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CREATIVE SPACES

Urban culture and marginality in Latin America

edited by Niall H.D. Geraghty and Adriana Laura Massidda

INSTITUTE OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

8. The spatiality of desire in Martín Oesterheld's *La multitud* (2012) and Luis Ortega's *Dromómanos* (2012)

Niall H.D. Geraghty and Adriana Laura Massidda

Martín Oesterheld's *La multitud* and Luis Ortega's *Dromómanos*, each produced in Argentina in 2012, are divergent in style and technique. Nonetheless, the spatial characteristics of each film are such that a comparison between them allows one to reconceptualise notions of marginality and creativity in contemporary Buenos Aires. *La multitud* is an observational documentary that depicts various urban typologies found in the east and south of the city. More specifically, the film focusses on the remains of two ambitious, unfinished, and abandoned amusement parks, the *Ciudad Deportiva de la Boca* and *Interama*, latterly known as the *Parque de la Ciudad*. The film then utilises these architectural ruins as a focal point to explore the surrounding areas. While the south of the city has historically developed as a peripheral area,[1] the spaces depicted in *La multitud* represent particularly sharp instances of urban marginalisation. *Dromómanos*, in contrast, follows a range of *socially* marginalised characters in Buenos Aires as they enter and cross areas such as the northern corridor (Plaza Francia, Plaza Italia and Palermo), an area close to the city centre which is more typically a site of residence for the middle and higher middle class; Barrio Compal, a deprived settlement in the extreme outer edge of the urban fabric of greater Buenos Aires; and others including the city centre proper and a psychiatric hospital. The contrast between Barrio Compal and the central areas depicted in *Dromómanos* (especially the northern corridor) is sufficiently sharp to underline the geographical and socio-economic marginalisation of the former area. Nonetheless, it is the film's unapologetic, if not confrontational, depiction of diverse forms of social marginalisation which most captures the viewer's attention. The film unflinchingly records the

1 G. Silvestri and A. Gorelik, 'San Cristóbal Sur entre el Matadero y el Parque: acción municipal, conformación barrial y crecimiento urbano en Buenos Aires; 1895–1915', *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. E. Ravignani"*, III (3) (1991): 81–107; H.M. Herzer, ed., *Barrios al sur: renovación y pobreza en la ciudad de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Café de las Ciudades, 2012). See also Anabella Roitman's chapter in this volume, pp. 155–80.

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lived experience of an alcoholic, a psychiatric patient and a disabled man as they traverse the city seemingly without aim or purpose. In order to reconcile this representation of the fringes of Argentine society with the more overtly spatial analysis found in *La multitud*, this chapter will argue that the two films reconceptualise the idea of urban marginality itself through their depiction of movement, desire and, ultimately, of power.

In the introduction to a special edition of the journal *BLOCK* exploring the relationship between power and architecture, Anahi Ballent and Adrián Gorelik propose that the three fundamental clients, or forces, which shape contemporary architecture are 'la política – política en sentido estricto de poder, en relación al control de un aparato estatal –, las instituciones sociales – política en sentido amplio, referido a la "gobernabilidad" de las sociedades modernas –, y el capital' [politics (in the strict sense of power, in relation to the control of a given state apparatus); social institutions (politics in a wider sense, referring to the 'governability' of modern societies); and capital].[2] By drawing on historical analysis of the spaces depicted in Oesterheld's *La multitud*, it will be shown that this conception is insufficient to account for the spatial dynamics of wider Buenos Aires, just as traditionally authored architecture cannot be taken as synecdoche for the whole built environment. While it will be recognised that landmarks within the city are the physical manifestations of interactions between capital and the state, it will be shown that 'politics', as defined by Ballent and Gorelik for example, cannot fully explain the development of marginal spaces shown in the film, nor the movement of characters through these spaces. It will instead be proposed that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's conception of desire – understood as a positive affirmation of productive energy[3] – can more thoroughly account for the dynamics witnessed in the film.

Unlike psychoanalytic (or other) models which propose that desire is the result of a fundamental *lack*, for Deleuze and Guattari desire is the basic unit of productive energy. They also contend that society's fundamental task is to constrain this desire.[4] Thus, by connecting this concept of desiring-production with their later discussion of smooth and striated spaces,[5] we first seek to spatialise the concept through our analysis of Oesterheld's *La multitud*. Drawing on historical analysis of the spaces depicted in the film, it will be argued that landmarks within Buenos Aires are the physical manifestations of interactions

2 A. Ballent and A. Gorelik, 'El Príncipe', *Block*, 5 (2000): 6–11, at p. 7.

3 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by R. Hurley, S. Mark and H. Lane (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); A. Ross, 'Desire,' in A. Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary* (rev. ed., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 65–7; E.Holland, 'Desire + Social Production', in Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, pp. 67–9.

4 J. Roffe, 'Capitalism', in Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, pp. 40–2.

5 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by B. Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 474–500.

between capital and the state which strive to either constrain or release desire. It will subsequently be posited that the urban margins are a repository for a form of desire that is liberated by the economic policies instigated by the state, yet potentially beyond its control. It is this form of desire that will receive closer critical analysis through our interpretation of *Dromómanos*. By bringing Deleuze and Guattari into dialogue with the conception of psychogeography elaborated by Guy Debord and the situationists, it will be argued that *Dromómanos* shows how the pursuit of liberated desire can radically alter our conception of city space. Thereafter, by focusing more specifically on the rituals enacted by the characters within the film, it will be shown that desire is creatively utilised to overcome marginalisation or, rather, constitutes the power proper to the margins when it becomes an affective war-machine directed against the very forms of thought which sustain the state.

La multitud

In his analysis of the various conflicting imaginaries that have moulded the city space of Buenos Aires throughout its history, James Scorer briefly comments on *La multitud*, arguing that 'the film is a study, both aesthetic and social, of urban decay and decline'.[6] Drawing on the traditions of *cinema vérite* and direct cinema, *La multitud* certainly deploys exquisite cinematography in order to record the slow ruination of the abandoned theme parks to particularly poignant effect. Moreover, Oesterheld records the spaces which surround each park utilising the same techniques in such a manner that they, too, appear to share in the parks' elegant deterioration. The *Ciudad Deportiva* is located in the *Costanera Sur* and the film records each of the distinct spaces which surround it: the shantytown *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno*, the coastal park *Reserva Ecológica*, a dump for abandoned cars, the massive fuel burning power plant *Central Térmica Costanera Sur*, and towering over all the locations and becoming the gravitational centre of the first half of the film, the new skyscrapers under construction as an extension of the upmarket area of Puerto Madero (see figures 8.1–8.2). Equally dominant in the film's second half is the *Torre Espacial* found at the centre of the abandoned amusement park *Interama* (see figure 8.3). The tower, the tallest building in Buenos Aires, is 176 metres high and dominates the cityscape in the south-west of the city. Within *La multitud*, it becomes the organising point for a conglomerate of heterogeneous living spaces, including the social housing complexes Lugano I–II and Soldati, and *Villa 20*, an informal settlement established several decades before *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno*. As in the *Costanera*, this space also included a dump for abandoned cars

6 J. Scorer, *City in Common: Culture and Community in Buenos Aires* (New York: SUNY Press, 2016), p. 187.

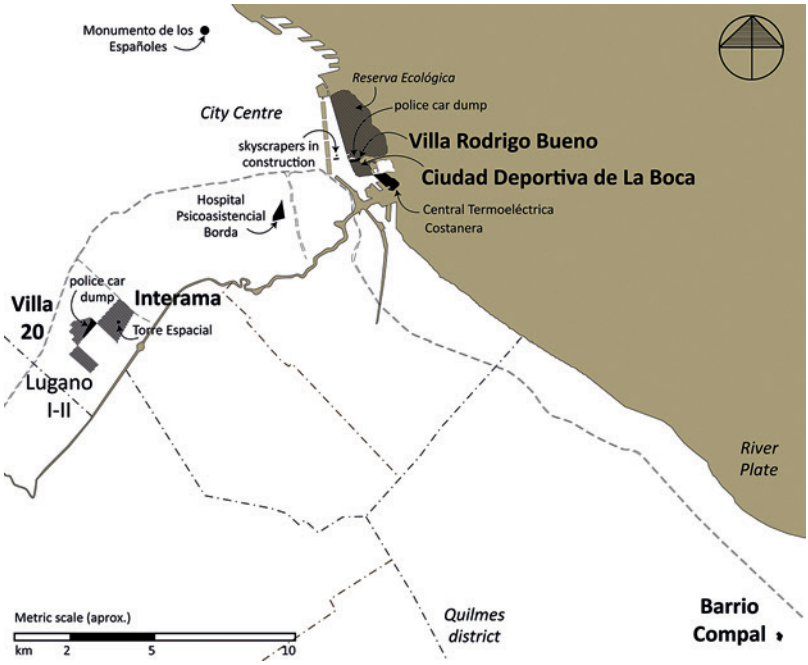

Figure 8.1. Map of relevant locations. Source: drawn by Adriana Laura Massidda.

Figure 8.2. Ciudad Deportiva de La Boca in the foreground, with Puerto Madero skyscrapers in the background. Source: La multitud.

at the time of filming, although this was subsequently removed.[7] As outlined in the Introduction, a concern with urban fragmentation has been central to analyses of Latin American cities (Introduction, p. 20), and this list of diverse geographical locations would seem to emphasise this same phenomenon. Crucially, however, *La multitud* also records a number of other typologies – wasteland, wetlands, railways and motorway embankments, for example – which connect each of the distinct spaces depicted. These are readily identified as 'interstitial spaces' as defined by Cristian Silva in the present volume (pp. 55–84), and in something of an echo of Silva's advocacy of a creative use of such urban interstices, the film quietly captures life unfolding within all of the spaces that it contains.

While we draw much from Scorer's wider analysis, in contrast to his central hypothesis regarding *La multitud*, we propose that striking images of vegetation bursting through the rusting hulks of abandoned cars (cover image) testify to the creative potential found in areas seemingly defined by perpetual decline. Furthermore, we contend that this creativity is primarily expressed through movement, which effectively works to smooth out space and liberate desire. Thus, where Scorer suggests that Oesterheld's 'panoramic shots of abandoned spaces highlight how the city is failing the multitudes that inhabit it',[8] we propose that it simultaneously records 'the fluidity of the masses, the

Figure 8.3. Interama in the foreground, including the Torre Espacial in the background. Source: La multitud.

7 N. Pizzi, 'Denuncia por contaminación en los cementerios de autos', *Clarín* (18 July 2009); Ministerio de Seguridad, Presidencia de la Nación (República Argentina), 'Saneamiento de los predios donde funcionan los depósitos de autos', 20 Aug. 2016, www.minseg.gob.ar/saneamiento-de-los-predios-donde-funcionan-los-depósitos-de-autos (accessed 2 Apr. 2017).

