

## **Modelização espacial, comunicação e memória cultural no bairro Lavapiés, em Madrid: a questão das corralas**

### **Spatial modeling, communication and cultural memory of Lavapiés neighborhood in Madrid: the question of corralas**

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**Resumo:** *Tendo por base o conceito de memória cultural não hereditária, proposto pelo semiótico da cultura Yuri Lotman, este artigo apresenta uma análise das corralas, um tipo de habitação popular presente no bairro Lavapiés, em Madrid, que será explorado como um texto cultural, e o modo pelo qual esse símbolo é traduzido no cartaz de divulgação das Fiestas Populares de Lavapiés de 2019. Com isso, objetiva-se pontuar a existência de um modelo subjacente a essas habitações, à qual se vincula um sentido de participação e coletividade, e como esses sentidos são ressignificados na peça gráfica. Por meio da memória, busca-se ainda explicitar de que maneira, de acordo com a perspectiva semiótica, os processos comunicacionais ocorrem na esfera da urbe.*

**Palavras-chave:** *memória cultural não hereditária; cidade; comunicação; coletividade.*

**Abstract:** *Based on the concept that cultural memory is not hereditary, as proposed by the culture semiotician Yuri Lotman, this article presents an analysis of the corralas, a type of popular housing found in the Lavapiés neighborhood in Madrid. This kind of housing will be explored as a cultural text, and the general manner in which this symbol is translated in the poster promoting the Fiestas Populares de Lavapiés de 2019. Therefore, the aim of this article is to punctuate*

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*the existence of a subjacent model to these housing dwells that is linked to a sense of participation and collectivity, and how these senses are re-signified in the printed poster. Through memory, we also seek to explain how, according to the semiotic perspective, communicational processes occur in the sphere of the city.*

**Keywords:** *non-hereditary cultural memory; city; communication; collectivity.*

## Introduction

Located in the central region of Madrid, *Lavapiés* is, along with *El Rastro*, popularly known as one of the “lower neighborhoods” of the Spanish capital, designation resulting from, according to Osorio (2017), two factors: the first is derived from a geographic cause, since both neighborhoods are located in a slope that leads to the Manzanares river, located in a geographically low region of the city; and the second one is linked to historic factors, because, starting in the 16th century, Lavapiés and El Rastro would attract a big amount of migrants mainly coming from rural areas of Spain, firstly due to the public slaughterhouses located there and, later, because it was transformed into an industrial area, which made the area highly populated. Their inhabitants lived in extremely poor material conditions, reinforcing, thus, the association of the neighborhood with something “low”.

It was in this context which, especially in the 19th century, there was a big expansion of *corralas*<sup>2</sup>, a type of popular housing made due to the housing deficit made by the big population influx present in the region. It is the so-called “hallway houses”, constructions with a few floors, built around a main patio that sheltered extremely small houses, which had around 20m<sup>2</sup>, accessible through open hallways, facing the patio. Commonly, there was only one bathroom and one kitchen per floor shared by those who lived in there. As Osorio (2017) reinforces, these were spaces with very few privacy, used almost exclusively for sleeping. The big patio located in the center of the construction made the coexistence with the neighbors basically mandatory, because part of the everyday life of those who lived there actually took place in the outdoor area of the housing. Thus, the *corralas* were constituted similarly to small communities.

In the last decades, *corralas* went through a process of revitalization financed by the public power and became independent housing, which, despite being small, had individual bathrooms and kitchens on each unit. Many of them can still be found in the neighborhood (image 1)

2 The word *corrala* comes from the Latin *carrus*, *carro* (in Spanish) and designed a commonly circular space, rounded by a ditch or a wall.

(image 2) and one of the biggest is occupied by Centro Cultural La Corrala. *Museo de Artes y Tradiciones Populares*, linked to the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (image 3) (image 4) (image 5). Currently, Madrid is the city with the biggest amount of “hallway houses” in the world (OSORIO, 2017).

Although it was brief, this small storyline offers us a glimpse of the reasons why these types of housing came to be an important symbol of the neighborhood. It is not fortuitous that their neighbor association is called La Corrala (Image 6), the same way that numberless are the allusions made to Corralas in the folders of events made in the region.

