

## The Pixed City / Xarpi and the Body-Landscape

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### Abstract

With the theme PiXação, subject Xarpi and object racism, the article talks about the enigmatic sense of risk of life, which accompanies the “being” of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Through the piXador / Xarpi crime, the analysis focuses on judgments, somehow, on the existing capital punishment in the logic of living another city, where the landscape becomes the body of the city.

**Keywords:** piXação / Xarpi, city of the colonized and racism, body-landscape

### 1.1 - Introduction - Pichada / piXada / Xarpi landscape and the city of the colonized

The “postcards” of the cities present a diverse landscape, in natural and urban beauties, that mix in the constructions of the senses of being of a place. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, the slums, for example, it is a result of these senses, next to a “romantic utopia,” which reveals desires of living in “purgatory of beauty and chaos” during a brumada landscape aesthetic, abstract feature symbolic and anti-symbol, which tends to conceal a part of this landscape.

For the geographer Jorge Luiz Barbosa (2012), the anti-symbols face the symbols, and reveal conflicts given in the socio-cultural and economic differences:

The hills, plains, mangroves and banks of rivers and ponds inhabited by popular communities have historically gained very different meanings from those attributed to the wonderful city. They represent a landscape to be denied, something that marbles the cult of the wonderful landscape of Rio. The signs of stylized nature and the places of unequal society meet and face each other: they are symbols and anti-symbols, dueling in the urban landscape, revealing distinctions of socio-cultural and economic. (BARBOSA, 2012, p. 31).

Those who live in a place of aesthetic landscaping meanings such as the South Zone of the respective city, for example, benefit and assist to the detriment of the other regions of the same city, that is, it creates a dualism South Zone versus “the rest of Rio”. The fact that people from all over the city attend the beaches of the South Zone, brings discomfort to the inhabitants of this place, who, often, criminalize these subjects, as if they were forbidden to be frequenting that space.<sup>1</sup>

Another action involving matches networks and connections at the same time present in opposing areas of the landscape, so involved in symbolic and antisimbólicos phenomena is the practice of marking the surfaces of cities (e.g. a fence, wall, building, home, public transport, viaduct, bridge, footbridge, etc.). For example, the writings that appeared in the student movements in Europe and the protests against the military dictatorship in Latin America, in the 1960s, the tags initiated by Gangs of New York in 1930, and that stylize with the highest proportion in the Hip-Hop culture years of 1970/80. Any of these or other griffins, regardless of locality and area / surfaces, whether private, public (which also stand in private conceptions) or natural (e.g. rocks), made with brushes, paints, some sharp bridge object, or any other material that it marks, seems to exhibit a certain characteristic present especially in large cities: the distant necessity of the human being to “scribble” the places, by means of old and / or new linguistic and literary formations.



Figure 1 - Plate and Pifil in the Center. Source: photo registered by the author himself, in August 2017.



Figure 2 - PiXação on a corner of Ver-O-Peso. Source: photo registered by the author himself.

Still in the provocations with the Carioca landscape, I now bring to this discussion the symbolic / anti-symbolic involvement, one of these practices / graphic brands present in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and also in other Brazilian cities. Without discussing the “right”, the “wrong”, or the “why” of the word idea that is able to put the rounded part of the right side of the letter “p” to the left side, or the “i” is transformed into “i” upside down, offer the graffiti as an authentic phenomenon, existing a little more than four decades, from various exhibitors signs of originality, sociability, among other movements that give grounds for reinterpretation in each territory, be it a state, a municipality, a region, a neighborhood, a street or any other enclosure. With its own aesthetic, an individual, which is understood in the collective of those who are subject or interested in practice, graffiti happens in experiences among the various generations, through an audience that is independent of class, creed, ethnicity or gender. Manifested on a variety of surfaces, the act of scouring primarily involves a characteristic with the juvenile and the popular, by bodies crossed by the absence of definition - for example, people who, despite having passed the official age as “young”, show a strong following relationship in their lives, through phenomena such as graffiti<sup>2</sup>.

