

"Well, of course. This experiment may not work.

What experiment?

It's just an experiment, but see if you can make any sense out of this story?

What story?

What do I bring back from a very long day confronting this city?

The story of my adventures, I suppose!"

The advent of new communication technologies has made connecting to other people exponentially easier with an immediate effect of active participation in a community not depending so much on geographical location, yet this connected "utopia" leaves an increasing residue of personal solitude. This project explores the individual's role within a group and the dichotomy of solitude and community. Also, this project explores a city and its inhabitants as a living organism imbedded with collective memories, investigating issues such as: obstacles of communication, urban architecture and close proximity living, obsession with documentation, political and social voyeurism and general surveillance in cities, and a flood of pre-fabricated visual information. This project will weave together tales and cross boundaries of social sciences attempting to question the **meme** of a city and the challenges it encounters.

"**meme** /mi:m/ n. L20.(f. Gk. *mimema*. that which is imitated, after Gene.) Biol. An element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by non-genetic means, esp. imitation".

– Richard Dawkins, 1976

Meme is an information pattern, held in an individual's memory, which is capable of being copied to another individual's memory. Memes are ideas, skills, habits, stories or inventions, that are passed from person to person by imitation. Like genes they compete to get copied, but unlike genes their competition is for space in our memories, and for the chance to get into books, advertisement campaigns, magazines and television programs. The survivors in this game are the ones we see all around us. Just as genes have created our bodies, so memes have created our minds and our cultures.

And yet I have constructed in my mind a model city from which all possible cities can be deduced...

This project tries to apply the tools of memetics to pin-point some commonalities about communication in an urban life landscape. There are intrinsic qualities in the organization of a metropolis and its life. These features are universal: they will be found in all cities.

A city can be viewed simply as a network of relationships, of which there are many kinds. The city does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of streets, the shapes of windows, the curves of the steps, the antennae of the television rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

The other issue addressed and questioned in this project are challenges of communication in the never-ceasing advance of networks of information. Today we have access to split-second post office - *Internet*. We can instantly communicate with friends and other acquaintances who live on the other side of the globe. We confess our deepest secrets and fall in love with strangers gathering in chat-line communities. Yet strangely enough, we often have no idea about the person living above and below our box-like apartment. This project will try to dig through this duality.