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On the way, there was a graffiti: city, slum quarter, transports and paths in the territory of Rio de Janeiro.

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the art of graffiti in the city of Rio de Janeiro, from the concept itself to the cunning tactics of urban routes, authored by Michel de Certeau, the art as a symbolic system of Clifford Geertz and the image as a means of expression of Yves Bonnefoy. As it appeared in the New York, this form of street art has spread around the world as a contestation language. The crisis of cities in the new globalized context expanded the use of the street art: in Brazil, the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro graffiti appear as an expression of criticism and media. As in Rio de Janeiro mass transit takes place on the surface by means of private bus companies running on roads where graffiti art employs walls of factories, abandoned buildings and overpasses, the resulting painting makes visible the chronic urban ills.

Key-words: graffiti, urban centers, Brazil

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Carioca *Graffiti* - differences between the global and local scales

It came as no surprise for those who know Brazilian street art the enthusiastic tone printed in the BBC *on-line* story glorifying the workmanship and the globalized aesthetic sensitivity of the Brazilian *graffiti* artists. It referred to the paintings temporarily covering the walls of Kelburn Castle, Scotland, where a group of street artists, originating from Brazil, made those paintings intended to remain there until the end of the renovation work on the historic building. The high quality of their work and the unusual result, led the owner of the castle, the Duke of Glasgow, to convince the authorities to allow the permanence of the paintings after the completion of the works.[1]

The emergence of this urban art in the 70's and 80's was received with concern by the public because of paintings containing bizarre images and enigmatic phrases. However, within the context of globalization of cultural assets, street art saw its expression diffused, bearing the "cultural" label (Steinmetz, 1999:7). It allowed underprivileged sectors to gain a voice and audience in a context defined by Giddens as "post-traditional order" (Giddens, 1999:10). Art made on walls seems to exceed past and present to become a permanent human expression. The Israeli archaeologist and professor Boaz Zissu explains that although *graffiti* in the modern world is seen by many as vandalism, "for others, it's a sort of pop culture on the boundaries of modern art, never mind that it defaces someone else's property… But it's not new. *Graffiti* has been around since ancient times, ever since ordinary people could write, really. It's a generally overlooked nuisance for most archaeologists. But for some, it's another glimpse into the past".[2]

In this essay we will analyze the urban territory of the city of Rio de Janeiro where the first manifestations of this art appeared in 60's. At that time, the repressive apparatus of the dictatorial military regime deployed in 1964, were still active. Part of the public opinion stigmatized *graffiti* as a clandestine act practised by the peripheral populations in reply to the practices of power. For Michel de Certeau, such

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[1] (www.bbc.co.uk/portuguese/reporterbbc/story/2007/05/070516.).

[2] (rogueclassicist**,** September 2, 2011 Categories: Uncategorized, URL: http://wp.me/poaX4-3Dq, Entry in October 20, 2012).

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demonstrations represent a "corner of resistance, without compromising the sincerity with which it could be credible nor the lucidity with which, for that matter, the struggles and the inequalities can be seen and that hide under the established order" (Certeau, 1998, p.142).

Despite the difficult unanimity between the authors and researchers, *graffiti* is a social and cultural manifestation conceptualized by its artists as fiction *in progress*. For the carioca graffiti artist Smael Vagner, "the tagger merely wishes to put his name on a wall, be famous, and is a vandal, but the *graffiti* artist is interested in aesthetics and in the community". On the other hand, the art researcher Ana Lucia Leal believes that "these borders are very elastic and there is much discussion about it; the colourful designs would be considered as *graffiti*, but also are the *tags* (writing, signatures or letters with some kind of technical preparation) colourful, made on walls, buildings, the city's overpasses, and now also on canvas, presented in galleries and art exhibitions" (Leal, 2009, p.13). In the opinion of the English author Cedar Lewish, it represents a peculiar code of the practice of *Street Art* whose interactivity with the audience of the masses on the streets is practised by different groups or "crews" (Lewish, 2008:45).

These works appear on some of the walls in Rio de Janeiro; although they look widespread, they seem to focus on a few routes that receive large flows of mass transit. Some authors identify in their sequence of images the presence of a legible communicational process in the order of the displacements (Apostolidés, 1993:134). The image concept that we employ is Yves Bonnefoy's: "a system of signs that mediates the relation of the individual to the world" and that is an inter-language referential and mediation system, assuming different shapes as written texts, word, television media text like soap operas, and radio broadcasts produced through slogans of some reporters (Lussaut, 1998:46).

The origins of graffiti

This form of art emerged in New York City during the *Cultural Turn* in the 1960's. The United States was divided by the Vietnam War and troubled by the struggle for civil rights (Sousa, 2004:.250). It rapidly conquered the country and spread around the world, later connecting its aesthetic to the expression of the *Hip-Hop* movement (Cavalcanti, 2008:22). This name which arose in the year 1968 is assigned to an

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African-American musician called Afrika Banbaataa (Konzo Kugelberg, 2007:140). Between the years 1970 and 1980, the movement expanded with the emergence of *DJs, rappers* and *break-dancers* (Pais & Blass, 2007:33). From African-American and Latino communities in the United States it became emblematic for a large number of young people supported by three poetic pillars: break-dance, rap and *graffiti*.