8 Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 187.

penetrating power of the migrating hordes'[9] as they attempt to overcome what Paul Virilio characterises as the 'police repression intended to control their wanderings'.[10] For what unites each of the spaces depicted in *La multitud* is that they represent diverse political attempts to mould and control both the city of Buenos Aires and society.

The press published for the release of *La multitud* focusses on the abandoned amusement parks and suggests that these peripheral city spaces 'were both locations for entertainment built by different dictatorships: the Sport City of La Boca was built during Onganía's de facto government, and the Interama amusement park opened near the end of the [last] military regime'.[11] While this description certainly places power and control at the centre of the film's thematic concerns, and these dictatorships were certainly important actors in the development of each location, this is nonetheless an excessive simplification of their rich histories and the complexity of Oesterheld's film. Regarding *La Ciudad Deportiva*, while it is true that the majority of the construction took place during the *Revolución Argentina* (1966–1973), which is to say the dictatorship led by Juan Carlos Onganía from 1966 to 1970, the two events can only be linked by association. The project had been conceptualised and executed by the not-for-profit Boca Juniors Civil Association (the organisation that is the owner and operator of the famous football club) a few years prior to the advent of the dictatorship, and government approval for the plan had been provided by congress during the democratically elected administration of Arturo Illia in 1965.[12] The plan was incredible in its ambition and its scope: the government granted the association an area of the Río de la Plata which had to be reclaimed for construction, and the amusement park was meant to contain various sporting facilities and a massive stadium with a capacity of 140,000. Had it been completed, Boca Juniors' new home would have been one of the largest in the world at the time. However, while parts of the park were built and opened to the public, only the foundations for the stadium were ever laid.[13] Thus, the only possible direct connection with the dictatorship was through a later leader of the *Revolución Argentina*, Alejandro Agustín Lanusse (head of

9 P. Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology,* trans. by M. Polizzotti (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2006), p. 33.

10 Ibid., p. 29.

11 'BAFICI [14] Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente. Del 11 al 12 de Abril / 2012' (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2012), 264. Also reproduced in the back cover of the film DVD.

12 Ley 16.575 (República Argentina), *Boletín Oficial* 20.610 (1964); Sub-comisión de Historia, "Armando la historia," *Sitio Oficial Club Atlético Boca Juniors*, 27 Dec. 2013, www.bocajuniors.com.ar/el-club/boca-armando-futbol (accessed 2 Apr. 2017).

13 Lucas Taskar et al., *Ciudad Deportiva – El documental*, 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgENhsJMZHU&feature=youtu.be (accessed 2 Apr. 2017); A. Galarza, 'The ciudad deportiva', http://futbol.matrix.msu.edu/chapters/4E-1F8–1/ (accessed 11 May 2016).

government between 1971 and 1973), who was said to be sympathetic to the project and who attended the ceremony to lay the keystone for construction of the (never to be completed) stadium.[14]

In sharp contrast, the project to construct the *Interama* amusement park *was* directly conceptualised and implemented by the mayor of Buenos Aires, Osvaldo Cacciatore, who had been appointed directly by the national executive of the last Argentine dictatorship, the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* (1976–1983). Nonetheless, the idea of constructing an amusement park in this location was first proposed in 1965, again during Illia's government, as part of the partially realised Parque Almirante Brown project.[15] This ambitious municipal initiative for urban development represented the culmination of years of local government debates concerning the use of the marshlands found in south-west Buenos Aires. Moreover, the Parque Almirante Brown project conformed to a long history of 20th-century urban planning in Buenos Aires which sought to regularise, formulise and incorporate informal and natural areas of the city. In other words, this planning tradition sought to expand the city through the creation of public parks that were to be recreational and educational.[16] Crucially for our present argument, both the Parque Almirante Brown, and other similar plans, contained or ran parallel to projects designed to eradicate pre-existing shantytowns in the area.[17] What was new in *Interama*, however, was the role of private enterprise, as the management of the park was not retained by the local or national governments but awarded to a private company.[18]

The press release is somewhat misleading once more when it suggests that the spaces surrounding the amusement parks 'harbor settlements and shantytowns where thousands of families live, many of them migrants and

14 'El primer pilote del futuro estadio de Boca', *La Nación*. 25 May 1972, reproduced in P.C. de Rosa Barlaro, 'El Super Estadio de la ciudad deportiva de Boca', *El archivoscopio. Donde los hechos del pasado reviven en imágenes* (La Nación) (blog), 1 June 2016, http://blogs.lanacion.com.ar/archivoscopio/lo-que-no-fue-los-proyectos-que-se-quedaron-en-la-nada/el-super-estadio-de-la-ciudad-deportiva-de-boca/ (accessed 16 March 2018).

15 *Centro Urbano Integrado Parque Almirante Brown. Solicitud de préstamo al Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo* (2 vols., Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1965).

16 A. Gorelik, *La grilla y el parque: espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887–1936* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1998); M.-N. Carré and L. Fernández, '"La muralla verde": áreas verdes como dispositivo para disciplinar la población, Gran Buenos Aires (1976–1983)', *Provincia – Revista Venezolana de Estudios Territoriales*, 25 (2011): 115–42.

17 A.L. Massidda, 'Shantytowns and the modern city: examining urban poverty in south-western Buenos Aires (1958–1967)' (unpublished University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 2016).

18 As a matter of fact, this process has been subject to numerous complaints of corruption which unfortunately lie beyond the scope of the present article. A summary can be found in *La gran estafa*, 2016, Students of Year 4, EEM N°5 DE 19, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBx4UL6syy0 (accessed 2 Apr. 2017).

in extreme poverty'.[19] While it is certainly true that both sites contain *villas miseria* (the local name for shantytowns in Buenos Aires) which are in a continual state of development, such a comment overlooks the significant and fundamental differences between *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno* and *Villa 20*. The former is a relatively new settlement constructed on invaded land, which emerged at some point between the mid 1970s and the early 1990s.[20] In contrast, the latter *villa* developed around a housing complex constructed in 1948 by the *Fundación Eva Perón*.[21] This historical difference is clearly visible in the film due to the relative differences in the quality and density of the buildings, and the degree of economic and construction activity in each *villa*. Finally, the press release overlooks the other prominent urban typologies contained within the film which, again, pertain to varied political programmes. The social housing complex Lugano I and II was constructed by the city government in the early 1970s as part of the Parque Almirante Brown project; [22] that of Soldati was constructed by the national government in the same decade as part of the *Plan de Erradicación de Villas de Emergencia*;[23] the *Reserva Ecológica* is contained within land reclaimed from the river by the *Proceso*; and the *Central Térmica Costanera* was conceived by the *Revolución Libertadora* in 1956, was opened in 1966 during Illia's presidency, and remained in public hands until president Carlos Saúl Menem's neoliberal structural adjustment and privatisation programmes of the 1990s.[24] Similarly, the new skyscrapers under construction in the wealthy neighbourhood of Puerto Madero form part of a development closely linked with Menem's neoliberal economic policies.

During Menem's presidency (1989–1999) the national executive and the city government collaborated to create the *Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero*, a public–private partnership initiative whose explicit purpose was to attract national and international capital in order to develop the area of land donated

19 'BAFICI [14]', p. 264.

20 M. Carman, *Las trampas de la naturaleza* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2011).

21 D.E. Bordegaray, 'Historia y memoria en la construcción de una historia barrial: el caso de Villa Lugano', in N. Rebetez Motta and N. Ganduglia (eds.), *El descubrimiento pendiente de América Latina: diversidad de saberes en diálogo hacia un proyecto integrador* (Montevideo: Signo Latinoamérica, 2005), pp. 237–44; 'La población residente en villas en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su magnitud, localización y características. Transformaciones en el período 1960–1991' (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, 1991).

22 Comisión Municipal de la Vivienda, 'Lugano I–II, Parque Almirante Brown, Buenos Aires, 1967/68', *Summa*, 18 (1969): 53–62.

23 O. Wainstein-Krasuk, T. Bielus and J. Goldemberg, 'Conjunto Habitacional "Soldati"', *Summa*, 64–5 (1973): 120–7.

24 Ley 23.696 (República Argentina) (also known as Ley de Reforma del Estado), *Boletín Oficial* 26.702 (1989); Ley 24.065 (República Argentina), *Boletín Oficial*, 27.306 (1991).

to the corporation.[25] As Daniel Kozak noted in 2008, the project was 'one of the preferred destinations of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the city'[26] and, despite the economic collapse of 2001 and subsequent changes in both city and national governments, the development continues in much the same manner at present. With this in mind, the incorporation of private capital into the public construction of *Interama* previously mentioned testifies to an important shift in urban planning in Buenos Aires, which continued through the 1980s following the return to democracy. This new approach originated in architectural post-modernism and was gradually adopted as a key tenet of neoliberal urban policy, arguing that a 'city by parts' would promote public space, democracy and trade.[27] A similar process was also witnessed in the 1990s as planners sought to integrate urban fragments directly into the market by creating 'ventajas diferenciales para el desarrollo de negocios privados' [differential advantages for the development of private businesses], a theme which has continued to some extent in the present day, where planners 'han incorporado los discursos más radicalizados del nuevo pensamiento empresarial' [have incorporated the most radicalised discourses of new corporate thought] into their designs for the city.[28] Interestingly, however, the present owners of the former *Ciudad Deportiva* are a development company who intended to construct similar luxury buildings on the site but who found the implementation of the project hindered by lack of government approval.[29]

Striating desire in *La multitud*

Such is the variety and complexity of the historical circumstances giving rise to the creation of the various spaces featured in Oesterheld's work that the film could provide the perfect basis for an exploration of 20th-century conceptions of modernity and modernisation, the relationship between the city and nature implied in such discourses, and their correlative attitudes towards informal settlements and urban development. For our present argument, however, the elusive and shifting dynamics which underpin such developments are rather more important. Moreover, it is the focus on the theme parks themselves, at least one of which can be directly connected to the most recent Argentine dictatorship, which most clearly uncovers these illusory drives. By focussing on these spaces, Oesterheld expands the limits for spatial analysis of the

25 Ley 1279 (República Argentina), *Boletín Oficial* 26.767 (1989); Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 'Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A.', www.buenosaires.gob.ar/gobierno/corporacion-antiguo-puerto-madero-sa (accessed 2 Apr. 2017).

26 D. Kozak, 'Urban fragmentation in Buenos Aires: the case of Abasto' (unpublished Oxford Brookes University PhD thesis, 2008), p. 170.

27 Ibid.; Ballent and Gorelik, 'El Príncipe', p. 7.

28 Ballent and Gorelik, 'El Príncipe', p. 10.

29 F. Spinetta, 'Sí a la urbanización de la Rodrigo Bueno, no al barrio de Irsa', *Página*, 12 (15 Dec. 2016).

dictatorship beyond those studies centred on repression and control. Where, in a spatial sense, this dictatorship is now frequently remembered through the *hidden* topography of the Clandestine Centres for Torture and Extermination which have been made public in recent years,[30] and through brutal policies of shantytown eradication,[31] Oesterheld creates a film focussed on the dictatorships' most *visible* attempts to create spaces for leisure and recreation for the repressed population. And it is through this apparent contradiction that the fundamental impulses that underpin Oesterheld's film can be uncovered.