The public relation pichadora is fruitful, and occurs at all times, including in the writing of the name of the phenomenon. As the reader may have already noticed, “graffiti” is written in this text with “ch”, as officially the word was recorded. But, presently, a purposive grammatical error will be made in this text, since most punters seem to write the word graffiti with the letter “x”, not with “ch”. Yes, there are spellers who write the same word with “ch”. However, by asking for permission for the scribblers, I notice in my act of reading them, and I venture to say, that most practitioners of this phenomenon write the word with the letter “x”.

My invocation is also in the case of writing the letter “X”, in order to offer my empathy with the book “Lets the Boy’s Play”, doctoral record in Education of Gustavo Coelho, when, in his intellectual effort with the phenomenon of piXaçã, is submitted to the respective orthography inspired by the Italian anthropologist Massimo Canevacci, in the book “Cultures eXtremas” (2005). Thus, all words that involve piXaçã and its derivatives - piXador, piXar, etc. - will be written, at this moment, with the letter “X”. Verbalization of the form of writing made, with a purpose: my work is tune in the core of the conjuncture Xarpi, nomenclature as the phenomenon in focus is based in the state of Rio de Ja-

neiro, from its capital. Xarpi is the language used among the piXadores to identify their practices and their practitioners, that is, Xarpi is the piXaçã, and to be Xarpi is to be piXador, always in the singular.

## 1.2 – The body-landscape and piXaçã as a tattoo

Anti-black racism is another phenomenon of symbolic and anti-symbolic treatment, which provides the landscape of a city. Traumatizing, but still with its existence treated doubtfully, distrust determined from a relationship that does not see Western at the epicenter, such racialization is commonly perceived as something of the past, well resolved by a civilized way, through developments, for example, of the processes of language. To think about such topics is to think of the logics of storage, the accumulation of information: what happens from exclusive adjectives, creators of a tension, determined by the relations of the reason of those who have privileges, the centralization of the sense of reason, appreciated by a starting point, the white man.

In Part 4 of the book “Pode O Subalterno Falar?”, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2010) asks a question, apparently without the pretense of getting a fixed answer: “What should the elite do to be attentive to the continuous construction of the subaltern? “(SPIVAK, 2010, p.110). This question is one of the necessary provocations to think of the colonial constraint of anti-black racism, since in order to exist the need for men and women of nonwhite skin, to be similar and / or pleasing to the whims of whiteness, in order to survive to the world, is something (still) emergency to be reflected. To think this question of Spivak, in my view, is to think about the genocide, especially the racist, given the data released in 2015, explaining that the highest homicide rate in Brazil happens to young people (12 to 29 years), poor, male and black, as I stated here, in footnote, during the summary of the respective text.

For the French philosopher and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, to feel this racism, to try to understand it, is to feel shame, something that happens before any racist action:

To make people ashamed of their own existence ... Yes, to make them aware of the opportunities they have wasted, of the passivity they have shown in situations, where, precisely, it would have been necessary, just like a thorn, in the heart of the world, to force, if need be, the rhythm of the heart of the world, to displace, if necessary, the system of command; in

any case, it would be necessary, with determination, to face the world. (FANON, 2008, p. 80).

It is in this shame that Fanon's object of study is defined: "to allow man of color to understand, with the help of precise examples, the psychological causes that can alienate his fellow men." (Fanon, 2008, p.81). The mirror game spoken by Mbembe and thought by others (and others), is the means of achieving this shame, or rather, when it comes to accepting it or not. When accepted, the anguish caused by it (shame) can be transformed into embarrassment, a process that, by having a continuous acceptance, ends up bringing the point that undermines the other. But in his denial, the anguish of shame, even if it comes to embarrassment, since without the continuation of his consideration, such shameful feeling stands as a disdain. During his provocations through a thought that continues to accompany shame as something inconstant, through a central goal, that of "making possible a healthy encounter between black and white" (Fanon, p. 81, 2008), Fanon manifests idea that such a meeting could also be thought of in any colonial relation, a conflicting commitment that occurs through the relational processes with language, as I did at the beginning of the text when I spoke of the mixed basis. If speaking is to exist absolutely for the other, in the condition of "assuming a culture" and "bearing the weight of a civilization," man, possessor of language, in possessing it, also possesses, "on the other hand, the world that this language expresses and that is implicit to it" (Fanon, 2008, p. 33).