For some thinkers, since the crisis of the 1990's, capitalism entered a more advanced stage and equally destructive for two centuries of existence (Giddens, 2000:9). Unemployment and the loss of rights forced the poorest sector of the urban population to live compressed between individualism and community on the outskirts of cities that were in an accelerated process of degradation. The problem pointed out by F. Jameson in the context that he calls post-modernity, seems to be associated with the expansion of street art as an aesthetic renovation, anchored in the actions of citizenship (Jameson, 2009:111). Maybe it is due to this feature that the Argentine thinker Nestor Garcia Canclini defined *graffiti* as "a syncretistic and transcultural means". Associated with the "urban disorder," it reinforces one of the goals of this essay which is to study the interpersonal communication in the face of the retraction of urban planning (Canclini, 1998:.338).

The Portuguese scholar Oliveira Campos, in his travels through the city of São Paulo, beside the impersonality of the metropolis, found a place "of immense visual creativity depicted in these contemporary expressions of an illegal nature. This city is an emblematic case, internationally renowned, for the local processes of cultural creation from global impulses, an example of *creolization* or *hybridization* that reaches the *graffiti* language". He also noted that between his capital, Lisbon, and the city of São Paulo, there are links "that are paradigmatic regarding the chains of significance that we can find among many other urban centres scattered throughout the world. *Graffiti* has been globalized although it has not been uniformed" (2009:3-4).

Globalization and city

Graffiti's time of expansion was going through a profound change. In the year 1973 the world was closing a 30-year conjuncture of uninterrupted economic growth:

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The Golden years. Elapsed since 1945, it wasn't a linear process, but oscillated in pursuit of systemic adjustments. Capitalism was going through major transformations since the collapse of Bretton Woods, the oil shock of 1973, and the lost decade of 1980 (Villaschi, 2005, passim). And finally, the strengthening of globalization, driven by decisions emanating from the "Washington Consensus" consolidated the emergence of a global capital market, widespread industrial production (Castells, 2000:53). These transformations resulted in mass unemployment, evictions from housing and workplaces. The new economy openly despised the social experiences accumulated for centuries (Hobsbawm, 1999:286). The weakening of the nation-state ran in parallel with the policy of deregulation and unemployment of workers on a large scale.

The debate on the capitalist modelling won dramatic contours when critical works like Jane Jacobs'(1992) questioned the principles dictated by the new context of power. Robert Fitch, also a North-American, in his work *The assassination of New York,* published in 1993, detected the suppression of villas and restaurants, replaced by office buildings. The prices of urban land and ancient buildings soared and, at the same time, small businesses and family-sized businesses in valued areas were banished (98).

With the end of the *Golden Years* came the end of the time of modern economics with its many and complex factories which were centralized and Fordist. Located in fixed territories, they housed crowds of workers with their ways of life, culture and social experiences. The digital revolution and automation brought new global components of tremendous speed and global connection. Industry spread globally thanks, among other conditions, to the supply of a more flexible labour force. In this new order, the old workers' loyalty to their companies and vice versa became outdated (Kuttner, 2000:152). As Zygmunt Bauman pointed out, the new economy became volatile and its relationship with the State power was extraterritorial (2000:11). Once this agile economy landed, it sparked a severe crisis in the markets and emerging countries, such as Mexico, Russia and Brazil (Castells, 2000:59).

The debilitation of the national state extended to municipal administrations whose power and administrative structure was inoperative and no longer responded to new challenges (Borja & Castells: 31). Overwhelmed by the speed of the process, cities throughout the world were threatened by an unsettling future. To make matters worse,

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the obsolescence of large industrial complexes resulted in degraded areas. This process took dramatic proportions both in Europe as in the United States, affecting the once prosperous cities such as Detroit, the splendid "motor city". It turned into a ghost town, populated by closed factories, abandoned by thousands of residents (Boyle, 2001, passim). The result did not represent the end of the city but the termination of some urban experiences inherited from modernity and typical of the Fordist system. The city, like a phoenix, resurfaced from its own crisis. It was the beginning of a new stage, when new actors were made present, especially those who, according to Certeau, possessed city practices.

That's what Saskia Sassen demonstrates in her now classic work, considering that the new global economy was articulated around the cities, which global or not, would increasingly depend on their cultural goods and services in order to survive in the globalized process (Sassen, 1994:102). If on the one hand, the city in the global and informational economy joined the global networks, on the other hand, it bore its restructuring in a local and regional character (Borja & Castells: 33).

This is where we introduce the issue of *graffiti* as art of the city and in the city. Employing the operating concept of *practice*, authored by Michel de Certeau, we see that the "users" of city space transform it into a *"space of enunciation"*, the place of doing and resisting. Claude Fischer and the Chicago school analyzed the "mosaic" of social worlds (1983) as a promising perspective. Contradicting the pessimists, they sustain the creation of related groups associated to what they call "subcultures". Louis Wirth (1967) on his part considers that in urban areas, *Street Art* is of visual nature. Thus the streets emerge, as the privileged, personal and unified space, free from speculation, an open space to all kinds of rallies, demonstrations, revolutions and popular or populist beliefs like it is detected in the revolt in Rio de Janeiro, in June of 2013. For the Brazilian writer João do Rio (1881-1921), in addition to the street having soul, it "is born as a man is, from the hiccup, from the spasm. There is human sweat in the mortar of its pavement" (João do Rio, 1987:47).