As was the case with Onganía's military government, the most recent dictatorship upheld a narrow conception of western values closely linked to ideas of Christian civilization and anti-communism which necessarily restricted individual and collective freedoms. Drawing on the work of Judith Filc, Scorer notes that the last dictatorship posited 'the family as the basic unit of the nation and the principle site of moral education', and that 'the regime presented itself as the upstanding father to a wayward, childlike citizenship'.[32] While this depiction of society precedes the advent of these dictatorships, what is unique is that the last military government imposed this vision by creating 'an urban network of detention centers and military substations' which both systematised and spatialised the practice of 'disappearance' – the kidnapping, torture and murder of civilians – and through 'other, less brutal but nonetheless militaristic transformations of the city' designed to discipline society, as both Scorer and Graciela Silvestri note.[33] Indeed, Silvestri's analysis of the relationship between architecture and the dictatorship is particularly important in that she highlights that the regime also created a number of green spaces designed with other principles in mind, which is to say that they were created in order to produce 'una cierta imagen de orden y limpieza' [a certain image of order and cleanliness], the essential elements of the vision of 'la *ciudad blanca* de Cacciatore' [Cacciatore's *white city*].[34] Scorer is particularly effective in unifying these seemingly contradictory urban visions. As he notes, the '*ciudad blanca* was a *white* city not only in an aesthetic sense, but also in religious (whiteness = Christian purity), racial, and moral terms', and both architectural visions, 'albeit in different ways, were designed to create a "healthy" citizenship, enhancing the physical well-being of a body politic threatened by the cancer

30 As Scorer notes, 'in Capital Federal alone there were over 50 sites directly connected to detention and/or torture, a little over one per barrio, illustrative of how the city had become saturated with such spaces' (Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 34).

31 V. Snitcofsky, 'Clase, territorio e historia en las villas de Buenos Aires (1976–1983)', *Quid*, 16 (2) (2012): 46–62; E. Blaustein, *Prohibido vivir aquí: una historia de los planes de erradicación de villas de la última dictadura* (Buenos Aires: Comisión Municipal de la Vivienda, 2001).

32 Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 35.

33 Ibid., p. 36, both quotations; G. Silvestri, 'Apariencia y verdad', *Block*, 5 (2000): 38–50, at p. 39.

34 Silvestri, 'Apariencia y verdad', p. 40.

of subversion'.[35] Thus he argues that the dictatorship's plan of shantytown eradication can be understood as an instance of the 'institutionalization of disappearance' necessary for the production of a healthy, clean living space.[36] The same logic applies to Cacciatore's project to dismantle a massive garbage dump in south-west Buenos Aires and then use the vast quantities of domestic waste to create new recreational areas at the edge of the city.[37] With this in mind, it is important to note that this dump was located within land previously designated for redevelopment as a leisure space within the Parque Almirante Brown project designed by the freely elected government of Arturo Illia in 1965. Once more the crucial point is that plans for large-scale excavation and the creation of new parkland in this area preceded the dictatorship itself. In an inverse manner, it has also been noted that the incorporation of private capital into the construction of *Interama* by the dictatorship, became the *lingua franca* of urban planners in Buenos Aires utilised to promote democracy after the military regime's demise.

While Scorer is effective in demonstrating that the dictatorship maintained a unified and consistent urban vision, then, it is also clear that the regime (and subsequent democratic governments) appropriated planning ideas based on other discursive principles in order to fulfil that same vision. Moreover, this vision is also inevitably aligned with political power, and cannot account for the spatial dynamics evolving within those marginal spaces which Oesterheld also includes in his film. In her analysis of the dictatorship's seemingly contradictory urban vision, Silvestri argues that one should not be led 'a pensar que no existe ninguna relación concreta entre forma arquitectónica y poder' [to think that there exists no concrete relation between architectural form and power] but rather that 'las relaciones son más ambiguas y tangenciales, aunque no por ello inexistentes' [the relations are ambiguous and tangential, although that does not mean that they do not exist].[38] In a similar manner, we propose that the very process of capturing and repurposing discursive and spatial practices is, in and of itself, demonstrative of the underlying drives that we argue unite the urban dynamics witnessed throughout *La multitud*, namely, Deleuze and Guattari's notions of 'desiring production' and of 'striated space'. Crucially, framing the analysis in this manner will later enable us more fully to account for the creativity inherent to the peripheral locations depicted in the film.

35 Scorer, *City in Common*, pp. 170 and 37 respectively.

36 Ibid., p. 170.

37 O. Oszlak, *Merecer la ciudad: los pobres y el derecho al espacio urbano* (2nd edn, Buenos Aires: Editorial Universidad Tres de Febrero, 2017); N. Cosacov, M. Perelman, J. Ramos and M.F. Rodríguez, 'De "la Quema" al parque: notas sobre las políticas urbanas en la dictadura y la producción de pequeños consensos cotidianos en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires (1976–1983)', *Sociohistórica*, 29 (2012): 71–85; Carré and Fernández, '"La muralla verde"'.

38 Silvestri, 'Apariencia y verdad', p. 39.

What we want to propose is that by focussing on those urban plans which the *Revolución Argentina* and *Proceso* dictatorships developed in order to present themselves in a positive light, Oesterheld's film not only records the regimes' appropriations of previous discursive structures, but also their attempts to capture, channel and striate 'desire' in order to maintain their power. For Deleuze and Guattari, both 'desiring production' and 'striated space' are developed first and foremost through their radical materialist metaphysics which contends that all of existence is 'a matter of flows, and that any society must structure these flows in order to subsist'.[39] Within this conception, the fundamental, or primary, human drive is that of 'desire'. However, unlike psychoanalytic models, for Deleuze and Guattari, 'desire is … first and foremost the psychical and corporeal production of what we want'.[40] Crucially, Deleuze and Guattari also contend that each society attempts to channel these flows of productive energy in order to control the population and centralise power.[41] What the theme parks in *La multitud* represent, then, is this appropriation of *positive* desire utilised to sustain the dictatorships and which becomes a counterpoint to the dictatorships' most brutal repression.[42] We would also contend that it is this same process which has governed the creation of the various typologies that we observe in the film. Thus, the plans to create the social housing complexes Lugano I and II and Soldati sought to provide some habitation and reinforce the power of the state, yet were simultaneously coupled with projects to eradicate neighbouring shantytowns; the *Central Térmica Costanera* was conceived of and built to provide the energy to drive early industrial expansion and provide the population with employment; and the development of *Puerto Madero* was one of a raft of measures designed to integrate the city into the global market and create new opportunities for work and wealth creation, a project which would also radically alter social relations within Argentina. What this makes clear is that the politics and ideology of those who were in power at any given moment cannot fully explain the processes enacted. As we have seen, each of these plans overlap such that they form a continuum of attempts to capture 'flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital',[43] and Oesterheld ultimately records those locations which serve as the physical expression of projects designed to incorporate numerous fluxes into the political programme of any given government, democratic and authoritarian

39 Roffe, 'Capitalism', p. 40.

40 Holland, 'Desire + social production', p. 68.

41 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 139.

42 Deleuze and Guattari interpret the works of Franz Kafka in a similar manner by arguing that part of Kafka's genius was to depict the incorporation of people's leisure, loves and even indignations, as part of the same desiring machine designed to control them. See G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. by Dana Polan (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 81.

43 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 386.

alike. This formal organisation of space which both manifests and maintains state power is what Deleuze and Guattari term 'striation'.[44] By focussing on the theme parks, however, Oesterheld effectively allows the viewer to conceive of the striated space of the city as the spatial manifestation of the channelling of desire, a discussion absent from (although we would suggest heavily implied in) the work of Deleuze and Guattari.[45] Nonetheless, the presence of *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno* and *Villa 20* within *La multitud* serves as a permanent reminder of that which is beyond these attempts to striate desire and control society. Indeed, they necessarily imply a different conception of space, as we shall now see.

Wandering and the production of smooth space

La multitud progresses through a subtle process of visual counterpoint designed to highlight the morphological differences between the spaces it depicts. Most acutely, frequent shots of *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno* and *Villa 20* are presented in stark contrast to those shots of the various other urban typologies the film contains: the housing complexes Lugano and Soldati, the regular urban fabric of the city, and the gleaming towers of the new skyscrapers under construction in Puerto Madero. The regular, ordered and controlled enviroments that contain public and private construction projects are noted more readily, precisely because they stand in contradistiction to the haphazard, freeform and rather more improvisational structures found in their neighbouring *villas*. It is immediately possible to compare these latter typologies with the 'variability', 'polyvocality' and essentially rhizomatic qualities that Deleuze and Guattari argue are the defining features of 'smooth space' which evolves in the absence of centralised organisation and is the antithesis of 'striation'. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari identify 'shantytown-urbanization' as a primary example of the 'untamed evolutions' they advocate,[46] and directly state that 'sprawling, temporary, shifting shantytowns' could provide an example of a smooth space developing within the striated city.[47] Building on this point, Felipe Hernández and Peter Kellett argue that there is 'a direct link between cities as forces of striation … and shanty towns, or informal settlements, as examples of smooth space which emerges within the striated space of the city but refuses to conform to the rules it attempts to enforce'.[48]

44 Ibid., p. 385.

45 Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of striated space is found in the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *A Thousand Plateaus*. Published several years after *Anti-Oedipus*, it largely abandons their conception of desiring-production altogether.

46 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 462.

47 Ibid., p. 481.

48 F. Hernández and P. Kellett, 'Introduction: reimagining the informal in Latin America', in F. Hernández, P. Kellett and L. Allen (eds.), *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 9.

