International Journal of Communication 19(2025), 2152–2171 1932–8036/20250005

“Negro Drama”: Beyond the Colonial Family Romance in Brazilian Hip-Hop

BRYCE HENSON
Texas A&M University, USA

Hegemonic actors, agencies, and institutions represent Brazil as a postcolonial nation built upon interracial mixture and racial harmony. This relies on the Brazilian White *mestiço*’s romanticized colonial narrative between the Portuguese master/colonizer, the enslaved African woman, and their mixed-race progeny. Yet this obscures the brutal symbolic and material exclusions that Black Brazilians experience. As such, this article turns to Racionais MCs, Brazil’s most famous rap group, and their song “Negro Drama” to analyze Brazil through the genre of tragedy and critique Brazil’s colonial family romance. Drawing on postcolonial studies and Black diasporic feminisms, it argues that group members Edi Rock and Mano Brown, in their lyrics, refuse the symbolic White father and his romanticizing national imaginary and instead identify with the Black mother to depict the materiality of Black life on the stage of tragedy. It concludes by acknowledging the song’s ideological racial interventions and gendered limitations as a singular text of tragedy.

Keywords: Black Brazil, Racionais MCs, colonial family romance, Black diasporic feminism, Brazilian hip-hop

Without a doubt, the gangsta’ rap group, Racionais MCs (Rational MCs), has been the paragon of Brazilian hip-hop for more than 35 years. Today, the four members remain as relevant as ever, exerting enormous influence among Black people on the margins of Brazilian society. Among their most popular songs is the 2002 hit “Negro Drama” (Black Drama), a gritty and critical insight into Black life and material conditions in Brazil’s peripheries far from city centers, middle-class neighborhoods, and picturesque beaches (Racionais MCs, 2002b). Even though they released the song more than 20 years ago, “Negro Drama” is still one of the most popular Brazilian hip-hop songs. Like many hip-hop groups, Racionais MCs are relevant because they are part of a broader politico-cultural movement that uses hip-hop as an artistic intervention to deconstruct, critique, and imagine a world beyond Brazilian nationalism.

“Negro Drama” (Racionais MCs, 2002b) interests me not merely because it is simply a canonical song in Brazilian hip-hop, but because its critical purchase lies in its departure from the typical romance narrative that structures Brazilian cultural texts and national consciousness. By romance, I mean “a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero’s transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it” (White, 1973, p. 8). Many postcolonial societies use romance to convey a sense of triumph over colonial ills and usher in a new epoch of freedom and unity through

Bryce Henson: BHENSON@TAMU.EDU
Date submitted: 2023-03-17

independence (Scott, 2004). In Brazil, this narrative strategy centers around the racial democracy thesis: The supposedly romantic encounters between the White Portuguese colonizer/master and the enslaved African woman produced a modern mixed-race nation that is free of racism. This thesis is framed from the vantage point of the Brazilian White *mestiço* who asserts his position as a modern subject (Ferreira da Silva, 2007). The racial democracy thesis sits firmly within what Françoise Vergès (1999) deems "the colonial family romance" (p. 3), a framework that describes how postcolonial societies construct an imaginary set of parents—one a White father, the Other a racialized mother—to express political unity through racial miscegenation.

In this article, I argue that Racionais MCs disrupt Brazil's colonial romanticism and instead use tragedy to depict Black life amid the multiple contradictions generated by colonialism, slavery, heteropatriarchy, and racial capitalism.[1] Specifically, they refuse orienting themselves around a symbolic White father in romance and, through tragedy, vertically identify with Black mothers as the modality for family- and nation-making. I follow Hayden White (1973) who defines tragedy as "intimations of states of division among men more terrible than that which incited the tragic agon at the beginning of the drama" (p. 9). That is, a social group is caught in the crosshairs of specific conditions, dire situations, and difficult decisions not of their own choosing. Similarly, David Scott (2004) argues:

> Tragedy has a more respectful attitude to the past, to the often-cruel permanence of its impress: it honors, however reluctantly, the obligations the past imposes. Perhaps part of the value of the story-form of tragedy for our present, then, is not merely that it raises a profound challenge to the hubris of the revolutionary (and modernist) longing for total revolution, but that it does so in a way that reopens a path to formulating a criticism of the present. (p. 135)

Scott (2004) describes Black postcolonial subjects as "conscripts of modernity" (p. 62) who navigate the "tragedy of colonial enlightenment" (p. 11). For him, tragedy problematizes, even as one is firmly within it, the norms, meanings, institutions, and structures that constitute the modern world. Racionais MCs add to this by refusing the imaginary parents of the nation in Brazil's colonial family romance and by focusing on common Black kinship units: the Black mother and her bastard child. By deconstructing national myths around the White father and the Black mother while opting for a material approach, they chart, I argue, out

[1] Racionais MCs are not the first to portray Black (Brazilian) life through tragedy. An earlier example is Black Brazilian intellectual Abdias Nascimento who wrote the play *Sortilégio: Misterio Negro* in 1951 for the Black Experimental Theater (TEN). The play was later published as a book. *Sortilégio* centers on Dr. Emanuel, a Black man, who encounters great loneliness in Brazilian society. On the back cover of the 2022 edition, the book description reads: "By telling the story of Emanuel, a Black man and a doctor, the play traces the biography of millions. Your drama, this drama, is our tragedy." The play reveals the fallacy of the racial democracy mythos: Dr. Emanuel is educated, is married to a White woman, and practices an Afro-Brazilian religion. He seemingly contributes to social, racial, and cultural blending into a White *mestiço* society. Despite being exceptional socially and professionally, he still confronts racism at nearly every stage of his life. See Nascimento (2022).

a complicated ensemble of race, gender, and nation that pulses across past, present, and future on many different terrains.

Methodology

Methodologically, this article uses a textual analysis to interrogate in "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b) the "various forms of discourses, ideological positions, narrative strategies, image construction, and effects" (Kellner, 2003, p. 14). My focus here is on narrative strategies in music because of its esteemed place in Black diasporic communities as a communicative vehicle for human consciousness, knowledge transmission, and cultural lifeways (Glissant, 1989; Hall, 1992).

