

GRAFTING MEMORY

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MEMORY
BETWEEN SPACE AND INDIVIDUAL

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Thesis

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To Ghiulnara and Petru, to their patience and faith in my dreams,

To those who get goose bumps for true emotions,

To the music that gave me tears of inspiration,

To the moments of pure joy,

To the dreamers.

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Introduction

I really like vintage stores.

They are like small doors to other worlds that belong to the past. The objects, the cloths on display for me are like old grandpas that have so many stories to tell about their life, experiences and memories. The small tools of everyday use are authentic storytellers of how people used to make their juice or sew their cloths or how they used to get warm in winter, and I chase these moments of true life inside this shops.

I have a similar feeling when I approach old buildings sometimes they have a strong language to express the time and the point in history where they come from. Materials, structures, ornamental elements speak for the building, its region and traditions. On the other hand the structure is a teller of the time. Some buildings awake an imagery in my mind and I visualize how people moved around, with their specific cloths, traditions and everyday costumes. It is a small personal madeleine¹, and it is different for every person. Even a staircase may arise a series of memories connected with the building or with the personal life of the spectator.

I am fascinated by the magic that a building can whisper with its features. The moment that makes us imagine a world behind a building is the topic of my research and I investigate it through the means of the functioning of our brain, as well as social behavior and arts insight on this topic.

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1 M.Proust, p 23

My goals are to understand what is memory, what kinds of memory exist, how does memory work between the spectator and space. Also how poetical literature and other arts dealt with the topic of memory.

In conclusion I offer my point of view on memory through my observations on the building that first has awoken different memories and a strong imagery.

My curiosity upon memory in its shades, pushed me to start with a linguistic base on how humanity has seen memory through time, and what we consider memory today. Memory in architecture works in a two way relation Building-Spectator, who is my spectator and how is memory working in a social environment.

The last part consists in my personal research on what memory is for me after what I learned from the different points of view on memory and especially in connection with the Cinema Palace in Maastricht, the building that first made me dream, imagine and awake memories.

I visited the building several times per week from October until November and every time I took note of the associations, memories or episodes I imagined while looking at the building. This made me have a big catalogue of mind images that explained what kind of memory Cinema Palace awakens in me. Through the linguistic research of memory I come up with a new definition of memory between architecture, personal life and common knowledge.

I urge the attention on the fact that I reaserch on the phenomenology of memory. I learnt many interesting facts about memory connected with the person, arts and architecture, but my conclusions are guidelines on how to behave with memory.



CHAPTER 1

What is memory?

Since time immemorial, humans have tried to understand what memory is, how it works and why it goes wrong. It is an important part of what makes us truly human, and yet it is one of the most elusive and misunderstood of human attributes.

The popular image of memory is as a kind of tiny filing cabinet full of individual memory folders in which information is stored away, or perhaps as a neural super-computer of huge capacity and speed. However, in the light of modern biological and psychological knowledge, these metaphors may not be entirely useful and, today, experts believe that memory is in fact far more complex and subtle than that.

Memory is our ability to encode, store, retain and subsequently recall information and past experiences in the human brain¹. It can be thought of in general terms as the use of past experience to affect or influence current behavior. Memory is the sum total of what we remember, and gives us the capability to learn and adapt from previous experiences as well as to build relationships. It is the ability to remember past experiences, and the power or process of recalling to mind previously learned facts, experiences, impressions, skills and habits. It is the store of things learned and retained from our activity or experience, as evidenced by modification of structure or behavior, or by recall and recognition.

Etymologically, the modern English word "memory" comes to us from

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1 A. Cattana, M.T.Nesci, p 235

the Middle English *memorie*, which in turn comes from the Anglo-French *memoire* or *memorie*, and ultimately from the Latin *memoria* and *memor*, meaning “mindful” or “remembering”.²

