

## THE NATION'S NARRATIVE. LITERATURE AS URBAN AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS: TESTIMONY IN BELLE ÉPOQUE RIO DE JANEIRO

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### I. INTRODUCTION

“Nations – wrote Gellner – unlike the brotherhood of man favoured by the Enlightenment, are exclusive clubs” (Gellner, 1997:68). This exclusive club allegory may be applied to the Republican Regime installed in 1889 in Brazil, which would put into practice and would intensify the elite’s power project implanted since 1822, after the country’s independence. By the use of well succeeded strategies, popular masses were excluded from politics and were seen as dangerous and antagonists of the State, despite the fact of being constituted by the country’s inhabitants. For them it was restrained a similar treatment appropriated for a foreign enemy. Not being recognized in their alterity, they were targeted by discursive operations produced by the elite which applied scientific knowledge to reach this aim. They were tutored and stigmatized by their bestiality, under the rubric of complete incapacity for citizenship. These masses were constituted in its majority by ex-slaves from African origin and mixed race people. Even the whites, or nearly, white when poor, all depended on elite’s favors and clientelism. The slaves, freed on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1888, were impeded from participating in the political process, among other causes, as a consequence of the electoral law from 1881, which also limited the right of vote just for the literate people reducing the amount of electors from 10% to 1% in a total population of approximately of 14 million (de Carvalho, 1990:24). Despite being in freedom after the Republic was declared, they were impeded from voting or being elected; therefore being more and more distant from formal citizenship. In the present paper, we analyze different social origins writers’ narratives

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engraved during the Belle Époque. Their vision of reality reflects their aspirations, frustrations, perspectives, belongings and refusals despite applying very different approaches. They represent their time, in which they are passive actors. Many times they reveal their preference for one side. According to Certeau's heterology and Laura de Arriba's words, the speech about the *other* is shown filled with meanings, being a place where readings and knowledge interact, and where politics of action on the real are founded (de Arriba, 2004:57). The result is the production of a narrative that reflects the nation in its contradictions, revelations and occultations. Their narratives scenery is the city of Rio de Janeiro, capital of a country which, until then, was predominantly rural. A country where slavery and physiocracy were the elite's traditional speeches, added to the maintenance of big extensions of cultivated land where their externalized production aimed North-American and European consumption. Hence, our corpus is composed by texts from writers such as João do Rio, Gonzaga Duque, Machado de Assis and the Portuguese, Eça de Queiroz. Among them, the quadroon Afonso Henriques Lima Barreto's work will be specially highlighted. Due to his origin and his writing, he was despised and discredited by the elite and ended his days in poverty, forgetfulness, deeply plunged in depression and alcoholism. He would frequently denounce the elites' countermands, as well as the lack of citizenship able to bind together different national segments. His more emblematic works under this critical and incisive condition were *Triste fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (1911), *Recordações do escrivão Isaías Caminha* (1909), *Vida e Morte de M. J. Gonçalves de Sá* (1919). We are applying Michel de Certeau's notions of cunningness and practice as well as the attempts to find in these texts a narrative of a nation which, according to Bhabba, may be able to enlighten this literature analysis as a witness of its time.

## II. RIO DE JANEIRO: THE ANIMALIZED CAPITAL

After the proclamation of the republic, the composition of Rio de Janeiro city adopted a quite heterogeneous profile; despite it went on being nominally the capital of a country with continental dimensions, it was impeded to reverberate the national problems and supplies. If this was the general tone of the elites' politics, the popular masses, which inhabited it, had within it the fundamental scope of their lives. It was in the city that they exercised their social network, where they manipulated their self-aid practices. Maybe it can be asserted that their image of the world adopted an urban face which was used as a theater where they played their tricks to survive, intertwined with a speech heavily hostile towards moral (de Certeau, 1998:351). It is not to admire that, as vote or voice was not given

to them, their ways of collective representation in politics were expressed by means of riots. Traditional, their time would flow in a different way than modern times. Their physical appearance, clothing and emblems belonged to an old-fashioned and multicultural context.

The elites would unquiet themselves due to what was described as a unique delay from the masses who they accused, since their scientific basis, of being crime promoters, of dissolving good old habits and disseminating diseases. In press, they were frequently described as delay agents, ignorance and superstition matrix. Their traditional religiosity was pointed as an impermeable barrier against the elite's enlightenment, positivist and racist project. Despite this accusation, the Candonblé traditions, as it was the case of João da Baiana and the afro-descendent community settled around the former Praça 11, were eagerly sought by powerful and rich people (Porto Rocha, 1995:80). On the other hand, positivism – philosophy developed by the French philosopher August Comte – was well received in Brazil in the last decades of the XIX century. The ideas which led to the republic in 1889 showed themselves diversified and shaped themselves to the sight of groups of action. The *paulista* group, which adopted a liberal tendency, revealed a strong influence of Spencer's work, showing even more marked traits of social Darwinism. Also influenced by the American way, they would see with good eyes the preservation of private property and kept preoccupations of maintaining the social order. Positivism, which ended up in the Brazilian Jacobin movement, united sectors such as liberal professionals, journalists, students and teachers. Its influence, however, according to more recent analysis, acquired a doctrinary and exclusivist role seducing, on the other hand, the Jacobins and army officers committed to a 'national salvation mystic', ideological shelter which congregated young officers as well as senior ones (Viotti da Costa, 1987:357). Its influence in teaching was decisive, adapted to the national environment, hostile to great ideas debate, Brazilian positivism struggled to coin a pseudoscientific legitimating speech which consecrated the positivist maxim that the state of 'a social organization is essentially dependent on its civilization' (Bénichou, 2001:247). To the historian José Murilo de Carvalho, 'the fact that the republicans did not get the population's poor sector support, Negroes above all', remains (Murilo de Carvalho, 199:30). In a nutshell, the republican chief's hostility towards the masses became evident since the proclamation of the new regime. On the other hand, his plans to reshape the capital demanded that these masses, considered ignorant, dangerous and poor, were expelled, promoting an authentic social prophylaxy. Well, if the nation, as some theoreticians who study it believe, is born from a postulate

and an invention, it only lives thanks to the collective gathering to this fiction (Thiesse, 2001:14). In Brazil from Belle Époque, because of these exclusion protocols, the nation should arise to the popular masses as an exclusive club, visited only by gentlemen. This bitterness would not be shared only by the secluded ones, as writers such as Lima Barreto and João do Rio, also the fierce republicans implicated in the consolidation of the regime, would manifest their disagreement against the national vessel. Something like it occurred with the politician Alberto Torres who, around 1920, wrote an article reflecting the indignation of a tropical Zola: 'This state is not a nationality; this country is not a society, these people are not a people. Our men are not citizens' (Torres, 1933:297).

The new branch of the agrarian elite, renewed by the appearance of more dynamic and paid agricultural areas in the state of São Paulo, was based on modernity conquests. These allowed them to have domain over the national space and time and, mainly, over the weakened masses. The new panoply was constituted by the telegraph and the telephone, by vote and automobile, by the cinematograph and railways, by photography and Mauser rifle, by the gun machine Madsen and the destroyer, the airplane and the formal education to few. This civilizatory urge aimed at convincing, educating, shaping and remodeling popular behavior. This, conversely, would hide sociability strategies which would be far from the official culture and its politics, and might have contributed to the perfecting of the meaning of nation (Murilo de Carvalho, 199:38).