Given that *La multitud* also contrasts informal shantytowns with spaces striated with political desire, Hernández and Kellett's description certainly appears to correspond succinctly with Oesterheld's film. Yet the very structure of the film leads us to question this assertion, or perhaps even to invert the argument, for it actually appears to reveal the slow process of striation which develops over time. Within the film, informal smooth spaces, which seemingly appear beyond government attempts to channel desire, appear to be gradually organised, formalised and striated. This is clearly seen in the varying degrees of formality within the construction processes depicted in the film. The ordered and efficient construction within Puerto Madero, where every worker has a uniform, a yellow hard hat and proper boots, and where massive cranes move imposing blocks of prefabricated construction materials, finds its counterpoint in the patchwork of *Rodrigo Bueno* where a resident in flip-flops and a yellow cap utilises recycled waste materials to add an additional structure to a house. What appears first as an acute juxtaposition between two forms of space resolves into a temporal sequence when we witness construction in the far longer established *Villa 20* and find a process somewhere between these two extremes. A mobile crane mounted on a truck unloads construction materials, echoing the sophisticated, enormous and fixed cranes found at Puerto Madero (see figure 8.2). The simple fact that *La multitud* incorporates these delicate symbolic echoes – from yellow hard-hat to yellow cap; from fixed to mobile crane – seems to suggest that the informal becomes less so over time. Just as the large-scale construction projects included in the film represent complex historical and political processes which have gradually reconfigured the city, so, too, the contrast between *Villa 20* and *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno* is demonstrative not only of government interventions in informal spaces, as described by Anabella Roitman in the present volume (pp. 155–80), but also of the innumerable interactions between state and non-state actors which have combined to transform and striate these urban spaces. Indeed, we would argue that these complex relations – as analysed by Orlando Deavila Pertuz in Cartagena (pp. 107–32), or Adriana Laura Massidda in South West Buenos Aires[49] – which are ever present, yet unseen in the film, essentially function as the genetic code which produces the *villa* morphology. In contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's (and Hernández and Kellett's) suggestion, then, it appears that the shantytowns in *La multitud* represent the fact that 'smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space', rather than the process by which 'striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space'.[50] This is not to suggest, however, that the latter process is entirely absent from the film. Rather, the injection of smooth space into the

49 A.L. Massidda, 'Shantytowns and the modern city'.

50 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 474–5.

striated city assumes a different form: the seemingly random wandering of the urban nomad.

La multitud is a film in continual movement. As in Lucy O'Sullivan's analysis of Juan Rulfo's photos (pp. 31–53), where Rulfo's lens captures furtive glimpses of people moving through the interstitial spaces of Mexico City, *La multitud* progresses with an ethereal lethargy as it follows various residents in the east and south of Buenos Aires wandering through each of the locations depicted. Where Rulfo's still photos lend themselves to O'Sullivan's Foucauldian analysis of modernist Mexico, however, Oesterheld's images of mobility instead suggest that he records 'a problem less of enclosure or exclusion than of traffic'.[51] This is to say that, as in Paul Virilio's analysis of Paris, in *La multitud*, Buenos Aires becomes 'a tapestry of trajectories, a series of streets and avenues in which they [the people] roam, for the most part, with neither goal nor destination',[52] the basis for Virilio's corresponding conception of '*habitable circulation*'.[53] In place of a traditional narrative, the film advances in a seemingly aimless manner by following various characters for a short period of time as they move through the city. In this way, and as the very title of Oesterheld's film suggests, *La multitud* presents the audience with a particularly muted image of the multitude – invoked equally by Paul Merchant (pp. 85–103) in the present volume, as by Scorer in the work previously cited[54] – in motion. Moreover, even seemingly static objects and spaces are recorded in motion: the skyscrapers and *villas* are filmed while under construction; the *Central Térmica* continually billows steam from its cooling towers; and the camera follows an engineer as he enters and ascends the *Torre Espacial* to then work on the telecommunications equipment situated on the exterior of its uppermost platform. In addition, the film includes shots of cars travelling at great speed along motorways, as it records a character moving through the city on a train in order to visit an acquaintance in the Lugano housing complex; a sequence which serves to connect the two halves of the film and the east and south-west of the city. In this instance, the journey is evocative of Deleuze and Guattari's argument that 'in striated space, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to points' as people travel 'from one point to another',[55] and that, in its attempts to striate the space over which it rules, 'the State never ceases to decompose, recompose, and transform movement, or to regulate speed',[56] an idea derived from Virilio's argument that the contemporary city is an extension of the architecture of the

51 Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 33.

52 Ibid., p. 29.

53 Ibid., p. 31.

54 Scorer, *City in Common*, pp. 12–20.

55 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 478 and 380.

56 Ibid., p. 386.

fortress specifically designed to regulate and control speed.[57] With this in mind, it is also important to remember that the vast extension of highways within Buenos Aires was one of the most emblematic urban interventions carried out by the last dictatorship. In this instance, the project quite literally constitutes a channelling of flows, and therefore represents another striation of space, a device utilised to control movement and constrain desire.[58]

In sharp contrast to these depictions, however, the film features numerous other journeys which refuse to subordinate the trajectory to the point, as Oesterheld similarly refuses to provide a complete narrative for the movements in question. Moreover, the characters embarking on these journeys frequently ignore the rules that normally govern movement within the striated city, as they utilise other means of locomotion. Powered by his own strength in a flimsy rowing-boat, we witness a resident of Barrio Rodrigo Bueno move slowly through wetlands strewn with rubbish and then enter the vast expanse of the Río de la Plata and fish in the shadow of the *Central Térmica* and the turbulent waste water it discharges into the river. More frequently, however, we witness numerous characters as they walk through the city space, paying no heed to the rules which should govern circulation. These characters cut through the abandoned theme parks, sprint across highways and make only halting progress. In one instance, for example, a female character strolls through the abandoned land of the *Reserva Ecológica*, sets up a deck chair and makes a phonecall. As the film drifts from each of these urban wanderers to the next, one is reminded that Deleuze and Guattari also define 'smooth space' as 'nomad space' precisely because the continual movement of the nomad subordinates specific points 'to the paths they determine'.[59] Crucially, Deleuze and Guattari's description of nomadic smooth space is also derived from the work of Virilio.[60] For Virilio, contemporary politics and urban design are characterised by attempts to unleash, yet control, ever increasing speeds.[61] Within this analysis, however, he also proposes that 'shantytowns and favelas … are situated between two speeds of transit'[62] and that the 'masses are

57 As Virilio writes: 'highways or railways, the toll systems that the government insists so strongly on instituting at the very entrances to a capital … this whole apparatus is only the reconstitution of the various parts of the fortress motor, with its flankings, its gorges, its shafts, its trenches, admission to and escape from its portals, the whole primordial control of the masses by the organisms of urban defense' (*Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 40). See also Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 212.

58 Oszlak, *Merecer la ciudad*, pp. 257–308; Silvestri, 'Apariencia y verdad', p. 44; G. Jajamovich and L. Menazzi, 'Políticas urbanas en un contexto de dictadura militar', *Bitácora Urbano Territorial*, 20 (1) (2012): 11–20.

59 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 478 and 380.

60 Ibid., p. 387.

61 See Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 29.

62 Ibid., p. 33.

not a population, a society, but the multitude of passersby'.[63] It appears that in *La multitud* these two positions converge and coalesce: the shantytowns function within an alternative temporality, just as the nomadic trajectories are characterised by their relative slowness when compared to those other, formal and rapid journeys. And we would suggest that it is in this way that the titular multitude re-imparts a certain smoothness into the heart of the striated city.

As the unnamed lady sits and makes her phone call in the *Reserva Ecológica*, the land surrounding her is difficult to distinguish from a patch of waste ground. This is not entirely surprising given that the park is an unusual hybrid space. As previously noted, the land was formed from the rubble excavated during the construction of new highways during the last dictatorship. Nonetheless, once relocated to form a landmass in the river, the variety of indigenous species that settled there led the Municipality of Buenos Aires to declare the area an ecological reserve and public park in 1986.[64] The space is simultaneously by-product and source, caught between the forces of striation and an emergent and natural smoothness. Oesterheld further emphasises this natural comparison when he includes a sequence of shots of a pack of stray dogs wandering through this same space. A subtle visual parallel is established between the animals and our nomadic guides who Oesterheld, too, has grouped as a pack. For Deleuze and Guattari it is packs and bands that populate smooth, nomadic space, and thus they link the duality smooth/striated to the dyad rhizomatic/arborescent, which is central to *A Thousand Plateaus* and one of the best-known features of their work: 'Packs, bands, are groups of the rhizome type, as opposed to the arborescent type that centers around organs of power'.[65] So, too, the contemporary conception of the multitude is defined by its 'heterogeneous makeup, its animalistic, biological characteristics and its nature as an antagonistic force of protest'.[66] Yet, in Oesterheld's film, the multitude's antagonism is muted, constrained and performed through the most perfunctory of embodied activities: walking. In this regard, Scorer's analysis of the everyday practices and politics of *cartoneros* [informal rubbish collectors] in Buenos Aires is instructive.[67] Drawing on the work of Henri Lefebvre, Michel

63 Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 29.

64 Ordenanza 41.247 (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires), *Boletín Municipal* 17.843 (1986); later modified by Ordenanza 42.859 (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires), *Boletín Municipal* 18.361 (1988).

65 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 358.

66 Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 12.

67 It is interesting to note that in Scorer's exceptional analysis of the historical and conceptual development of the 'commons' in Buenos Aires, movement has only a minor or secondary role. Nonetheless, this discussion comes to the fore when he contrasts the *tren blanco* (the special train services, using dilapidated rolling stock, that bring the *cartoneros* to the city centre to work) and the way in which the *cartoneros* enact political change by walking through the city. Although framed in a different manner, this comparison shares a great deal in common with the present analysis. See Scorer, *City in Common*, pp. 149–59.

De Certeau and others, Scorer argues that for the *cartoneros*, 'the simple joining together of multiple and contiguous trajectories enacted by walking has an impact on the city … precisely because it enables bodies to mobilize against structures of power without the need for any other form of mediation'.[68] So, too, in *La multitud* the wanderings of the urban nomads repurpose the seemingly useless interstitial spaces of the city, move against structures of power designed to constrain them, and actively work against the pursuit of limitless velocity. As in Scorer's analysis of the *cartoneros* walking through Buenos Aires, the film thus reminds the viewer that 'the multitude itself can be everyday, a "mode of being"' as in Virno's analysis.[69] More than this, however, the film makes it clear that the multitudes both inhabit smooth space and re-impart it into the heart of the striated city through their perennial nomadic wandering. Nonetheless, neither Oesterheld nor Deleuze and Guattari allow for an unequivocal and easy association between smooth space and a moral good. Indeed, in both cases the ambivalence proper to the term becomes particularly apparent through their treatment of capitalism, as we shall now see.

Dictatorship, capitalism and schizophrenia

While *La multitud* explores the spaces arranged around two abandoned amusement parks, the two halves of the film are visually dominated by vertical structures which literally tower over and impose upon almost every shot: the skyscrapers of Puerto Madero and the *Central Térmica Costanera* in the first half of the film, and the *Torre Espacial* in the second. In each case they are urban expressions of the channelling of desire through social policy, and the gradual implementation of an industrial and capitalist economy by governments of various stripes. The *Central Térmica* stands as a monument to the mid 20th-century industrialisation of the Argentine economy, the very motor for the rapid expansion of the informal *villas*, while its privatisation under Menem's government is testament to the implementation of neoliberal economic policies. Similarly, the skyscrapers under construction in Puerto Madero both reflect these same policies and, as the construction continued unabated during the presidency of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner at the time the film was made, are suggestive of a certain continuity of neoliberal development during her tenure (2007–2015), despite the vastly different nature of her political programme when compared to that of Menem. In this regard, the transition to the *Torre Espacial* within the film is particularly important.