Beyond these manifested uses and meanings, in this article, what is interesting to us is to punctuate to what extent the corralas can really be understood as spaces of memory in this neighborhood, from which drive from the construction of meanings related to the idea of collectivity and belonging commonly associated to the region. We also seek to locate in what way such mnemonic sign builds its own reverberation in the relationship established with other languages, in a way to amplify and create new meanings linked to communal life, as it happens in the poster for the 2019's *Fiestas Populares de Lavapiés*<sup>3</sup>, which will be analyzed in the last part of this text.

It is important to highlight here that the discussion proposed in this article is a part of a wider research, performed in the Lavapiés neighborhood, geared towards apprehending the constitution of their different spaces (FERRARA, 2002, 2008) and meanings generated by them in the culture. In order to do that, during the period of 7 months, from January to July 2019, there were made numberless derives (DEBORD, 2003) in the region, in addition to the realization of informal conversations with residents and historians, semi-structured interviews, guided tours and bibliographic research, which allowed us to outline the presence of different dominants (JAKOBSON, 1983) in the neighborhood, having in

3 The Fiestas populares de Lavapiés are also known as the trilogy verbena de agosto, formed by the parties of San Cayetano, San Lorenzo and La Paloma. The poster was idealized by Marion Cassabalian, resident of the neighborhood.

sight the recognition of the modes of operation of these different spaces and the roles they exercise.

As Kull points out, “[...] establishing distinctions is, somehow, also a method” (2007, p. 76). In accordance with such line of thought, through discrimination of differences and positions, it was possible to apprehend how memory is put as an important and dominant trait of corralas when seen in the field of the semiotic space of relations built in the Lavapiés neighborhood.

It is important to reinforce that our research path take as base the inherent reasoning to what Machado (2002) locates as a “semiotic issue”. According to such bias, the focus of the research process becomes the explicitation of the way in which, in semiosis, the languages and cultural codes generate new messages and/or texts which, in turn, produce new meanings or re-signify the ones that are already there. As the author says, “the semiotic issue, instead of responding why, it seeks to reveal the ‘how’, always as a critical exercise” (MACHADO, 2002, p. 214). Therefore, apprehending through which mechanism the corralas are articulated as spaces that are built as cultural mnemonic texts related to life in collectivity, which, in turn, lead to the formation of other texts and the re-signification of the sense of community, as it occurs in the aforementioned poster, constitutes the core of our discussion.

In correlation to Machado, such approach is also based in the epistemological perspective of study of culture linked to semiosphere, defined by Iuri Lotman (1996), one of the main representatives of Escola de Tartu-Moscou (ETM), as the semiotic space of relations continuously built and redefined by the exchange and tensions established among the most distinctive systems of language present in the culture through the semiotic frontier.

In the field of semiosphere, according to what we will discuss, a memory is constituted as a device that exercises a double function, since it is both responsible for assuring the continuity of systems, and for inciting the creation of new cultural texts. It is equally through the memory, which, finally, we will seek to explicit in what way, according to the

semiotic perspective, the communicational processes happen in the sphere of urbe, through which it is continuously redefined. Here, it is important to locate that, to the semioticians of ETM, communication is understood, essentially, as “[...] a process of progressive complication [...]”<sup>4</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 67), a product of relations continuously redefined among different systems, through which non-hereditary memory is active in culture. Next, we will see how this process can be understood in more detail.

### City and Memory

Even though few were the allusions made by Lotman to the city throughout his studies, the semiotician did not disregard the way it can be understood through the continuously built and redefined correlation among various sign formations, as well as the different temporalities that characterize them. According to the author:

Precisely the semiotic multilingualism of any city converts it into a field of different semiotic collisions, impossible in other circumstances. When we gather different codes and texts about national and social style and meaning, the city creates semiotic hybridizations, recordings and translations that transform them into a powerful generator of new information. Source of such semiotic collisions is not only the synchronic meeting of heterogeneous semiotic formations, but also diachrony: architectural constructions, urban rituals and ceremonies, the own city plan and thousands of other remnants of other times work as coded programs that produce again, permanently, texts of the historic past. The city is a mechanism that recreates their past and, thus, obtain the possibility of meeting with the present in the level of synchronic. Culture and culture are opposed to time<sup>5</sup> (LOTMAN, 1994, p. 11-12).

