



Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America (Critical Studies in Latin American Culture)

By William Rowe, Vivian Schelling

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Samba and carnival, radio soaps and telenovelas, oral poetry, popular drama, Amerindian art. This illustrated overview of Latin America's popular culture considers the broad spectrum of cultural forms in the various countries of the subcontinent.

Exploring the ways in which daily life and ritual have resisted and been influenced by Western mass culture, *Memory and Modernity* traces the main anthropological, sociological and political debates about the nature of popular culture. Rowe and Schelling use their analysis of the development of a culture industry in Latin America to engage with wider debates about modernity, drawing out the contrast between Latin America's cultural wealth and its widespread material poverty.

In challenging the assumptions of much Western cultural criticism, this book will be essential reading for students of Latin American society, while offering the general reader a concise and accessible overview of an exciting and varied popular culture.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Rowe and Schelling trace the main anthropological and political debates about the nature and significance of popular culture in Latin America. Latin American culture as demonstrated by radio and television soap operas, the samba and carnival, popular drama, and oral poetry is an excellent way to convey how everyday life in Latin America has both assimilated and resisted Western mass culture. The authors point out, for example, that television soap operas in a semiliterate society have extraordinary power to shape culture but have themselves been formed by memory of the past. Novels by elite authors such as Jose Maria Arguedas and Manuel Puig have been transformed by the wealth of these expressions of non-elite culture. Although flawed by academic pretension and clouded by a slightly Marxist political viewpoint, *Memory and Modernity* is still worth reading. For academic collections.

- *Nancy Padgett Lazar, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit*

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Review

“Erudite and well-researched ... A new, needed and definitive work has been achieved.”—*New Statesman and Society*

“Presents a dynamic interpretation of Latin American cultural production in the twentieth century. Challenging the well-worn, apocalyptic theses of cultural death in the wake of globalisation, it investigates Latin America’s diversity of cultural expression, not annihilated by, but multiplying in, interaction with ‘Western’ culture and its new technologies.”—*Bulletin of Latin American Research*

About the Author

William Rowe is a Reader in Spanish American Studies at King's College, London, and Honorary Professor at the University of San Marcos. Peru.

Vivian Schelling is Senior Lecturer in Third World and Development Studies at the University of East London. She is author of *A Presenca do Povo na Cultura Brasileira* and co-author (with William Rowe) of *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*.

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