil and the light was linked with good, carrying corresponding moral connotations.

In this same context, given the modes of concealment and not-saying inherent in both colonial language, as highlighted by Cusicanqui (2015), and in the operation of "racism by denial" (Gonzalez, 2020), we posit the operation of *taypi* as a space-time for visualising this third space that arises the encounter of opposites. To this end, as advocated by Cusicanqui (2015), we have focused on observing the verbal-visual aspects of the texts repressed in a language of omission. The author explains that visual culture helps in this historical-social understanding of

events, asserting that observing images "reveals and actualises many unconscious aspects of the social world" (Cusicanqui, 2015, p. 175) because images reveal what words hide.

The first *taypi* of seeing racist imagery in this article (Figure 1) arises from tracking the same story throughout the day, where the depiction of women in violent situations is recurrent in the video but is denied[4] as the cover of the story on the portal's page. One can observe the prominence given to White women holding positions of prosecutors in the organisation of the page and then how the images of Black women in situations of violence are gradually erased, adhering to a racist logic and in no way reminiscent of the other futures that processes of historical reparation could provide.

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[4]The term "denegada" (translated into "denied" in the English version) is employed in the context of intentional concealment, as discussed by Lélia Gonzalez (2020).

Figure 1: *Taypi I: comparison between two newspaper articles on the same topic*
Note. Prepared by the authors based on articles from August 9, 2021 (Coelho, 2021; Rouvenat, 2021). Translation: "RJ Court of Justice organises joint effort to combat violence against women on the anniversary of the Maria da Penha Law"/"Reception is the biggest challenge in combating violence against women, says judge about joint effort".

Taypi II (Figure 2) depicts the clipping of the morning and afternoon stories referred to in the reports on the portal's page (see Figure 1). By "clipping", we refer to the segmentation of video images into frames and the transcription of the journalists' and presenter's verbal remarks into written text. When comparing the morning and afternoon stories, it is possible to observe the repetition of images recording the bodies of women in situations of violence as scenes in the stories, a common practice in television journalism, which relies on images to illustrate and accompany the spoken text.

Figure 2: *Taypi II: story throughout the day frame by frame*
Note. Prepared by the authors based on articles from August 9, 2021 (Coelho, 2021; Rouvenat, 2021).

When tallying the total number of women on screen, we identify five, only two of whom are Black: a journalist and a victim. The presence of a Black woman journalist in the lunchtime story does not, however, mean any textual changes to what is reported in the afternoon newspaper, as the same content is repeated as in the morning story. This points to the fact that the mere presence of a Black woman as the voice responsible for telling the story does not necessarily imply a narrative structured on the basis of racial power dynamics. We call

this plastering of language and journalistic coverage practices "colonising and colonised journalism".

At the same time, upon examining the textual information within the news reports on the television programmes that are reproduced in the texts on the news portals, it is possible to highlight another form of erasure regarding Black women: in all the articles about the service task force, peripheral areas of Rio de Janeiro are mentioned, where the majority of the population is Black, but the choice to illustrate these areas is abandoned in favour of portraying the façades of the justice units.

The selection of imagery featuring security forces, coupled with the emphasis on White prosecutors, is also tied to another aspect of colonising journalism: reliance on security forces as the primary sources guiding the narratives. By incorporating the layer of institutional racism experienced by Black women victims of violence and femicide into this analysis and revisiting the images of the *taypis* (Figure 1 and Figure 2), we contend that another manifestation of racist imaginaries rooted in the concealment of Black bodies becomes more evident.

Another form of erasure relating to narratives of gender-based violence involves the repetition of the same images of these women as archive images, exposing them to victimisation every time these images resurface on news programmes. This visual repetition, devoid of context and the stories of these women, which would entail humanisation or personification, perpetuates yet another form of violence perpetrated by journalism in its coverage of gender-based crimes.

In the context of reporting on crimes driven by gender relations, one could argue that the use of images depicting body fragments without accompanying narratives about the victims may be motivated by the intention to safeguard the identities of these women. This caution, which we consider fundamental, disappears when we think about the sensationalisation of the Black death, as seen in the following article and the accompanying *taypi* (Figure 3).

Figure 3: *Example from a news item on the G1 portal*
Note. Prepared by the authors based on articles from March 7, 2021 (Serena, 2022). Translation: "'the incident took place in the area known as 'Cabaré' and was recorded and extensively shared on social media. The man has already been convicted of rape and is wearing an electronic anklet' informed the commander".

In the article *Homem É Preso Após Ser Filmado Agredindo a Esposa Em União, no Piauí; Vídeo* (Man Arrested After Being Record Assaulting Wife In União, Piauí; Video; Serena, 2022), we note that the title of the article and the fact that there are video recordings of the violence are used as a strategy to capture readers' attention. Immediately following the headline, the video showcasing the assault of a Black woman is made available with the initial disclaimer: "warning. Strong images". In the images, the woman is physically and verbally assaulted by the man the article identifies as her "husband". In the video, one can hear

comments and laughter from the individual filming the violent act without intervening to safeguard the woman's life.