4 In the Spanish translation: “[...] un proceso de complicación progresiva [...]”.

5 In the Spanish translation: “Precisamente el poliglotismo semiótico de cualquier ciudad la convierte en campo de diferentes colisiones semióticas, imposibles en otras circunstancias. Al unir códigos y textos diferentes en cuanto a estilo y significación nacional y social, la ciudad realiza hibridaciones, recodificaciones y traducciones semióticas que la transforman en un poderoso generador de nueva información. Fuente de tales colisiones semióticas es no sólo el encuentro sincrónico de formaciones semióticas heterogéneas, sino también la diacronía: las construcciones arquitectónicas, los rituales y ceremonias urbanos, el propio plan de la ciudad y miles de otros restos de épocas pasadas actúan como programas codificados que generan

In the referred excerpt, Lotman doesn't leave any doubt about how heterogeneity of the semiotic space of urbe is built through the interaction between synchrony and diachrony, or, more precisely, by how, through synchrony, in other words, by a set of relations that are constituted in a certain moment, becomes possible to apprehend the diachrony of a set of cultural text, belonging to different times of culture, which equally intervene in the configuration of new textual arrangements through the dialog established with other codes and languages.

Still according to the author (LOTMAN, 1996), every cultural text is a product of relations of translatability and un-translatability operationalized by the semiotic frontier established between, at least, two systems of language or codes, in a way in which one of the main characteristics of every text is the "semiotic heterogeneity"<sup>6</sup> (LOTMAN, 1998, p. 14). It is also this multilingualism that allows us to understand to what extent one of the main functionalities exercised by the text is reported to memory. To Lotman, "non-hereditary memory of a collectivity"<sup>7</sup> (2000, p. 172) consists in an attribute of the culture itself and the texts that give materiality to it. It is through the correlation between the different extracts that compose a text that becomes possible to apprehend a double intellectual property which characterizes the function of memory: to store and produce new information, which correspond, respectively, an "informative memory" and a "creative (creating) memory"<sup>8</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 158).

In the first case, when they store an information through time, memory generates a program or a vector geared towards future, which establishes dominant forms of organization of a certain cultural text. That does not mean that such sign arrangements remain unchanged, but that, despite the operationalized transformations due to the dialog established with their surroundings, something remains.

de nuevo permanentemente los textos del pasado histórico. La ciudad es un mecanismo que recrea una y otra vez su pasado, que obtiene así la posibilidad de encontrarse con el presente en el plano de lo sincrónico. Ciudad y cultura se oponen al tiempo."

6 In the Spanish translation: "heterogeneidad semiótica".

7 In the Spanish translation: "memoria no hereditaria de una colectividad".

8 In the Spanish translation: "memoria informativa" "memoria creativa (creadora)".

As the semioticist says, it is about “something invariant of meaning”<sup>9</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 157), or, according to Machado (2013, p. 17), about “invariants in the context of variations”, passible of being recognized by the presence of a set of “constant texts”<sup>10</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 157), by the movement of codes or the persistence of certain models and their respective models, as we will discuss later in the area of corralas.

With that, it is possible to apprehend the long duration of certain cultural texts and codes, and the manner in which it creates a hierarchy of values in a specific sociocultural context (LOTMAN, 2000). Far from being static, such hierarchization can only be understood in the field of transformations of a certain cultura, which can result in an alteration of the positions filled by different sign extracts, whose transformations, as Machado indicates (2013, p. 18), demand the consideration about “what changes and what remains”.

Due to this operation of the informative memory, a culture creates their own parameters about what it should remember, and also about what should be forgotten (LOTMAN, 1996). However, over time, such “memory-forgetfulness paradigm”<sup>11</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 160) can also suffer changes. The heterogeneity and irregularity that characterize the semiosphere demand the consideration of the most varied types of sign arrangements and/or isolated fragments which, at the same time expelled from a certain space of relations do not disappear from culture and, through the dialogue with other texts and “contemporary” systems, through the semiotic frontier, can come to rupture in a certain context, however, with a new configuration.

By the action of the mnemonic device “[...] every piece of semiotic structure or every isolated text conserve the mechanisms of construction of the whole system”<sup>12</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 31), which, in turn, necessarily, generates a new textual arrangement, the same way it keeps traces

9 In the Spanish translation: “alguna invariante de sentido”.

10 In the Spanish translation: “textos constantes”.

11 In the Spanish translation: “paradigma memoria-olvido”.

12 In the Spanish translation: “[...] todo pedazo de una estructura semiótica o todo texto aislado conserva los mecanismos de construcción de todo el sistema.”



of its memory. Therefore, something that should be “forgotten” does not disappear, since it survives in a state of latency, ready to rupture in a certain context, and, eventually contribute to the redefinition of parameters about what should be remembered or forgotten from a certain culture. It is this mechanism that clarifies the action of the creative memory, in other words, the capacity that every text has to produce new sign arrangements and unpredictable meanings by the translation exchange that is established with the surroundings through the semiotics frontier.