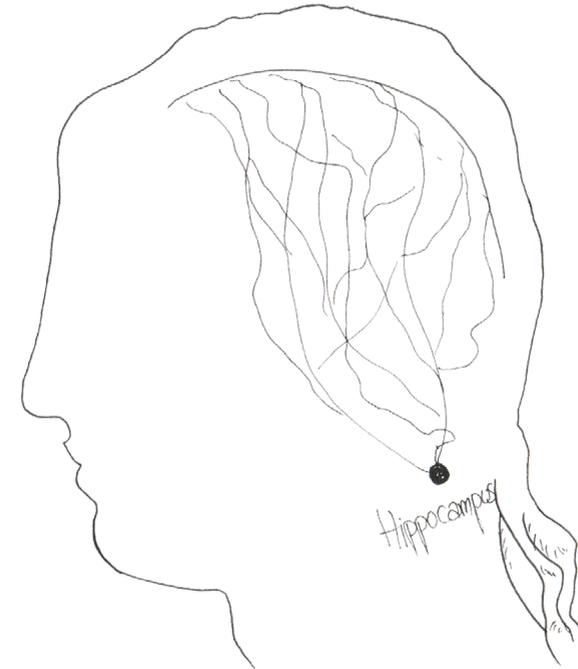
In more physiological or neurological terms, memory is, at its simplest, a set of encoded neural connections in the brain. It is the re-creation or reconstruction of past experiences by the synchronous firing of neurons that were involved in the original experience³. As we will see, though, because of the way in which memory is encoded, it is perhaps better thought of as a kind of collage or jigsaw puzzle, rather than in the traditional manner as a collection of recordings or pictures or video clips, stored as discrete wholes. Our memories are not stored in our brains like books on library shelves, but are actually on-the-fly reconstructions from elements scattered throughout various areas of our brains.

Memory and Learning

Memory is related to but distinct from learning, which is the process by which we acquire knowledge of the world and modify our subsequent behavior. During learning, neurons that fire together to produce a particular experience are altered so that they have a tendency to fire together again⁴. For example, we learn a new language by studying it, but we then speak it by using our memory to retrieve the words that we have learned. Thus, memory depends on learning because it lets us store and retrieve learned information. But learning also depends to some extent on memory, in that the knowledge stored in our memory provides the framework to which new knowledge is linked by association and inference. This ability of humans to call on past memories in order to imagine the future and to plan future courses of action is a hugely advantageous attribute in our survival and development as a species.

The sociological concept of collective memory⁵ plays an essential role in the establishment of human societies. Every social group perpetuates itself through the knowledge that it transmits down the generations, either through oral tradition or through writing. The invention of writing made it possible

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2 www.etimonline.com
3 J.H.Byrne, p.12
4 Ibid 3 p.103
5 M.Halbwachs 1992



for the first time for human beings to preserve precise records of their knowledge outside of their brains. Writing, audiovisual media and computer records can be considered a kind of external memory for humans.

How memory works

It seems that our memory is located not in one particular place in the brain, but is instead a brain-wide process in which several different areas of the brain act in conjunction with one another (sometimes referred to as distributed processing⁶). For example, the simple act of riding a bike is actively and seamlessly reconstructed by the brain from many different areas: the memory of how to operate the bike comes from one area, the memory of how to get from here to the end of the block comes from another, the memory of biking safety rules from another, and that nervous feeling when a car veers dangerously close comes from still another. Each element of a memory (sights, sounds, words, emotions) is encoded in the same part of the brain that originally created that fragment (visual cortex, motor cortex, language area, etc), and recall of a memory effectively reactivates the neural patterns generated during the original encoding. Thus, a better image might be that of a complex web, in which the threads symbolize the various elements of a memory, that join at nodes or intersection points to form a whole rounded memory of a person, object or event. This kind of distributed memory ensures that even if part of the brain is damaged, some parts of an experience may still remain⁷. Neurologists are only beginning to understand how the parts are reassembled into a coherent whole.

Neither is memory a single unitary process but there are different types of memory. Our short term and long-term memories are encoded and stored in different ways and in different parts of the brain, for reasons that we are only beginning to guess at. Years of case studies of patients suffering from accidents and brain-related diseases and other disorders have begun to indicate some of the complexities of the memory processes⁸, and great strides have been made in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, but many of the exact mechanisms involved remain elusive.

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6 Ibid 3 p.16

7 Ibid 3 p.17

8 Ibid 3 p.14

The study of human memory

The study of human memory stretches back at least 2,000 years to Aristotle's early attempts to understand memory in his treatise "On the Soul". In this, he compared the human mind to a blank slate and theorized that all humans are born free of any knowledge and are merely the sum of their experiences. Aristotle compared memory to making impressions in wax, sometimes referred to as the "storehouse metaphor"⁹, a theory of memory which held sway for many centuries.