The carioca context: crisis and overcoming

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When the capital moved to Brasília in 1960 the city of Rio de Janeiro lost its capital position that it had kept since 1767. In this conjuncture of the 18th century, the Portuguese America was the most important colony of the Portuguese Empire. Its south-center gained prominence thanks to discovery of gold and diamonds and due to the battle fought for the ownership of the River of La Plata. Once the Portuguese monarchy became aware of the strategic position of the city of Rio de Janeiro, it transferred its viceroyship to the capital. On becoming an independent country in 1822, the political formula of a centralized empire maintained its capital in Rio de Janeiro. It became a central and organizing location, symbolic of the immense territory. The Republic, proclaimed in 1889, kept it as capital. To introduce it to the world as the country's showcase, its leaders reformed it according to the paradigms of the *Plan de Paris* of 1865, of the Baron Haussmann (1801-1891) in the II French Empire.

Between the years 1930 to 1945, the developmental period of the dictatorial government of Getúlio Vargas, the position of the carioca metropolis was consolidated in the country's imagination as the "wonderful city". The emblematic Carnival marches and songs like "Rio de Janeiro, I love you", sported a chorus which naively recited: "I like whomever likes this sky, this sea, these happy people". They all exalted a myth that led to a notion of national unification (Motta, 2004:8). However, in the year 1960 that picture was ruptured. The capital was transferred from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, situated in the center of the country. Planned by Lúcio Costa, it followed the Corbusian mold like Chandigarh, in Punjab. The cultural effervescence and the political opinion remained intense in the 1960's with cultural manifestations like the *Bossa Nova* and the *Cinema Novo*. Currently, the cultural carioca sector is still responsible for a huge cultural production in the context of the country (Ferreira, 2010).

After the military coup of 1964, the expressive middle class part of Rio de Janeiro maintained the libertarian tradition of the ancient capital and resisted the dictatorship (Motta, 2004:.9). In accordance with the economic model of evolutionism of the authoritarian government, the city received a large number of migrants who would reside in slums, worsening urban problems. For I. Vassoler, that perception was more critical in the areas of transport and accommodation to the extent that it expanded the illegal occupation of urban territory and the consequent degradation of urban

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environment (Vassoler, 2007:15). In that scenario, young members of the middle class begin to paint on walls words of an apocalyptic profile such as *Lerfa Um*, or *Coelacanto causes tsunami* (Cavalcanti, 2008:10). This apparent absence of meaning in the painting suggests that the practitioners expressed the loss of stable references. Upon mediating between the old and the new, they seemed stagnated between two moral worlds (Hall, 2006:51). For Oliveira Campos, the conflict and the space of a new citizenship transformed the city into a battlefield fought, "within the city walls" taken as support for what the author calls "youth cultures" as a support for expressing themselves and declaring their messages (Campos, 26).

The route through the city and the walls along the streets and avenues

Four hundred years of existence of the city of Rio de Janeiro emphasized some essential routes in its urban territory. One of them was the permanence of the first city street, the old 'Rua Direita', now named the '1º de Março'. This artery, even with its 400 years of existence, still receives an enormous flow of collective transport. Until the mid-19th century, Rio de Janeiro saw the growth of its territory by means of the use of a rational mosaic. Through this mosaic, ceremony paths of the ancient Portuguese regime like the procession of the *Corpus Christi* were conducted. According to Roger Chartier, the political ritual of the Ancient Regime produced an incisive speech intended to legitimize the power that was embedded in the urban layout (Chartier, 1985:225, 227).

During the first and second reigns of the Brazilian Empire (1822-1889), most of the festive urban paths were determined by power, although some African groups used the same space giving it a diverse sense. In the 21st century modern spatial practice and the everyday life of an inhabitant indicate that it should be endowed with a certain social consistency (Lefebvre, 2000:49). In Rio, this indicates the irresistible rise of the private transport sector, whose entrepreneurs have enormous political power. Their abusive practices are at the root of the recent student and popular uprisings that shook the entire country. At the same time it establishes an attempt of integration between the

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various sectors, from the transport system to the real estate groups for whom the city is a source of profits and attractive commodity (Ferreira: 2010).

This collective transportation system uses the road network made up of streets and avenues such as 'Avenida Brasil', an arrival gate bus station in Rio de Janeiro, and the bridge that connects it to nearby Niterói. One of the most emblematic projects deployed in Rio de Janeiro was the Doxíades Plan. Dating from the 1960's, it predicted the deployment of road corridors or layouts like a Polychromatic Project. Established in 1992, its colours were used to name the great arteries like the Red Line and the Yellow Line [3]. So, along the axles that the new *parataxis* establishes as public transport routes, we have the walls which receive an important part of the *graffiti* painting. The images represented are chronicles painted on the walls. Somehow they follow a tradition in identity, as for João do Rio, the street had been the desired territory, of transgression and communication; they expressed opposition to the adult power which caused, at certain times, this manifestation to stand out as a threatening presence in the public space, suggesting the unpredictable and the uncontrollable(João do Rio, 1987: passim).

The French medievalist Georges Duby (1919-1996) referred to the walls surrounding medieval Paris as a place of communication. In the novel *The Plague* (La Peste, 1972), by Albert Camus (1913-1960), the wall that surrounded the Algerian city of Oran was long and yellow, closed to communication between Arabs and the French. Victor Hugo, when describing his love of medieval Paris which was succumbing to Haussmanian demolition, wrote: the walls made Paris "murmuring" (Hugo, 1949:123). And V. Anastassov considers that the walls of a city can be considered metaphoric politics of power like those that oppose him (Anastassov, 2010: passim). To Michel de Certeau, the wall of Brazilian cities had become an area of struggle, of transformations and communication. Reflecting on his experience with the poor urban Brazilians, he preferred to write "the popular concept in a practice of repression", in which the *practitioners* expressed themselves by means of a material which he called "junk". By being appropriate for the helpless "that junk-wall becomes, in the appropriation of tactics, the exercise of a 'deviationist tactic".