Therefore, seen through the perspective of the semiotic space of relations, city must be considered through different sign systems that are built, their respective memories and reverberations in culture and, as indicated by Lotman, architecture is one of them. About that, there is no way to disregard that, from the semiotic point of view, corralas configure as architectural cultural texts, whose mnemonic device, according to our perspective, is primarily articulated through a underlying model in its design, through which it would be possible to apprehend a vector for the meanings they produce in culture, as it is the case of the idea of collectivity and belonging built around such housings.

As we pointed out in another article (NAKAGAWA, 2019), through the ETM perspective, the model should be seen in consonance with Cybernetics, and, as such, it is reported to diagrams of relations passive of being edified having in sight the recurrence of the way of showing up certain phenomena. It is about forms of inteligibility that leads us to apprehend persistence of certain cultural models, considering both their invariables and their variables. Once formulated, the models distance themselves from phenomena directly related to them and produce their own semiosis, starting to serve as base for the elaboration of hypothetical inferences on the possible ways of organizing culture, often destituted from a singular visuality.

V. V. Inavov, another important ETM intellectual, considering the primordial role played by spatial modelling in the process of organizing cultures, exposes a set of models passible of being apprehended in the development of cities throughout centuries, which would indicate their

different forms of development, taking into account the relation established between constant “semiotic factors”<sup>13</sup> and their variations.

To do so, the author points out the presence of a set of regularities manifested both in pre-urban settlements and in the *urbe per se*, through which would be possible to apprehend the action of the informational memory of culture. It is about two “basic geometric types”<sup>14</sup> (IVANOV, 1993, p. 109): the squared and the circular, which, not rarely, would also be present in models belonging to other systems. With that, Ivanov reports to one of the most elementary processes related to the organization of any culture, in other words: the configuration of the “structural model of space”<sup>15</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 83) and the consequent delimitation between their “own” space and “other’s” space, which would characterize the semiotic constitution, organization and individualization of any city.

Before we focus on the meaning of those forms of organization, it’s important to reinforce that, as Lotman says, the spatial model of culture is characterized, essentially, through topological aspects. In the field of geometry, topology is reported as the study of characteristics of sets that are maintained unaltered even when deformed, which would allow to identify the relations of connection, neighborhood and continuity between different spaces which, not always, show themselves clearly. Such specification is very important so we could point out that, in the field of semiotic thinking, the delimitation between the “own” and the “other’s” space is not reported to a topographic marking, related to the construction of the physical space built, but to the essentially sign and information dimension of space.

Therefore, both the circle and the square must be understood in their topological characterization, since they are closed ordenations, both would be passible of protecting the internal space against external threats, the same way they can come to orient the physical organization of the space of culture, because, “the semantic interpretation of the

13 In the Spanish translation: “factores semióticos”.

14 In the Spanish translation: “tipos geométricos básicos”.

15 In the Spanish translation: “modelo estructural del espacio”.

model of culture consists in the establishment of correspondence between their elements (space, frontier, spots) and the phenomena of the objective world”<sup>16</sup> (LOTMAN, 1998, p. 102). In this sense, to these two types of geometric types, we could add others that, through the common topological aspects, would play the same role. As Ivanov emphasizes:

[...] The circular and squared concentric shapes, or in general, polygonal, are often an issue not so much of real planning but of symbolic interpretation. The idealized conception of people or city as a circle does not mandatorily suppose a circular construction. The city can really have a shape of a polygon (sometimes of a regular quadrilateral), or a more complex geometric structure, distinct from the circle, but in a symbolic level can be described as a circle or a square inscribed in a circle (mandala)<sup>17</sup> (IVANOV, 1993, p. 111).

We notice that, because they have the same topological characteristic, every geometric image described by Ivanov are regarding to an invariable relative both in architecture and in specific shapes of urban organization, in which is possible to apprehend a remarkable trait of the action exercised by the culture memory. Even though we do not confuse city with architecture, since the second one consists of one of the many systems that build the first one, through the topological perspective, it is possible to perceive how urbe and a certain architectural design can be structured according to the same model, and, with that, be similar in some aspects, given the isomorphic relation established between one and the other. It is, therefore, culture models which, as Lotman says,

16 In the Spanish translation: “La interpretación semántica del modelo de la cultura consiste en el establecimiento de correspondencias entre sus elementos (espacio, frontera, puntos) y fenómenos del mundo objetivo.”