In antiquity, it was generally assumed that there were two sorts of memory: the "natural memory" (the inborn one that everyone uses every day) and the "artificial memory"¹⁰ (trained through learning and practice of a variety of mnemonic techniques, resulting in feats of memory that are quite extraordinary or impossible to carry out using the natural memory alone). Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian expanded on the art of memory or the method of loci, and their ideas were passed down to the medieval Scholastics and later scholars of the Renaissance like Matteo Ricci and Giordano Bruno¹¹.

However, it was not until the mid-1880s that the young German philosopher Herman Ebbinghaus developed the first scientific approach to studying memory. He did experiments using lists of nonsense syllables, and then associating them with meaningful words, and some of his findings from this work (his classification of the three distinct types of memory: sensory, short-term and long-term) remain relevant to this day.

The basis of today studies of memory start with this definition and scientists especially in the XXth century made new discovers every year composing the part of the bigger puzzle, arriving to what we know today about memory.

As computer technology developed in the 1950s and 1960s, parallels between computer and brain processes became apparent, leading to advances in the understanding of the encoding, storage and retrieval processes of memory. The computer metaphor is, however, essentially just a more sophisticated version of the earlier storehouse view of memory, based on the rather simplistic and misleading assumption that a memory

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9 Aristotle p.6

10 A.L.Tota,T.Hagen, p.20

11 Ibid 3 p.23

is just a simple copy of the original experience.

The change in the overall study of memory during the 1950s and 1960s has come to be known as the "cognitive revolution"¹², and led to several new theories on how to view memory, and yielded influential books by George Miller, Eugene Galanter, Karl Pribram, George Sperling and Ulric Neisser. In 1956, George Miller produced his influential paper on short-term memory and his assessment that our short-term memory is limited to what he called "the magical number seven, plus or minus two"¹³.

In 1968, Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin first described their modal, or multi-store, model of memory (consisting of a sensory memory, a short-term memory and a long-term memory) which became the most popular model for studying memory for many years. In 1972, Fergus Craik and Robert Lockhart offered an alternative model, known as the levels-of-processing model.

As the first model (Atkinson-Shiffrin) is closer to my personal method of inquiring the memories in the building taken as a study case in the last chapter, I will explain better the details and different definitions of memory in Atkinson-Shiffrin model.

Craik-Lockhart

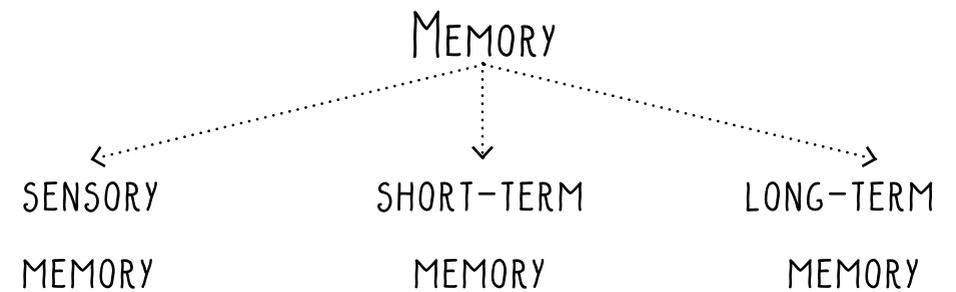
It should be noted that an alternative model, known as the levels-of-processing model was proposed by Fergus Craik and Robert Lockhart in 1972, and posits that memory recall, and the extent to which something is memorized, is a function of the depth of mental processing, on a continuous scale from shallow (perceptual) to deep (semantic). Under this model, there is no real structure to memory and no distinction between short-term and long-term memory.