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[3] http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/smtr/hp_cve_linhavermelha.htm

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And the practice of *graffiti* becomes "a transgression in the economy of profit: it appears there as an excess (waste), contestation (the rejection of profit) or offence (an attack against property)" (Certeau: 89). What is thrown away by the hegemonic technique culture, born from an industrial society such as walls and viaducts, turns into communicative support. Its position is in public places of heavy traffic, flanked by large, obsolete manufacturing complexes or degraded areas. Painting is a practice in the order built by other subjects that are different from those who borrow and redistribute communication through the area (Certeau: 79). This question leads us to reflect on the affirmation of Jameson regarding the "return of the aesthetic" in a cultural context that he calls "post-modern" and which is linked to the recovery of new intensities in terms of images (Jameson, 2009:113). In the 1980's, artists of the peripheries turned to these abandoned or semi-abandoned panels in front of which heavy traffic circulated. For some authors the late arrival of this practice to Rio made it one of the last major cities in the country to receive it while, in the 1990's, *street art* had been incorporated into the daily life of São Paulo for almost 20 years (Cavalcanti, 2008: 25).

Taking into account the criticism of H. Belting about the platonic theory of images, *graffiti* is a way of defending a living memorialist practice against artificial memory. Only living beings have the power to remember, whilst plastic works captured in their *métis* duplicate death (Belting, 2004:.223). Rio's peripheral communities always used music and body and physical actions and endurance practice, raising visibility inside the system. So it was with the burials of slaves and the duplications of sense in the cities of Portuguese America. The same happened with the famous popular musician João da Bahiana, whose space was Praça 11, missing today, contemporary of the so-called "Africas". These areas, endowed with a strong identity were popular places located in the coastal hills of Saúde and Gamboa in a territory then marked by multiculturalism.

Graffiti in More Recent History

The earliest examples of this art in Rio de Janeiro which emerged in the 1960's were made by an individual known as a drifter and an urban prophet, nicknamed *Gentileza* (Kindness). The main expert on his "apostolate", the cultural researcher

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Leonardo C. Guelman, considers that the greatest work made by the prophet was in the 1980's. The work was represented by the "55 viaduct pillars of the Caju, in Rio de Janeiro". With his picturesque words, *Gentileza* denounced the cunning coalition between the "capeta" (devil) and capitalism, which he renamed as "capetalism". The work of this urban prophet was considered by the theologian Leonardo Boff, as "a Trinitarian mystique as rarely it could be found in the history of Christianity". His written messages on the pillars of viaducts and the disseminated images in pure urban poetry obsessively presented his keyword: *gentileza gera gentileza* (kindness generates kindness) (Guelman, 1997:33).

While street art was born in Rio with scatological gravity, in Latin American cities such as Caracas, Buenos Aires and Mexico City, it was a young artistic expression (Salazar, 2008:7). In Rio de Janeiro, in the late 1980's while *Gentileza* acted, young graffiti artists arose from the suburbs and outlying communities changing the language employed as with "Gilson", a popular character named "poet of the barriers". He was an artist who was able to sprinkle kilometres of public works barriers along the city with endless verses enriched by drawings.

At that time, the capitalist system realized the communicative potential of *rappers* and graffiti artists conveying images more effectively than formal advertising conducted by large agencies in the market. Large companies such as the Brazilian Post Office and the network of snack bars "Bob's" stamped its logo as a *graffiti* displayed on a wall, near the Praça Mauá, a well-known central port area of the city of Rio de Janeiro "(Cavalcanti, 2008:29). On the other hand, the street artists from the periphery developed a poetics containing a strong socio-political character. According to the journalist Sarah Coursey, editor of the *online* newspaper *The Rio Times*, the artist Smael Vagner's work emerged for the first time on the walls of buildings in Rio in the year 1998. His paintings, made with strong colors and perfection, raised prestige for the young man who would present himself as a member of the "Nation" group. He consolidated a production that Coursey considered as famous as the group "Santa", whose works are spread along the slope of Santa Teresa. To Smael, Rio de Janeiro has good *graffiti* disseminated in schools, while São Paulo has more aesthetic homogeneity throughout its work (Coursey, 2011).

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For C. Geertz, meaning is public because culture is public. Therefore, *graffiti* is a public cultural practice that becomes a means of communication and mediation with the public resulting in what Martin-Barbero (2004) called "approval". It is all about encouraging the exercise of the cultural competence of people, the creative experience, the recognition of differences, namely, the assertion of identity that is strengthened through communication - made towards it and in conflict with (it) another" .

Returning to the context of the 1990's, we see that in Rio de Janeiro and the rest of the country, graffiti, *break-dancer* and *funk* consolidated their presence in the *Hip-Hop* movement. Emerging from complex socio-cultural exchanges, socio-political disappointments and alienation, such demonstrations obtained the recognition and approval (Hershmann, 1997: passim). It's the case of Brazilian *funk* which, despite the official ban that prowled its dances, became a genre of cultural export. This demonstration represented for Janaina Medeiros, the "true Brazilian electro music" (Medeiros, 2006:110).

