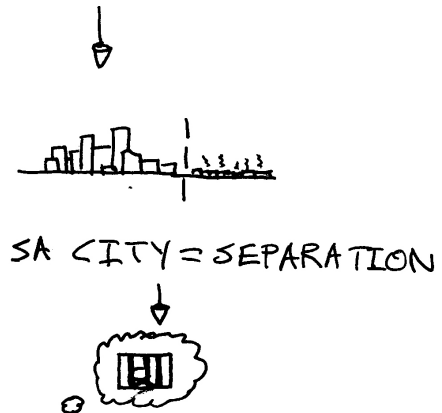
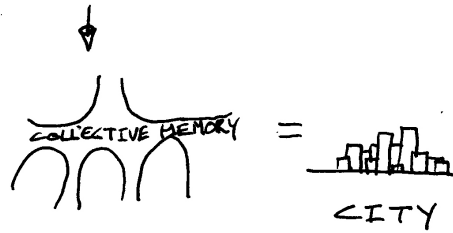
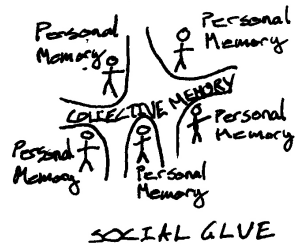
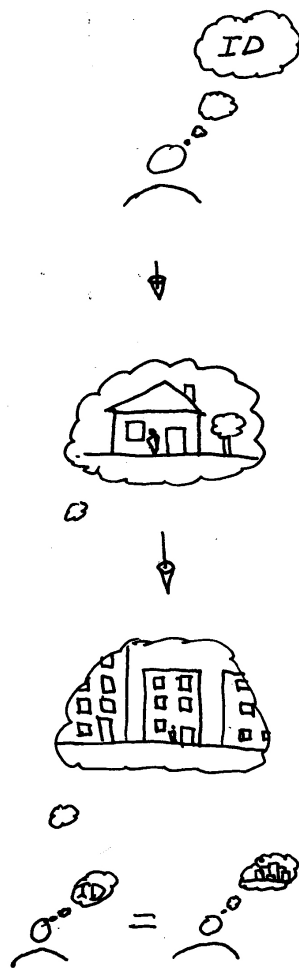




2



MEMORY

Defining Memory and Collective Memory

Memory's Significance

remembrance

=

ID

+

PAST

=

social
glue

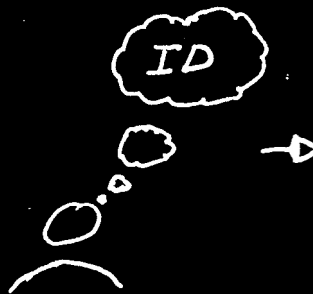
people

When we remember, we present our identity to ourselves and to others, we are reflecting on our very nature. "We are what we remember" (Psychologists, Fentress and Wickham 1992:7). This means that past experiences are part of who we are - the people, the cities, the buildings... "Memory, in fact, pinnacles every aspect of our mental lives... Memory is always at work in our minds; reading this book, thinking of friends, thinking about news, are all, in part, exercises in memory." (Fentress and Wickham 1992:5)

"Remembrance as a vital human activity shapes our links to the past and the present" (Young 1994:9). Our past influences how we identify with our present situation. Memory, like our shadow, follows us everywhere, representing an image of who we are.

Memory also influences how we interact with people. Fentress and Wickham (1992:xi) said, "Recalled past experience and shared images of the past are kinds of memories that have particular importance for the constitution of social groups in the present." A past remembered by a number of people can act as a type of social glue.

Sketch of memory as part of a persons identity.
(RE:2007)



Sketch of memories being linked to places. (RE:2007)





Left: Hassimia Sahib's Butchery before the start of forced removals and demolitions under the Group Areas Act.
Pageview, Johannesburg, Transvaal (Gauteng).
April 1976. (Goldblatt 1998: 83).



Right: Hassimia Sahib's butchery still in business after the destruction of part of the building under the Group Areas Act.



