



T.C. Boyle's "The Tortilla Curtain": Urban Conditions, Racism, and Ecological Disaster in Fortress Los Angeles

Laura Schomaker

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Kurzbeschreibung

Los Angeles is famous for its sunny weather, for the Hollywood film studios and for being the residence of the rich and beautiful. And although - or, precisely because - all this is more illusion than reality, the city frequently serves as setting for various pieces of fiction. However, Los Angeles does not only play a huge role in the media, but since lately also in the realm of urban studies. Having long been a kind of 'outsider' in the field, it is now regarded as a prototypical example for urban development by the L.A. School. In this context, its image is less sunny and positive, but reveals a deep-rooted racism against Latin-American immigrants in combination with a fortress mentality on the part of its white population as well as a unique urban ecology, in which natural catastrophes seem to be regular occurrences. This paper intends to outline the significance of Los Angeles in urban studies and trace the thereby acquired findings in a fictional representation of the city: T.C. Boyle's novel *The Tortilla Curtain*. In the process, it is shown how urban conditions, racism and nature, especially in the form of ecological disasters, intersect and influence each other. Über den Autor und weitere Mitwirkende

Laura Schomaker wurde 1987 in Ratingen geboren. Ihr Studium der Medien- und Kulturwissenschaft an der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf schloss die Autorin im Jahre 2010 mit dem akademischen Grad Bachelor of Arts erfolgreich ab. Ihr weiterführendes Studium der Literatur und Medienpraxis sowie American Studies an der Universität Duisburg-Essen beendete sie 2013 erfolgreich mit dem akademischen Grad Master of Arts.

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