As previously intimated, the tower was built by the most recent Argentine dictatorship, but control of the park was granted to a private enterprise. Nonetheless, at the time the film was made (2012), the management of the tower and surrounding park had returned to the city government, by then

68 Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 159.

69 Ibid., at p. 157.

controlled by the decidedly neoliberal mayor (and current president of Argentina) Mauricio Macri. Given this historical coincidence, it is tempting to read the transition from the skyscrapers to the tower as a symbolic 'return of the state' or 'a simple return to populism'[70] following the collapse of Menem's neoliberal regime and the Kirchners' ascension to power. Such a reading, however, oversimplifies the complexity of the political reality that the tower comes to represent. In the first instance, it is important to note that – in a remarkable instance of the privatisation of profits and the socialisation of losses – the 1978 by-laws which regulated the creation of *Interama* established that any loss made by the private corporation running the park would be underwritten by the local government. In addition, the park only returned to public control upon the financial failure of the enterprise.[71] Thus, the state did not become an agent empowered to control decisions but merely a guarantor for private financial profit. The municipality has since attempted to renovate the park, again incorporating a significant level of private enterprise in their plan. Given this complex history it appears that the tower actually represents the shift in the Kirchner era to *neodesarrollismo* or 'post-neoliberalism' described as 'an evolving attempt to develop political economies that are attuned to the social responsibilities of the state whilst remaining responsive to the demands of "positioning" national economies in a rapidly changing global political economy'.[72] This is to say that, at a national level, the governments of Néstor and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner represented 'a developmental regime that is sufficiently distinct, yet simultaneously a development within and from the neoliberal state'[73] insofar as they sought 'a redemption and renewal of the original Peronist program now termed "serious capitalism"' which included 'social programs' which 'conform[ed] to the neoliberal "safety net" models'.[74]

Given this historical context, it appears that these towering structures represent the continuing development of a form of neoliberal capitalism that ultimately lies beyond state control. Nonetheless, they also seem to testify

70 J. Grugel and P. Riggirozzi, 'Post-neoliberalism in Latin America: rebuilding and reclaiming the state after crisis', *Development and Change*, 43 (1) (2012): 1–21, at pp. 3–4.

71 *La gran estafa*, 3; Ordenanza 33.615 (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires), *Boletín Municipal* 15.554 (1977); Ordenanza 34.278 (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires), *Boletín Municipal* 15.848 (1978), Ordenanza 34.376 (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires), *Boletín Municipal* 15.840 (1978).

72 Grugel and Riggirozzi, 'Post-neoliberalism in Latin America', p. 4.

73 C. Wylde, 'Post-neoliberal developmental regimes in Latin America: Argentina under Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner', *New Political Economy*, 21 (3) (2016): 322–41, at p. 324. In addition, for a detailed discussion of *neodesarrollismo* under Néstor Kirchner, see C. Wylde, 'State, society and markets in Argentina: the political economy of neodesarrollismo under Néstor Kirchner, 2003–2007', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 30 (4) (2011): 436–52.

74 N. Reddy, 'Argentina: the end of Kirchnerism?', *New Politics*, 15 (1) (2014), http://newpol.org/content/argentina-end-kirchnerism (accessed 30 March 2017).

to an antagonism between two conflicting speeds. In his analysis, Virilio is undoubtedly correct when he stresses that contemporary capitalism 'has become one of jet-sets and instant-information banks'.[75] Nonetheless, Doreen Massey is equally correct when she asserts that 'neoliberalism in practice is *not* simply about mobility: it too requires some spatial fixes',[76] a point further developed by David Harvey when he notes that, while contemporary capitalism is 'focussed on speed-up and acceleration of turnover times',[77] these developments frequently rely on 'long term and often high cost fixed capital investments of slow turnover time'.[78] It seems, then, that these monuments to contemporary capitalism, like the *villas miseria* before them, are also 'situated between two speeds of transit' but are designed to facilitate rather than act 'as brakes against the acceleration of penetration'.[79] This seemingly contradictory manipulation of relative speeds to implement the structures on which neoliberal capitalism depends is also demonstrative of a further paradox: while the forces of capitalism lead to the physical striation of space, the result of this process is 'circulating capital … a sort of smooth space in which the destiny of human beings is recast'.[80] Given their devastating critique of contemporary capitalism, this point makes the ambivalence of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of smooth and striated space particularly clear.[81] The manipulation of relative speeds, and the striation of space to produce the smooth space of capital, finds a further horrifying correlate within the specifically Argentine context. The most recent military dictatorship implemented an extremely violent state control of bodies and psyches (including the murder of thousands of Argentines) in order to impose neoliberalism, primarily through the actions of Minister of Finance José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz. Accordingly, critics such as Pilar Calveiro have subjected the dictatorship's extermination plan to

75 Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p.136.

76 D.B. Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 86.

77 D. Harvey, 'Between space and time: reflections on the geographical imagination', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 80 (3) (1990): 418–34, at p. 426.

78 Harvey, 'Between Space and Time', p. 425.

79 Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 33.

80 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 492.

81 This ambivalence is not at all surprising given that Deleuze and Guattari develop their conceptions of both smooth and striated space from the work of Virilio. As previously noted, Virilio's analysis of the fortress underpins Deleuze and Guattari's conception of striated space. So, too, Virilio's study of the 17th-century naval strategy of 'the fleet in being' is fundamental to their conception of smooth space. See P. Virilio, 'The suicidal state', in *The Virilio Reader* ed. by Der Derian J (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 29–45, at pp. 30–1; Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, pp. 62–4, 171; Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 387. The militaristic origins of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of space are also reflected in the fact that General Aviv Kokhavi of the Israeli Defense Force specifically utilises their work while planning his operations. See B.H. Bratton, 'Logistics of habitable circulation' in Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, pp. 7–25, at pp. 21, 25.

rigorous Foucauldian analysis, arguing that the military government sought the disciplining of Argentine society,[82] while others, such as León Rozitchner, have argued that it was Menemism which ultimately established 'by peaceful and democratic means the same political economy that the dictatorship implanted through cruelty and terror',[83] important elements of which were subsequently retained by the Kirchners.

In the first half of *La multitud*, the *Central Térmica* and the new skyscrapers of Puerto Madero bear witness to the forces of capital which begin the process of industrialisation and seek to connect the city to transnational markets. In the second half, however, the *Torre Espacial* testifies to the attempts to control capital and constrain desire in a re-emerging state following the financial collapse of 2001. While the film's press release was too quick to connect the amusement parks to 20th-century Argentine dictatorships, it is nonetheless clear that the three vertical structures which dominate the film are tainted by association, through the gradual imposition of a neoliberal economic order, with the *Revolución Libertadora* and the dictatorship of 1976–1983. And at the film's conclusion this association becomes particularly clear as the *Torre Espacial* appears as a phallic panopticon towering over the residents of the Lugano social housing complex, who are shot from outside the building, backlit and illuminated from the electric lights in their own homes. Perfectly reflecting Foucault's description of Bentham's panopticon, the residents can always be seen, can never know if they are being observed at any given moment, and can never view the guards watching over them.[84] Nonetheless, as Scorer notes, the film is also a study 'of urban decay and decline',[85] and it is essential to recognise that *La multitud* primarily features shots of the *deteriorating* remains of *Interama* and the *Ciudad Deportiva* following the ultimate failure of these projects. What we now want to propose is that these spaces, and the informal settlements *Villa 20* and *Barrio Rodrigo Bueno*, ultimately become repositories for alternative forms of productive desire.

Oesterheld's delicate use of counterpoint throughout *La multitud* is an effective technique deployed to render the connections between informal and formal spaces visible. Moreover, informal and formal economies are linked visually in the film by a street vendor peddling coffee to workers in the city while living in precarious conditions. In this way, the film highlights the continual intertwining of marginal spaces and extra-legal activities with their legally sanctioned counterparts. Moreover, the film reminds the viewer that the *villas* provide housing for the labour necessary in an industrialised capitalist economy,

82 P. Calveiro, *Poder y desaparición* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1998).

83 L. Rozitchner, 'Terror and grace', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 21 (1) (2012): 147–57, at p. 150.

84 See M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 200–9.

85 Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 187.

while necessarily questioning the fundamental logic of private property which underpins that same system. Thus it appears that in *La multitud*, as in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism functions by breaking the rules and norms previously created to channel desire and maintain power,[86] and that 'the decoding of flows and the deterritorialization of the socius' are its most characteristic and most important tendency.[87] Importantly, for Deleuze and Guattari this capitalist decoding (the removal of rules and norms in order to integrate flows of desire under relations of exchange to promote the pursuit of capital) can generate 'a spontaneous or unpredictable form of desire freed from social coding',[88] which also resists and disrupts the very capitalist system that produced it, a phenomenon that they name schizophrenia. The deployment of counterpoint, the careful blending of formal and informal typologies and the depiction of state sanctioned and extra-legal journeys and activities in *La multitud* all serve to demonstrate that the *villas* depicted in Oesterheld's film are, in and of themselves, a spatial expression of this form of schizo-desire: a physical manifestation of the product and limit of the capitalist system in which they are inscribed.

In the final reckoning, then, *La multitud* depicts the spatial eruptions made manifest by the interconnection between three co-dependent, yet contradictory, forces. The forces of the state (regardless of the government responsible) are shown to striate space and attempt to capture and channel flows of desire. The forces of capital, meanwhile, rely on the striated space produced by the state, but produce a smooth form of capital which, in its functioning, liberates the desire the state attempts to capture. And finally, there are the forces of informality, providing the labour power for the striation of space but simultaneously injecting new smooth spaces within the striated city, creating subjectivities beyond state control who reconfigure the city space through their nomadic wandering across the city. Nonetheless, while the very existence of the shantytowns may violate the laws of private property, within the film, residents' actions only ever represent rather minor infractions of the law. The multitude is in motion, yet muted. Their actions are perhaps best characterised through Asaf Bayat's conception of 'quiet encroachment', that is, the 'noncollective but prolonged actions of dispersed individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives (land for shelter, urban collective consumption or urban services, informal work, business opportunities and public space) in a quiet and unassuming illegal fashion'.[89] What the film only depicts in a rather

86 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 139.

87 Ibid., p. 34.

88 Holland, 'Desire + social production', pp. 65–6.

89 A. Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (2nd edn., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 35. For detailed discussion of the *villas miseria* in south-west Buenos Aires in relation to Bayat's conception of 'quiet encroachment' and the

minor manner, therefore, is Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that 'when a State does not succeed in striating its interior or neighbouring space, the flows traversing that State necessarily adopt the stance of a war machine directed against it, deployed in a hostile or rebellious smooth space'.[90] A depiction of this 'schizonomadic'[91] war machine is, however, the central focus of the second film we will discuss in this chapter: Luis Ortega's *Dromómanos*.

Dromómanos: a study of social marginalisation?