Collective Memory: Definition

 $\leq$

COLLECTIVE
MEANING

≠ everyone's memory

Public memory

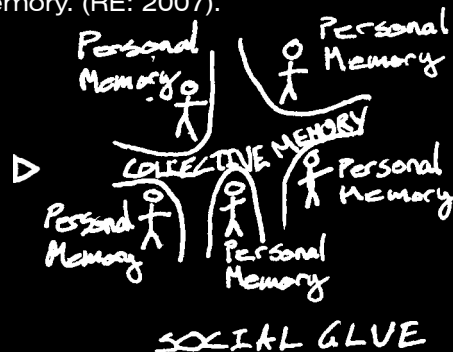
= group's memory

=
social construct

For the purpose of this thesis collective memory is the collection of societies' memories. These are often conflicting and compete within the same historical event. Collective memory therefore does not include every person's memories under one identity but rather, there are parts that are common and other parts that are deeply personal and fragmented. It is not the memory that is important so much as the common meaning (Young 1993:xi).

Public memory will refer to groups of people who share a common event in history. Young said that the memory of these groups is a social construction based on society's values and assumptions. These memories of shared historical events are organised into roughly similar patterns (1993 :xii).

Sketch of individual memory and binding collective memory. (RE: 2007).



Art of Memory (Yates, 1966: front cover)

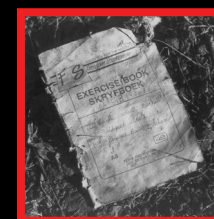




Holocaust Exhibition of suitcases belonging to people who were ordered to write their names and birth dates on them before their deportation to the camp. (Young 1993:133)



Above: Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu (INTERNET. Cited 3 January 2007).



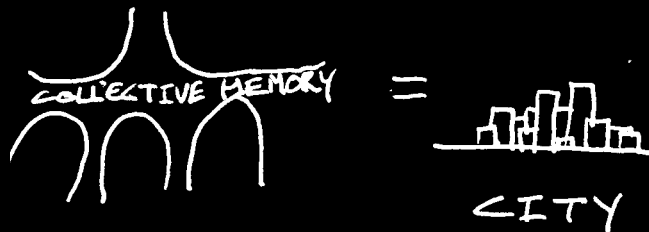
peoples memories =
places + images

CITY =
Collective memory
memory = process

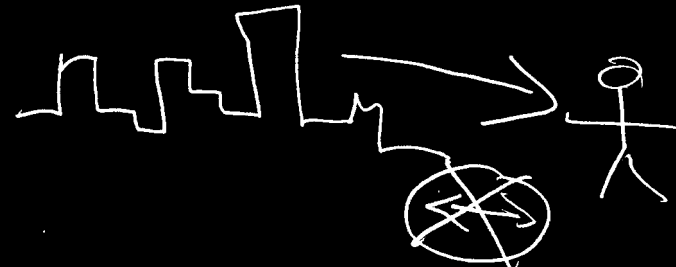
general structures
similarity closure proximity
continuity

Collective memory, according to Fentress and Wickham (1992:25), is an expression of collective experience. It identifies a group of people and gives them a sense of shared past. The past establishes itself in people's memory as places and images (Yates 1966:6). Halbwachs (in Rossi 1984:13) reports that when a group of people are introduced to a space, the space is transformed into its image by those people. Aldo Rossi, architect and writer specialising in collective memory, states "One can say the city itself is the collective memory of its people." (1984:130). Norberg-Schulz continues that "man gradually constructs the image of a structured world." (1986:29) He notes that peoples' perception is based on their point of view, therefore perception of place varies from person to person. However, there are general structures common to all personal spaces. The objects are organised according to laws of similarity, proximity, continuity and closure (paraphrased from Norberg-Schulz 1986:29).

Collective memory is linked to place i.e. the city.
(RE 2007).

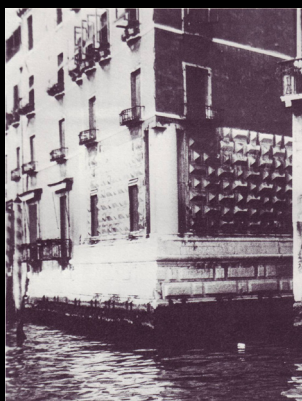


The city affects collective memory of people but
collective memory does not directly affect the city.
(RE: 2007).

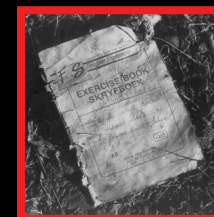




Aldo Rossi's memorable column - Filarete's Column, Venice (A Scientific Autobiography, Rossi 1981:05).



Above: The place to which the government wanted the people of Oukasie to move. Letlhabile Removal Camp, Transvaal (Gauteng). 30 November 1986 (Goldblatt 1998:78).