According to this point of view, to speak about elite's nationalism does not imply in any semantic production of chauvinist sense of a external conquest war, or a military fight for hegemony. Nothing would be stranger to this context as feeding irredentist assumptions. They saw themselves reflected in the similar ones existent in neighboring countries, dominating Indian or African masses, having seen that they applied coincident political strategies in their contexts. In innumerable Latin-American republics, their capital cities thrived as strong urban poles, 'centers' opposed to 'environs' organized to meet external markets' interests (Rama, 1985:passim).

Power, in these cities, did not reside in their urban limes though, but proceeded exactly from the oligarchic rural marks which fit them in their pattern. The narrative of the nation is written in the middle of these contradictions which, not infrequently, implied in reconfiguring meaning. This seems to have been the case of the Republic of Argentina. In the commencement of XX century, the local elites searched for a national symbol, an identity factor, able to symbolize the virile qualities of the nation. A historiographic operation, which was able to promote the *gaúcho*,

until then an unlawful and marginal figure, to take a prestigious place in the nationality archetype of this country (Fradkin, 2003:109-133).

Writing this novel configured an identitary writing, libertarian from the past and from the old, being at the same time legitimating of the renovated context. Summed up briefly, it could play the role of a baptism certificate to ingress modernity and the exclusive club. Since the context from the Lights that modernity has sped its procedures, under the Eurocentric rubric, of a key project to human kind. It did not limit itself to changes more or less accelerated; it became responsible for the expansion of the products of reason in its most various fields of human activity (Touraine, 1994:21). In a worldly scale, without any precedents in history, all the countries, since the industrial ones until the more distant ones, were somehow affected by it. Ideas migrated, just like it occurred with the great transatlantic migratory fluxes (Murilo de Carvalho, 199:42).

The countries which were founded during the XIX century in colonial regions or their heirs in the division of industrial work, received these modern aspirations. This dissemination held in this double revolution dealbar propagated an authentic cultural revolution (Anderson, 1991:51).

All the same, the ideas could not be applied in America as they were in the original European contexts. There must be a filter, a 'revolution slow down', expression consecrated by the XIX century Brazilian conservationists. In this process, the configuration taken by the nation seemed to be the place of ambivalence and weirdness. Maria Emília Prado places the agents who produced this elaboration under the label of eclectic (Prado, 2005:159). As the author points out, these thinkers disdained elaborated formulas and clung to pragmatism, 'to what can be done', cultural practice rooted among us since the beginning of colonization and put in practice by the Pombal Marquis illustration. It was not only a rhetoric code filled of restrict application.

About this issue, Bhabha places some forged indignations about the ambiguity of these meanings as for example if it is enough when we ask ourselves if we became a people, we also should ask when we ceased being one, or what is the process that allowed us to become a fraternal and solidary nation (Bhabha, 2002:7). To write about this indignation as an impossibility is what made from a writer as Lima Barreto in the description made by Alfredo Bosi; 'an observer who finds himself vanquished but not submitted to the social machinery' (Bosi, 1994:268).

### III. THE CONTEXT OF THE REPUBLIC: URBAN PREEMINENCE AND A SOCIAL REVOLUTION

These writers' job took place mainly in Rio de Janeiro City. Capital of Brazil since 1763, was the cultural and political capital of Brazil during colonial times, being equally stage of important conflicts and decisions. As a great Brazilian writer, Machado de Assis (1839-1908), has declared a capital 'is work of times, daughter of History' (de Assis, 1961:50). In 1889 its quietude was stroked by a *coup d'état* which knocked down the monarchy installed in the country since 1922. Despite the depletion of what was anachronically denominated the 'Ancient regime' by the republican *intelligentzia*, the social and symbolic position of the Throne, particularly his former occupant, was target of high prestige among the popular masses. The paternal figure of the emperor and his proverbial dedication to the 'office', with probity and kindness, they would find fertile roots in a people variegated by monarchic traditions originated from Catholicism and Ancient Regime fideism (Murilo de Carvalho, 1991:26). But this survival also strengthened itself in the cultural and ethnic composition of masses. The monarchy had deep roots not only in the Iberian imaginary but, above all, in the African one. The masses once stated they were culturally mixed, worshipped ancient male and female representations as agents who brought life and authority. During the military coup that dethroned D. Pedro II (1826-1891), Rio de Janeiro watched, surprised, the troops' choreography while displacing them-selves, in such a way that the journalist Aristides Lobo described the apparent passivity of the people as 'bestialized'. Almost thirty years later, João do Rio (1881-1921) wrote and pointed out consciously that the prisoners from the detention house declared themselves, in their totality, monarchists. They would make no advert or public speeches but 'all prisoners are radically monarchists' (do Rio, 1987: 160). While investigating the carnival groups he found out, astonished, that none of them called themselves republic, not his members would call themselves 'republicans'.

Not even joking, 'and you know why?' asked the reporter who interviewed the carioca writer,

Who was promptly answered: 'because the masses are monarchist!' (do Rio, 1987:95).

The Portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz (1845-1900), who knew a good deal about the Brazilian elites' lives, described the proclamation of the Republic as a result of an authentic magic sleight-of-hand trick. One day Empire and, out of the blues, from the moving of the General of the Army Deodoro da Fonseca's sword (1827-1892), the scenery changed, obedient as a theater puppet; and instead of actors and monarchic

administrative structures raised their republican congeners. To Eça, the Brazilian republic was like the Hellenic goddess Athena who was born 'complete and gifted, porting a flag, a hymn, under the blessing of Archdeacon Lacerda. No friction, no mess, this republic soon starts to run (de Queiroz, n/d-b: 837). This form of government, though, did not emerge in Brazil as an authentic social mobilization. It was 'run' as work and action from a group whose wide range typified the elite's paradoxes and contradictions. Nevertheless, there was a group on the top, a distant and powerful segment: the rich local oligarchies such as the *paulista* and the *mineira*. Next there was an intermediate sector made of military and engineer, doctors and lawyers, by salespeople and public employees. Doctors; people who lived from the State machine and who feared the ascension of a large urban contingent, who worried about the ex-slaves in the dispute of the small work market. This intellectualized group gave support and designed the republic that represented it as modern, modernizer, civilizatory. By them, the image of the Parisian Marianne got used to the tropics, removed the august toga, and became pleasantly half-naked. It must be taken into account that the republic, according to its protagonists' speech, presented itself as an authentic panacea to the national problems. Innumerable texts contained a peculiar identity sense with the other American 'republics', manifesting a weirdness feeling for what could be a peculiar trait in the political nation soul: monarchy above classes, typifying an agglutinating symbolic element (Machado and Pereira das Neves, 1999:392).

Together with this turbulent military Jacobin circle, the stabilization followed. The triumphant coffee planters' elite of São Paulo gained the indebted fluminense barons, successfully suppressing the monarchic form of the government. The progressive adoption of free work and the constitution of new economic connections made coffee more competitive. When the republican elite and its intellectuals consolidated their project of country, the popular masses from African origin were forced to disappear from history. Their role should be ended by the Aurea law, signed in 1888 and which freed *tout court* the captives mass. After promoting the capitalist accumulation as captives since the beginnings of modern colonization, they were declared inadequate to the working world, being left to them informal jobs, social disprotection, the slams, crime, prostitution. The elite claimed not being guilty for this authentic *coup d'histoire* through which the ex-captives were victim. The hygienist speech, racist and rationalist, represents the cognitive structures, the 'intellectual schemes' that these actors produced about their social world (Christian, 2004:7). Hence, it seems that it is possible to identify a Darwinist speech that crosses the

alterity situations, because these crowds were considered by the *intelligentzia* as existing below the human level. This characterization was strongly originated in the guiding and ambiguous writing resultant from the intense debate by the time of the independences. The perspective of slave masses freedom scared the revolutionary Creole leaderships in America from Thomas Jefferson up to Simon Bolivar (Anderson, 1991:59). The same happened in Brazil. Even in the first decades on the XX century, the captives' descendents were stigmatized as simians and described by knowledgeable testimonies as 'men's caricatures' (Freyre, 1954:17). Once freed, inserted in the carioca capital city, they should be kept at the margin of the society, blocked off integrating it.