The act of speaking, acquiring a language, for Fanon, is one of the commitments of the "city of the colonized" (Fanon, 1968). When we speak, the language is that of the settler, and to accept this language, somehow, is to accept its world, its attributes, the logics that are part of the senses of that language. The racism of color, as I am already trying to provoke, happens, happens to exist, in the disdain of a language that does not accept the dialect not recognized by this language, even if it occurs in the form of language. Who is black and has never felt embarrassment at some point in their own city? Who is black and has never heard (or felt) in this moment of shame, phrases like "I'm just doing my job."? Who is black and, in this kind of shame, felt so alone, that he preferred to "let it go"? The city of the colonized is that place of the "let go" feeling, carried out by what Fanon calls the "black abandon", which would be the annulment of racism among the racialized, by logics carried out "precisely"

because it is a "black. For it is not possible not to dislike it. " (Fanon, 2008, p. 81).

Interested in what happens in the constraint of the construction of the "other," which does not show the proper language for the colonial ranges, I have focused my thinking on racism with the Xarpi, a practice that is involved in conflict with the interests of the State, and therefore, I believe, inspired by Fanon, that the phenomenon, the phenomenon of the popular present in the Brazilian cities, invites the people to feel desire of annihilation, therefore carries "blood in the air." (Fanon, 1968, p.52). First and foremost, piXaçã is seen as disgusting in society, and its treatment, although it is shown with a "light sentence", since it is officially a crime, crossed by intensively violent markings.

According to Fanon (1968), in moments of social collapse, the people admit their revolutionary capacity in the conflicts arising from collective life. This collective life would be what many readings of the social sciences reduced from "mass", the place where the people are, that is, the place of the worker, who is treated as a bandit, same place as the bandit, "one who, in singular combat, succumbs after killing four or five policemen, the one who commits suicide in order not to denounce his accomplice", the treaty as "public enemy number 1", "thief" "Debauchery," the "depraved," who acts "exclusively against a colonial person or good," and are to the people the "heroes," for with them the "identification process is automatic". (FANON, 1968, p. 52 - 53).

Between crime and criminalizer, rational everyday life (hoisting) takes place. The good. The bad. The beautiful. The ugly. The enjoyed. The depreciated. The right. The wrong. Reason judges, and brings a problematic called by Fanon as "truth":

The problem of truth must also hold our attention. Within the people, truth always belongs to nationals. No absolute truth, no discourse on the transparency of the soul can crush this position. The lie of the colonized colonial situation responds with an equal lie. (FANON, 1968, pp. 37-38).

Within this set of issues, I provoke a truth about piXaçã: it is more criminal than an environmental disaster that wipes out a city and kills 19 people. About this truth: no person from Samarco was arrested and a prisoner has been imprisoned for more than 6 months, for having defiled the

Pampulha Church - I speak of Mariana, Belo Horizonte, and the state of Minas Gerais. Still, following this reading, I say that it is true that, in only one wall in the city of Rio de Janeiro, there are several spellings that should not be there. But it is also true that we did not know (until now) of anyone who caught up with having put "Only Jesus expels the demons of the people", or something. (COELHO, 2016). The only one that is penalized, within law enforcement or not, for marking / smudging outside walls, is the piXador, since, when this happened to graffiti artists, they would have been mistaken for piXadores. I realize that in this case the graffiti artists mistaken for Xarpi, an action took place that operated primarily through the Judgment, where young people were framed in action, say, homicidal, through the moralistic standard of the "justiceiro" that is often seen in cities, especially in the cases of the circulation of a certain exhibition of this "justice".