Just as the carioca *funk*, the city's *graffiti* emerged from the practices of resistance to the influx of dominant cultures. Its paintings produced on walls, many of them authentic urban scrap and on ample surfaces of large public works. The origin of this urban scrap is due to the process of economic deflation lived across town, and it started around 1960 when Rio de Janeiro ceased to be the federal capital. Many cultural, political and economic institutions were transferred to Brasília. Deflation worsened when, in the decades of 1980 and 1990, many large companies moved to cities like São Paulo, giving Rio the worst industrial participation (Osório, 2005:26). The economic plans intended to recover it do not appear to have been successful (Amendola, 2002).

However despite its vaunted "decadence", the city of Rio de Janeiro remained one of the largest cities of Latin America. It was able to create "standards of uniformity", reshaping the traditional habits of its population and subordinating them to a "modern" style of work, fashion and amusement. Residing in a big city crowned the dreams of numerous migrants and, in particular, to be able to have a home of their own, with paving, piped water, sewage and electricity; and be nearby public schools, kindergartens and health centres.

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A little history: the mesh of roads and slums

In the context of the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the deployment of the Republic in 1889, an expressive part of the poorest and needy populations of the city of Rio de Janeiro lived precariously. They occupied houses in the old city centre whose precariousness did not attract public investment, therefore becoming more and more degraded (João do Rio: 119-130).

Without public investment, such zones got ruined thus justifying official campaigns for the eradication of poverty and disease. The city peremptorily proclaimed itself to need modernization and sanitization. During the reforms undertaken between 1903 and 1910, these populations were expelled from these central areas. They populated the first slums that for Zaluar and Alvito are the oldest that are admitted occupying wasteland areas: the hills like Santo Antônio in 1897. For the wealthy, living in a modernized and beautified city demonstrated, according to Lefebvre, the practice where a "société secrete son space."

According to Certeau, power knows the city through its scientific and impersonal tools. Only the "practitioners" or residents have their tactics and astuteness that resolve their urban problems. In this Certeosian sense, the slum was presented by the incisive power as a problem when it was the solution requiring perfecting. One exception: in the 1930's, during the Vargas government, Mayor Pedro Ernesto acknowledged the presence of slums and introduced some improvements at 'Mangueira'. However, as stated by Sergio Magalhães, that experience did not prosper (Freire, Oliveira, and 2008: 214). It couldn't, because the power believed that only it knew what popular housing was and what was best for the population and not them, that is, the "practitioners." [4]

Between the years of 1937 and 1945, the Estado Novo regime (New State) of Getúlio Vagas, developed an active social policy by consolidating labour rights. Beside the increment of employability and family constitution, he invested in affordable housing through the attribution of pensions. These initiatives, however, were of limited

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[4] Dias da Cruz, expressing the power and scientific point of view, wrote in 1940: "The construction of one's home in certain regions didn't obey to any technical or economic convenience. Each one made it how and where it seemed better, hiding from the eyes of inspectors. Hence the difficulty of correcting the many wrongs that were disfiguring various excerpts – houses badly made, misaligned and crooked

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range and were not solving the slum issue. In the year 1937, the city of Rio de Janeiro's Building Law viewed the slums as an aberration. The city forbade them from appearing in the official city map and receiving new homes or improvements: they were destined for eradication. The Estado Novo's solution was for "proletarian parks", proposing the change of habits and education of residents (Alvito & Zaluar: 27).

After the corporate-military dictatorship, in democracy, the problem becomes a solution: the slum-quarter project

The democratic government of President João Goulart (1919-1976) elected in 1961 was overthrown in 1964 in the context of the Cold War in the Southern Cone. A coalition of business entities, armed forces and U.S. intelligence bodies participated in the coup; the abundant support of foreign capital was also used (Dreifuss, 1981). The authoritarian military and corporate regime deployed with this support revitalized capitalist actions in Brazil. It resulted in a great economic growth in the country throughout the decades that followed. Despite increased police repression and the salary crunch which transferred income to the economic elites, the country became modernized (Dreifuss, 1981:445). However, this conservative modernization defeated social and labour movements by force. It also supplanted the excluded, name given by these researchers to the slum populations. However, if the trade union and labour structures were able to regroup, the same did not occur with the "excluded". When they began to rise, their political voice and presence was kidnapped by the "tyranny of housing estates and slums by drug trafficking" and the militias (Alvito & Zaluar:26).

The successive military governments connected the country thanks to its development policy: they deployed highways, ports and an advanced micro-wave telephone system through satellites (Santos, 1994: 39). Despite all of this, slums continued to expand, receiving thousands of migrants. Many headed to the suburbs of the "central", the so-called "north side," which for many was a semi-colonial area, in front of the "metropolis", the south area of the middle and upper class. However, the phenomenon of suburbanization, for Micoud, is due to the off-centre growth of the city: "an example that, more than any other shows the evil of the city today: the suburbia

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problem". It allows an invisible order to unveil in the city and one which proposes the analysis of three levels: time, space and men (Micoud, 2000:.3).

It should be kept in mind that speculators who acquire urban land in Brazil explains the way the country is urbanized (Maricato, 2000:152-153). Thus, the political power competing for the interests of property speculation is an almighty nature, against which middle or heavy resources do not feature. It reminds us of a dominant star, the Sun, as Micoud wrote: "The master of the house is the one who organizes" as the mother city, leaving the suburbs to live as sub-cities, dependent and subordinated. The spatial order of "city" is one that prevents thinking the identity of the suburbs as such (Micoud, 2000:51). City-center and suburb-periphery have to be connected by a transportation system. In Rio de Janeiro, by adopting the private urban transport model allowing the granting of circulation of private company buses, the municipal power questioned the orderly growth of the city and the happiness of the disadvantaged citizens. As Caiafa wrote, "a city is defined largely by the possibility of occupying its location and the access to it"(Caiafa, 2007:71).