17 In the Spanish translation: “[...] las formas concéntricas circulares y las cuadradas o, en general, poligonales a menudo es una cuestión no tanto de planificación real como de interpretación simbólica. La concepción idealizada del pueblo o de la ciudad como un círculo, no supone obligatoriamente una construcción circular. La ciudad puede tener realmente la forma de un polígono (a veces de un cuadrángulo regular), o una estructura geométrica más compleja, distinta del círculo, pero en el nivel simbólico puede ser descrita como un círculo o como un cuadrado inscrito en un círculo (mandala)”.

are “[...] descriptions of culture text built with the help of resources of spatial modeling, and, particularly, topological [...]”<sup>18</sup> (1998, p. 101).

In the field of architectural design that distinguishes the corralas located in the Lavapiés neighborhood is that, according to what we have emphasized, it is characterized by a central patio surrounded, in general, by three floors in which the small housings are located, it is possible to observe the action of a model similar to what is punctuated by Ivanov: the cell (SENNETT, 2019), characterized by a closed quadrangular format, in which center there is the presence of a patio. It is precisely through that it would be possible to apprehend the action of memory that organizes that spatiality, having in mind the presence of a vector that allows us to notice certain regularities concerning, for instance, the social relations that are articulated there and the meaning production, and, on the other hand, the reverberation that is produced through the exchange with other texts.

### **Corralas and the cell model**

According to Richard Sennett (2019), in general, every city has a “tissue”, in other words, a specific order that establish a direction for the relationship built between the different types of buildings, streets and open spaces.<sup>19</sup> Among the three types of tissue pointed out by the author,<sup>20</sup> one of them reports precisely to the cellular tissue. It is an order that happens through the “unity of patios”<sup>21</sup> (SENNETT, 2019, p. 55), in a way that the buildings built are facing indoors, not outside, on the street. Throughout history, such patios acquired different variations and scales, since they comprised both family groups and public spaces surrounded by big walls, that gathered bazaars, markets and churches.

18 In the Spanish translation: “[...] descripciones de textos de la cultura construidas con ayuda de los recursos de la modelización espacial y, en particular, a las topológicas [...]”.

19 In the same work, Sennett makes an important distinction between *ville* and *cité*. The first reports to the built environment, and the second one is about the relationships built in the daily life. The different tissues are more directly found related to *ville*.

20 The other two are: orthogonal and aggregation.

21 In the Spanish translation: “unión de los patios”.

Still according to the author (SENNETT, 2019), this type of spatial organization is found directly related to the possibility of structuring more welcoming forms of social, given the sensation of proximity given by the intensification of the face-to-face encounter among individuals belonging to small groups to which dekurs the possibility of creating more collective and solidary forms of organization. That is why, not rarely, such type of housing had a central importance for the protection and resistance of socially vulnerable groups, working as a “[...] secret space, hard to penetrate for the authorities [...]”<sup>22</sup> (SENNETT, 2019, p. 57).

It is important to emphasize that, to Lotman, the semiosis generated by any architectural construction does not limit to itself, since it comprises a whole “extra-architectural” series<sup>23</sup> (LOTMAN, 2000, p. 105), which involves forms of sociocultural organization, rituals and many other aspects, which derive from the formation of mnemonic symbols, which are essentially characterized by the capacity “[...] of focusing on themselves, conserving and re-building the “memory” of their previous contexts”<sup>24</sup> (LOTMAN, 1998, p. 156), originating from what Lotman indicates it to be a “symbolic resonance”<sup>25</sup> (LOTMAN, 1998, p. 156), characteristic of the operation of memory in culture.

In this sense, the idea of a more community, horizontal and cooperative organization of social life is frequently associated to cell models, as it happens with the corralas, can be seen as a mnemonic symbol that is reported to a very specific spatial and social modeling which, for a long time, is shown present in the culture and that equally allows us to know a certain “world view” linked to more communal forms of social organization. As Lotman says:

The architectural space lives a semiotic double life. On one hand, it models the universe: the structure of built and inhabitable world is translated to the world in its entirety. On the other, it is modeled by the

22 In the Spanish translation: “[...] espacio secreto, difícil de penetrar para las autoridades [...]”.

23 In the Spanish translation: “extraarquitectónica”.

24 In the Spanish translation: “de concentrar en sí, conservar y reconstruir el recuerdo de sus contextos precedentes”.

25 In the Spanish translation: “resonancia simbólica”.

universe: the man-made world reproduces its idea of global structure of the world. To it is linked the elevated symbolism of everything that, one way or another, belongs to the space of inhabitation created by humans<sup>26</sup> (LOTMAN, 2000, p. 103).

