

Geraghty, Niall H.D., Massidda, Laura (2019) *Creative Spaces: Urban Culture and Marginality in Latin America*. ILAS, School of Advanced Studies, University of London (London), 280 pp. £25.00 pbk

The eight essays collected in this volume explore the relationship between marginality and creativity in several Latin America urban centres, over a time period from the 1950s to the present. The theoretical basis on which the authors develop their analyses is a re-consideration of 'marginality'. Creativity is then understood to encompass a wide range of practices, including film-making, curating, urban planning, and political organizing.

The editors Niall H.D. Geraghty and Laura Massidda outline the theoretical challenges tackled in the volume in the Introduction. In contradistinction to some of the literature on marginality, they 'propose that it [marginality] is a process through which spaces and groups remain (or become) excluded from decision-making, cultural recognition or economic opportunities by those sectors that concentrate power' (9). They argue that marginality is a part of processes that are modern, and that the concept condenses the changing role of the state, as well as the 'coterminous and complementary developments in the nature of capitalism' (10). The centre-periphery model is here shown to no longer be relevant, since any urban space can be turned into a marginal space, no matter where in the city it is located. At the same time they argue that 'marginal spaces within Latin America are best viewed as a privileged site for theoretical practice' (18). This is where the link with creativity – understood as the production of the New – becomes clear: the articles examine manifestations of creativity that either embody and practise theory in marginal spaces, or they look at how it is produced through action.

The articles themselves are grouped in three sections entitled 'Where are the margins?', 'The struggle for the streets', 'Marginal arts as spatial practice.' The articles in the first section explore representations of the spatiality of marginality, the second section comprises articles on grassroots and state interventions into urban space, and the two articles contained in the last section look at the spatial dimensions of art and the spatial imagination in film, respectively. Each case study is

located in a specific city – Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, Cartagena, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires – and each analysis is locally grounded, while the close attention paid to the overarching concepts that hold the book together, provide a kaleidoscopic lens onto the various issues that are explored.

The articles by Lucy O’Sullivan, Cristian Silva and Paul Merchant collected in the first section explore margins as localities. O’Sullivan analyses Juan Rulfo’s photographs of the spatial and temporal in-between spaces that the writer and photographer noticed when looking at modern architecture in Mexico City. Cristian Silva ventures into suburban marginal spaces in Santiago de Chile, and at the interstitial spaces produced by urban planning and the privatization of land, adding a valuable analysis to the theorization of urban interstices. Paul Merchant approaches marginality and the denial of it as a cynical process, by analysing the multitude in the film *Mitomana*.

The section ‘The struggle for the streets’ is loosely organized around tensions between state and popular politics in the urban space. The articles by Orlando Deavila Pertuz and Lucy McMahon look at collective struggles and popular politics as creative practices of organizing and of spatialization, whereas Anabella Roitman looks at the ‘management of the marginal’ in the South of Buenos Aires. These three articles pinpoint most clearly the relationship of the role of the state, and of the development of the nature of capitalism.

The articles in the third section, on marginal art as spatial praxis, looks at the spatialization of marginal art, and at artistic engagements with spatiality and spatial inequality. Simone Kalkman analyses two different approaches taken to socio-spatial inequality by art displays in Rio De Janeiro. Both art projects are embedded within spatiality, critically engage with it, and stage spatial inequality. Niall H.D. Geraghty and Adriana Laura Massidda compare affective spatiality in two films from 2012, Martín Oesterheld’s *La multitud* and Luis Ortega’s *Dromómanos*, both set in Buenos Aires. They look at practices of walking of marginalized city dwellers in a city marked by neoliberal politics, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of striation and smooth space. The section and the volume end on an Afterword by Geoffrey Kantaris. The author reflects on the issues discussed

throughout the volume in light of a comparative, transatlantic critique of capitalism and of urban space under capitalism.

The interdisciplinarity of the approaches taken throughout the essays make good on the editors' promise of a thoughtful and innovative approach to marginality and creativity in the contemporary Latin American megalopolis. The framework provided in the Introduction gives the reader a great compass to navigate this interdisciplinary volume, and the Afterword inspires readers to continue the lines of thought and analysis.