Is bus transportation rational? The answer may be ambiguous. Max Weber characterizes modern society as the result of rationalization. In the more recent processes of late modernity or post-modernity, "rationalization" (which was central in Weber's analysis), loses its space to another process.

In the face of the strategy of modernism that positioned reason ahead of any consideration is that Treviño calls "social process". For this author, communities were much more than a physical space: "También son un proceso vivo que no puede arreglarse de manera espacial o comprarse como un bien" (Treviño, & Rees, 2003:107). The modernist trend to standardize indiscriminately took Regine Robin, a *flaneur* of the 21st century, to argue that the "urban landscape" of Mexico City, in the midst of its chaotic development, was made similar by modernism to so many others around the world. For her, when referring to the Mexican capital, "this city, in some aspects, resembles São Paulo, or Tokyo. Modernity pushes standardization, homogenization, but it is the guarantee of development of the metropolis, its living character. Entire neighborhoods have lost their previous urban fabric and have radically transformed" (Robin, 2009:188).

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The urban game and *graffiti*

Now, for Michel de Certeau, "the thousand ways to play/undo the other's game",
i.e. the space imposed by others, characterize the subtle, tenacious, resistant activity of
groups (Certeau, 1998, I: 8). This game practised on the urban walls is a
communicational process aimed at establishing a dialogue with both the present and the
future. As professor Zissu points out in our modern-day, "spray paint and marker pens
are the most common instruments of the graffiti artist. But in ancient days, a nail or
stick often did the job". For him, the "major difference between modern *graffiti* and
ancient *graffiti* is that many ancient *graffiti* was written really to last." On the other
hand, Professor Jonathan J. Price, chairman of the Classics Department at Tel Aviv
University observed that the ancient *graffiti* was intended for the future because if
someone wrote: "It wasn't Kilroy Was Here", this wasn't some scatological remark on a
bathroom stall but it was often someone's epitaph written by hand on a wall either by
paint or with a nail or messages sort of to the future (rogueclassicist | September 2, 2011
at 10:10 am | Categories: Uncategorized: Sem categoria | URL: http://wp.me/poaX4-
3Dq).

The practice of *graffiti* represents what Bhabha called the "narrative construction
of minority speeches "of everyday life. It integrates the tense social environment of
Latin American metropolises dominated in terms of social communication by the
hegemony of televised media (Bhabha, 1998:307). In *graffiti*, were there an
intertextuality mediating image, television text and literature? Most graffiti artists are
literate, educated in public schools where the literary text was within their grasp. They
were seen not as ordinary students, but artists, people with whom this literature
established a sensitive mediation. Ana Maria Mauad summarizes the issue of image
produced with an involvement in the territory of a city filled with images and
communicative stimuli: "Rio de Janeiro, a living space that makes and produces sense,
whose code of images takes various forms: photographic clichés, cinematic film tapes,
chronicles, radio soap operas, music, etc." (Mauad, 2007:15).

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In a city like Rio de Janeiro, confrontation practices are developed that, to Certeau, are communicational because: "In these combatant stratagems there is an art of blows, of throws, a pleasure in changing the rules of the oppressing space. Tactical prowess and joy of a technicality" (Certeau, 1998, I: 79). It is noted that a communication practice, according to the personal testimony of Cavalcanti, is configured along kilometres of a mural extension. Its surfaces, covered with consecutive chained messages are arranged in an order that surpasses neighbourhoods and municipalities of the metropolitan area of the city.

Did this mode of communication for printed images bear a new kind of political communication? Ash Amin, when analysing the age of urban disarticulation, considers the "multiple usage of public space and proliferation of the sites of political and cultural expression seemingly odd to expect public spaces to fulfil their traditional role as spaces of civic inculcation and political participation." Centuries ago, the central public spaces of a city were primordial especially in a classical and medieval world. However, as Habermas points out in Italian mercantile cities, a minority of political actors in a collective body were the focal point of the political, economic and, above all, cultural transformations. And then, therefore, the notions of restricted citizenship and civic responsibility are established in public places (Amin, 2008:2). Thus, the public urban space became "one component, arguably of secondary importance, in a variegated field of civic and political formation" (Amim 2008:3). According to the analysis of Otília Arantes, the *Cultural Turn* and the main actors of the *Cultural Studies* became aware of the power of the cultural economy (Arantes, 2000:42-43). If for the *New Left* the logic of high capitalism strolled by culture, Daniel Bell, writing in 1976, points out in that transposition the hidden presence of a public enemy loose on the streets: an "adversary culture".

Globalization in Rio de Janeiro

In the academic and business circles of Rio de Janeiro, globalization sparked intense debates on the post-liberal urban planning. Some Brazilian managers and thinkers, echoing the externalities of city-marketing, rushed to introduce it as the panacea. It would be able to solve the wrongs of the city and make it competitive and

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the first global city of Latin America. The powerful real estate sectors strove to increase speculation and their profits. The speech which revolved them since the *Cultural Turn* claimed that the urban *marketing* projects and *city-marketing* would be able to raise the city's prolonged crisis. On the other hand, within those modern projects, it is essential to have the existence of a new local modelling policy as a natural corollary which doesn't seem to be in these entrepreneurs' plans.