Both postcolonial studies and Black diasporic feminism inform my reading of "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b), enabling me to critique both the colonial family romance *and* trace how the tragedy puts forth a different orientation of the world. I follow Cameron McCarthy's (2001) assertion that the postcolonial intellectual "turns his or her subaltern gaze on the eye of power itself, producing powerful revisionary effects on hegemonic, biological, and naturalized notions of nation, group identity, and so forth" (p. 91). Without a doubt, media and popular culture are important terrains of the postcolonial struggle over meaning, belonging, human hierarchies, and critical pedagogy (Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Parameswaran, 2002). Yet, as Ella Shohat (1992) argued, not everyone is equally postcolonial. The postcolonial struggle is not simply between the former colony and the metropole. It manifests through and against the brutal institutions, structures, and logics that began on the plantation in the colony and stubbornly persisted into the contemporary conjuncture. In other words, a postcolonial national identity *cannot* be a substitute for race because those who fiercely fight the colonial struggle yet ignore racism are often "the heirs of the privileges and the wealth of the European colonizers" (Guimarães Corrêa, 2023, p. 7).

While Brazilian narratives romanticize interracial relationships as proof of a racist-free society, Brazil is structured through racism and sexism (Gonzalez, 1984). Engaging Black diasporic feminism, I trace the contradictory ways that race, gender, sexuality, and class shape and are shaped by ideals and materialities of modernity, family, and the nation. In particular, I am drawn to Sueli Carneiro's (2019) critique of the racial democracy thesis, Hortense Spiller's (1987) notion of racial "ungendering," and Beatriz Nascimento's (2023) analysis of how miscegenation is a means to whiten Brazil and eradicate Black people. To be clear, I am not claiming Racionais MCs to be Black feminists. There are numerous Black feminist critiques of them and Brazilian hip-hop (e.g., Matsunaga, 2006). Rather, I offer a Black feminist reading as one specific way to engage the tragedy genre through "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b), which critiques the colonial family romance and gestures toward other models of kinship.

Racionais MCs

Arriving from North America, Brazilian hip-hop emerged in the 1970s as a conduit of political expression, social protest, self-transformation, and knowledge production for marginalized youth (Gomes da Silva, 2015; Santos, 2016; Sobral Freire, 2018). Brazilian hip-hoppers' goal has long been to convince Black people to change their social and economic habits, transform their reality, and disrupt "the system"

(Henson, 2023; Miranda, 2014; Pardue, 2008). Thus, Brazilian hip-hop is intensely pedagogical (Andrade, 1999; Messias, 2015; Souza, 2011). Hip-hoppers tell "authentic" (i.e., quotidian) stories about racial prejudice, state violence, and segregation (Teperman, 2015) as well as the broken promises of democracy and citizenship (Herschmann, 2005).

Racionais MCs is Brazilian hip-hop par excellence. The group consists of three rappers—Mano Brown, Edi Rock, and Ice Blue—and one DJ, KL Jay. All hail from São Paulo, Brazil's largest city. Two group members are from northern peripheries, and the other two are from southern peripheries.[2] They released their first song "Pânico na Zona Sul" (Panic in the South Zone) on the 1989 compilation album *Consciência Black* (Black Conscience; Racionais MCs, 1989) before becoming a group. Across their albums, their music captures the lives of Brazil's marginalized: those who are poor, Black, and from the periphery.[3] Numerous Brazilians recognize the importance of Racionais MCs, particularly in raising critical consciousness among Black, poor, and periphery communities, and in connecting them with other Black people in Brazil and across the diaspora.

Despite their immense popularity, the group members refuse to be labeled pop stars. DJ KL Jay noted in an interview, "We are not a commodity, we are artists" while Mano Brown said, "I am not an artist. Artists make art. I make weapons. I'm a terrorist" (as cited in Kehl, 2000, p. 626). Critiquing Brazil's structures of racial capitalism, their music functions as "a political ideology oriented towards demanding rights and structural and cultural improvements in poor communities" (Nascimento, 2011, p. 180). This is how, after all these years, Racionais MCs remain meaningful for the Black underclass through social critique, political demands, and diasporic connectivity (da Cruz Inácio, 2008). The group members are invested in telling the quotidian stories of their material conditions, lived experiences, and fraught circumstances without trying to overcome or hide their misery (Kehl, 2000). Their storytelling exposes Brazilian modernity as a tragedy for Black people, countering the romanticism around the past and present. Like many Brazilian hip-hoppers, the group's artistic works are grounded in their own material conditions and lived experiences of hope and suffering rather than regurgitating romantic narratives around race, family, nation, and colonialism.

Negro Drama

For Brazilian hip-hop aficionados, the *Nada Como um Dia Após o Outro Dia* album is in the pantheon of all-time classics (Racionais MCs, 2002a). Nearly seven minutes long, the beat for "Negro Drama"

[2] A periphery is a hillside community of poor and low-income people, who are predominantly Black, on the outskirts of the city's urban core. They are sometimes called suburbs. The community consists of mostly self-constructed homes without land rights. Usually neglected by the state, a periphery usually has a makeshift social service system, such as running water, waste removal, etc. Finally, these areas are heavily policed because the state and bourgeois civil society have criminalized these areas and its residents.

[3] It is fair to note that they often ignore how these issues affect women. For a treatment of women in Brazilian hip-hop, see Rebeca Sobral Freire's (2018) *Hip-hop feminista? Convenções de gênero e feminismos no movimento Hip-hop soteropolitano* and Licia Maria de Lima Barbosa's (2013)*"Eu me alimento, eu me alimento, força e fé das iabás buscando empoderamento!": Expressões de mulheres negras jovens no Hip-hop baiano*.

(Racionais MCs, 2002b) is slow and heavy, an ideal sonic backdrop for Black people's confrontation with tragedy. The lyrics are roughly divided between Edi Rock and Mano Brown.

There is no music video for this song, but the album cover provides an apt visual representation. The imagery signifies the styles, commodities, and tastes of urban Black youth on the stage of tragedy. It features a young man wearing baggy khakis, Converse Chuck Taylor shoes, a black T-shirt, and a red bandana hanging off his waist. The upper torse is cut out of the photo, but it shows him leaning back with one foot on the bumper of a green lowrider vehicle, equipped with a "RACIONAIS" license plate, likely in the periphery. A beer bottle and a half-full beer glass sit right in front of the car, to the side of the man's feet.

One can tether the album cover's visual imagery to how the song lyrically describes Brazilian society as a tragedy. Osmundo Pinho and Eduardo Rocha (2011) write that "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b) depicts the fraught world of Black life between the pursuit of economic success and one's circumstances in the periphery. This analysis parallels David Scott's (2004) assertion that the postcolonial tragedy "is centrally concerned with our constitutive openness to luck, to fortune, to chance. It shows us in a dramatic and vivid way our very mortal vulnerability to the contingencies of our worldly life and of our physical embodiment" (p. 182). In Brazil, this vulnerability is forged through structural racism that organizes sociopolitical relations between individuals, the state, and the economy (Almeida, 2019).

