



The Space of Boredom: Homelessness in the Slowing Global Order

Bruce O'Neill

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In *The Space of Boredom* Bruce O'Neill explores how those people cast aside by globalism deal with an intractable symptom of downward mobility: an unshakeable and immense boredom. Focusing on Bucharest, Romania, where the 2008 financial crisis compounded the failures of the postsocialist state to deliver on the promises of liberalism, O'Neill shows how the city's homeless are unable to fully participate in a society that is increasingly organized around practices of consumption. Without a job to work, a home to make, or money to spend, the homeless—who include pensioners abandoned by their families and the state—struggle daily with the slow deterioration of their lives. O'Neill moves between homeless shelters and squatter camps, black labor markets and transit stations, detailing the lives of men and women who manage boredom by seeking stimulation, from conversation and coffee to sex in public restrooms or going to the mall or IKEA. Showing how boredom correlates with the downward mobility of Bucharest's homeless, O'Neill theorizes boredom as an enduring affect of globalization to provide a foundation from which to rethink the politics of alienation and displacement.

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