Urbanization has completely changed the paradigm of human existence in the world. If, on the one hand, we have Brazilian centers able to rival the magnificence and the equipment of the so-called first world, Latin America and the Caribbean make up one of the most urbanized regions in the world, with 80% of the population's total (588 million). This is configured, as Davis points out, in the worst of all possible worlds and where the State seems to have completely abdicated the task of controlling property speculation (Davis, 2006: 87).

The city's growth in recent decades has incorporated most of the millions of migrants who flock from rural areas every week to reside on the outskirts or slums, which grow to infinity. They become, as Robin describes, many areas without a border and precise limits in peripheries that don't keep anything else that is rural or urban. If the horizon of the central cities are occupied by modern technology, this periphery, like graffiti paintings promote the recovery, and many of them, return to the midst of this "urban world of the twenty-first century lives, so sordid, with the pollution, excrement and decay" (Robin,2009:5). Marcel Roncayolo considers that the current city has positive characteristics, such as mobility, access to sources of information and new technologies, education, standard of living, consumption, etc. On the other hand, there is a downside, i.e. an *urban pathology* translated as insecurity, violence, loneliness etc. (Roncayolo, 1998, passim).

On the other hand, with economic expansion, the valuation of the periphery is indicative of urban mobility; consolidated slums like *Rocinha*, in the prestigious southern area of Rio de Janeiro, has an internal real estate market where increasing appreciation rates are dealt with. The high cost of rents charged in *Rocinha* represents the city developing spontaneously without organization. If modernism insisted on

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devaluing this "disorder" as negative, Micoud suggests that it represents the real future for the city (Micoud, 2000:103).

It is a consensus for the experts that the slums are not all alike. Some have been eradicated without any governmental policy action that would benefit them (Pearlman, 1979:.20). A major change occurred when an innovative project hosted and developed by the city of Rio de Janeiro and by innovative architects changed the context. It's the project named "slum-quarter" which, for Magalhães, does not result from the action of an actor, but represents a process, and which seems to have been well accepted by most active communities. The authorities incremented accessibility by paving streets and promoting art works to make communities healthier and integrated. They began to reap benefits with the arrival of other services (Unesco 1981:18). Gradually the residents began to acquire building materials that have substantially improved the sanity of slum housing.

City, *Graffiti, pathways: Cariocas take the bus*

In the globalized era the new information technologies have accelerated the mediations of social and personal experience. The multi-faceted individualization whilst process and mechanism, reacts to contemporary consequences and regulates the duality between the individual and society, between globalization and individualization. Therefore, what we may call a globalization paradox does in fact exist. In relation to the appropriation of space, it presents ambivalent trends, in strengthening individuality, valuing freedom, or the isolation of the individual with the abstention of elementary social relations. So, for João Maia and Juliana Knapp, "every city on the globe disappears before the moving speed of objects and people; the metropolises lose personality and identity, they become identical; public circulation spaces become spaces drained of meaning, as they are not shared by the citizens" (Maia e Krapp, 2005:33).

Local development policies assume particular importance in the development of urban artistic practices. As Ash Amin warns us, currently the locations of civic and political training are plural and disseminated. Civic practices and public culture are marked by the circuits of fluxes and association that are not just books, television, music magazines, international associations, etc. Training centres have proliferated,

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including spaces that, to Amin, belong to the circuit of micro-politics, such as work, school, community and neighbourhood and the performance of power, assemblies, political parties and social movements.

The city of Rio de Janeiro has its space and surroundings linked to a visual imagery, which for Ana Maria Mauad are: "eternal images of the contours of the hills and the immensity of the sea. Images of the city with the hustle and bustle of cars and the majesty of the buildings. Images of leisure and excitement in the anthill of a Sunday beach. Clear, sharp and monochrome images, with variants in gray scale and brown" (Mauad, 2007:15).

In relation to the effects of globalization and the spectacular changes resulting in a pattern of industrialization that restructures the Brazilian economy and of Rio de Janeiro in particular, is what Ferreira Santos translated as the de-industrialization of the central area accompanied by a proliferation of the carioca space for tertiary activities, constituting complementary centralities (commercial sub-centres). In the Port area, the increasing container loads also reduced the area used by the port generating "urban voids" (Ferreira Santos, 1999, Scripta Nova). In a way, they were revitalized by *graffiti* that they reconfigured as urban equipment. Employing these tailings as support for a fighting art, the graffiti artists succeeded, with their strokes of art, to change the rules of the oppressing space. Vera Pallamin considers that: "Urban art is a social practice. The works allow the apprehension of relations and differential modes of appropriation of the urban space, involving its aesthetic purposes with the dealing with social meanings around them, their modes of cultural and political themes" (Pallamin, 2000:23-24).

Brazil and Rio de Janeiro are located in Latin America, a region of the globe whose urbanization is an irresistible impulse destroying the balance between the local and the global; without it, says Robin, it is impossible to live. Some people placed before the swift passage of time, the modifications of space which the city requires, can be traumatized. They "take refuge in their "corner", their neighborhood, where they accompany the passage of time at a human pace. This is the case of all these bars or restaurants that serve to anchor the urban disoriented by the hectic pace of the city" (Robin, 2009:196).

