

ters, curiously, not an academic dynamism but rather an antimovement based on a tedious series of failures during the six months in which the object–subject submitted himself to body building. However, Malysse typically skipped exercises and failed to perform stipulated sets, thus provoking laughter from his gym mates and his text’s readers. Malysse’s implacable resistance to muscular self-sculpting resulted from his self-assured feeling that his physique was adequate and did not require any type of inflation. Additionally, he did not buy into the idea of shaping himself to elevate the self socially or sexually. In fact, he claims he did not need at either of those goals. Thus the reader will be inclined to ask why Malysse would have enrolled in such a Calvary. Notwithstanding any anthropological, psychological, theoretical reasons, something else comes up that is even more intriguing: in contrast to the painful climb to the gym, Malysse reveals an unquestionable inner strength, a mental activity that makes him examine minutely and clearly not only his weight-lifting companions, but also his own emotional states. One has the impression that it is his mind that enters into a rhythm with the weight machines, lifting many more kilos, and proving to be much more vigorous than his body. After all, rather than muscle pulling, what we see are reflections, ironies, boredom, annoyances, little dialogues, (mental) insistences and resistances, and, occasionally, a machine or two that enters the scene.

Roland Barthes has explored the mysticism of sports. But in the process of describing euphemistically the numbing effect caused by muscles he impoverished “mysticism,” one of the richest of words. Has solipsism saved Malysse from such

numbness? Whatever the reader’s response, his lucidity in talking about his inner experience seems an academic solipsism. Is the fact the Malysse refers to his body as something he “has” and not something he “is” also solipsism? His thoughts flies free, but in this description the also seem separated from the body.

Here, at the conclusion, the reader is left with a taste for a second round or for more information in relation to what the researched researcher, that object–subject called Malysse, might represent what he lives as he takes up an exclusively psychically experience. Like Descartes, his well-known countryman of the 17th century who escaped from an accusation of epistemological solipsism, will Malysse be forced into a dualism, however, 21st century and metropolitan *paulista*?

Ideologies of Marginality in Brazilian Hip Hop. Derek Pardue, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 210 pp.

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Derek Pardue estimates that on any given weekend in metropolitan São Paulo there are some forty public hip-hop events. And there are perhaps 200,000 hip-hoppers in the São Paulo area, almost all of them working-class youth from the city’s *periferia*. For many, hip-hop is not simply a pop culture commodity, but a way of thinking and acting. In local terms, then, hip-hop is not just an *arte* (an art form), but a *movimento* (movement) and a *cultura* (culture).

Pardue’s ambitious study sets out to show why hip-hop in São Paulo matters

and how it works. He argues that hip-hop matters because it functions as an ideology and social practice through which residents of São Paulo's periferia express their "reality," identify and critique structures of oppression, and reformulate understandings of themselves and their neighborhoods. Perhaps most importantly, hip-hop is stubbornly "periferia-centric." That is, hip-hopper seek to reverse the social invisibility of poor and largely non-white youth not by rejecting the periferia, but by making the experiences of marginality, crime, and living outside the city center the ground upon, which they can claim their authority to represent "reality."

By making the periphery the center, hip-hoppers produce novel understandings of race, social identity, and "Brazilianess" itself. Pardue makes some bold claims in this regard. For example, hip-hop, he argues, is at the center of how black working-class persons understand and apply *negritude*. Hip-hop is also, "the first organized effort to represent the periferia as a distinct symbol of aesthetics and ethics." In short, hip-hoppers center their understandings of reality upon the periferia, and then use this "reality" as the ground upon which they try to transform themselves and their communities. Hence Pardue claims his task is to "demonstrate how Brazilian hip hoppers make these 'facts' speak for themselves and what forms of representation (sound, image) ... they use to achieve this discursive feat" (27).

