

GROUNDWORK: Revealing Place and Memory

This part describes how memories associated with places can challenge official narratives and nationalist discourses. I outline the research methodologies I employed, including ethnography, collaborative map-making, and other architectural approaches, to illustrate their potential for allowing for access to alternative narratives associated with urban places. These approaches continue to inform and are interwoven into the book, both in a specific investigation of Nicosia and then through broader suggestions for design theory and practice.

How can the history of a place be understood? How can the relationships between its forms and the events of the past be seen? How can its changing contours and memories be visualized?

I had expected to see the town of my mother's memories, of her nostalgia—nostalgia laced with sighs. She had lived her lifetime sighing about Comala, about going back. But she never had. Now I had come in her place. I was seeing things through her eyes, as she had seen them. She had given me her eyes to see. "Just as you pass the gate Los Colimotes there's a beautiful view of a green plain tinged with the yellow of ripe corn. From there you can see Comala, turning the earth white, and lighting it at night." Her voice was secret, muffled, as if she were talking to herself....Mother.

Pedro Paramo, Juan Rulfo, 1955

People and their stories illuminate the relationship between urban forms and history.