For the cell modeling implied to *corralas* and by the memory linked to it, one establishes a hierarchy of values in which the collective necessarily must be superposed to the individual, which does not mean to cancel it. Still regarding this aspect, as Lotman (2013) points out, the collective can only be understood as such when one considers the relation of similarities and differences put among the distinct individualities, in a way any collectivity is characterized, essentially, by its ambivalence. Even if, in certain circumstances, one of the trends may become dominant, one does not survive without the other. In addition, according to the principles of isomorphism that base the Lotmanian thinking, every individuality is also equated to the whole it is a part of, the same way it brings in itself a seed of the collective, in a way that:

Here, the quantitative index is activated and behaviors become the base of a sense of partition and participation. The individual experiences itself simultaneously as a whole made similarly to universal and as a part, that forms the base of human self-awareness. The self-awareness is not an “exterior” superstructure, but the organizing reality of everyday human life<sup>27</sup> (LOTMAN, 2013, p. 48).

In this sense, we notice that the cell modeling implied in *corralas* builds a memory characterized by a dominant related to a sense of participation, in which the individual is, at the same time, “I and we”, the

26 In the Spanish translation: “El espacio arquitectónico vive una doble vida semiótica. Por una parte, modeliza el universo: la estructura del mundo de lo construido y habitable es trasladada al mundo en su totalidad. Por otra, es modelizado por el universo: el mundo creado por el hombre reproduce su idea de la estructura global del mundo. A esto está ligado el elevado simbolismo de todo lo que de uno u otro modo pertenece al espacio de la vivienda creado por el hombre.”

27 In the english translation: “Here the quantitative indicator is activated and behaviours become the basis of a sense of partition and participation. The individual experiences him or herself simultaneously as a whole made in the likeness of the universal and as a part, which forms the basis of human self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is not an “exterior” superstructure but the organising reality of everyday human life”.

same way that the “double life” of the architectural space both translates the way subjects perceive the world and it produces the spatialities of culture. Therefore, we delimit what should be remembered, despite the significant transformations suffered throughout history of what is understood by individuality and collectivity.

In the scope of discussion proposed in this article, this can be apprehended, especially, when we seek to discriminate the semiosis that the mnemonic sign related to *corralas* produces or, still, their possibilities of symbolic reverberation, as pointed by Lotman. More specifically, let's see how this process can be observed in the poster of the 2019's *Fiestas Populares de Lavapiés*;

### **The redefinition of the idea of collectivity**

As we can observe, the illustration (Image 7) portrays the *corrala* decorated with two strings: in one, there is the presence of colorful flags, and, in the other, among a series of pieces of hanging clothes, two shirts stand out: one with the brand of the feminist movement and a pair of pants with the colors green, yellow and red, which are also present in the Senegalese flag, country from which are the main immigrant group living in the neighborhood<sup>28</sup>, in addition to a “rainbow flag”, symbol of the LGBTQ+ pride.

In the bottom part of the poster, in the center, there is a gathering of people belonging to different ethnic groups with open arms, facing a poster with “2019 Popular Parties of Lavapiés” written and “Parties free from racist, homophobic and sexist attitude”. To the left, there is also the sentence: “weaving a neighborhood”.<sup>29</sup>

It is important to emphasize how the parties are defined in the poster, in other words, as celebrations defined by coexistence and tolerance of singularities that comprise different ethnicities, genders, sexual

28 The most representative groups are, respectively, original from Bangladesh (20.56%), Morocco (6.97%), Equator (6.22%) and Senegal (4.06%) Source: OSORIO, 2017.

29 In the Spanish version: *Fiestas populares de Lavapiés* de 2019; “fiestas libres de actitudes racistas, homofóbicas y machistas”; “tejiendo barrio”.

orientations and social struggles. About that, it is important to reinforce that about 32% of the residents of Lavapiés are immigrants, which makes it the neighborhood with the biggest concentration of foreigners of the Spanish capital (in other parts of the city, this percentage is up to 16%). The region is also known by the presence of numberless occupations and collectives, in addition of gathering numberless movements geared towards the fight for minority rights. According to Fernández (2013), the neighborhood has so many activists that there is a term to designate it: *el rollito*.