Atkinson-Shiffrin Memory Model

What we usually think of as "memory" in day-to-day usage is actually long-term memory, but there are also important short-term and sensory memory processes, which must be worked through before a long-term

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¹² Ibid 3 p.10
¹³ Ibid 3 p.11

ATKINSON-SHIFFRIN MODEL

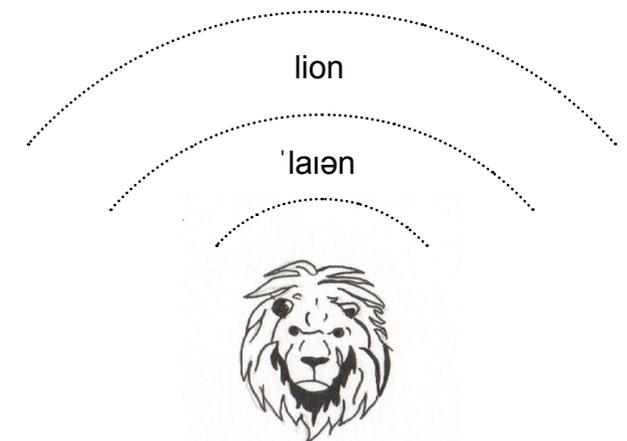


CRAIK-LOCKHART MODEL

1 STRUCTURAL ELABORATION

2 FONOLOGICAL ELABORATION

3 SEMANTIC ELABORATION



memory can be established. The different types of memory each have their own particular mode of operation, but they all cooperate in the process of memorization, and can be seen as three necessary steps in forming a lasting memory.

This model of memory as a sequence of three stages, from sensory to short-term to long-term memory, rather than as a unitary process, is known as the modal or multi-store or Atkinson-Shiffrin model, after Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin who developed it in 1968, and it remains the most popular model for studying memory.

Sensory Memory

Sensory memory¹⁴ is the shortest-term element of memory. It is the ability to retain impressions of sensory information after the original stimuli have ended. It acts as a kind of buffer for stimuli received through the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, which are retained accurately, but very briefly. For example, the ability to look at something and remember what it looked like with just a second of observation is an example of sensory memory.

The stimuli detected by our senses can be either deliberately ignored, in which case they disappear almost instantaneously, or perceived, in which case they enter our sensory memory. This does not require any conscious attention and, indeed, is usually considered to be totally outside of conscious control. The brain is designed to only process information that will be useful at a later date, and to allow the rest to pass by unnoted. As information is perceived, it is therefore stored in sensory memory automatically and unbidden. Unlike other types of memory, the sensory memory cannot be prolonged via rehearsal.

Sensory memory is an ultra-short-term memory and decays or degrades very quickly, typically in the region of 200 - 500 milliseconds (1/5 - 1/2 second) after the perception of an item, and certainly less than a second. Indeed, it lasts for such a short time that it is often considered part of the process of perception, but it nevertheless represents an essential step for storing information in short-term memory.

The sensory memory for visual stimuli is sometimes known as the iconic

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14 Ibid 3 p.16

memory, the memory for aural stimuli is known as the echoic memory, and that for touch as the haptic memory. Smell may actually be even more closely linked to memory than the other senses, possibly because the olfactory bulb and olfactory cortex (where smell sensations are processed) are physically very close - separated by just 2 or 3 synapses - to the hippocampus and amygdala (which are involved in memory processes). Thus, smells may be more quickly and more strongly associated with memories and their associated emotions than the other senses, and memories of a smell may persist for longer, even without constant re-consolidation¹⁵. This is the reason why the Madeleine has such a strong impact on Proust reconstruction of the last time he found himself in a similar situation.

Experiments by George Sperling in the early 1960s involving the flashing of a grid of letters for a very short period of time (50 milliseconds) suggest that the upper limit of sensory memory (as distinct from short-term memory) is approximately 12 items, although participants often reported that they seemed to "see" more than they could actually report.

Information is passed from the sensory memory into short-term memory via the process of attention (the cognitive process of selectively concentrating on one aspect of the environment while ignoring other things), which effectively filters the stimuli to only those which are of interest at any given time.

Short-term memory

Short-term memory¹⁶ acts as a kind of "scratch-pad" for temporary recall of the information which is being processed at any point in time, and has been referred to as "the brain's Post-it note"¹⁷. It can be thought of as the ability to remember and process information at the same time. It holds a small amount of information (typically around 7 items or even less) in mind in an active, readily-available state for a short period of time (typically from 10 to 15 seconds, or sometimes up to a minute).