Memory and the

CITY

CITY architecture
MEMORY = landscape
 certain artefacts

50%
 world's population

CITY = locus = $\begin{matrix} \text{past} \\ \text{present} \\ \text{future} \end{matrix}$

Memory = Identity

Memory = City

City = Identity

The city has become the place where individual and collective memories occur. "The city is the locus of the collective memory." In 2000, 50% of the world's population lived in cities. This percentage is increasing in developing countries like South Africa (Koolhaas 2006:2 & 6). The city is therefore impacting on a larger percentage of the population. More people are connected within the same networks of shared events, built fabric and past. Rossi said the city is the place of union between the past and future in the present (1984:130).

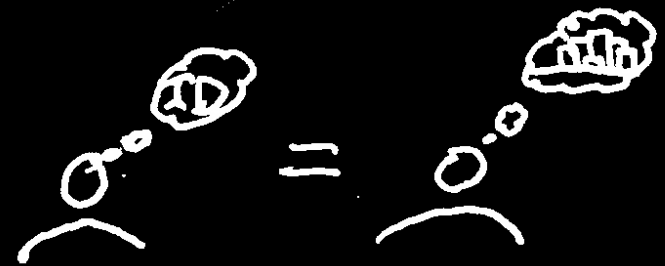
Daniel Libeskind (architect specialising in memorialising conflict, formally a classical musician) said that the city is the greatest spiritual creation of humanity. He calls it 'a collective work' that develops an expression of culture, society and the individual in time and space (1998:13).

When the city has lost part of its built fabric it has lost part of its identity and we as individuals lose part of our very own identity.

Sketch of our memories being of the city. (RE: 2007)

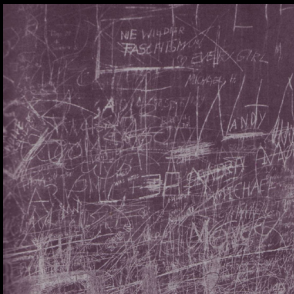


Sketch of our identity being intertwined with our memory of the city. (RE: 2007)





Graffiti on Harburg's Monument against Fascism.
Through the peoples action the austere, engraving
column disappears under their writing (Young 1993:
35)



Above: Aldo Rossi's City Image
(Rossi 1982: 75)



South African

Cities

=
separation +
privilege

SA
=
STRONG
MEMORIES

past
present
future

Cities are considered centres where human rights can be exercised, a place where people meet, share ideas and interact under the image of the city. However, in South African cities, public life has always been separated by race, and public spaces mainly designated to the 'privileged'. Colonial rule over South Africa implemented a strategy of divide and rule over local inhabitants and non-colonials. Public realms in the city were representative of a singular, dominant race, first colonial then White Afrikaaner.

Collectively held ideas result from social and historical forces (Fentress and Wickham 1992:7). "Testimony collected in the aftermath of genocide, war, or systematic political repression (Apartheid South Africa) has pointed to the impact of trauma on memory." (Coombes 2003:8) These memories are extremely fragmented on recollection. The sensations produced by the experiences of detention, displacement, or unannounced police harassment in the 'dead of night' carried with it temporal repercussions. These de-stabilising elements, according to Coombes, meant holding onto the past and present, and prospects for the future were essential in conditions where everything 'conspired against memory' (2003:9).

The South African city separated out (RE: 2007).



CITY = SEPARATION

South Africa has strong memories of a certain type of detention (RE: 2007).





Above: Luke Kgatitsoe at his house, destroyed by government bulldozers in 1984 (Goldblatt 1998: 60).



Conclusion

Memory is part of our identity. It forms the social glue between people in society. It is a process built up over time, affecting the past, present and future.

Collective memory has collective meaning and does not include everyone under one umbrella. There are some parts of memory that are common and others that are deeply personal and fragmentary. The common parts have a general structure related to places and images.

The city is the locus of memory. It makes up part of the people's collective memory. The city forms part of our identities. To lose part of the city is to lose part of our very identity. The South African city has been engineered toward separation and is the locus for strong memories.

Memory forms part of our identity. Our memories are always attached to a certain place. This place is in the city we live. Therefore our memories and our identities are directly linked to the city in which we live.

Some parts of our memories are common and others are personal. The memories that are common form a social glue between groups of people. That collective memory is situated in the city.

For South Africa the city is spatially associated with separation. Memories of detention and separation are associated with South African cities.