Tragedy is apparent at the song's beginning. Within 11 seconds, Edi Rock raps about the material conditions of Black folks who live beyond romantic depictions of Brazil filled with tropical beaches, carnival parties, samba music, and exotic women. He raps:

Negro drama	Black drama
Entre o sucesso e a lama	Between success and dirt
Dinheiro, problemas, invejas, luxo, fama	Money, problems, jealousy, luxury, and fame
Negro drama	Black drama
Cabelo crespo e a pele escura	Tightly coiled hair and dark skin
A ferida, a chaga, à procura da cura	The bruise, the open wound, in search of the cure
Negro drama	Black drama
Tenta ver e não vê nada	Trying to see and seeing nothing at all
A não ser uma estrela	But a star
Longe, meio ofuscada	Far away, half obscured
Sente o drama	Feeling the drama
O preço, a cobrança	The price, the cost
No amor, no ódio, a insana vingança	In love, in hate, the insane revenge

(Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:00:11–00:00:35)

The song begins by emphasizing the dismal conditions and circumstances that Black people are inserted into. That is, everyday drama is part of tragedy. Rock's (Racionais MCs, 2002b) first lyrics reference Black

people's circumstances before identifying a Black subject. Rock scores the racial states of division for Black people outside of romantic depictions of Brazilian society. The tragedy lies in the conditions not of Black people's choosing but in the myriad circumstances that inhibit their ability to assert an autonomous subjectivity and easily pursue success. Worse, Rock is worlds away in his peripheral community. When he raps "far away, half obscured" (Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:00:28–00:00:30), it refers not only to the informal racial segregation that places Black people in the peripheries of São Paulo but also to how São Paulo's dreary weather and clouds visually obscure these communities, hardly visible to the city center.

The opening lyrics critique ideologies around postcolonial triumphs and colonial romance. Instead of focusing on typical mixed-race Brazilian subjects like the hypersexual *mulata* or the *pardo* footballer, Rock (Racionais MCs, 2002b) turns to the Black youth with dark skin and tightly coiled hair whom the state and society criminalize as bandits. Furthermore, Rock's focus on money, problems, dirt, and fame critiques Brazil's structure of racialized capitalism, which has only intensified since neoliberal globalization and restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s (Camargos, 2015). Contrary to the racial democracy thesis, racism is not about individual prejudice; it is structural (Almeida, 2019). Finally, Rock uses the themes of seeing and distance to locate the poor and working-class Black youth in his urban environment of the periphery. In Brazil, race and class operate through geography to spatially marginalize and further stigmatize poor and working-class Black communities (Gomes da Silva, 2015).

The tragedy in "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b) is not confined to only the contemporary era. It stretches back centuries, anchored in colonialism and slavery. Operating from a material rather than ideological perspective, Edi Rock raps:

Periferias, vielas, cortiços	Peripheries, alleys, and tenements
Você deve tá pensando	You must be thinking
O que você tem a ver com isso?	What do you have to do with all of this?
Desde o início, por ouro e prata	Since the beginning, for gold and silver
Olha quem morre, então	See who died, then
Veja você quem mata	Look at who kills
Recebe o mérito a farda que pratica o mal	The uniform that practices evil receives an award
Me ver pobre, preso ou morto já é cultural	Sees me poor, in jail, or dead. It's already cultural
Histórias, registros e escritos	Histories, records, and written accounts
Não é conto nem fábula, lenda ou mito	It's not a tale or fable, legend or myth
Não foi sempre dito que preto não tem vez?	Ain't it always been said that the Black has no place?
Então olha o castelo e não	So look at the castle, and it weren't
Foi você quem fez, cuzão	You who made it, asshole
Eu sou irmão do meus truta de batalha	I am the brother of my homies in battle

Eu era a carne, agora sou a própria navalha	I used to be the meat, but now I'm the razor blade
Tim-tim, um brinde pra mim	clink clink, cheers to me
Sou exemplo de vitórias, trajetos e glórias	I am an example of victories, trajectories, and glories.

(Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:00:55–00:01:37)

Rock (Racionais MCs, 2002b) constructs a different thread between the historical past and his present moment. Black drama began during slavery and colonialism, refuting the romanticism around Brazil's past. Black suffering is not an aberration of modernity; it is a central element of Brazilian society across time.

Rock highlights four key points in these selected lyrics. The first is how colonialism depended on the barbaric treatment of Black people, the extraction of natural resources, and forced labor (Zeni, 2004). This was part of a broader racialized colonial system that reduced Black people to chattel property in a structure that extracted raw materials in the colony to be sent to the metropole for accumulation and/or industrial capitalist production (Robinson, 2021). The second point is that slavery was not benign, as the racial democracy thesis purports, but rather extremely violent, like elsewhere in the Americas. Rock (Racionais MCs, 2002b) unveils the racialized bio/necropolitical power between the White planter class and enslaved Black people with his lyrics "See who died, then / Look who kills" (00:01:04–00:01:07). He then brings this same asymmetrical power relation into the present through his notion of "the uniform," which I read as a police officer rewarded for gratuitous violence against Black people (Smith, 2021). His lyrics tie the structure that "sees me poor, in jail, or dead / It's already cultural" (Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:01:10–00:01:13) as a national legacy that extends back to colonial slavery. Despite national ideologies that Brazil does not have racism, material analyses demonstrate that racism manifests through racial capitalism (Bacelar, 1999), informal segregation (Gomes da Silva, 2015), intense policing (Beatriz dos Santos, Nascimento-Mandingo, & Chazkel, 2020), and racial violence (Silva & Carneiro, 2009). Institutions change, but the racialized structures that insatiably and brutally crave Black suffering and premature death operate well into the present.

Beyond the first two points, Rock (Racionais MCs, 2002b) raises a question about the dominant narrative strategy of Brazilian history itself. The racial democracy thesis creates an idealism around colonialism, slavery, and racial mixing that absolves the White male subject, whether the Portuguese colonizer/planter or the contemporary White *mestiço*, from his role in the production of racialized and gendered violence against Black people. Rock prefers a narrative grounded in archives to challenge the romantic idealism in the racial democracy thesis. For him, the important narrative is material, "not a tale or fable, legend or myth" (Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:01:16–00:01:19) such as the racial democracy thesis. It is in this vein that I wish to read Rock's assertion that he is "an example of victories, trajectories, and glories" (00:01:34–00:01:37) not because he has triumphed over the barriers in Brazilian society, but because he, a Black man, still exists in the 21st century after decades of violent ideological, symbolic, and material practices that diminish Black people's life chances.