In this example, the journalistic narrative employs the strategy of juxtaposing frames from the video side by side. However, we emphasise that this arrangement of images in repetitive succession without contrast does not resemble what we are referring to as "taypi" here, as this depiction is merely a freeze-frame portrayal of violence against the Black body.

Furthermore, the journalistic narrative fails to question the lack of empathy exhibited by those who recorded the incident. Instead, the editing choice accentuates the aggressor's police records and relies predominantly on police voices as the primary source once again. By conducting this contextualisation based on a punitive logic, which holds the victim responsible for her involvement with a man who has been arrested and which offers the representation of Black men as marginal and violent, journalism once again attacks women.

This exploitation of Black pain as a journalistic strategy to attract an audience is also evident in TV Bahia's coverage (Figure 4), noticeable from the moment this issue is deemed significant enough to be broadcast "live" on the programme.

Figure 4: *Taypi III: TV Bahia report broken down as an example of the exploitation of Black pain*
Note. Prepared by the authors based on articles from March 7, 2021 (Bahia Meio Dia, 2022). Translation: "pregnant woman assaulted by ex-partner".

In the programme, a journalist is transferred to "live" in front of the victim's house and describes where she lives and where the assault took place. Alongside the visual violence exposing the victim's face and body, the reporter proceeds to ask her brother questions about whether the child she is expecting is the aggressor's daughter and whether the daughter she had before is from the same father. This line of inquiry insinuates in a derogatory manner that societal protection and journalistic empathy are contingent upon the woman's adherence to certain moral standards. When considering the victim as a Black woman, these behaviours still repeat colonial violence that constructed the image of the Black woman as the "slave mistress" whose sexuality and offspring had to be controlled. As described by Wilderson (2020/2021), in both instances, Black bodies are killed and brought back to life, only to be killed again publicly.

Conclusion

By summoning the images depicted in the analysed journalistic narratives, it becomes evident that they relate to a reality of ongoing violence against Black Brazilian women since slavery. The persistence of this historical recurrence is rooted in the ongoing perpetuation of imagery dating back to the invasion of the African continent, where people were abducted and subsequently enslaved. This imagery still lingers in present-day Brazil, a former colony. The restitution of these lost lives seems to be one of the irreparable items. Thus, the visuality of this situation underscores the need for changes encompassing macro-social scenarios. Urgent action is needed, including the development of national public policies aimed at halting this cycle of social neglect through the adoption of measures to dismantle racist imaginaries and the institutions under their influence, along with reforms in education, the arts, culture, legal codes and journalism.

The *taypis* have allowed us, precisely because of their imagistic nature, to bring out nuances of "Brazilian racism" that words and writing try to deny, as proposed by Lélia Gonzalez (2020) and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015). Adopting the perspectives of visual culture in critical perspectives, particularly when images are arranged in sequence, side by side or juxtaposed, enables us to uncover fissures, contradictions, physical and symbolic violence, power games, dehumanisation, racism and other hierarchical strategies that verbal discourses try to hide.

As we have tried to demonstrate, while journalism is an important social activity that allows us to investigate the ways in which gender-based violence and femicides affect Black women, it also reinforces dynamics that reproduce "Brazilian-style racism". Overcoming the logic of coloniality, which underpins racism in Brazilian journalism, requires structural changes that necessarily need to incorporate training programmes for journalistic activities. Thus, in addition to anti-racist content in theoretical subjects and journalistic techniques training, it is imperative to integrate research and outreach activities into the endeavour to combat the racism ingrained in journalism and among some practising journalists.

Before the impossibility of repairing the irreparable, in terms of the damage inflicted in the past, the challenge lies in combating racism and physical and symbolic violence against Black women in the present (and not just those motivated by gender relations, which are the focus of this article), enabling the new futures to which Maria da Glória de Oliveira (2022) refers in her discussions on reparation policies.

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Biographical Notes

Nayara Luiza de Souza is a PhD student in the Postgraduate Programme in Social Communication at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and holds a Master's degree in Social Communication from the Postgraduate Programme in Social Communication at UFMG (2023). She has a degree in Social Communication — Journalism from the Universidade Federal de Viçosa (2012) and a postgraduate degree in Marketing Management from the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais. Furthermore, she is a member of the research groups Insurgente (UFMG) and the Grupo de Estudos sobre Discurso, Interseccionalidade e Subjetividade (Research Group on Discourse, Intersectionality, and Subjectivity), linked to the Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. She is the pedagogical coordinator of Notícia Preta's School of Anti-racist Communication.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1347-5208

Email: souza.nayaralu@gmail.com

Address: Avenida Antônio Carlos, 6627 - Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brasil. CEP: 31270-901

Carlos Alberto de Carvalho is an associate professor in the Department of Social Communication at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, where he teaches undergraduate courses and the Postgraduate Programme in Communication. He coordinates Insurgente: Grupo de Pesquisa em Comunicação, Redes Textuais e Relações de Poder/Saber. He has authored numerous articles in journals and book chapters and published books single-authored, in collaboration and as an organiser, in Brazil and abroad.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8433-8794

Email: carloscarvalho0209@gmail.com

Address: Avenida Antônio Carlos, 6627 - Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brasil. CEP: 31270-901

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