Dromómanos is sharply different in style and aesthetics to *La multitud.* The film is a particularly uncomfortable hybrid. All but one of the characters appears as themselves, and it is difficult to separate truth from fiction. *Dromómanos* is stylistically close to a form of *art brut*: the aesthetics are intentionally ugly, and Ortega has even suggested that they shot the film on the cheapest and worst cameras they could find.[92] In contrast to the beautiful cinematography and carefully constructed counterpoint of *La multitud*, the hand-held camera work is shaky and poor quality, and the scenes come together in an apparently random sequence. The title itself refers to those suffering from the condition of 'dromomania', an uncontrollable psychological urge to wander, which establishes an immediate connection with the work of Virilio. Not only does Virilio name the study of the pursuit of perpetual speed 'dromology', but he also pays particular attention to 'dromomaniacs', a term which refers both to those suffering from the psychological condition and to deserters under the *ancien régime*.[93] The title also connects the film to our previous discussion of Deleuze and Guattari who proffer radical alternative visions both of psychological illness and nomadism, as we have seen. Internally, the film's title seems to refer most precisely to the character of Fermín, a psychiatric patient who appears as himself and wanders through Buenos Aires in a seemingly aimless manner.[94] Given that the film also features key scenes in which Fermín consumes large quantities of alcohol and cocaine, one is particularly reminded of Virilio's comment that 'at the beginning of the Classical Age, the spectacle of the insane or possessed was fashionable, as is that of drug addicts today. We spy on the kinetic disorder of their inexplicable attitudes and their discourses'.[95] Fermín is resident in the psychiatric Hospital Interdisciplinario Psicoasistencial José

corresponding idea of the 'non-movement', see Massidda, 'Shantytowns and the modern city', pp. 175–8.

90 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 386.

91 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 105.

92 Luis Ortega, comments made during a Q&A session at the Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente, 2012.

93 Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 169 n3.

94 Ortega, Q&A session.

95 Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, p. 108.

Figure 8.4. Brasil arriving to Barrio Compal. Source: Dromómanos.

Tiburcio Borda (*Borda* hereinafter) and, unlike *La multitud*, most of the action takes place in central Buenos Aires and the *corredor norte*, more traditionally middle-class and wealthy areas of the city. In contrast to Simone Kalkman's analysis in the present volume (pp. 183–200), then, the film seems to focus, in a spatial sense, on a mobile marginality which demands to be understood on its own terms, and which directly injects spatial marginalisation into the centre of the city. Not only is the *Borda* hospital a marginal space walled-off and separated from the regular urban fabric which surrounds it, but the film features other marginal spaces incongruously located in wealthy and established areas. For example, Fermín frequently visits his friend, identified only as Dr Pink Floyd, a previously well-established psychiatrist turned alcoholic, whose deteriorating apartment within a middle-class building features predominantly in the film. While *Dromómanos* does also feature Barrio Compal, a peripheral settlement located in the district of Berazategui at the extreme edge of the urban fabric of greater Buenos Aires, this settlement too is linked to the city centre through the character of Pedro who appears in both spaces, visits Fermín and Pink Floyd in the latter's apartment, and occasionally sleeps rough in the city centre (see figures 8.1 and 8.4). Unlike *La multitud* which features a train journey between different settlements, Pedro's journeys between these spaces are never depicted.

Despite these clear spatial contrasts, however, it at first appears that the film is more concerned with forms of *social* marginalisation that are not primarily economic. Not only is Fermín marginalised due to his mental illness, but Pink Floyd seems to be equally excluded from society due to his dependence on alcohol. The point is proven when he attempts to visit his ex-wife and daughter and is denied entry to their apartment. Indeed, each of the characters that feature in the film appears to suffer from some form of marginalisation, stigmatisation,

or exclusion. Pedro suffers from dwarfism and, in one scene, is chased from the home of his girlfriend by children throwing stones. His girlfriend Camila, spatially and economically marginalised in Barrio Compal, is also severely disabled. The closest that the film comes to introducing a narrative or plot also introduces two more seemingly marginalised characters. It is learned that Pedro has had an off-screen affair with Brasil, a character who (as her name suggests) is stigmatised due to her condition as an immigrant from Brazil, and the film follows a rivalry between the two girls vying for Pedro's affections. Finally, *Dromómanos* also features the burgeoning relationship between Fermín and Phium, another resident within the *Borda*. Crucially, however, the film refuses to cast any moral judgement, critique or comment on these characters' apparent marginalisation; it does not present them in opposition to any norm or standard, and it does not seek to elicit any sympathy (nor antipathy) for their condition. Rather, it is through the intervention of the viewer's own preconceived notions of normality that they come to be marginalised. The film follows its own internal logic, which becomes increasingly shocking and disturbing for the viewer. While the film is deeply unsettling, we argue that, for this very reason, it is designed to expose the interiority of thought that gives the state form a seeming universality.

The exterior of thought and war machine nomadism

As *Dromómanos* progresses the viewer is confronted with a series of scenes which reveal the various characters' extreme behaviours, as they are also forced to listen to a sequence of unusual speeches that are disturbingly strange and seem to verge on madness. Indeed, it is precisely because of this radical difference that the viewer perceives the characters to be marginal in the first place. Viewed in this manner, it is immediately possible to connect the characters' actions with such statements by Deleuze and Guattari that 'from the standpoint of the State, the originality of the man of war, his eccentricity, necessarily appears in a negative form: stupidity, deformity, madness, illegitimacy, usurpation, [and] sin' each of which are readily identifiable in the film. We would also argue that the film confirms that the man of war represents 'a pure form of exteriority' opposed to our usual 'habits of thinking'.[96] Importantly, Deleuze and Guattari conceive of the war machine as having both a psychical and a spatial component. Indeed, through their conception of the war machine, they link their critique of Kantian subjectivity and common sense to their description of smooth and striated space. As they argue, as opposed to the psychical and philosophical 'striated space of the *cogitatio universalis*' the 'form of exteriority situates thought in a smooth space' within which there are 'only relays, intermezzos, [and] resurgences'.[97] Given that Deleuze and Guattari

96 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 353–4.

97 Ibid., p. 377.

have suggested that in contemporary society 'psychoanalysis lays claim to the role of *Cogitatio universalis* as the thought of the Law',[98] it is arguably Pink Floyd who most succinctly encapsulates Deleuze and Guattari's man of war. In renouncing his career as a psychiatrist Pink Floyd has, much like Deleuze and Guattari, rejected oedipal interpretations of reality and his preference for bizarre pop surrealism gradually precipitates the 'spiritual voyages effected without relative movement, but in intensity', which are an essential 'part of nomadism'.[99] Indeed, as we shall go on to argue, the film represents a struggle between interior and exterior forms of thought and space, and ultimately focusses on spiritual voyages which become 'direct symbols of power' directed at the audience as a weapon.[100]

The struggle over models of thought is most clearly perceived, in the first instance, through scenes depicting Fermín's interactions in the *Borda* hospital and an adult education institution which he attends. During these sessions, Fermín is medicated and encouraged to learn the basic tenants of economics and history. Such scenes are, of course, reminiscent of Foucauldian disciplinary institutions within which bodies are restrained and subjected to regular timetabling and repetitive exercise so that they may become 'docile' and 'may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' in order that they become 'individuals mechanized according to the general norms of an industrial society'.[101] Such scenes stand in sharp contrast to those in which Fermín wanders out of the hospital, explores the city and seeks out Pink Floyd to enact their own strange, quasi-religious, therapeutic sessions and rituals. And it is during one of these sessions that this psychical conflict assumes spatial characteristics. While visiting Pink Floyd and Pedro in the former's apartment, Fermín asks him for advice in preparing for a history exam. Not only is this a task which Pink Floyd is largely incapable of executing, but when Fermín rhymes off a list of historical figures from Argentina's past, it is Pedro who alludes to the spatial striation of such thought by reminding Fermín that these are merely the names of the streets of Buenos Aires. Moreover, it is first through Fermín and Pink Floyd's spatial experimentation with the city of Buenos Aires itself, which closely resembles the creation of psychogeographical situations as theorised and practiced by Guy Debord and the situationists, that the film comes to echo Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion that 'the war machine's form of exteriority is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses'.[102]

In one of several scenes in which Pink Floyd ventures out of his apartment, he appears in a park near Avenida Libertador, a busy road in the *corredor norte*,

98 Ibid., p. 376.

99 Ibid., p. 381.

100 F. Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. D. Cooper and R. Sheed (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 127.

101 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 136, 242.

102 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 360.

and reconfigures the space by converting it into a golf course. The scene is initially funny as Pink Floyd loses his ball and searches for it in a pond, dunking his head under the water in a vain attempt to locate it. Such experimentation is particularly evocative of the work of Debord and the Situationist International, for whom the field of psychogeography represented 'the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals'. As in Pink Floyd's experimental game of golf, the situationists advocated 'the systematic provocative dissemination of a host of proposals tending to turn the whole of life into an exciting game',[103] through the 'construction of situations' based on the principles of the '*dérive*', or drifting, 'which is the practice of a passionate uprooting through the hurried change of environments',[104] and *détournement*, 'a deliberate reusing of different elements – like images or text – to form something new out of the existing parts'.[105] Nonetheless, Pink Floyd's *détournement* takes a decidedly darker and more dangerous turn when the alcoholic, off balance and stumbling former doctor practices his chip shot over a busy street full of fast moving traffic. In this case Pink Floyd reclaims a particularly wealthy area of the city, takes the most bourgeois of leisure activities, and turns it into a dangerous and transgressive practice. While this new situation may not be readily identified as 'an exciting game', it undoubtedly evokes 'the concrete construction of temporary settings of life and their transformation into a higher, passional nature'.[106] The episode also serves to emphasise that, unlike the situationists who employed these techniques as a deliberate artistic strategy, Pink Floyd (and later Fermín) acts in an improvisational manner for no clear purpose other than the satisfaction of his own desires. It is rather for the audience that these deliberately recorded situations become psychogeographical, much in keeping with Debord's original conception. While the improvisational repurposing of the city shares some characteristics with the reconfiguration of Buenos Aires through walking witnessed in *La multitud*, the specific setting of one of Fermín's *dérives* allows us more fully to perceive what *Dromómanos* adds to this analysis.

On one particular occasion, Fermín takes Phium to swim in a fountain. In a perfect example of situationist *détournment* the couple appropriate and transform the city by creating something new out of the existing structure:

103 G. Debord, 'Introduction to a critique of urban geography', *Les Lèvres nues*, 6 (1955), paragraphs 2 and 7 respectively.

104 G. Debord, 'Report on the construction of situations and on the terms of organization and action of the international situationist tendency', in T. McDonough (ed.), *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 46.