Mano Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) offers a complimentary engagement with tragedy to critique racial democracy and the romanticized connection between the colonial past and postcolonial present. The

continuity between the horrors of then and the atrocities of now curses through a common kinship structure obscured by the racial democracy thesis. Brown deviates from the romanticized imaginary Brazilian parents, the White Portuguese father, and the Black mother. Instead, he focuses on the more common family unit for Black people on the margins. Turning here upends not only Brazilian nation-making but also, I argue, the Freudian horde that typically constitutes the colonial family romance. In a low and serious voice, Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) speaks the first six lines before rapping the rest:

Crime, futebol, música, carai'	Crime, football, music, shit
Eu também não consegui fugir disso aí	I wasn't able to get away either
Eu sou mais um	I'm just one more
Forrest Gump é mato	Forrest Gump is dead
Eu prefiro contar uma história real	I'd rather tell a real history
Vou contar a minha	I'm going to recount mine
Daria um filme	I would make a movie
Uma negra e uma criança nos braços	Of a Black woman and a baby in her arms
Solitária na floresta de concreto e aço	By herself into the concrete and steel forest
Veja, olha outra vez o rosto na multidão	See, look again at the face in the crowd
A multidão é um monstro sem rosto e coração	The crowd is a monster without a face or heart
Hei, São Paulo, terra de arranha-céu	Hey São Paulo, land of the skyscraper
A garoa rasga a carne, é a Torre de Babel	The rain drizzle tears the flesh, it's the Tower of Babel
Família brasileira, dois contra o mundo	Brazilian Family, two against the world
Mãe solteira de um promissor vagabundo	Single mother of a promising vagabond
Luz, câmera e ação, gravando a cena vai	Lights, câmera and action, recording the scene
Um bastardo, mais um filho pardo sem pai	A bastard, another brown son without a father
Hei, senhor de engenho, eu sei bem quem você é	Hey, master of the plantation mill, I know very well who you are
Sozinho cê num guenta, sozinho cê num entra a pé	Alone you're gonna get robbed, you can't walk alone

(00:02:57–00:03:51)

Brown reinforces Rock's emphasis on the racial conditions, lived experiences, and unfortunate circumstances in Brazil's peripheries. He then uses the Black mother to challenge the White patriarch's power as the vortex of Brazilian familial orientations and nationalism through an anti-individual stance that refutes heroic protagonists who drive romantic narratives (Scott, 2004).

The first four words that Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) speaks, "crime, football, music, shit," (00: 02:57–00:03:01) reference positions Black Brazilians are expected to socially perform: drug trafficker, entertainer, or miserable subject. They are interpellated by a cocktail of White fear and desire. This reading parallels David Scott's (2004) question: "Are historical events to be understood as principally the outcome of the action of individuals imposing their sovereign wills upon the world, or the result of external and impersonal forces determining the direction of individual action?" (p. 36). Brown seems to suggest that it is, for Black people, the latter in Brazilian society.

When Brown raps about being a face in the crowd and that the crowd is a monster, he refuses to become an individual and opts to be part of the masses, who are the White *senhor*'s bastard offspring. Rather than make himself out to be an aberration, Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) opts for an anti-individual stance, expressing that he is "just another one" (00:03:04–00:03:05) that the "crowd is a monster without a face or heart" (00:03:23–00:03:27) and that he is going to rob the plantation slave master who is the absent father. The crowd can invoke Freud's (1918) notions of expelled brothers, as well as David Scott's (2004) assertion that tragedy occurs at a communal, rather than individual, level because it must acknowledge the structural conditions into which people are inserted.

Perhaps Brown's (Racionais MCs, 2002b) most searing critique is that he uses kinship units to shed light on two different sides of Brazil. There is the romanticized family in the racial democracy thesis between a White patriarch, an African/African-descended woman, and their mixed-race progeny. This kinship unit is supposedly indicative of racial harmony in Brazil more generally. Then, there is the tragic side, the *pardo* (mixed-race man of African descent) and his Black mother in the "concrete and steel forest" (Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:03:17–00:03:21) that is São Paulo's urban environment. For Brown, *this* is the commonplace Brazilian family. Who is the father? Brown names him: the White patriarch, referring to him as the *senhor de engenho*. Calling the White father the *senhor de engenho* draws connections between colonial violence on the plantation (Carneiro, 2019) and the modern nation-state (Henson, 2021) via White supremacy and heteropatriarchal power. For Brown, the "senhor de engenho" (Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:03:46–00:03:47) in present-day Brazil often denies a large proportion of the society in which he has created. Naming the *senhor de engenho* is noteworthy because it calls into question the centrality of the White male subject, whether the Portuguese colonizer/master or the White *mestiço* Brazilian, as a legitimizing figure of both the family and nation.

Brazil's Colonial Family Romance

Mano Brown throws into disarray the Brazilian racial democracy thesis on multiple levels. The first is the standard romanticism around Brazilian colonial slavery. In his book *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, Gilberto Freyre (1986) argues that the Portuguese colonizer/master was more cosmopolitan than his European counterparts. Already influenced by contact

with the Moors, the Portuguese supposedly instituted a more benign and racially harmonious colonial environment. The "plastic minded" Portuguese colonizer socially, culturally, and sexually mingled with Indigenous and African/Black people, creating a substantial *mestiço* population that defines Brazil's unique national identity. In national thought, this fostered a racial democracy. According to Freyre's (1986) logics, Brazilians cannot be prejudiced because they would have to be prejudiced against themselves. Thus, there is no racism in Brazil because its origins in colonialism and slavery were without prejudice. However, both Rock and Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) identify the structures of racism that are pervasive throughout Brazil's history and how they fold over onto the present.

Black Brazilian feminist intellectuals have tirelessly critiqued the Brazilian racial democracy. The romantic narratives of colonial slavery obscure the materiality of racialized sexual violence that proliferated across history. Black feminist Sueli Carneiro (2019) writes, "In Brazil, the colonial rape perpetuated by the Portuguese white master, against Black and Indigenous women, is the origin of every construction of national identity as well as the racial and gender hierarchies present in our society" (p. 151). As others note, Brazilian slavery was anything but harmonious, benign, and romantic (e.g., Aidoo, 2018; Pinho, 2008).

Just as the White patriarch is fundamental to the colonial family romance, so too is the Black woman—though not on the same scale. The state, media, public officials, intellectuals, and the White middle class contradictorily hail Black women to the arena of mothering. They deem Black women the "mothers of the nation" (Caldwell, 2006, p. 40) to designate their contributions, along with White Portuguese men, toward producing a mixed-race population that defines Brazilian identity. However, interracial mixture is done in service of whitening the nation, based on the hope that Brazilians will internalize whiteness as superior and search for partners that will whiten, or at least lighten, their progeny. Beatriz Nascimento (2023) argues that interracial mixture is a means to make Black people disappear. Thus, while the White patriarch is always needed, the Black woman's reproductive abilities, after a certain point, can be discarded. This is why the legitimate Brazilian family *today* is the White husband, his White wife, and their White children (Carneiro, 2019). Yet, Black women are still often called to do the labor of mothering as domestic servants, even if they are not granted the privileges of motherhood (Gonzalez, 1984; Gumbs, 2016).