When I accompanied the Xarpi to the processes of these and other readings, one of them, Duck, brought some "bandit truths", or rather, those initiatives accepted out of the ordinary. He comments that one becomes Xarpi when the practice is done in high quantity on the level of other practitioners of piXação to recognize the action; he also explains that this high amount is fomented by the risk of life, since those who are subject to piXação may end up dying: - "PiXo since 2007 ... but I will only become Xarpi in 2017. (...) now the boys recognize what I do. (...) "; - "(...) you can end up dying (...) falling from a building (...) and even with a shot ...".

So, I remember again the truth in Fanon when he writes that:

The behavior is frank with the nationals, twisted and illegible with the settlers. Authentic is all that precipitates the collapse of the colonial regime, which favors the emergence of the nation. Authentic is what protects the natives and ruins the foreigners. In the colonial context there is no real conduct. And good is simply what harms the settler. (Fanon, 1968, p. 37 - 38).

The PiXação / Xarpi can be seen as a "scrawl" of authentic literacy, since it annuls a grafocentric society, by means of a tongue twisted and illegible for the settlers. To be incomprehensible to the settler is to expose the so-called "vain" that disregards the harmony of certainty, in favor of

another species of man, which seeks the end of the absolute agreement of the colonizing actions.

By means of an "own rhythm" that provokes a "new language", which receives no legitimacy from anyone, not even from those who are willing to use this new language (Fanon, 1968), decolonization is the disposition of an action prepared for violence and violence. An unbridled action, because it somehow confronts the position of the "intermediary", the one who "brings violence to the house and brain of the colonized", when "does not mitigate oppression" through the "good conscience of the forces of order "Decolonization appeals to the reason of the colonized," who "make a just inversion of things" through derision, "when those values are invoked in their presence," or (Fanon 1968, p.28) "even if he knows that the prosecutor can be killed, he then puts the moment of practical practice, because, no, it is the realization of a decolonized attitude, because, at the end, he insults them and vomits them with all his forces "(Fanon, 1968, p.32). To act with derision, in the decolonization of Xarpi, for example, is to be an admirer of a person who has been honored in the form of a statue, but nevertheless to follow with the will to want the scorn said by Fanon seems to show at that moment that everia be of doubt, but, before being doubt, happens, that is, wants and does. "What will they think of me?" Change places with "I'll do it and fuck".

I dream that I take a leap, that I swim, that I run, that I rise. I dream that I burst out laughing, that I transpose the river with a kick, that I am persecuted by a band of vehicles that never catch me. During colonization, the colonized does not cease to free itself between nine o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning. (FANON, 1968, p. 39)

This dream idea in Fanon is broad, complex, but for now, it referred to one of the lines I got in my field: - "Zumbi was a revolutionary guy from the time of enslavement. (...) my intention was only to go, not to turn, and to leave in the newspapers. (...) But I have nothing against Zumbi. (...) Just like the comrade of the suca, who, for a change, is black. " (Xarpi Cúka, in an interview in Olaria, neighborhood of the North Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, RJ, in August 2017). It is violent to think swastikas in any representation of Zumbi, or of any other representation that favors us, the blacks. But this violence, which causes shame, also exposes the racist anguish of living in a frankly genocidal city, which has in this

kind of scorn, the outrage of any colonial disdain. In other words, the settler's city has the clean, perfect and harmonious face of Zombie. The head, however, would be the city of the colonized, a frankly racist city. But why not another head, bust, finally statue? With so many of her for Carioca songs, because Zumbi? Cuká well explained the reason, the period that the "spotlights" appear in that place, in that period. In any other statue, so many racist people who have already won statues, are left in the city, and there is little routine to draw attention to them, compared to what happens with the Monument to Zumbi in November. Statues in Rio de Janeiro are "all the same," except for some of those who were somehow considered bandits.

(...) city flattened, scraped by the lack of common sense, inert, suffocated under the geometrical burden of eternally present crosses, restless in the face of fate, mute, contradicted in every possible way, unable to thrive with the juice of earth, perplexed, pruned, reduced, devoid of fauna and flora. (FANON apud CÉSAIRE, 2008, p. 31).