Pardue's ethnography centers on hip-hop "true believers," or people who participate in hip-hop not just through consumption (such as buying CDs or attending shows), but who actively participate in some active manner in one of the "four elements" of hip-hop (rapping,

DJing, graffiti, and street dance). This is a heterogeneous group and Pardue examines the differences, and at times sharp disagreements, between "marginal" rappers and "positive" hip-hoppers. These are, nonetheless, disagreements among those who make hip-hop their main occupation. A description of a concert in Diadema where a rap group criticizes drug use while the audience "reeks of marijuana" makes one wonder about how hip-hoppers interact with other youth who enjoy hip-hop but who do not necessarily see themselves as part of the "movimento."

Pardue organizes his book around key components of hip-hop ideology, especially "traficando informação" (trading information), "conquistando espaço" (gaining space), and "tomando atitude" (getting an attitude). In exploring how hip-hoppers try to "gain space," for instance, he traces how the hip-hop movement arose in São Paulo. As groups (posses) sought spaces to dance, perform, rehearse, and market their products, they connected with earlier forms of working-class activism. In negotiating with authorities, for instance, posses drew upon skills developed by their parents, many of whom were migrants to São Paulo and were involved in struggles over access to urban infrastructure. In the 1990s and 2000s, as Internet connectivity become more widely available and cheaper, hip-hoppers connected with a broader array of groups, from the São Paulo-based Movimento Negro Unificado (Unified Black Movement) to the Bronx-based Zulu Nation, an Afro-centric hip-hop awareness group.

Pardue draws attention to the contradictions inherent in hip-hop ideology and practice. One of his more provocative chapters addresses how participating in flows of

information (trocando informação) has led hip-hoppers to reconfigure race. This is a multistage, complex, and sometimes contradictory phenomenon. As early musicians tapped into a broader Afro-diasporic set of styles, musics, and ideologies, many connected to Black Nationalism in the United States and articulated a sharper critique of racism within Brazil.

Yet, Pardue argues, an early emphasis on “blackness” (that is on race) as the central component of identity soon shifted to an emphasis on periferia. Likewise for some rappers a critique of racism sometimes goes hand-in-hand with the dominant ideology of Brazil as a “racially mixed” and therefore color-blind society. Pardue also argues that hip-hop’s focus upon the extreme localism of the “quebrada” (the neighborhood) is both generative and limiting: while it produces critical visions of “reality,” it also regulates mobility and risks reproducing dominant representations of crime and social disorganization. And he shows how “tomando atitude” or gaining a critical self-presentation, is often grounded in sharp gender inequalities.

Pardue argues that in order to understand hip-hop in São Paulo, or indeed popular culture anywhere, attention must be paid to production, consumption, and distribution. As he follows hip-hoppers while they teach workshops, shop for CDs, or stage public shows on concrete soccer pitches, he traces alternative routes through São Paulo. A world that is often barely visible emerges in its complexity. Likewise, his attention to changes in sound engineering deepens his analysis of how hip-hop articulates race and gender. But despite the importance of dance in the early development of hip-hop in Brazil,

Pardue relegates analysis of this one of the “four elements” to a brief discussion in his chapter on gender. Overall, while Pardue sets out to explore the “politics and pleasures” of hip-hop, the accent is upon the politics, with less attention to more embodied or ludic aspects.

For many poor youth, hip-hop matters because it provides a channel through which they can critique, and perhaps transform, their lives. Having access to information and gaining space and visibility are such valuable commodities in Brazilian hip-hop because for many periferia residents information, space, and visibility have been so limited. Hip-hop works, Pardue shows, by drawing upon U.S. music and other Afro-diasporic ideologies and practices and by rooting itself in the locality, the “quebrada.” Ultimately, though, Pardue’s major questions remain unanswered and, perhaps, unanswerable: in exposing periferia “reality,” are the voices of hip-hop in São Paulo shifting social relations, or reinforcing persistent contradictions in Brazilian society? Do the “voices of the periferia” present a vision of reality that makes structures of oppression visible, or are they also transformative?

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Writing from New York City, evocative playground of much of the Brazilian poetry Charles Perrone outlines in *Brazil, Lyric, and the Americas*, it is difficult to avoid reveling in the “shared interests in