105 A.E. Souzis, 'Momentary ambiances: psychogeography in action', *Cultural Geographies*, 22 (1) (2015): 2.

106 Debord, 'Report on the construction of situations', p. 44.

not so much 'under the paving stones, the beach' as 'within the fountain, the swimming pool'.[107] There is an additional irony in that the fountain in question is a monument nicknamed *Monumento de los Españoles* (the official name being *Monumento a La Carta Magna y las Cuatro Regiones Argentinas*), donated by the Spanish community to the city in commemoration of its first hundred years of independence and located in the northern area. While the monument was donated by a community of immigrants in the créole capital, its colloquial title creates a linguistic link to the initial Spanish settlers in the region who first affected the striation of the territory. The very foundation of cities like Buenos Aires were established by following the strict guidelines set out in the *Leyes de Indias*, and by oppressing and killing the nomadic indigenous populations. With this in mind, it appears that, once more, Fermín and Phium inject a degree of smoothness into the heart of striated Buenos Aires. More than this, however, the very act of swimming in the fountain represents a visual echo of earlier insurrectionary moments in the history of the city. Both on the 17 October 1945, when a multitude of supporters descended on the centre of the city to demand (then Minister of Labour) Perón's release from prison, and in December 2001 during protests against politicians of all stripes following the financial crash, fountains in the central city were used by the participants to bathe and refresh themselves. On both occasions these behaviours were considered particularly shocking as they ultimately 'violated expectations about who had the right to do what in Buenos Aires'.[108] While Fermín and Phium's actions undoubtedly raise similar questions, what is entirely lacking from *Dromómanos* is the accompanying political context. In both previous instances, the use of the fountain accompanied a specific insurgent action to obtain a definite political outcome. By including this visual reference, Ortega instead accentuates the *absence* of traditional political objectives in Pink Floyd and Fermín's actions. And this is precisely the point. Unlike the work of Lucy McMahon, where a range of marginalised and formal actors combine a variety of legal and illegal practices to construct a form of 'unruly politics' (p. 138), *Dromómanos* presents the viewer with a particularly confrontational form of 'unruly anti-politics'. Moreover, this anti-politics is designed to work on the viewer. While Debord argued that the *dérive* should 'involve playful-constructive behavior',[109] it is inescapable that the situations presented in *Dromómanos* are particularly uncomfortable for the viewer, and become increasingly violent over the course of the film. There is a certain shock witnessing Pink Floyd chip a golf ball over

107 As per the famous situationist slogan from May 1968: '*Sous les pavés, la plage*!'.

108 L. Podalsky, *Specular City: Transforming Culture, Consumption, and Space in Buenos Aires, 1955–1973* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), pp. 3–47; Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 19.

109 G. Debord, 'Theory of the Dérive', *Les Lèvres nues*, 9 (Nov. 1956), trans. by K. Knabb, paragraph 1 (Situationist International Online Archive), www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html (accessed 2 Apr. 2017); Scorer, *City in Common*, p. 19.

traffic, but this transforms into acute distress during one of Fermín and Pink Floyd's strange reunions. In this instance, the audience witnesses a psychiatric patient and an alcoholic take cocaine and, in the absence of a corkscrew, break a wine bottle and drink from it. The sense of disquiet only continues as the film progresses. The viewer observes Brasil develop a relationship with a baby pig which is her only real friend. Later, she becomes increasingly distressed when she cannot locate the animal and she stumbles upon a scene which transmits extreme anguish to the audience. Together with Brasil they watch a fully grown pig being killed by being repeatedly struck on the head with a mallet in a makeshift slaughterhouse in *Barrio Compal*. In these situations, the film unleashes a 'passional' element which is not playful, but rather deeply disquieting. As we will go on to argue, such elements are incorporated into the film in order to unleash creative power from positions of marginality by producing an affective war-machine.

Affect as a weapon of war

Throughout *Dromómanos*, each of the characters continually seeks to unlock the transformational potential in all that surrounds them as they consistently refuse to accept the actual state of things as they are. Given that, for Deleuze and Guattari, the production of the new, the process of creation, is always associated with metamorphosis, this is the first indication that the characters' actions produce 'affect' understood as 'a transitory thought that occurs prior to an idea or perception' necessarily linked to the transformative process of becoming.[110] Thus, for Fermín and Pink Floyd, scissors and door handles become bottle openers, just as we see them transform the function of city landmarks. For her part, Brasil demonstrates a particular affinity for the natural world: she utilises a watering-can to transform her mattress into a flower bed, and the film records numerous scenes within which she attempts to train her pet pig to be a fish. In each case, the characters produce 'affects' understood as the momentary sensations which immediately precede the emergence of something new that has hitherto lain beyond our actual state of existence. In a minor way, this point is proven when Brasil and Camila finally confront each other over Pedro's affair; the scene becomes entirely surreal as they face off as in a western gun-fight before hailing each other with cheap plastic birdcalls and performing a bizarre dance of aggression, affecting a kitsch becoming-animal. While these scenes are at turns comic and disquieting, they merely establish the primacy of metamorphosis for other more powerful scenes. As we will go on to discuss, it is these scenes which produce 'weapons of war' as 'feelings become uprooted from the interiority of a "subject," to be projected

110 F. Colman, 'Affect', in A. Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary* (rev. edn., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 11.

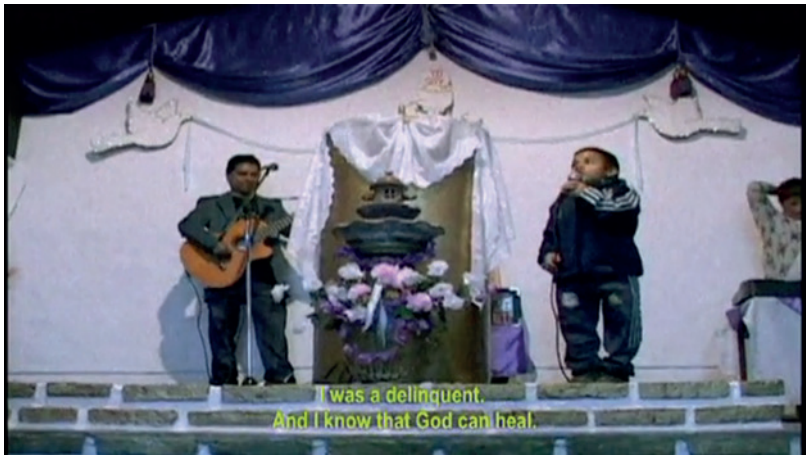

Figure 8.5. Pedro renouncing his delinquent past as part of a religious ceremony, immediately followed by Camila's process of divine healing. Source: Dromómanos.

violently outward'.[111] As we will go on to argue, these scenes, in the words of Guattari, ultimately 'produce power signs, sign-points capable of playing the part of particles in the arena of de-territorialization',[112] which is to say that they engender further transformation and become a source of marginal creative empowerment for the characters in the film.

The first two of the aforementioned scenes of power are intercut early in the film, while the third appears towards its conclusion. Nonetheless, it is imperative to consider all three together in order to understand their full significance. In the earlier scenes, Pedro, Camila and Brasil travel to a local Pentecostal church and participate in the service while, simultaneously, Fermín and Pink Floyd engage in a drug and alcohol binge. In the first scene, Pedro delivers his testimony before the congregation, renouncing his past delinquency and accepting Jesus in his life (see figure 8.5). Thereafter, Camila undergoes a process of divine healing, whereby the pastor lays his hands on her, reciting prayers loudly through a microphone, supplicating on her behalf while the congregation become increasingly agitated, joining in the prayers in a vociferous and haphazard manner. Subsequently, the scene moves into something of a frenzy as Pedro, Camila, Brasil and others receive the Holy Spirit, enter into a trance and are lain prone on the floor while the congregation convulse around them. In the scene's counterpoint, Fermín and Pink Floyd travel to the latter's apartment and consume copious amounts of alcohol and cocaine. As the scene progresses, however, it too assumes spiritual significance. Fermín, shirtless, consumes a line of cocaine before lighting numerous candles and placing

111 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 392–3.

112 Guattari, *Molecular Revolution,* p. 127.

them around the apartment. Under the soft candlelight, Pink Floyd is shown lying in bed, also shirtless, as he reads aloud from the Alcoholics Anonymous' twelve-step programme. This reading is interspersed with shots of Fermín laughing maniacally beside a wall splattered with what appears to be blood. The ritual's spiritual overtones are heightened by the fact it is intersected by the former scenes of Pentecostal observance, by the accoutrements of religious service, by the fact that the twelve-step programme also requires a belief in a higher power,[113] and ultimately by a strange speech delivered by Fermín at the conclusion of the improvised liturgy. During this discourse, Fermín explains that, while not a Christian, he is not an atheist and he articulates a conception of the world as a struggle between God and the Devil, between good and evil. He concludes by earnestly stating that he knows his life has a purpose and that if it not be for good, that he die immediately. In the final scene in this triad, Pedro, who Pink Floyd has earlier claimed is the '*llave al cielo*' [key to heaven], assists his local pastor in performing an exorcism. Pedro is shown washing the body of another man in a semi-conscious trance and laying his hands on him as the pastor urges the spirits Umbanda and Macumba (the names of two animist and syncretist belief systems from Brazil) to relinquish control of the man's body and soul.

The depiction of Pentecostalism in *Dromómanos* is both reflective of Argentine society and apposite for our discussion of transformative marginal empowerment for four specific reasons. First, as David Lehmann has argued, Pentecostalism is culturally dissident in relation to hegemonic spiritual powers in Latin America and appeals to the popular classes.[114] Indeed, as Pablo Semán has demonstrated, in the peripheral *barrios* surrounding greater Buenos Aires (economically and geographically similar to *Barrio Compal*), Pentecostalism is 'la opción de los más pobres' [the option of the poorest people].[115] Second, traditionally 'Pentecostals in Argentina had the perception that politics were a "thing of the world" (in the world of sin) in which they should not become involved,'[116] which is to say that it, too, represents a form of thought exterior to that which sustains the state.[117] Third, and in a related manner, Pentecostalism

113 See 'About the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) 12–Step recovery program', www.recovery.org/topics/alcoholics-anonymous-12–step/#spiritual (accessed 2 Apr. 2017).

114 See D. Lehmann, 'Dissidence and conformism in religious movements: what differences separates the Catholic charismatic renewal and Pentecostal churches?', *Concilium,* 3 (2003): 122–38.

115 P. Semán, 'De a poco mucho: las pequeñas iglesias Pentecostales y el crecimiento pentecostal. Conclusiones de un estudio de caso', *Revista Cultura y Religión*, 4 (2010): 16–35, at p. 24.

116 D. Míguez, 'Why are Pentecostals politically ambiguous? Pentecostalism and politics in Argentina, 1983–1995', *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe / European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (1999): 57–74, at p. 60.