The project of a country, based on authoritarianism, was made from its strategies of intervening in reality and creation of an world image produced by philosophers, engineers, sanitarians, military and lawyers who began to talk in the name of the nation (Álvarez, 1991:56). The right of doing so within the modern communication nets of meaning production systems was appropriated by the power owners. Only the lords have the right to speak (Clastres, 1988:106). Their knowledge was based on the irresistible advance of the scientific certainty and the technology progress unavoidable line which, generated from the central countries, considered all the former conquests out of date. The republican coup, while breaking the old monarchic centralization base, made possible the irresistible ascension of new local oligarchies in the national geopolitical context (Campello de Sousa, 1968:162). As a background, the imperialism, at its most in the worldly system, constructed by a Europe committed to its Christianizing and civilizatory mission, and put into practice by the powerful emergence of the United States of America (Mignolo, 2001:32). The country followed in its former complementary vocation inherited from the colony, supported by coffee supremacy which was the main exportation product during the Empire and the first decades of the republic. Brazilian economy always showed itself dependent on the market oscillations, vulnerable face international economic crisis. The European mercantile and financial connections intensified its deals with the periphery, tracing a new way of mondialization. Brazil was favored from this second industrial revolution when foreign capital arrived, eager to build the infra-structure from the countries which modernized themselves in a fast way. However, the working conditions and the industrial worker were excruciating, according to what June E. Hahner demonstrated (Hahner, 1993:206-207). The *Encilhamento* was a financial reform implemented in 1890 which resulted in a huge amount of bills, injecting capitalism into the speculative vein. It represented an effervescent and artificial bubble, a speculative project



which made new companies arise, but also caused innumerable disastrous bankruptcies (Sevcenko, 1999:44). Through this perspective, important European, North-American and Canadian financial sectors intensified their inversions in the peripheric countries, notably in service and infra-structure. The industrialization in Brazil, according to this point of view, expanded to the sector of substituting importations. Despite being modest its refrained growth occurred in big and middle urban centers, identifying the city and industrialization in the imaginary as hooked to modernity. The capitalization of this sector was performed either with external capital brought by some immigrants, either by the application of some exceeding generated by the dynamic coffee plantation.

After some riots, the republic stabilized itself and produced a *pax republicana* that merged with the authoritarian tradition of the elites. It should be marked that, since the independence of Portugal, in 1822, the agrarian groups placed aside the fragile middle sectors and repressed the captive masses. They managed to break down, successfully, the liberalism, the revolution and the republican idealism venture. Instead, they preferred a monarchic solution which sounded less dangerous to operate. They adopted the Empire whose dynasty was European, and which survived until 1889. They built a speech of a nation as a simulacrum just 'to be seen by the Englishmen'<sup>1</sup>. Their authoritarianism was forged under the combusive heat of ancient roots; it emerged now, under the new and vibrant blooming, brightened by the latest scientific conquests. As an expression of the social Darwinism that reigned, they reduced the set of citizens, trusting the political participation to a few privileged ones.

Breathing the Portuguese Illustration pragmatism that was alive among us, they tracked a conservative and discretionary way. They made *tabula rasa* out of history, exercising an 'internal colonization' in a similar process to the one observed in Argentina of Sarmiento, betting in the increase and expansion of European civilization (Mignolo, 2001:34). Such project was placed in the boundary of the state-nation building, attested the European colonization, as the Teuto-Brazilian historian Varnhagen did, as a necessary step, if not the only and fundamental one. Indians and Blacks contributions were disdained, for it was considered they lacked history. From this point of view, it was identified in history and tradition forms of life to be set off due to its obsolescence. This *praxis* was detected by the writer Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909), while probing that the elite, for him described as 'the very most civilized', from the large urban centers from the coastal carried out machine guns and trains to civilize its own people. Even if that meant massacre, as it occurred during arrayal de Canudos war. This bloody and brutal conflict was held between 1896 and 1897 in a

remote hinter region – the *Sertões* – in the state of Bahia. Its population comprised *caboclos*, mulattoes, *cafusos*, mixed and weakened people that the successive plantation crises would have left in the desert area of the *Sertão*, without a job without any support. Euclides da Cunha described them as ‘the lively stone of our race’ making an ‘old society, a dead society, galvanized by a freak’. Therefore its leader, pruned, was a mystical who strolled throughout the wilderness of the *Sertão*, the devout Antonio Conselheiro whose words congregated these trapped shipwrecked from history in an island capable of proportioning shelter and safety. They were obstinate in not recognizing the republic and its institutions. They venerated the deposed Emperor, practiced a popular Catholicism anatomized by the church as heresy. The oligarchies from Bahia, fearful that the rebellion would spread itself, plotted a *causus belli* that started out an armed intervention of the central government.

The ending of this action of force resulted in the total devastation of the village, with the army ‘destroying the houses, 5200, carefully counted’ (da Cunha, 2002:360). The Canudos drama motivated the Peruvian writer Vargas Llosa to write a novel entitled: *The war in the end of the world*.

The *belle époque*, which belongs to the certainty era, took place from the end of XIX century to the first decades of the XX century.

The riches of the wealthy social layers made an impression that societies and the political regimes were subject to a modern and rational administration (Hobsbawm, 1979:384). By the way, a war historian declared that the prosperity of this time and the huge economic expansion of the West in a worldwide economical circuit demonstrated a persistent prosperity ‘beyond the narrow band of upper classes (Murray, 2005:249). Besides the arms, part of the new management paradigm was based in the modern city, elaborated from Paris of Haussmann’s plan, between the years 1850 and 1870, and that made from the first modern city an image territory, experiences and knowledge to be conquered (Landau, 1993:44-45).

The influence of this well-succeeded project produced in the entire world the concept of modern city *par excellence*. Paris strongly attracted the intellectuals from many countries who searched modernity (Landau, 1993:32). Francophilia became the word of order, at least among the elites, despite its influence, were dissolved throughout the whole society. Face this evidence, the count of Gobineau, the French council in Rio de Janeiro defined the Brazilian as ‘a man who dreams about living in Paris’ (Raeders, 1998:93). Machado de Assis warned in an article that the Brazilian novelette should embody more ‘local color, more American features’, instead of revealing itself ‘entirely Parisian’ in ‘its divagations about the

Boulevard and the Tortoni café' (de Assis, 1961:26). A character of Gonzaga Duque's scope (1863-1911), who lived in Rio de Janeiro after an unforgettable Parisian sojourn and who eagerly aspired to go to Paris to live 'the breathing of its boulevards, in the breath of its joys (...) Oh Paris...!... Paris. (...) with its domes, its towers, its palaces (Duque, 1973:50).

The Portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz (1845-1900), answered that in 1888 his close friend, the aesthete and dandy Eduardo Prado insistently asked 'my opinion about your Brazil'. Resounding Emilia Viotti's assertion that the elites preferred to build the state and not a nation, Eça claimed that, in 55 years of independence, Brazil, having a 'healthy, free and strong' young people, sound and kicking, as a divine boat, instead of making of it 'a god' preferred to make a 'bowl' out of it.

His greatest criticism was about the spirit of imitation, of the duty the elite imposed itself of being the European civilization branch in the tropics in Brazil. Instead of stimulating the American refreshment, a country brightened up with light, it preferred to import from the Old World its 'democracy, industrialism, the society by shares, in all the delirium of its infinite shapes, electric lights, the 'French poison' under the brand of the main champagne and the romance. It was ripped to the greatest refinement and asked to be delivered elegantly, the positivism, and the burlesque opera'. From the old and original Brazil, connected to earth and nature, nothing was left and the elite's hunt for the prognostic affected by certainty and security was aggravated. The doctorism; all the members of the society would call by themselves the demiurgic title of doctor. And thus Eça's feather would go on, 'the whole nation doctorated themselves, doctors from the North to the South of Brazil, nothing but doctors could be found.' To the Portuguese writer, the Brazilian doctor would disdain reality and strive to 'all conceive before hand and make an attempt to rule the world by the rules from the compendiums.' And he mocked about a former minister from the empire, a doctor, who 'in all public matters never checked the nation needs, but would nervously turn over the pages of the books, searching for what, vaguely similar, Guizot has done in France, and Pitt in England.' And he sentenced like a prophet: 'These are Brazilian doctors in their nationalities, but not in nationalism, which every day make Brazil more denationalized (de Queiroz, n/d-a:1105-1109). The city of Rio de Janeiro was described by the doctoral speech as one of the 'three little doors' edification. Its architecture was considered despicable by critics such as Rui Barbosa who named the vetust Carmo abbey 'horrendous manor'. The carioca *urbs* was stigmatized as the one from the diseases, epidemics, lack of civilized equipment and leisure. City of danger,

sickness, crime and prostitution. Its ethnic composition had altered a lot in the last decades from the XIX century. There were a great number of ex-slaves who migrated from the Paraíba Valley, from the coffee farms in the old fluminense province to the city of Rio de Janeiro. They did not remain in the countryside because there was no possibility of assenting them as free peasants. Or they would become partners in the coffee plantations or they would make their living as *meeiros*. They were thrown in the 'white's world' competing with immigrants (Machado e Pereira das Neves, 1999:384-5). The attempts of sharing the unproductive land and its division among the ex-slaves resulted in vain. It must be highlighted that in XIX century Brazil the land was always concentrated in big properties. The land law in 1850, for example, declared that only the acquisition of land would only be legal in the Empire, being any other means considered illegal. The land did not belong to royalty any longer but to the country, becoming a good in this way (Viotti da Costa, 1987:146). The capacity of the agrarian interest mobilization was very powerful and physiocratic, struggling against the attempts of implanting an industrialization strategy. A great number of immigrants from the south of Europe were boarding the Brazilian coasts. Spanish, Italian, Portuguese. These, speckled by anarchism were, at least, white. They contributed to bleach the population. Their children and grandchildren, ennobled, could aspire to take part in the restricted club.

#### IV. THE BATTLE FOR THE CAPITAL: THE REPUBLICAN PROJECT OF REFORMS

The republican project demanded the capital modernization of the three-century old unadapted *urbs* to the contingencies of a more intense circulation and the occupation of new terrains. It demanded the discipline from the population's daily routine and the production of a political speech, because it seemed to be always tending to a riotous protest. Finally, it was necessary to suppress the old urban liberties, some of which were inherited from mediocrity by means of the construction of the national Portuguese state. Besides the fighting for culture, it was about the bold battle signed by Bobbio and which was held among the *respublica* and the *civitas*. In order to vanquish the city and its people, the method of the republic was made of suppressing its Chamber in 1903, confiding its operation to technicians, many of which were originated from other states and who behave themselves with the arrogance of foreigners in conquered land. Social control over the carioca crowd, whose habits were considered barbarian and anti-hygienic, was reinforced, as well as over the popular sociability. On the other hand, beside the bat, we had the tenderness; disposable, but necessary. And seducing strategies appeared to deal with this multitude as

heterogeneous as frightening. One of the solutions was to hunt their capacity of representation, neutralize it, empty it politically, break off with citizenship and impede them to imagine themselves as a nation (de Carvalho, 1991:56). Conservative governments usually take from the people the capacity of representing the 'national soul'. This is what happened with Paris – a traditional standard in the traditional popular fight – and the same occurred in London in the Thatcher's government (Harvey, 1992:216).

Both remained without city halls for a long time. The politic federalist model adopted by the Brazilian republic reinforced the authoritarian handle of oligarchic State power. The president Campos Salles, who ruled from 1898 to 1902, claimed that 'it was from there, from the states that the Republic is governed, above the riotous crowds, disturbed on the streets of the capital of the country'. It was necessary to take the political tool away from this popular mass, it was necessary to make the self-aid strategies, which protected the poorer segments and were based on colonial tradition, to go back

The building plan put into practice in Rio de Janeiro was immense, by the mobilization of powerful financial and technical resources to civilize the city; it aimed at making it European, taming its unquiet people. Likewise the Canudos War, when the people from the Sertão were controlled by means of rifles. A very similar story took part in Rio de Janeiro where tradition and history were eliminated, and streets and houses were destroyed by pickax blows. The field of Law studies struggled to speed 'progress', contributing with the elaboration of the 1890 code, destined to be positive, to educate the population by imposing 'civilized' values (Caulfield, 2000:172).

The reform project was implemented in President Rodrigues Alves' government (1902-1906), who applied comprehensive sanitary, prophylactic and police measures. He intervened in the old city of Rio demolishing old habitations. The implementation of the project was handed to a group of very competent technicians; led by the senior engineer Pereira Passos, it was integrated, among other engineers, by Lauro Muller and Paulo de Frontin. This last one was the responsible for the coordination of a large boulevard opening works, which was destined to be the great attraction of the project, denominated Central Avenue. It was torn in the core of the old city with 1.800 meters long and 33 meters width, demolishing for its construction around 500 lodgings, most of which were unhygienic. In order to build at its margins, a façade contest in the *beaux arts* style was held consecrating its eclectic French pompous style. Its initial trace begun at Mauá square – its entrance gate – and ended up in

another sumptuous square, converted into the modernity acropolis in the country, crowned by eclectic buildings connected to the elites' high culture (Needell, 1993:57).

This set of buildings was enriched by the construction of new avenues and by the huge hills demolishing, crucial streets paving and plentiful public light implantation with equipment imported from France and Belgium, which made possible engineering works like Leme tunnel.

During intense debates originated by so many constructions, the organic intellectuals and

Elite's rebellious supported, with enthusiasm, these renovations and its social corollary. It was necessary to expel the ignorant masses, ghosts of a past to be exorcized. All the people should be white and not mixed, nor with a darker skin. As Lima Barreto, who adopted literature as a mission, made evident, by means of the 'firm colors' of the critics which he suffered directly the consequences of his own (Sevcenko, 1995:193). According to Lima Barreto this was a time in which:

The Hausmanns hopped. Avenues were projected, they were opened in the blueprints, squares and palaces delineated themselves and, as a complement, they also wanted the local population cleaned, elegant and white: impeccable coachmen, shoe polishers in *libré*, blond servants with blue eyes, wearing the uniform the could be seen in English fashion magazines. This was the state of mind which dictated the famous shoe project (Lima Barreto, 1949:194).