Just like it was represented and translated by graphic codes, we can infer that the corrala present in the piece has a polygonal shape, even though, in the illustration, there are only three sides and two vertices, whose position seek to simulate the tridimensionality of the architectural construction in the bidimensional space of the graphic piece. Gathered in the central patio, the individuals portrayed are in front for the sayings and are found centralized in the piece, however, backwards from that contemplates the entirety of the poster. Therefore, when we can position in front of view, the observer put themselves in the same position that are portrayed here, beginning, therefore, to be a part of the group. This action is “allows” the geometric shape/corrala is “completed”, expanding themselves out of the poster, in other words: through what is put as part of the gathering portrayed there, in a way that the tridimensional space of urbe, and, especially, the neighborhood whose walls were pinned in hundreds of posters, turns into a big corrala.

Through operationalized translation by the graphic codes, it is noticed how is intended to build the tridimensional space by the bidimensionality of the poster, whose take place the beginning of sense related to the spatial modeling implied to corralas. As Lotman says, a central aspect concerning to spatial semiotic regarding its “vectorial character”<sup>30</sup> which, necessarily, implies a “guidance”, because “[...] a typologic trait will be the guidance of gaze the point of view of a certain

30 In the Spanish translation: “carácter vectorial”.



ideal observer, identifiable, about their own city”<sup>31</sup> (2000, p. 109). It is, therefore, a communicably indissolubly related to the mnemonic trait of the space which, even in dialog with diverse contexts, is capable of activating meanings built in the development of time.

Consequently, there is no way how to disregard the memory related to the idea of collectivity present in the poster, at the same time in which the context portrayed there implies the redefinition of that is understood a social amplitude much more wide, the same way that goes through considering the singularities that form the whole. About that, it is important to reinforce that, according to Lotman (2013), the delimitation of the individual and the collective only can be done when is taken into account with the wider context that involves both. Therefore, if in the past, corralas were reported to small groups constituted by a set of families, by the resonance enabled by the mnemonic sign, as it happens in the graphic piece, the collective begins to comprise wider groups that involve different ethnicities and political stances, clarifying, at the same time, a characteristic that distinguishes not only the region of Lavapiés in Madrid, but numberless other neighborhoods from other cities.

At the same time the piece seems to point out that such conception of collectivity, far from erasing differences, emerges through them. As indicated by Lazzarato, in fact, “being together” must be understood, primarily, by the relations that arise in the midst of “multiple singularities” (2006, p. 30), which, increasingly erupt in the current geopolitical scenario. It is this ambivalence that generates relations based on cooperation, poitentialized by events geared towards “[...] an experimentation of devices of being together [...]” that favor “[...] the encounter of singularities and the ageing of different worlds” (LAZZARATO, 2006, p. 228).

Retrieving the aforementioned poster, we notice that the diversity it seeks to represent does not rupture with the memory related to corralas and the hierarchy of values inherent to them, however, it locates that, in

31 In the Spanish translation: “[...] un rasgo tipológico de ella será la orientación de la mirada, el punto de vista de cierto observador ideal, identificable, diríase, con la ciudad misma”.

fact, the sense of collectivity and belonging cannot be dissociated from the consideration of singularities. With that, we perceive how, despite their variations, the idea of collectivity seem to persist in setting mode of the city, which, according to Lotman, makes it opposed to time.

In addition, the specificity of the sign configuration of the piece, which predetermines in a very clear form the position to be filled by the observer, results in equally modelling a certain sense of belonging only passible of being built by the sensory dimension of what is put in front of it in the urban space, in a way that “[...] the message only ‘has sense’ if it is ‘felt’” (MACHADO, 2005, p. 290) in the specificity of this context.

One cannot lose sight that the sensory involvement promoted by a certain media and their coding system is one of the fundamentals of the concept of communicational mean proposed by Marshall McLuhan (2005, 1969). According to the author, being constituted as an extension of one or more sensory organs, every media generates a series of transformation in the human perceptocognitive dimension and in the most varied spheres of society and culture. These effects and/or changes that generate the environment, which, in turn, defines the media.