117 More recently, attempts have been made to engage Pentecostals in the political process. For detailed analysis of these trends (and their relative failure or success) see Míguez, 'Why are Pentecostals politically ambiguous?' and H.G. Aasmundsen, 'Pentecostals and politics in

in Latin America instead 'aims to address two tensions exacerbated by underdevelopment: the need for physical healing and the struggle against evil forces'[118] through practices 'such as divine healing or exorcism of demons'.[119] While these practices are more commonly associated with the large-scale Neo-Pentecostal churches that have emerged in recent years, Semán has also demonstrated that small-scale, local churches in the periphery of Buenos Aires adapt and borrow such practices.[120] Finally, Pentecostals engage in 'pervasive borrowing of practices, rituals and symbols across inherited religious boundaries',[121] including from Brazilian possession cults. As several scholars have noted, in doing so, the Pentecostals in question retain an animist and syncretist worldview but invert their significance 'by branding them agents of the devil and campaigning vociferously and occasionally even violently against them'.[122] The point is that, as a set of religious practices, Pentecostalism engages in processes of adaptation and appropriation which create a parallel worldview to animist cosmologies that postulate that the world is populated with spirits who can take possession of people. By retaining this worldview, an immediate connection can be drawn to the late work of Guattari who argued that 'animist cosmologies in Brazil present forms of resistance against capitalist subjectification'.[123] Moreover, as Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro argues, 'animism is an ontology of societies without a state and against the state',[124] which creates an immediate correlation with the work of Deleuze and Guattari previously discussed. Guattari has also proposed that 'art and religion' could form 'arrangements for producing signs which will eventually produce power signs'[125] which, as Isabelle Stengers notes, are any sign that

Argentina: a question of compatibility?', *Iberoamericana. Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 42 (2012): 85–109.

118 A. Corten and A. Voeks, 'Latin American Pentecostalism as a new form of popular religion', in P. Freston, S.C. Dove and V. Garrard-Burnett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 414–29, at p. 417.

119 Corten and Voeks, 'Latin American Pentecostalism', p. 416.

120 See D. Lehmann, 'The religious field in Latin America', in P. Freston, S.C. Dove and V. Garrard-Burnett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 729–38, at p. 756; and Semán, 'De a poco mucho', p. 25.

121 D. Lehmann, 'Charisma and possession in Africa and Brazil', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18 (2001): 45–74, at p. 45.

122 Ibid., p. 66. See also P. Freston, 'History, current reality, and prospects of Pentecostalism in Latin America', in P. Freston, S.C. Dove and V. Garrard-Burnett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 414–29, at p. 441.

123 J. Hetrick, 'Video assemblages: "machinic animism" and "asignifying semiotics" in the work of Melitopoulos and Lazzarato', *FOOTPRINT*, 8 (2014): 53–68, at p. 56.

124 A. Melitopoulos and M. Lazzarato, 'Assemblages: Félix Guattari and machinic animism', *e-flux*, 36 (2012): 44–57, at p. 45.

125 Guattari, *Molecular Revolution*, p. 127.

'produces or enhances metamorphic transformation in our capacity to affect and be affected'.[126] As we will go on to argue, these crucial scenes consolidate into Guattarian power-signs and unleash the psychical and spiritual powers of the exteriority of thought, empowering the characters and disturbing the audience.

That Pentecostalism becomes a form of transformative empowerment within *Dromómanos* is most clearly seen in Pedro's case. In early scenes, Pedro is shown participating in mindless delinquent behaviour. However, having provided his testimony, renounced his past and received the Holy Spirit, he becomes the very agent of deliverance. Pedro obtains an alternative form of spiritual power and the ability to transform the lives of others by assisting in the casting out of demons. For the others, however, the process is somewhat different and can be grasped by more carefully considering the cases of Camila and Fermín. In the former case, Camila receives the Holy Spirit and undergoes a process of divine healing. Yet, it is clear that she does not undergo a physical transformation. Her metamorphosis is, rather, spiritual. As André Corten and Ashely Voeks explain, the efficacy of divine healing is not found in a material alteration in the world, but is a spiritual process which 'inverts misfortune from social suffering to empowerment'. As they describe the process in rational terms, 'an individual is healed because of a shift in attitude toward personal miseries, choosing to see them as relative and thus giving life a new meaning' as they can adopt 'a new stance vis-à-vis all that comprises' their 'misfortune and suffering'.[127] We contend that it is this process that we witness in the lives of both Camila and Fermín. While the latter engages in improvisational and invented rituals rather than Pentecostal practices, it is important to remember that the drive for divine healing is also grounded in the 'struggle against evil forces',[128] to which Fermín also attests. Once more, as Corten and Voeks explain, within this struggle, practitioners 'confer a quasi-ontological status on occult forces, which are often associated with mental illness in urban or working-class areas' and thus liberate the sufferer from their infliction 'by making them believe that their agony is not caused by mental illness, but rather by an attack from a force that is perfectly real'.[129] In each case in the film, what the audience perceives to be a source of marginalisation, then, becomes the expression of a world in perpetual transformation and struggle, and the gateway to liberation for the characters. For the audience, however, the rituals enacted in the film remain disturbing, disorienting and disquieting. The naturalistic, agitated camera work ensures that each observance is imbued with a visceral immediacy and intimacy that is deeply uncomfortable. This discomfort emerges from the simple fact

126 Cited in Hetrick, 'Video assemblages', p. 61.

127 Corten and Voeks, 'Latin American Pentecostalism', pp. 416–17.

128 Ibid., p. 417.

129 Ibid., pp. 422–3.

that the rituals represent a logic beyond the comprehension of the audience. They are disturbing and challenging precisely because they unleash the forces of affect and confront the viewer with their own psychical striations and their adherence to the interiority of thought. The film reveals the full creative power of marginality by refusing to present the rituals in a form that the viewer can recognise and understand. Such scenes obey their own logic and thus challenge and overturn our perception of the city, as they do our perception of marginality itself and of the world around us. The characters are empowered as they transform the world, while the audience is disturbed by the realisation that their own reality may undergo the same transformation. Confronted with such radical alterity in such a visceral manner, the viewer is forced to question the very foundations of their own perceptions, and the emotions of disquiet and discomfort rapidly turn to terrifying affect. Unlike psychogeography, the film is not a game but a confrontation; it is a war machine directed towards the viewer that unleashes the affect immediately prior to the act of creation. It is simply that it presents such a radical challenge that creation itself is a terrifying experience.

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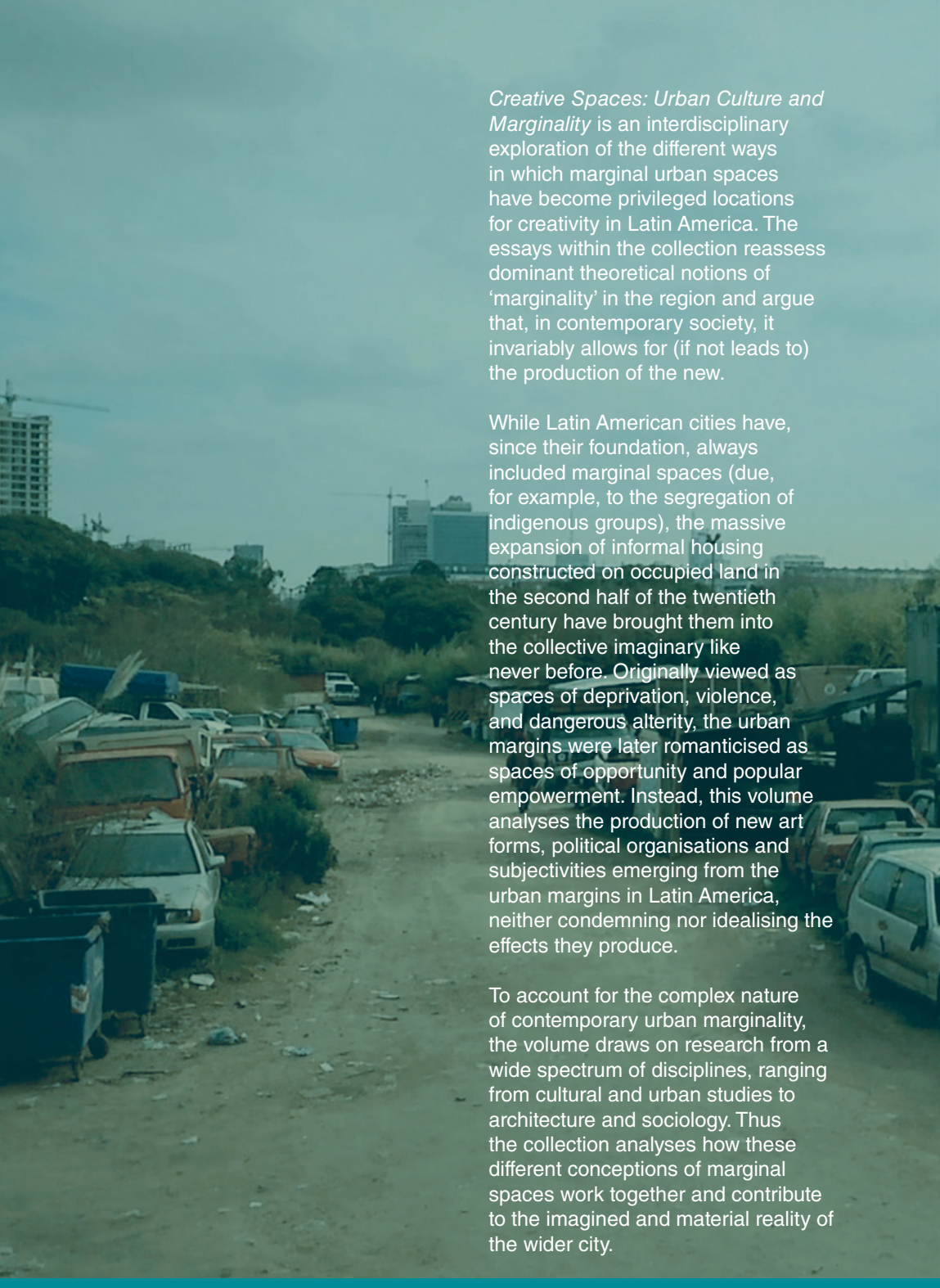

Creative Spaces: Urban Culture and Marginality is an interdisciplinary exploration of the different ways in which marginal urban spaces have become privileged locations for creativity in Latin America. The essays within the collection reassess dominant theoretical notions of 'marginality' in the region and argue that, in contemporary society, it invariably allows for (if not leads to) the production of the new.

While Latin American cities have, since their foundation, always included marginal spaces (due, for example, to the segregation of indigenous groups), the massive expansion of informal housing constructed on occupied land in the second half of the twentieth century have brought them into the collective imaginary like never before. Originally viewed as spaces of deprivation, violence, and dangerous alterity, the urban margins were later romanticised as spaces of opportunity and popular empowerment. Instead, this volume analyses the production of new art forms, political organisations and subjectivities emerging from the urban margins in Latin America, neither condemning nor idealising the effects they produce.

To account for the complex nature of contemporary urban marginality, the volume draws on research from a wide spectrum of disciplines, ranging from cultural and urban studies to architecture and sociology. Thus the collection analyses how these different conceptions of marginal spaces work together and contribute to the imagined and material reality of the wider city.

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