This famous project did not exist but as a signic strategy adopted by the fictional process employed by Lima Barreto by means of which, ironically, he demonstrated that the Republic reinforced its social control, intensifying the internal colonization. It contended with 'barbarian and anti-hygienic' costumes from its outdated patricians, considered against their will as 'relatives who embarrassed us'. The shoe decree, an absurd law, was seen by the novel character, identified with the selected few, as 'necessary thing (because) it causes a bad impression to see these people barefoot. This would only happen in very late developing countries! I have never seen this in Europe' (Lima Barreto, 1949:235).

According to this legal determination, all individuals who came to the streets must be wearing shoes not to be arrested. The project of a republic refunded the city in a certain way, from which resulted its modern capitality profile. This situation was witnessed by means of irony by a picturesque character born from the creativity of João do Rio. It was about an Egyptian prince, in transit to Buenos Ayres, the cosmopolitan and elegant capital of the neighboring republic of Argentina. He decided to board in Rio de Janeiro before, attracted by the novelties he had heard about. He installed himself in a hotel located on Central Avenue, after

criticizing its prices (high above any civilized standard) he felt fully compensated because he 'was in the capital where people start to talk, again, about the new, the new of yesterday to the Europeans (sic) as me'. From his apartment window he saw 'a work of explosion of a new land to the progress, while this majestic vision of Central avenue transformed itself in 'a permanent apotheosis of a giant child who let the savagery and the traditions cradle behind to plunge into a challenge to the general trend of civilization (do Rio, 1912:26).

The project displaced the poor population to the city boundaries. Therefore, disarticulating this way its traditional ways of surviving and self aiding, reserving the freed areas to the demands of modern life. On the other hand, the 'civilized' Brazilian press persisted on a serious project of scientific clarifications of how the poor and their slowly progressing environment disseminated infecting contagious diseases such as smallpox (Chaloub, 1999:169). That is because being pushed by the demolitions and evictions; the poor clung to making their living, which means, to unqualified jobs placed in the city. People could move no further. This is the context in which the slams were born as an effective answer. The occupation of returned lands in the mists of urban areas, constituted a strategy of reconnecting lost bonds (Porto Rocha, 1995:96). As a consequence of the slams growth, the stigma about their way of living expanded itself. In distant environs, where the implantation of streets and habitation was pioneer, tiny houses which could not hold a small family, were shared and subdivided, and the reduced rooms were rented to the poorest population in the city. In these cubicles, besides the most modest servers from the State administrative machine, craftsmen resided 'buyers of empty bottles, cats and dogs' neuters, sorcerers and medicinal herbs pickers, to make a long story short, a variety of jobs that only poor people would take and that our small and big bourgeoisie would not even guess they had existed' (Lima Barreto, 1948:124).

Between these two portions of the city, some sensitive intellectuals would transit with the necessary formalities to the passage between two countries or two peoples or even, two distinct cultures. João do Rio, invited by the habitants of a slum, climbed Santo Antônio Hill and realized from up there that he 'was in a city within the big city'. And in the mid of a stared night, there was the disturbing impression of being in 'Arraial de Canudos' - Canudos Village. In Brazil, and in Rio, in particular the traditional population of the city developed strategies of collective life and self aid which let them face what Giddens denominated 'segregational arenas' (Giddens, 2002:145).

These segments would live in the modernity, exactly as their congeners in central countries. Partially in tradition, partially in modernity, they would slide through a city car between distinct temporalities, between different spaces in the city of Rio. Its displacement from work home is described by Gonzaga Duque:

The street car begun to move, at last: the trace rough rusty chains and the yoke departed with the weight in a rhythmic and balanced trot. (...) Open stores, filled of light and shining the glasses back would follow one another in cosmoramic views (...) And yet, the aspects would mutate, there was extensive darkness from the inhabited buildings or melancholic clarities from isolated illumination combustors, so that again the joy of light could reappear pouring out the front lights of the night commerce. Afterwards, beyond a square, movement begun to lose itself, being reduced to farther and farther echoes, and the deserted streets came, the abandoned squares, the dark places almost obscure, and the intermediary zone of the city outskirts, sad and reclused area where the incapable ones' submissive poverty would find refuge, the munchers' hate of a hopeless life (Duque Estrada, 1973:144-145).

The sliding between spaces and temporalities throughout transport is a strategy that implies misdemeanor because, if power and the inaugurating desire, as Benveniste pointed out, is 'toponymic', naming the places with his imaginary. The transgressor one – as for Certeau – only exists by displacing itself, producing a 'a familiarity in confrontation with a strangeness' (de Certeau, 1998:217) throughout this track. On the other hand, to Lima Barreto, a city as Rio de Janeiro was not born from the willingness of having power. It was the result of a physical and symbolic tapestry of people in time, crossing temporalities and practices of distinct lives as a result of 'a heritage, not of a planning' as Argan has affirmed. By what is stated by Certeau, it is possible to say that for Lima Barreto too, the city constitutes a crossing a diegesis because while crossing it and living in it, it seemed having lost nothing from what my grandparents' acquisitions, since they had untied themselves from Portugal and Africa. It was the draft of what would become, from nowadays to the years to come, the man, the creation of this place. For that, I base myself on the things that surround me, familiarity, and the landscape which surrounds me, which is not unknown for me anymore: it tells me about the ordinary history of the city, and lengthen the elegy of pains that it has observed in the city segments which preceded and originated mine (Lima Barreto, 1949:34).

Authoritarianism condemned the majority of the population's body and the imaginary, which had African and mixed roots, and were originated from a history of privations and disciplinary harshness born from alienated work. The colonial sight fabricated in Portuguese America anticipated Bentham's panoptic. It was a dehumanizing territory *par excellence*, of



privation of the self and the own body (Foucault, 1987:163). To the past exploitation the elite would practice a qualified robbery of the future. In this confront of bodies and imaginaries, the concept of Nation as defined by Renan can not be applied, as a daily plebiscite or the imaginative act, as developed by Anderson. Balibar, while writing about modernly instrumentalised racism and nationalism, alleges that 'racist organizations often refuse to be designated as such, laying claim instead to the title of nationalism and claiming that two notions cannot be equated' (Balibar, Wallerstein, 1991:37). This segment's culture credited to the race factor, enough scientific credibility to scant it in public and make an efficient power maintenance and adversary disqualification device. Being so, it is not to admire that the internal colonization and the strangeness feeling against its own people, in a raciest point of view, are remarked in one of Lima Barreto's work episode. When the avenue Mem de Sá was opened, the prostitutes were banned by the work and by the police, and were moved to Joaquim Silva Street, at the foot of Santa Thereza hill. An ordinary public employee who lived there, bothered by this affluent new coming neighbor wrote a missive to the chief of police in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The street in question is 'quiet, peaceful and your eminency maybe does not know as you are not natural from Rio de Janeiro but from the state of Bahia.' The man who lived in the referred street for 'more than twenty years' in his own house 'which belonged to my wife's father and now belongs to us', explained to the delegate who was original from Bahia that, 'prostitutes who lived in the new streets, who were directed there by the police because of the families', were looking for houses for rent in the street where he lived. 'Moreover, when the referred avenue was opened, they soon took their places. There is a *uti possidetis* favoring these last ones, what does not happen in my miserable street'. He did not want them as neighbors because, the cited girls 'are not alike my daughters not their cousins'. His patrimony did not consist only of the house, it was also moral and identitary. 'I confess, your eminency, that I got marry (necessary it is to say not to forget the wife) but also counting on the house, because of the hard times and because without a house it would not be possible to start a family'. The house in question constituted a patrimony, transmitted heritage by the parents and to our decent amanuensis 'from a house such as this one, good, solid, wide, airy, filled with family recollections, your eminency will agree, we can not move like that. It is part of the family, if not family itself' (Lima Barreto, 2001:24).