It is worth remembering that, according to the author (McLUHAN; STAINES, 2005, p. 80) the city is constituted as a mean that promotes the distension of different sensory organs, in a way that, as he says “[...] our technologies simulated for millions of years not only the body, but fragments of it. Only in the city is that the image of the human body as a unit became manifested”. We can say that, according to the Canadian intellectual, urbe are both constituted as an extension of the sensory and it intervenes to redefine it.

When inciting the drawing of a corrala which is only built through the singularity of each body, through the reordenation of the bidimensional language to tridimensional, the graphic piece of the 2019’s Fiestas Populares de Lavapiés promotes, precisely, the sensory involvement, which, according to McLuhan, constitutes one of the main attributes of the operation of a city as a communicative media, which correspond to less specialized forms of perception and reasoning. With that, we notice in

what way the piece not only contributes to build the city as it works as a metatext about which one can apprehend the own operation of the urbe as a communicative media and as a semiotic space of relations.

Such aspect also helps us understand the communicative dimension of the city through the semiotic perspective. As we previously pointed out, the idea of “progressive complication” that the ETM semioticians associate to communication<sup>32</sup> is directly related to how the different systems operationalize the translation of the informational memory, in a way of generating the creation of cultural texts increasingly heterogeneous, and, often times, unpredictable, because “[...] the message transmission is not the only role of the communicative mechanism, nor the cultural mechanism in its set. They perform the production of ‘new’ messages [...]”<sup>33</sup> (LOTMAN, 1996, p. 67).

In this sense, communication is understood by the most varied processes of interaction operationalized by the frontier of space of semiosphere, through which an information is translated into language and code, expanding, thus, the meanings it is capable of producing. As reminded by Machado (2005, p. 288) one cannot lose sight that “[...] one of the inalienable properties of communication is the capability of organizing information into languages of different codings”, without which it cannot even gain materiality in culture.

Therefore, when promoting different forms of translation of the informational memory characteristic of the cellular modeling, both corralas and the graphic piece clarify distinct communicational processes that build the urban semiotic space, the same way it amplifies the meanings related to the idea of community and the own operation of the city as communicative media. Through the perspective of ETM semioticians if memory builds spatialities of urbe is because, first of all, it is inserted into

32 Lotman (1996) locates communication as part of the intelligent mechanism of the culture. In order to build his formulation, the author takes as base the two brain hemispheres, whose operation is characterized by an asymmetric relation and an exchange among distinct semiotic individualities.

33 In the Spanish translation: “[...] la transmisión del mensaje no es la única función del mecanismo comunicativo, ni del mecanismo cultural en su conjunto. Éstos, al mismo tiempo, realizan una producción de nuevos mensajes [...]”.

a communicational process between distinct cultural spheres, through which a mnemonic symbol is translated and, with that, it both maintains a couple of distinctive traits and it expands in the relation it establishes with the surrounding.

## **Final Considerations**

As we've punctuated, both the architectural design of corralas and the poster of Fiestas Populares de Lavapiés are considered cultural texts, in a dynamic in which the second is constituted as a reverberation of the mnemonic symbol implied to the cellular spatial modeling of the first. Apprehending such action of non-hereditary memory, in turn, demands thinking about the semiotic space of relations that are established between both of them, once that only in relation with others a text is able to produce meaning. Therefore, the understanding of corralas as mnemonic cultural texts come from not the physical space built in these types housing, but the semiosis that the cellular modeling produces in the culture through communicational processes from which derive certain forms of social organization. About that, it is important to reinforce the recurrence of spatial modeling of corralas in certain forms of occupying public spaces, as, even, we verify in many immigrant groups living in the Lavapiés neighborhood, whose discussion extrapolates the scope of this article.

Still with relation to the existent bond between modelization, memory, communication and processes of social organization, one cannot lose sight that, as Machado says, “[...]” culture as collective memory is equally a modelizing system that acts about the behavior. In this case, it is a program that aims the future, since the semiotic rules of organization of life experience aims behavior” (2003, p. 163). In accordance with such thought, we notice that the action exercised by corralas as an architectural sign of memory and constitutive system of urbe stem from the “extra-architectural series”, capable of inciting certain forms of interaction with the urbe. With that, we can apprehend how the modelization agencied by communicational exchange are interposed in the process

of social interaction, in a way to evoke the constitution of certain types of bonds which, despite their continuous development, do not rupture with the past, but, rather, give new meaning to it.

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