The racial democracy thesis parallels what Françoise Vergès calls the colonial family romance. In her book *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Metissage*, Françoise Vergès (1999) elaborates how miscegenation constructs Réunion's ethnic identity and culture. Drawing on Freud, she argues that the "colonial family romance" (Vergès, 1999, p. 3) is a political narrative that substitutes an imaginary set of parents for the real parents of the colonized: the enslaved, the colonists, and indentured workers. The goal is creating a "unique root" (p. 4), a direct line back to the metropole, usually through the White patriarch. At the same time, the colonial family romance depends on *metissage* to account for the intense interracial mixing that produced new cultural forms, new languages, and creolized hybridities emerging from the plantation. The colonial family romance brings the formerly colonized, formerly enslaved, and formerly indentured onto the modernity stage through a direct line to White Western patriarchy.

Brazil's racial democracy thesis is not so much about creating a direct line back to Portugal as it is about legitimating the power of the White *mestiço* subject who comes to represent Brazil's modernity. This connection must be made because the White *mestiço* is marked, in the global arena, by both his second-

class European ancestry (Iberian) and the possibility that his ancestry may not entirely be European due to the colonizer/master's brutal and horrifying sexual violence against Black (and Indigenous) women on a massive scale. While the Brazilian White *mestiço* is not of the metropole, he inherits the productive power of the Portuguese as colonizer/master (Ferreira da Silva, 2007). This is why Brazil shares more commonalities with, say, the Jamaican colonial family romance. Stuart Hall (2017) writes that, in Jamaica, "the coloured, or creole, son [who] fantasizes himself to be 'really' the unrecognized literal, or symbolic, child, not—as in Freud—of some royal or princely family, but of the plantocracy, via the person of the surrogate white father" (p. 60). However, in this instance, illustrated by Brown calling the symbolic father *senhor de engenho*, the "son" is the White *mestiço*, not the Black man. This is not to say that some Black men do not aspire for this right, but rather that it is reserved first and foremost for the White *mestiço*.

Without a fatherland, there have been appeals toward a "fraternity" among Brazilian men. In the absence of a symbolic father, "an excess of *real*, abusive, arbitrary, and brutal fathers like the father of the primitive horde of the Freudian myth" (Kehl, 2000, p. 630) emerges in its place. Maria Kehl (2000) posits that Brazilian men are a brotherhood of orphans through various and even contradictory modes of horizontal identification. For Kehl, Black men like Racionais MCs turn to God or Afro-Brazilian *orixás* as symbolic fathers to replace the fatherland. However, I would resist the urge to identify Racionais MCs as orphans. With no symbolic or even real father in the picture, Brown emphasizes a *vertical* identification with the Black mother. Thus, my interest here turns to what happens when the Black male progeny seeks to claim the material (rather than ideological) Black mother as the means to social and national belonging rather than the symbolic White patriarch. This does not resolve the quagmire that Black women face, but it does gesture to other possibilities that the tragedy genre provides between the past, present, and future that move through Black women rather than White men.

The Politics of Black Motherhood

Both Rock's and Brown's (Racionais MCs, 2002b) lyrics critique the romantic ideologies that surround the symbolic White father in Brazil's colonial past and postcolonial present for nation-making purposes. Again, opting for storytelling based on materiality, they depict how the White father, then and now, has created a widescale tragedy at a structural level that overwhelmingly afflicts Black people through socioeconomic marginalization, segregation, premature death, and social stigma. For them, the White father is not a benign and cosmopolitan figure. As their lyrics point to, he kills, enslaves, exploits, and abandons Black Brazilians. He is not just the White father, but also the *senhor de engenho*, the police officer, the overseer, and the *dono* across Brazil's history and contemporary society.

Here, I put Brown's lyrics (Racionais MCs, 2002b) in conversation with Hortense Spillers' (1987) theorizing around the symbolic order of family and the racialized constructions of the gendered flesh. Again, I am not claiming Racionais MCs to be Black feminists. Instead, I am interested in how their identification processes where they claim their real Black mothers are a mode to critique the Brazilian colonial family romance. For Spillers (1987), the "New World, diasporic plight" represents a "*theft of the body*—a willful and violent (and unimaginable from this distance) severing of the captive body from its motive will, its active desire" (p. 67; emphasis in the original). Rather than be in possession of their own bodies, Black people have been reduced to flesh "that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment

under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography" (Spillers, 1987, p. 67) to justify Blackness as property, nonhuman, and synonymous with misery. Outside of the domain of the human who possesses bodily sovereignty, Black people have also been displaced from hegemonic notions of gender, which Spillers (1987) deems "ungendering." In the dominant grammar and symbolic order, Black people are "property" who signify "kinlessness" (p. 74). This falls heaviest on Black women who are faulted for a lack of proper femininity and for bestowing a deviant masculinity onto their sons. Under captivity, Spillers (1987) writes, "the offspring of the female does not 'belong' to the Mother, nor is s/he 'related' to the 'owner,' though the latter 'possesses' it, and in the African-American instance, often fathered it, *and*, as often, without whatever benefit of patrimony" (p. 74). As such, Black people, under Western discourses, are denied the notion of family, the vertical passing of lineage, honorifics, property, and choice (p. 74). Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) makes reference to this with the lyrics "A bastard, another *pardo* son without a father" (00:03:42–00:03:45).

At its core, Spillers' (1987) argument refuses the "misnaming" of Black women's power over and influence on their children without acknowledging the symbolic White father who hovers over Black communities. In his lyrics, Brown is sure to name and critique the power that the White father has over Brazilian families and society. Spillers (1987) argues that the Black matriarch stereotype is:

> false because the [Black] female could not, in fact, claim her child, and false, once again, because "motherhood" is not perceived in the prevailing social climate as a legitimate procedure of cultural inheritance. The African-American male has been touched, therefore, by the mother, handed by her in ways that he cannot escape, and in ways that the white American male is allowed to temporize by a fatherly reprieve. (p. 80)

That is, in the dominant view, Black people are only permitted the right to family—that is, to civilization—insofar as they are claimed by the White patriarch, and perhaps a Black patriarch. As a result, Black people have been forced to modify the meaning of family when it does not correlate to the master's family, or rather the "dominant enclave" (Spillers, 1987, p. 75). This applies to Brazil, where Black Brazilians have constructed alternative structures and meanings of family that deviate from the colonial family romance.