Lima Barreto's alter ego, the notary Isaías Caminha, emblem of this hopeful deprived mass, is far from this melancholy. He came from the old province countryside; he brings in his pocket a recommendation letter of an

influential man in the province addressed to a politician in the capital. In the elite's tradition, the social ascension would pass obligatorily by the patronage which filtered the candidates to a promotion. It was not rare that Negroes and quadroons would appeal to this kind of help in order to have their talent recognized and get started in the production system of symbolic goods. Face the scantiness of the culture market in Brazil, perhaps we could think of a similar process and state that governing is the control of culture storage.

Isaías Caminha, after living for some time in a cheap boarding house while waiting for the longed outcome of the job indication, was charged of robbery by the authorities for being a quadroon and poor. Taken to a police station, he suddenly sees all his dreams being destroyed, and the sweet image of his mother, his own self-image of a talented young man, while he heard the prison doors closing behind his back. In the presence of the unattainable and tragic fate, it only occurred to him to whisper: "the Motherland".

In the editorial department troubled daily life of the newspaper where he works, Isaías would wonder about the tearing of his self and his being, result of an asymmetric battle for modernity, of the authoritarianism, of internal colonization, of the civilizing willingness of the elites, which made him experience a kind of shame for his own birth, and this humiliation came to diminish a lot the friendship and tenderness with which I had always involved your remembrance. I felt separated from it. I would judge myself, to my own point of view, very different from it, originated by another breed, other blood and flesh... One by one they would come, these personalities which would invade me insidiously, in order to overfill myself later on until the annoyance and disgust of living (Lima Barreto, 1949:237).

## V. PARIS IN RIO DE JANEIRO: MODERNISM, SPACE AND SURROUNDINGS, THE CONNECTION BY THE STREET CAR

For the protestant colonizers who founded the United States of North America, their churches towers represented this conception of individuals in the face of God. While having this self-image as the Lord's instruments who served His goals, they saw themselves as the elected people who had conquered the American Promised Land. Individualists, they were adept of a self-government and were strongly autonomic. They would produce laws which subdued all men to their *auctoritas* (Sennett, 1990:45). Their local power was only formally linked to the metropolis. On the other hand, the Iberian colonizers would come to the new world as lords of the local plan, as catholic and vassals of a State which was created in the XII century, they nourished an expansionist project (Bobbio, Matteucci, Pesquino,

1999:425). For that their identitary matrix was external and the exploited colony was not the land where milk and honey would flow, but hell, where the dependence of the crown whose surveillance was insatiable. State and Church would ally themselves in the project of soul conversion. The colonial city in Portuguese America was the scenery of this theatre of power, market and warehouse capable of repressing all vices.

In Europe, the cities have been growing since 1500 when only four of them had a population estimated in 100 thousand inhabitants. In the year of 1800, there were already 23 of them, being London the biggest, with more than 1 million inhabitants (Burke, 1999:266). However, these cities faced astonishing problems for being unhealthy as well as for having a chaotic traffic. Strangled, polluted and deleterious, the biggest ones unraveled themselves from the ancient medieval belts areas. Their entrance in modernity was accomplished thanks to great inventions, daring and polemic projects such as the Plan of Paris, implemented between 1850 and 1870 by the III Empire (Landau, 1993:passim). It is from this perspective that the metropolis specializes itself, rationalizes itself and enters the XXth century. The influence of these modernizing settlements at the service of power, after the turbulence of 1848, resulted in a favorable atmosphere to cultural changes which overcame previous experiences. Finally, the end of XIXth century until 1914 was the *belle époque*, a time of prosperity. According to Hobsbawm, life looked wonderful for ‘those who had money and it were golden to the rich people– but also because the leaders of the majority of western countries, despite being worried did not fear the present time. Their societies and regimes seemed, in a general manner, manageable (Hobsbawm, 1988:384). Born in this atmosphere of progress and faith in science and plus, of a role of intervention performed by the modern State, Paris came up as the modern city seducing the intellectuals from surrounding countries who sought modernity as a goal.

Jacinto de Tormes, character of the novel *As cidades e as Serras* of the Portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz ( 1845-1900), would recite proud of himself, face the technological wonders which multiplied themselves everyday: ‘only the phonograph, Zé Fernandes, makes me truly feel my superiority as a thinking being and separates me from being an animal. Believe, there is nothing but the city, Zé Fernandes, there is nothing but the city’ (de Queiroz, 1992:16).

The whole world and all temporality contained in it, would succumb to the standardizing control of the modernity located in the metropolis. Kern wrote that thanks to the use of the telegraph, ‘everybody on the surface of earth would become open to the look, the observation of the civilized community and its system would mix the day to the night, the

sunrise to the sunset, everything appreciated at the same moment' (Kern, 2003:11). In the United States, the railway times would impose itself as a uniform matrix upon the whole nation and, quickly, the other countries of the world coordinated their railway times in a uniform net. Face the immense success obtained by generals Grant and Sherman while moving federal armies by the railway tracks during the American Civil War, the German Empire placed its railways and their time control under the Emperor Army Major State tuttee.

Machado de Assis, who also saw the acceleration of time, had the intuition that the best form of integration of the capitalism nets, around 1892, would lead to a smaller and more articulated world. In this world the information would circulate so intensely that, as one could see in magazines and newspapers, 'the salons of our beautiful preparatory exhibition in Chicago, at that same time, a 'telegram from Constantinople, published in one of our issues' (de Assis, 1961:39 ).

One of the peculiarities of the modern metropolis was to be peopled by a crowd. Composed of a thousand people it demonstrated the enormous power that the city had of 'reorienting people', integrating them, despite the potential differences between individuals. And, above all, there was an innovating possibility of these people to address themselves towards the 'outside of themselves'. One of the reasons why Baudelaire admired the painter Guys was exactly for the capacity he demonstrated in registering this, the metropolitan crowd, at the same time anonymous, fragmented and integrated. Paris, as a metropolis, was the matrix of this phenomenon. Within it there was room for everybody to be conquered, pilgrims or infiltrated. The Argentinean Domingos Faustino Sarmiento had observed, while browsing around in Paris, a little before 1848, that 'civilized life reproduce everywhere the same characteristics' (Pratt, 1999:323). In Rio, the federal capital, it was the crowd, a heterogeneous body. Entering the working market restrained, these people seemed taken by the business fever, worried about making money. To the writer João do Rio(1881-1921), many inhabitants, including children, would only think about finances; others would see themselves as bankers, some speculators and the ones who wished they could be millionaires. There were those who would buy a lottery ticket and find a way of 'getting a thousand deals'. People for whom daily life only meant to speculate, being, alternatively: 'one day Rotschild, Chouchard, Leydues, Rockefeller, one day Leopoldo de Bulhões. If we give a coin to any kid to buy candies the child will say, with the instinct of a penny pincher: I will keep it in the safe'. If, in the Old World, the prosperity of the Belle Époque seemed to show that the biggest part of the millionaires' expenses was destined more to impress their own pairs than to

humiliate the less favorable ones in the social chemistry, in Brazil, maybe the same aspects occurred. The character of the homonymous novel by Lima Barreto, M. J. Gonzaga de Sá, mocked the approximation done by the power in the direction of masses: ‘As for the rest, so many explanations are not necessary; nowadays science pays the court to the tiny ones. That is a point where universal suffrage politicians and laboratory men meet’ (Lima Barreto, 1949-b:64).