In "Return notebook for the country", Aimé Césaire served something to think of the "indigenous", "black", "city of the colonized": where one is born and dies anywhere, and shows hunger for bread, meat, shoe, coal, light and what else exists. (Fanon, 1968, p.29). In Rio de Janeiro, the carioca being, who is the Brazilian being, is founded in this sense of "being of the city". According to Abdias Nascimento, one of these foundations is contained in the ideas of the term "Racial Democracy", which would be a "concrete relationship in the dynamics of Brazilian society: that blacks and whites coexist harmoniously, enjoying equal opportunities of existence, without no interference in this game of social parity, of their racial or ethnic origins. " (Nascimento, 1978, p. 41). According to Abdias, "Racial Democracy" is one of the "colonialistic illusions" (Nascimento, 1978: 43), which is seen only in Brazil; in other words, "racial democracy" is characteristic of the city of the Brazilian settler. The "fomentation of the myth of the free African" (Nascimento, 1978, pp. 65-66), those who made (and still do, why not) the war on behalf of whites, who promised such freedom, if survived such a war. The free African would be one of the first inhabitants of the city of the Brazilian colonized, the protagonist of the "black spot" that needed to be whitewashed, to realize the



Figure 3 - Cuka na cabeça de Zumbi. Source: Empresa Brasil de Comunicação website (EBC)).

formation of a “clean” civilization, contemplating the rationalization of the white being, of mixed blood (“Nascimento, 1978, 69) - the mulatto, the brown, the brown, etc. According to Abdias, this disdain introduced in Brazilian institutions is given by a genocidal tool, apparently (apparently) supported by all, including the Catholic Church, who considered the Negro as “an infected blood” (Nascimento, 1978, p. 70).

### 1.3 - Conclusions

After all this complex delimitation, I return to the landscaping subject of Rio de Janeiro, again with Barbosa (2012), when he problematizes the landscape as the epidermis of the city:

The landscape is the epidermis of the city. We perceive the urban life through its mantle. Even if their perspectives are misleading and all their visible faces hide other, undesirable faces. The landscape is the ‘skin’ of the city and translates the ground of the lives of our daily lives. In it are expressions our dreams and fears, our secrets and exiles, our hopes and our dramas. Thus, full of life, the landscape is the concrete experience of living with the other, even if its rules are absurd. Therefore, the ‘skin’ expresses the diversity and plurality of our ‘being in the world’. (BARBOSA, 2012, p. 32).

When it offers this reading of urban life, which intends the landscape in the existence of desires and disinterest, understanding that the action of varnishing, of covering with a mantle, the idea of hiding some in the relation with the other, Barbosa shows a manifestation of the plurality which seems to say recognizing the diverse, but still does not accept it. The idea of the landscape as the “skin” of the city brought by the geographer seems to escape, or even perhaps ignore the dreams, fears, secrets, hopes, or any drama and happiness of the variation of being in the world, why not?) to be more intermediated if the landscape were to be considered the “body” of the city. In order to do so, I will follow the empiria of the action as a kind of tattooing activity of the city, which “draws” stylized poetic acts, representative of the intentionality of individuals and / or groups that “appropriate” the spaces of the city, an environment that I consider to have the subjectivity of the body-landscape.

Getting a tattoo, tattooing the skin, is, say, marking the body’s natural armor. Marking the skin occurs in the first

instance as a record of intentionality, whether by individual or collective need. To think about it, I bring the book “Tattoos Theories - Tattooed Body: An Analysis of the Stoppa Tattoo Stone Shop”, a result of a PhD research in Communication and Semiotics by Célia Maria Antonacci Ramos, who elaborates a thought about tattoo writing as one of the earliest manifestations of cultural space and time. Ramos (2001) Says:

Recent discoveries of paleontologists attest to the presence of inscriptions engraved on bodies already in very ancient periods. Victoria Lautman records in her book *The New Tattoo* that in 1991 a hunter discovered in Similaun Glacier in the Italian Alps a five-thousand-and-hundred-year-old corpse with tattooed inscriptions on the back and knee. The author also points out the discovery of Egyptian female mummies with lines and dots tattooed on the body and a circle emphasizing the abdomen. (RAMOS, 2001, p. 26–27)