Brown's (Racionais MCs, 2002b) "Brazilian family / Two against the world" (00:03:33–00:03:36) lyrics use the materiality of the Black family to identify this modified family structure and symbolically attack the White patriarch's power to claim, legitimize, and bestow lineage. Beyond the colonial family romance, Black women are pushed to the social, economic, and political margins in Brazilian society. Even though Black women are praised as mothers of the nation, they are rarely treated with respect across society, everyday interactions, and multiple economies. That is, Black mothers are respected not because they are people, but because they serve the symbolic and material needs of White patriarchy. Sueli Carneiro (2011) defines this as the "matriarchy of misery" (p. 130), not to designate matriarchy as having power parallel to patriarchy but to denote the way that matriarchy is entrenched in a subordinate set of relations of power so that when the mother is viewed as occupying the position of what should supposedly and rightfully be the father, the state and civil society ensure that the Black mother knows that she has violated the terms of the gendered and racial contract and thus, along with her children, must suffer.

Without the legitimizing White patriarch, Black mothers are blamed for producing, that is, giving birth to and raising, criminals in Brazilian society (Soares, 2012). Around the African Diaspora, Brazil included, Black women who mother Black children and are engaging in a political practice (Lorde, 2007). As anthropologist Christen A. Smith (2016) notes, Black mothers experience "both the fear of death and the dread of life without one's children" (p. 42). That is, Black mothers continue to have Black children in the face of predictable premature death that marks Black people's bodies, especially Black boys and young men, as less-than-human and disposable. This Black mother is not one of a colonial family romance, included only insofar as she produces the White *mestiço* for racial democracy, but rather the one on the stage of Black drama, representative of the Brazilian tragedy. Brown directly acknowledges this "matriarchy of misery" (Carneiro, 2011) as a means to subvert it and resignify it as a means of disrupting the fractal structures and ideologies that revolve around the Brazilian *senhor*.

Instead of identifying with the symbolic father, Brown (Racionais MCs, 2002b) acknowledges and identifies with the Black mother: "Single mother of a promising vagabond" (00:03:36–00:03:39). He does not blame the mother, but instead gestures toward how Black life is made under tragedy. However, Racionais MC's present an opportunity, however unintended by them, for Black men to harness "the power of 'yes' to the 'female' within" (Spillers, 1987, p. 80), that is, recognizing the mother's heritage, and not the father, as central to obtaining their own personhood. I find this notable not so much that Black women can claim their children, at least not in these lyrics, but rather because her male progeny is claiming her and not seeking recognition by or seeking to replace the White father. Still, this may shift how we perceive Black motherhood, especially outside of the colonial family romance. Based on common lived experiences, Brown (2002b) hails his Black mother as the basis of his own familial orientation:

Eu num li, eu não assisti	I didn't read it, nor did I watch it
Eu vivo o negro drama	I live Black drama
Eu sou o negro drama	I am Black drama
Eu sou o fruto do negro drama	I am the fruit of Black drama
Aí Dona Ana, sem palavra	Hey Dona Ana, nothing more to say
A senhora é uma rainha, rainha	The woman is a queen, queen
Mas aí, se tiver que voltar pra favela	And if I have to go back to the favela
Eu vou voltar de cabeça erguida	I'm gonna have my head held high
Porque assim é que é, renascendo das cinzas	Because that how it is, born again from the ashes
Firme e forte, guerreiro de fé	Firm and strong, a warrior of faith
Vagabundo nato!	A born vagabond!
(00:06:02–00:06:24)	

While there are of course horizontal identifications with his brothers, like Edi Rock, DJ KL Jay, and Ice Blue, Brown hails his mother, Dona Ana Soares Pereira (1935–2016), as his point of vertical identification and the site of which he is embedded in a family structure that produces the nation at a material level. To be fair, he reproduces one of the limited tropes that women can be included in Brazilian hip-hop: as mothers (Sobral Freire, 2018). Brown does not evade the scene of tragedy that unfairly runs through the Black mother; yet,

he does not reproduce the social stigma tethered to her or her children. That is, she is not a deviant and pathological subject. As he claims the Black mother, I would argue that he is not attacking the *senhor* to occupy his position but to claim humanity for those who are pushed out of the *senhor*'s family at the domestic and national level.

In "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b), Rock and Brown do not elide the symbolic and material power of the White patriarch, even in interracial relations. In my view, Racionais MCs are less invested in occupying the place of the White father than they are in razing the edifice by which he sits atop. Brown's lyrics "The crowd is a monster without a face or heart" (Racionais MCs, 2002b, 00:03:23–00:03:27) resonate with Françoise Vergès' (1999) insight about the mixed-race Black progeny as revolutionary and monster. Referencing the Reunion case, she notes that the French father fears:

> the return of an avenging son whom the father might not even recognize at the moment of being struck. It was about the father's guilt at having abandoned the son and broken the sexual and racial taboos of the colonial society. (Vergès, 1999, p. 103)

This is germane for Brown who is the child of a Black mother (Dona Ana) and an absent White Italian father. In "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b), the symbolic father would not be the Portuguese, but the White *mestiço*. As an avenging son, Brown, like Freud's (1918) expelled brothers, goes to kill the father, committing a criminal act. I would diverge from Freud (1918), Hall (2017), and Vergès (1999) by contending that Brown does not kill the father to create an identification with him. To be jealous and envious of the father is to want his place in this world. However, as Black men, Racionais cannot do so because in Brazil, the White father occupies the position of the *senhor* who can only affirm himself through his dominance over chattel property (Kehl, 2000). Identifying with one another, that is, other Black men (Racionais MCs, 2002b) locked in this structure of Black drama, indicates a refusal to identify with a positionality that would necessitate the subjugation of those like them. Put simply, they refuse the *senhor* because it requires the dehumanizing subjugation of fellow Black men.

In Brazil, Brown's (Racionais MCs, 2002b) family unit, for him, is commonplace for Black people, not just some ideal in various dominant representations, discourses, and ideologies that pulsate across various symbolic and material referents. Despite Black mothers being vilified by the state, media, and society, Brown identifies with Dona Ana and Black mothers more generally as a mode of family making. Claiming Black mothers as their point of vertical identification for lineage, title, property, and community, Rock and Brown must do so in a way that diverges from the traditional narrative strategy. The racial democracy thesis is a romantic narrative of the White *mestiço* as the modern subject of a tropical civilization. As David Scott (2004) notes, every romance needs an agent and a hero who acts on behalf of his people, earns their trust, and ushers in a new and supposedly better moment. This relies on an individualism that stands at the heart of a modern liberal subject who represents an Enlightenment based on rationality, freedom, progress, tolerance, and fraternity (Guimarães Corrêa, 2023). This individualism depends on the subjugation of Black people as unable to step into this individualism and modern subjectivity. More in line with David Scott's notion of tragedy, I see Rock's critique of the White patriarch's productive power and Brown's (Racionais MCs, 2002b) self-invocation as the Black woman's child, vagabond subjectivity, and participation in a monstrous crowd as an anti-individualism that focuses on collective actions and the stage

of tragedy that marks impossible and difficult choices by a group of people. That is, Black men are only able to claim lineage and personhood in a collective fashion that works by and through the Black mother rather than an individual position that would subjugate her.

