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Triana – Tres Mil: Emancipation Through Nostalgia?

The Roma – majority community living in the quarter of Triana (Seville) was expelled from their houses between 1957 and 1961, due to property speculation and xenophobia. While a few of these inhabitants were offered housing in different newly built apartment buildings in the outskirts of the city, many of the inhabitants of Triana remained in temporary housing and shacks.

Between the years 1968 and 1977, they were finally offered housing in building blocks in an area called Poligono Sur. The lack of sufficient attention from the municipality, added to the low living standards and the impoverished situation of this community led to a rise in criminality, abandonment, and marginalization, especially in a sub – zone generally known as “Tres Mil Viviendas”. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, many initiatives from governmental institutions and NGOs have been working in the area to improve their material and educational conditions. Some of these initiatives have focused on the flamenco tradition from Triana, aiming at focusing on pre – existing identity aspects from before the forced migration. These projects aim to foster education and occupational training, as well as artistic and collaborative skills. Furthermore, documentaries and artistic works have been produced showing the revival of flamenco culture in the Tres Mil quarter. While this approach could be seen as problematic for several reasons and the cultural works produced tend to idealise the role of flamenco in impoverished communities, it is also an opportunity to rethink nostalgia in a different light.

This paper will develop a notion of nostalgia which can overcome the reactionism that is usually linked to. This new conceptualisation aims at evaluating the ways in which political problems can be assessed, and the role of artistic creation in dealing with nostalgic feelings through responsibility, accountability, and historical liability. The topic of this paper is linked to the writing process of a poetry collection about Seville, urbanism, and xenophobia. This project has been awarded a Grant from the Ministry of Culture in Spain for Literary Creation (Grant code 2102234).