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The Vargas dictatorship expanded the road mesh of Rio de Janeiro, now including viaducts and tunnels. In the following decades, between 1950 and 1960, the government of President Juscelino Kubitschek (1902-1976) and the Governor of the former State of Guanabara, Carlos Lacerda (1914-1977), some new road connections appeared with the decided impulse towards the car and the apartment building. The new roads provided corridors for vehicles that spread throughout the wealthy segments of Rio de Janeiro's society. Although the model thought for Brazil was the United States and the city of New York, where the car seemed dominant, the role of public authority in the *Big Apple* on public transport was significant. The local and the federal government had a decisive role particularly in the New York metropolis (Smerk, 1991:46).

In Rio de Janeiro, the government withdrew from managing the transport in the decades of 1960 and 1970 resulting in a vacuum that allowed the private sector to take over the strategic transportation sector. Thanks to the complicity of the Taxi Worker's Union and the electoral system that allows them to elect representatives in the State and municipal plans, they created a concentrated template (Caiafa, 2007:128).

The popular uprisings in Brazil that broke out in June 2013 had their fuse on the price of bus tickets, soon thickened by other claims. Mobility is at the mercy of the interests of entrepreneurs making the system tense for its professionals as well as for its users (Caiafa, 2007:66). According to *Fetransport*, in 2005, in the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro about 105 municipal bus companies existed with 10.133 vehicles, which have on average about 5.5 years of use and carried approximately 118.000 passengers per month, and 4.538 passengers per day (Fetransport: 23).

Given the absence of an effective coordination process which would integrate the transport system, the priority circulation granted to buses follows the corporate profit surge. They take over the "lines" titled by numbers and names where sometimes native humour finds a domain speaker, revealing itself a real art in making people laugh. For example, a line in the city of Niterói linked the Fonseca neighbourhood, passing through Barcas until the neighbourhood of Icaraí. Because of the initials of the traversed stations, it received the curious nickname of FBI. These lines correspond to a territorial

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logic where the entrepreneur collects users and profits in time-consuming travel. The average time of a trip on public transportation in Rio is about 68 minutes, just over an hour, although over time it may reach 82.39 minutes. The average speed is around 19 kilometres per hour (Rocha, Motta and Vasconcellos, 2012, *O Globo* http://blogdofavre.ig.com.br/tag/corredores-de-onibus/).

In strategic points of that route where there is wall-mounted support available or a spatial suture, artists painted their *graffiti* but their art does not live alone in the city. The social space has a three-dimensional nature, including the mountains, the heights, the depressions, water surface, height and depth, whatever forms a representation of the cosmos. This suture site is a point of physical, visual and representative friction (Lefebvre: 224).

The growing dominion of road circulation since the mid 1950's downplayed the full possibilities of a waterway connection and stifled the underground's job, which in Brazil is not only late as it is ineffective. On the other hand, in the rest of the world and in particular in the USA, the use of the car and the petrol matrix accelerated the creation of complex urban arteries. In some cities they changed the pedestrian sense of its routes. New York has a less attractive transport profile for to the car once it favours public transport (Caiafa, 2007:54).

The rapid development in the direction of functionality was designed to house the engined vehicle. In these modern days, this explosion met decided and influential enthusiasts. As Robin notes, Le Corbusier and Robert Moses wanted to make New York City adequate for the car, considering we live in the age of this vehicle. Moses, a dynamic Mayor, undertook modernization throughout the city with bridges, tunnels, viaducts, highways allowing the ample circulation of cars. For Robin, "If we are to realize this grand design, wipe out some neighborhoods, never mind the general interest of the automobile civilization" (Robin, 2009:189). In Rio de Janeiro, besides the car, we have this mechanical being, owner of streets and avenues, a master in the time of men and their mobility: the bus.

Conclusion

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Graffiti as a street art became consecrated in the city of São Sebastião of Rio de Janeiro in a definitive way. To achieve this position, it came a long way until it was considered an aesthetically validated art status becoming object of international publications and academic work. A presence considered within the limits of criminal action and appealing, it got to an aesthetic position accepted by the official culture. *Street art* which appeared between the decades of 1960 and 1970, and was made by different *crews* in New York, was connected to the *Hip-Hop* movement and the struggle for civil rights. There it became a facet of the most expressive and culturally rich that occurred after the *Cultural Turn.* It was a phase in which the golden years had ceased and the urban revolution began as well as the emergence of youth. *Hip-Hop* was a cultural crucible operating with the mobilizing and identity capacity of the young peripheral populations, creating discursive and image alternatives of the more representative social themes of contemporaneity. Arriving in the city with a relative delay, its irradiation took advantage of the centuries-old tradition of protest by the city, which saw itself plunged into economic and cultural emptiness since 1960.

An author like Cavalcanti recovered the notion of strolling since Beaudelaire, João do Rio and Régine Robin, naming certain random routes where the paintings are installed as *drifts* (Cavalcanti, 2008:40). *Graffiti* became a symbolic intermediate, establishing a succession of routes where it's the protesting citizenship who takes hold of the routes, deploying its order in ceremonies and in speech. Through these acts of imaging, they consolidate and rewrite culture, regaining their voice and producing images [5]; while passing through the paths of globalization it took its artists and their expressions and are no longer local, assuming a global dimension.

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[5] The first bus route, dated from 09/10/2005, was defined in the direction Rio- Niterói, leaving Cidade Nova (Av. Presidente Vargas), passing through São Cristóvão (Av. Francisco Bicalho), crossing the Rio-Niterói bridge and moving towards the center of the city of Niterói on Av. Feliciano Sodré, with the observer sitting to the right of the vehicle.

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