Conclusion

Across the African Diaspora, desires to break free from colonial rule and independence have not always brought about the postcolonial freedom Black colonial subjects have dreamed of. As David Scott (2004) notes, this is part and parcel of the tragedy that sits at the heart of postcolonial presents in the modern world. Along those lines, I do not end this article with a neat and tidy resolution, with a happy or warming ending. That is, I too refuse the romanticism that Brazilian hip-hop critiques. We would do well to revisit an interview with Mano Brown:

> [*Raça* reporter]: Some people say that São Paulo's rap is sad. Carlinhos Brown said that this means not knowing how to prevail over misery.
>
> Mano Brown: In Bahia, they have to hide their misery in order for the tourists to come, to bring money to the guys there, including Carlinhos Brown. São Paulo is not a tourist destination. And the comment on prevailing over misery, you can't accept misery. (as cited in Kehl, 2000, p. 627).

To honor Brown's own approach to misery, which I find to be aligned with tragedy, how might we move forward?

Different stories organize the relationship between the past, present, and future in various ways (Scott, 2004). I find it troubling how, in "Negro Drama" (Racionais MCs, 2002b), there is a swapping of the Black son for the White father as the fulcrum of lineage making. It disrupts the romanticism between the past, present, and future, but it fails to fully organize the scene of tragedy because it still focuses on a male subject. While the White father moves lineage down to his sons, the Black sons in "Negro Drama" move up to claim the Black mother. What if he does not claim her? Even as "Negro Drama" disrupts the colonial family romance, we are still unsure if the Black mother can claim her children, how she moves, and her position in tragedy that is made in relation to but not dependent on her son(s). Where is she in this tragedy? My point is that even as tragedy honors the materiality of the brutal colonial residues that mark our postcolonial presents, we should question which tragedies are valued, narrated, and foregrounded in romantic idealisms. While "Negro Drama" demonstrates the utility of tragedy, it only depicts a partial picture that is not fully fleshed out. That is, what would it mean to put "Negro Drama" outside of an individual depiction and into a collective cultural archive of tragedy? This is not asking Racionais MCs to speak for Black women, but rather continuing to explore how the collective experiences of postcolonial tragedy are still marked by a range of social and political experiences that intersect across race, class, gender, and sexuality.

It is, of course, imperative to refuse the romanticism of postcolonial triumphs and depict the stage of modern tragedy that continues to shape the circumstances, conditions, and experiences of many Black

postcolonial subjects through themes such as materiality, anti-individualism, and collectivism. At the same time, these critical histories of the postcolonial present must honor tragedy by continuing to reshape the narrative and the organizing of characters, subjects, and relations that bind history together if a future of liberation beyond modernity and colonial enlightenment is to emerge.

References

Aidoo, L. (2018). *Slavery unseen: Sex, power, and violence in Brazilian history*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Almeida, S. (2019). *Racismo estrutural* [Structural racism]. São Paulo, Brazil Pólen Livros.

Andrade, E. N. (Ed.). (1999). *Rap e educação: Rap é educação* [Rap and education: Rap is education}]. São Paulo, Brazil: Selo Negro Edições.

Bacelar, J. (1999). Blacks in Salvador: Racial paths. In L. Crook & R. Johnson (Eds.), *Black Brazil: Culture, identity, and social mobilization* (pp. 85–101). Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Latin American Center Publications.

Barbosa, L. M. de L. (2013). *"Eu me alimento, eu me alimento, força e fé das iabás buscando empoderamento!": Expressões de mulheres negras jovens no hip-hop baiano* ["I feed myself, I feed myself, strength and faith of the iabás in search of empowerment!": Young Black women's expressions in Bahian hip-hop] (doctoral thesis). Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador. Retrieved from https://repositorio.ufba.br/handle/ri/23782

Beatriz dos Santos, A., Nascimento-Mandingo, F., & Chazkel, A. (2020). React or be killed: The history of policing and the struggle against anti-black violence in Salvador, Brazil. *Radical History Review, 137*, 157–176. doi:10.1215/01636545-8092834

Caldwell, K. L. (2006). *Negras in Brazil: Re-envisioning Black women, citizenship, and the politics of identity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Camargos, R. (2015). *Rap e politica: Percepções da vida social brasileira no rap* [Rap and politics: Perceptions on Brazilian social life in rap]. São Paulo, Brazil: Boitempo.

Carneiro, S. (2011). *Racismo, sexismo e desigualidade no Brasil* [Racism, sexism, and inequality in Brazil]. São Paulo, Brazil: Selo Negro Edições.

Carneiro, S. (2019). *Escritos de uma vida* [Writings from a life]. São Paulo, Brazil: Pólen Livros.

da Cruz Inácio, E. (2008). "Ser um preto tipo A custo caro": Poesia, intercuturalidade e etnia [Being a Black guy, The cost is high": Poetry, interculturality and ethnicity]. *Estudos de Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea, 31*, 53–68.

Dimitriadis, G., & McCarthy, C. (2001). *Reading and teaching the postcolonial: From Baldwin to Basquiat and beyond*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Ferreira da Silva, D. (2007). *Towards a global idea of race*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Freud, S. (1918). *Totem and taboo: Resemblances between the psychic lives of savages and neurotics* (A. A. Brill, Trans.). New York, NY: Mofart, Yard and Company. Retrieved from https://archive.org/download/totemtabooresemb00freu/totemtabooresemb00freu.pdf

Freyre, G. (1986). *The masters and the slaves: A study in the development of Brazilian civilization* (2nd ed.; S. Putnam, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Glissant, É. (1989). *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Gomes da Silva, J. C. (2015). *Rap na cidade de São Paulo: Juventude negra, música e segregação urbana (1984–1998)* [Rap in São Paulo city: Black youth, music, and urban segregation (1984–1998)]. Uberlândia, Brazil: EDUFU.

Gonzalez, L. (1984). Racismo e sexismo na cultura brasileira [Racism and sexism in Brazilian culture]. *Revista Ciências Sociais Hoje*, 223–244.