Despite all that, the doors of the club remained closed to Lima Barreto, to Isaías Caminha and so many others, even because the Brazilian elite kept its conviction of being the spare of a missionary Europe for a superior civilization. As the XIX century just ended in the First World War, its elite went on living in the past, because ‘there was never in history, and there will never be – wrote Hobsbawm – a century more European’ (Hobsbawm, 2000:36).

## VI. CITY, SPACE AND SURROUNDINGS, THE CONNECTION BY THE STREET CAR

As the Federal Capital, Rio de Janeiro had been marked by the railway time outside its boundaries and by the tram time, within its boundaries. The route of this last one followed the peculiar urban trace dictated by the topography ‘between the mountain and the sea’ and the one of the streets opened by the renovation process. This record was becoming dominant in the modern metropolis urban lives’ styles. Above and beyond the time, there was the new urban setting. Surpassing this, the growing dimensions of the *urbs* net, its vertical expansion took the passerby to look at the tall buildings and stare. Besides Paris and other European cities alike, there was New York which entered this model cities roll. Its gigantism was impressing, its precise geometry, its ferocious rhythm of making business and money.

Its impressive vertical ascension made popular the sky-scraper expression. Modernity and its projects tended to export its urban configuration. Conversely to this North-American potency features, Lima Barreto hold a contrary point of view, he would argue that Rio should keep its landscape identity by means of marrying with nature:

It is that Rio de Janeiro was not built according to what was established in the perpendicular and oblique theory. It has suffered as all spontaneous cities, the capital influx of the place where it was edified as well as the social vicissitudes where it has been through (...) But, it is its topography what has created all these difficulties, it gave our beautiful city this poetry frame, of dream and greatness. And this is enough (Lima Barreto, 1949-b:59).

Around 1870, the cable cars lines pulled by animals had expanded throughout the city. The consul of France in Brazil and the racism theorist, the count Gobineau, wrote that the great amount of itineraries has overcome any other city in the civilized world. Despite very disseminated, the service had its imprecision and the delays even after electricity came to perfect it. One of the characters of *Capital Federal* complained about waiting for the street car for more than a half hour, while the other, Rodrigues replied: ‘What the hell, let us not be so demanding. This company does not serve its passengers badly. The delay is not their fault, I was told so, there at the station’ (Azevedo, 2002:51). For Azevedo, the city, as the medieval distich, would free its people not by means of work but of transport. In the middle of the crowd, these would regain the proper anonymity for the multitudinous transgressions. As a Parisian *flaneur* while transporting to other far away places of the city where their identities were free and unknown, one of the characters, while defending himself of an accusation of adultery replies: ‘I do not want to be a bad tongue, but I met her in a street car from Vila Isabel, standing tightly close to Lima Gama some days ago’ (Azevedo, 2002:102). To some characters of Gonzaga Duque, the street car did not only connect parts of the city, it allowed the vision of the track in a quick and frenetic sight, capable to modify what was seen in every step. It interlinked a city whose landscape, in Lima Barreto's words, would integrate an ‘extravagant’ nature’.

To Euclides da Cunha, Canudos war outbreak was reported by the fast time of telegraph. Yet the civil war outburst after the Republic was proclaimed was marked by the timing of the train and the street cars. Another Lima Barreto's character named Policarpo Quaresma, saw the train arriving at São Cristóvão station, which was taken by troops and officials, with its ‘very dark steam engine, puffing, sweating. greasy, with its big front light, a Cyclopes’ eye, it would move forward like a supernatural apparition’ (Lima Barreto, 1948:185-6). Rio had its *flaneurs* that browsed around the *urbs* persecuting the present heroism. Updated, they would use technologic means of transportation as the train and the street car and would not only go on foot amid an anonymous multitude. For instance, Gonzaga de Sá, would permanently talk to his dead ones. Sometimes, when (I) was going ‘by train, I would see him by the miserable streets which bordered the beginning of Central region. Once I met him on a Sunday by the Flechas beach in Niterói (...). He would stop in front of a terraced house, he would look, look again and move on. He would climb up hills; go down hills, always slow and smoking voluptuously’ (Lima Barreto, 1949-b:55). Lima Barreto himself was a *flaneur* in his own way. On foot or by cable car, he would displace himself in the Federal Capital as

a fish in the sea, convinced of his special and temporal superiority because ‘the city is a need, a bigger city is an even bigger need (Lima Barreto, 1953:55).

Nevertheless, its ancient areas were discriminated, because of its archaic visual patterns. When a character from *A Capital Federal* informs a group of acquainted people that he lived in ‘Praia Formosa’, his interlocutors answered with prejudice: ‘that sounds terrible (...) It must have lots of mosquitoes.’ The owner, vexed, explains that his house is very badly located but, even though it is valued because it is a ‘three windowed terrace. The first floor is being used by the butcher’s’ (Azevedo, 2002:42).

## VII. MODERNITY IN CONFRONT IN AVENIDA CENTRAL AND IN THE HOTEL LOBBY

Rio de Janeiro’s boulevard, *par excellence*, during the whole XIX century and especially in the last decades, was known by the name of Rua do Ouvidor. A long street inherited the regular original tracing of colonial times, it occupied the central place. Marshall Berman makes a outstanding analysis of the two European models and their urbanicity signs (Berman, 1987:186). Gonzaga Duque placed two characters of his novel called *Mocidade Morta*, circulating along this street whose scenery reveals itself close to the idea of boulevard and Nievsky Prospect. Rio de Janeiro shuddered:

...amid the typical noise of Ouvidor Street, at the effervescent rush hour, at three o’clock. But they would look carelessly, with eyes which had forgotten this promiscuity that boils between the narrow lanes of irregular houses, in a noisy movement of a street fair. From the overabundant mass of black clothing, an irritating cashmere would rush in, festive in *capadocian* garments, symptomatic negligence of bourgeois clothing, miserable wastrels’ dirtiness, a disparate pomp of female costumes in contrast with the elegant balance of luxurious cocottes (...) Through the candy shop threshold, in the rampart of the sparkling jeweler window-shop, at the doorsteps of the fashion stores, people would gather, gesticulating, talkative and novelistic. They would strain sayings to the passing ostentatious rich ladies who stepped firmly affronting from above the daring convergence of looks, with chlorotic large faces of tropical girls; they would follow straight as waxen heads, under ostentatious hats in hangers (Duque, 1973:250).

The last decades of the XIXth century saw a massive importation of modern building material by Brazil. The Imperial Academy Neoclassicism, the main visual basis of monarchy, let place to the triumphant urban eclecticism also consecrated as a style of progress. In Rio, it was haloed in a triumphant way thanks to the contest which took place in order to promote Avenida Central façades. This process of modern importation

occurred in other Brazilian cities as São Paulo, Salvador, São Luiz, Fortaleza, Porto Alegre, Belém do Pará, Manaus.