“Re-treated” in “idealizations, deformations, schematizations,” “dress or nude,” whether it was “drawn” by painters or “carved” by “sculptors,” the body was, in the West, only a “pre” text, “a” stimulus, “not a” message. “The drawings and any form on the body were performed outside of it. (Ramos, 2001, p.57). In modernity, this portrait is done in the body, when, for example, it is touched by the tattoo. It is inscribed and transformed. Mute. He undergoes metamorphosis. It goes from “unbranded” to “branded”; or from “marked” to “most marked”. Transmigra, because it appropriates definitively. Appropriation worn in the body, as much as punishment, to depart, discriminate, deny something, as to be costume, habit, model, ethnic brand. Tattooing is, in some way, to mark an identification, positively or negatively, by touch. The beating with some pointed instrument, such as needles or similar (bones, sticks, tapas), used in many different rituals, within various purposes and acceptances. Today, “we record the return of this practice as much as socio-cultural ethnic exclusion, as in the Nazi camps, as aggregation or individualization ornamentation.”(Ramos, 2001, p. 85).

From this basic notion about tattoo or tattoo artist, I come back to comment on the skin: unique place of the tattoo, it is the one that dresses and coats, runs and penetrates, the whole body. “We blush with shame and sweat of

fear and emotion. We recoil from cold, but from commotion too" (Ramos, 2001, p.91). The skin keeps the organs connected, and gives the border between the inside and the outside. It hides and shows, through an ambivalence that shows itself as smooth and rough, seen in a close or distant way, in parts that cause pleasures or afflictions, with bitter or sweet flavors, causing love and / or hate. The recording on the skin goes beyond writing, which is ephemeral as it can be erased. I say this, thinking that the remote is in the act of "recording" the skin, which happens before the mark is "eternalized", in a preservation of that eternal through memory. It is the memory that makes the tattoo irrevocably infested, even when it is erased. Ramos (2001) explains something of the kind, saying that:

The tattoo artist breaks the skin tissues and introduces the paint into the epidermis, the deeper layer of the skin, that is, inside the body. In fact, with the tattoo, the memory lives in us. The body is a living support, committed to biological transformations and especially to cultural impositions. (Ramos, 2001, p. 92).

Returning to the subject of the body, "living sculpture" of skin / "armor," which "subscribes-tensions and wilts," a kind of "becoming" that which "once was," exhibits features perceptually agreed upon by a certain compound, encompasses the sensitive, culture, eroticism, inconsistency, affection, pain, in synthesis, the feeling present in time and space. The body as "a constant cultural construction, subject to the laws and fantasies of the culture in which one live.. (Ramos, 2001, p. 92-93).

Continuing with the geographer Milton Santos, for him, the landscape is a set of real-concrete objects, in a characteristic "transtemporal", out of time, junction of the past with the present, vertical construction, crossed. Each landscape is characterized by a given distribution of object-forms, full of specific technical contents. A material system created in different historical moments of the past, coexisting with the now, "The landscape is frozen history, but it participates in living history." (Santos, 2012, p.107). It is just an idea, despite its material concreteness. "All that we see, what our vision does not reach, is the landscape (...). Not only formed of volumes, but also of colors, movements, odors, sounds, etc. " (Santos, 2012, p. 61).

I believe in the idle power of these unformatted combinations, realized in the desires and / or the desired detachments, the diversity of being and being, as enigmatically offers the graffiti / piXação / Xarpi.

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### Endnotes

**1** - Link with example of this type of situation: <https://extra.globo.com/casos-de-policia/jovens-da-zona-sul-formam-gangues-em-rede-social-cercam-onibus-na-saida-da-praia-de-copacabana-rv1-1-17551814.html>.

**2** - I'm talking about other Carioca puberty phenomena, popular in the traditional context, not in the same order, or even without a complete separation. The memories and relationships of Galera's Funks Dances, the Movements of the Organized Twists and the outings of the Bate-Ball Classes, are examples of other initiatives that intertwine with the graffiti. (COELHO, 2016).