Guimarães Corrêa, L. (2023). Four concepts to think from the South. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 27*(2), 143–154. doi:10.1177/13678779231218395

Gumbs, A. P. (2016). m/other ourselves: A Black queer feminist genealogy for radical mothering. In A. P. Gumbs, C. Martens, & M. Williams (Eds.), *Revolutionary mothering: Love on the front lines* (pp. 19–31). Oakland, CA: PM Press.

Hall, S. (1992). What is this "Black" in Black popular culture? In G. Dent (Ed.), *Black popular culture* (pp. 21–33). Seattle, WA: Bay Press.

Hall, S. (2017). *Familiar stranger: A life between two islands* (B. Schwarz, Ed.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Henson, B. (2021). Communication theory from Améfrica Ladina: Amefricanidade, Lélia Gonzalez, and Black decolonial approaches. *Review of Communication, 21*(4), 345–362. doi:10.1080/15358593.2021.2001686

Henson, B. (2023). *Emergent quilombos: Black life and hip-hop in Brazil*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Herschmann, M. (2005). *O Funk e o hip-hop invadem a cena* [Funk and hip-hop invade the scene] (2nd ed.). Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Editora UFRJ.

Kehl, M. (2000). The orphan brotherland: Rap's civilizing effort on the periphery of São Paulo. *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies, 4–5*, 625–641. doi:10.62791/fm73qv50

Kellner, D. (2003). Cultural studies, multiculturalism, and media culture. In G. Dines & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (2nd ed., pp. 9–20). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lorde, A. (2007). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.

Matsunaga, P. (2006). *Mulheres no hip hop: Identidades e representações* [Women in hip-hop: Identities and representations] (master's dissertation). Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas.

McCarthy, C. (2001). Mariners, renegades, and castaways: C. L. R. James and the radical postcolonial imagination. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 1*(1), 86–107. doi:10.1177/153270860100100111

Messias, I. dos S. (2015). *Hip hop, educação e poder: O rap como instrumento de educação* [Hip hop, education and power: Rap as an instrument of education]. Salvador, Brazil: EDUFBA.

Miranda, J. H. de A. (2014). *Bahia com H de hip-hop* [Bahia with an H for hip-hop]. Salvador, Brazil: Segundo Selo.

Nascimento, A. (2022). *Sortilégio* [Spell] (3rd ed.). São Paulo, Brazil: Editora Perspectiva.

Nascimento, B. (2023). For a history of Black people. In C. Smith, B. Gomes, & A. Davies (Eds.), *The dialectic is in the sea: The Black radical thought of Beatriz Nascimento* (pp. 81–88). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Nascimento, J. (2011). Cultural and racial consciousness: The "calling" of Racionais MC's. In A. D. Tillis (Ed.), *(Re)considering Blackness in contemporary Afro-Brazilian (con)texts* (pp. 165–185). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Parameswaran, R. (2002). Local culture in global media: Excavating colonial and material discourses in National Geographic. *Communication Theory, 12*(3), 287–315. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00271.x

Pardue, D. (2008). *Ideologies of marginality in Brazilian hip-hop*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pinho, O. (2008). Relações raciais e sexualidades [Race relations and sexualities]. In O. Pinho & L. Sansone (Eds.), *Raça: Novas perspectivas antropológicas* [Race: New anthropological perspectives] (2nd ed., pp. 257–283). Salvador, Brazil: Editora UFBA.

Pinho, O., & Rocha, E. (2011). Racionais MC's: Cultural afro-brasileira contemporânea com política cultural [Racionais MCs: Contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture with cultural politics]. *Afro-Hispanic Review, 30*(2), 101–114.

Racionais MCs. (1989). *Pânico na Zona Sul* [Panic in the South Zone]. *On Consciência black* [Black conscience] [Spotify Streaming]. São Paulo, Brazil: Zimbabwe Records.

Racionais MCs. (2002a). *Nada como um dia após um outro dia* [Nothing like the day after another] [Spotify streaming]. São Paulo, Brazil: Casa Nostra.

Racionais MCs. (2002b). Negro drama [Black drama]. On *Nada como um dia após um outro dia* [Nothing like the day after another] [Spotify streaming]. São Paulo, Brazil: Casa Nostra.

Robinson, C. (2021). *Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition* (3rd ed.). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Santos, J. L. (2016). Hip-hop and the reconfiguration of Blackness in São Paulo: The influence of African American political and musical movements in the twentieth century. *Social Identities, 22*(2), 160–177. doi:10.1080/13504630.2015.1121573

Scott, D. (2004). *Conscripts of modernity: The tragedy of colonial enlightenment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Shohat, E. (1992). Notes on the "post-colonial." *Social Text, 31/32*, 99–113. doi:10.2307/466220

Silva, R. J. da, & Carneiro, S. (2009). *Violência racial: Uma leitura sobre os dados de homicídios no brasil* [Racial violence: A reading about homocide data in Brazil]. São Paulo, Brazil: Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra; Global Rights Partners for Justice. Retrieved from https://www.geledes.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Violencia-Racial-Portal-Geledes.pdf

Smith, C. (2016). Facing the dragon: Black mothering, sequelae, and gendered necropolitics in the Americas. *Transforming Anthropology, 24*(1), 31–48. doi:10.1111/traa.12055

Smith, C. (2021). Counting frequency: Un/gendering anti-Black police terror. *Social Text, 39*(2 (147)), 25–49. doi:10.1215/01642472-8903591

Soares, M. A. (2012). Look, blackness in Brazil!: Disrupting the grotesquerie of racial representation in Brazilian visual culture. *Cultural Dynamics, 24*(1), 75–101.

Sobral Freire, R. (2018). Hip-hop feminista? Convenções de gênero e feminismos no movimento hip-hop soteropolitano [Hip-hop feminist? Convestions of gender and feminisms in the Soteropolitan hip-hop movement]. Salvador, Brazil: EDUFBA/NEIM.

Souza, A. L. S. (2011). *Letramentos de reexistência. poesia, grafite, música, dança: Hip hop* [Re-existence literacy. Poetry, graffiti, music, dance: Hip-hop]. São Paulo, Brazil: Parábola.

Spillers, H. (1987). Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book. *Diacritics, 17*(2), 64–81.

Teperman, R. (2015). *Se Liga no Som: As Transformações do Rap no Brasil* [Tune into the sound: Rap transformations in Brazil]. São Paulo, Brazil: Claro Enigma.

Vergès, F. (1999). *Monsters and revolutionaries: Colonial family romance and metissage*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

White, H. (1973). *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zeni, B. (2004). O negro drama do rap: Entre a lei do cão e a lei da selva [Black drama in rap: Between the law of the dog and the law of the jungle]. *Estudos Avançados, 18*(50), 225–241. doi:10.1590/S0103-40142004000100020