

RESEARCH PROJECT:

SEVILLE. THE CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE CITY

Cities are perceived by their inhabitants and visitors as atmospheric entities. Some cities have the capacity to enchant us; others may arouse negative emotions towards them. Everyday narratives, just as representations in movies, paintings and literature tell us about the existence of cities as singular beings in the human mind. Currently, the social and cultural sciences have scarcely described and analyzed the atmosphere and the specificity of cities, as they, for instance, condense in myths, collective representations and rituals. Most investigations on cities treat several phenomenon IN a city, or they look at them as junctions of social developments on a national or even global level. But – according to the latest perspectives and approaches in the field of urban sociology, it is crucial to consider the respective city or town, where a phenomenon occurs, with its own logic of development and its quality as a bearer of practices and significations.

Consequently, cities are entangled in more or less dense textures of significations with their characteristic topoi, narrative plots, particular characters and expressive forms. The city dwellers put their lives and themselves into these textures. By their fugitive talks and acts, but first and foremost by their expressions that remain in space and time, they contribute to the permanence and variation of the cultural texture of their city.

My research project deals with the city of Seville as a symbolic system. As a starting point I take actual representations of the city and its inhabitants in literature, mass media, urban legends and jokes, street names, urban rituals and behaviors etc. By making long strides from actual images into the past I am excavating representative figures, topics, times, spaces and characteristic city emotions in order to accomplish a methodologically and theoretically reflected representation of the city's cultural texture.