However, as a metropolis, Rio de Janeiro blunted as love scenery to its characters, as tasty in flesh as hidden from outsiders' eyes. It became the city of sex, of plotting, of opportunity, of easy money, of seduction, of conquering, of falsehood. Through this angle, the hotel was one of the most important architectural programs developed, thanks to the huge expansion of communication means as well as the economic and financial connection, the pacing of speeds and comfort of transports. In the *Belle Époque*, these establishments would host the wealthy people and the middle class. Azevedo, defined his big hotel in *A Capital Federal* as something never seen before, because:

Jamais houve nesta terra	There has never been in this land
Um hotel assim mais tal!	a hotel such as this!
Toda a gente, meus senhores, Toda a gente diz:	Everybody, gentlemen, everybody says
Que os não há superiores na cidade de Paris. Que belo hotel excepcional!	That there are no better ones In Paris. What an exceptional hotel!
O Grande Hotel da Capital Federal (Azevedo, 2002:18).	The great Hotel of the Federal Capital!

Its services integrated a new window of novelties offered by technology. Offering he most in comfort and civilization: 'There are no hands to measure! One could wish! There has never been in Rio de Janeiro a hotel like this! First quality electric service! Splendid cuisine, chamber music played during the meals in a round table! A pneumatic clock in every room! Cold or hot baths, showers, swimming and gymnastic facilities and the massages' (Azevedo, 2002:19). A huge sum of money was transferred from the less favorable social layers to the cosmopolitan elites, financing coffee and exclusive progress. Lima Barreto, instead of nurturing enthusiasm by the services offered to a privileged minority, thinks about the undermined masses, helpless, without schools. He criticized the employment of public money in a luxurious newly opened establishment: the Hotel Glória. It seemed immoral for him to lodge the privileged ones while poverty and social questions were a police affair: 'Is it fair – he asked indignantly – that Rio de Janeiro's municipality spends such a high sum of money to lodge rich foreigners and let homeless millions of poor children helpless in life?' In the opening night there was a charity ball that cost 10 thousand *réis* for person, amount destined to the protection of 'poor children' (Lima Barreto, 1953:18). To the resentful writer it was about an 'injury and an offense to the very same children, in a building in which the government had spent, according to his own confessions, eight thousand *contos de réis*.' Ironic, he declared himself touched by the beautiful speech



delivered in the occasion by someone who spoke about ‘the state of misery in which the major part of the population of the ancient Austrian Empire found themselves. I was moved by the exposition of Dr. Ciro, but, I remembered at the same time of the slum, the Salgueiro one and other picturesque landscapes of this city’ (Lima Barreto, 1953:20).

### VIII. CONCLUSION

The nations, in the beginning of the XX century, looked like exclusive clubs and were peopled by exclusive members. This metaphor was applied to the Brazilian republican regime which kept into operation a project implanted since 1822 by the elites. By the appliance of secluding strategies, they would consider the masses as antagonists of the State. For them was reserved a similar treatment to the one employed for eliminating an external enemy. Because they were constituted by slaves and ex-slaves, and many poor white people, this qualification would give evidence to condemn them to be placed out of a history where, throughout a long term process, were their dead ones and their lives. The city of Rio de Janeiro was the capital of a rural country where the traditional structures of slavery and physiocracy would inscribe themselves as traditional speeches and reality producers. After the republic was proclaimed, the carioca *urbs* embodied heterogeneous populations and had its capacity of reverberating national problems controlled by the new form of government. The popular masses had a fundamental space of their lives, sociability tapestry and self aid in the city. Thus, in a way, they would see the city as a space for the practice of a political speech where traditional forms would thrive. This text, this irresistible decree came as a modern christening certificate, updating the country and its elite’s procedures. It rewrote its insertion in history. On the other hand the republican project for the capital, was based in a civilizing model which deprived the masses of their properties, banning them to the city distant outskirts where they were supposed to ‘re-colonize’ the city fringes. Concerned about their self-image of a civilized nation in the tropics, it tried to highlight its links to European civilizing matrixes and all their emblems of modernity. At the same time, the land, as a richness feature was still concentrated after the abolition of slavery that poured out considerable amounts of ex-slaves, homeless in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The crowds that rioted the capital of the Republic were marked by the massive afro-descendant presence, and were seen as an impermeable barrier against the enlightenment, boastfully positivist, and racist project of the elites.

This missing world is partially reconstructed in the work of the writers’ who we have studied. Their fictional writings are productions of

individuals, favorite authors, of intertextual readings. Individuals reflect their authors' peculiarities and experiences. João do Rio, Gonzaga Duque, Aluísio Azevedo (1857-1913), despite the bitter criticism in some moments, and the irony of many, were well-accepted and celebrated in life. They were target of respect of their contemporary peers. Yet, Lima Barreto, felt in his dark skin the perverse side of this context; discriminated, ignored, he let himself be consumed, literally, in the process of integrating his life to his work. He made no concessions while picturing his condition which was the same of millions of his compatriots. The characters he idealized, in its majority, present a curious tragic and Nietzschean trait. They already know they are doomed but they perform they role in the battle against an adverse fate. Policarpo Quaresma, M. J. Gonçalves de Sá, Isaías Caminha and so many others. Characters excluded in History just like, metaphorically, happened with Bertoleza slave, pale heroin in the novel *O Cortiço*, by Aluísio Azevedo. It was about a run-away slave who was sheltered by a poor Portuguese salesman, and who lived long years by his side. After making him rich with her daily effort and giving him her intimacy and whole dedication, she was discharged as woman and partner; her boss, now wealthy, decided to ascend socially, by marrying a graceful white girl, daughter of a prosperous neighbor. In order to get rid of the uncomfortable presence of Bertoleza, evidence for a possible accusation and debt, the boss denounced her to her former owner who, thankful, sent the police to rescue his legitimate property. A battle was engaged between the representation of Rio as the capital-city iridescent by the 'practice' of urban freedom and a new enlightenment configuration. The city became theme for the writers who created fiction from this metropolis peopled by crowds, where time passed dynamically; accelerated and multiple experiences that were perceived by the use of train and street cars. These last ones had contributed to horizontalize the multitude, printing more accelerated displacement, life experiences and scenery rhythms. The production of luxury hotels contributed to give the city a cosmopolitan look. At the same time it made the production of an anonymous way of life possible, compromised with the acceleration of the implantation of modern capitalism in Brazil. Just like Jacinto de Thormes, Eça's character, only a phonograph could separate a man from an animal, the modern and dynamic city, with its art, with its routes, with its cohabitation and intensity of changes and opportunities would split the old times from the experience of modern times. In innumerable Latin-American countries, like Brazil, their capital cities would thrive prosperously. Power was ruled from them originated by the oligarchic rural landmarks that would frame them up.

Being so, while the elites have used the nation as an exclusive and inclusive club, the masses have used the streets.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This expression is almost impossible to be translated and refers to the political and social measurements elaborated by Brazilian authorities for the British observers who insisted on their writing) As they saw them down on paper, they took for granted that they had been implemented, accordingly to the English administrative practice) However, in Brazil, there are laws which are effectively put into practice and others, which remain on paper) just as a simulacra or, in other words: to be seen by the Englishmen, or just to show (Viotti da Costa, 1987: passim).

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