For example, in order to understand this sentence, the beginning of the sentence needs to be held in mind while the rest is read, a task which

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15 Ibid 3 p.20
16 Ibid 3 p.17
17 Ibid 3 p.17

is carried out by the short-term memory. Other common examples of short-term memory in action are the holding on to a piece of information temporarily in order to complete a task (e.g. "carrying over" a number in a subtraction sum, or remembering a persuasive argument until another person finishes talking), and simultaneous translation (where the interpreter must store information in one language while orally translating it into another). What is actually held in short-term memory, though, is not complete concepts, but rather links or pointers (such as words, for example) which the brain can flesh out from its other accumulated knowledge.

However, this information will quickly disappear forever unless we make a conscious effort to retain it, and short-term memory is a necessary step toward the next stage of retention, long-term memory. The transfer of information to long-term memory for more permanent storage can be facilitated or improved by mental repetition of the information or, even more effectively, by giving it a meaning and associating it with other previously acquired knowledge. Motivation is also a consideration, in that information relating to a subject of strong interest to a person, is more likely to be retained in long-term memory.

The term working memory¹⁸ is used interchangeably with short-term memory, although technically working memory refers more to the whole theoretical framework of structures and processes used for the temporary storage and manipulation of information, of which short-term memory is just one component.

The central executive part of the prefrontal cortex at the front of the brain appears to play a fundamental role in short-term and working memory. It both serves as a temporary store for short-term memory, where information is kept available while it is needed for current reasoning processes, but it also "calls up" information from elsewhere in the brain. The central executive controls two neural loops, one for visual data (which activates areas near the visual cortex of the brain and acts as a visual scratch pad), and one for language (the "phonological loop", which uses Broca's area as a kind of "inner voice"¹⁹ that repeats word sounds to keep them in mind). These two scratch pads temporarily hold data until it is erased by the next job.

The short-term memory has a limited capacity, which can be readily

18 Ibid 3 p. 18

19 J.Bowers, p.10

illustrated by the simple expedient of trying to remember a list of random items (without allowing repetition or reinforcement) and seeing when errors begin to creep in. The often-cited experiments by George Miller in 1956 suggest that the number of objects an average human can hold in working memory (known as memory span) is between 5 and 9 (7 ± 2 , which Miller described as the "magical number"²⁰, and which is sometimes referred to as Miller's Law). However, although this may be approximately true for a population of college students, for example, memory span varies widely with populations tested, and modern estimates are typically lower, of the order of just 4 or 5 items.

The type or characteristics of the information also affects the number of items which can be retained in short-term memory. For instance, more words can be recalled if they are shorter or more commonly used words, or if they are phonologically similar in sound, or if they are taken from a single semantic category (such as sports, for example) rather than from different categories, etc. There is also some evidence that short-term memory capacity and duration is increased if the words or digits are articulated aloud instead of being read sub-vocally (in the head).

The relatively small capacity of the short-term memory, compared to the huge capacity of long-term memory, has been attributed by some to the evolutionary survival advantage in paying attention to a relatively small number of important things (e.g. the approach of a dangerous predator, the proximity of a nearby safe haven, etc) and not to a plethora of other peripheral details which would only interfere with rapid decision-making.

"Chunking"²¹ of information can lead to an increase in the short-term memory capacity. Chunking is the organization of material into shorter meaningful groups to make them more manageable. For example, a hyphenated phone number, split into groups of 3 or 4 digits, tends to be easier to remember than a single long number. Experiments by Herbert Simon have shown that the ideal size for chunking of letters and numbers, whether meaningful or not, is three. However, meaningful groups may be longer (such as four numbers that make up a date within a longer list of numbers, for example). With chunking, each chunk represents just one of the 5 - 9 items that can be stored in short-term memory, thus extending the

20 Ibid 10 p.30

21 Ibid 10 p.32

total number of items that can be held.

It is usually assumed that the short-term memory spontaneously decays over time, typically in the region of 10 - 15 seconds, but items may be retained for up to a minute, depending on the content. However, it can be extended by repetition or rehearsal (either by reading items out loud, or by mental simulation), so that the information re-enters the short-term store and is retained for a further period. When several elements (such as digits, words or pictures) are held in short-term memory simultaneously, they effectively compete with each other for recall. New content, therefore, gradually pushes out older content (known as displacement), unless the older content is actively protected against interference by rehearsal or by directing attention to it. Any outside interference tends to cause disturbances in short-term memory retention, and for this reason people often feel a distinct desire to complete the tasks held in short-term memory as soon as possible.

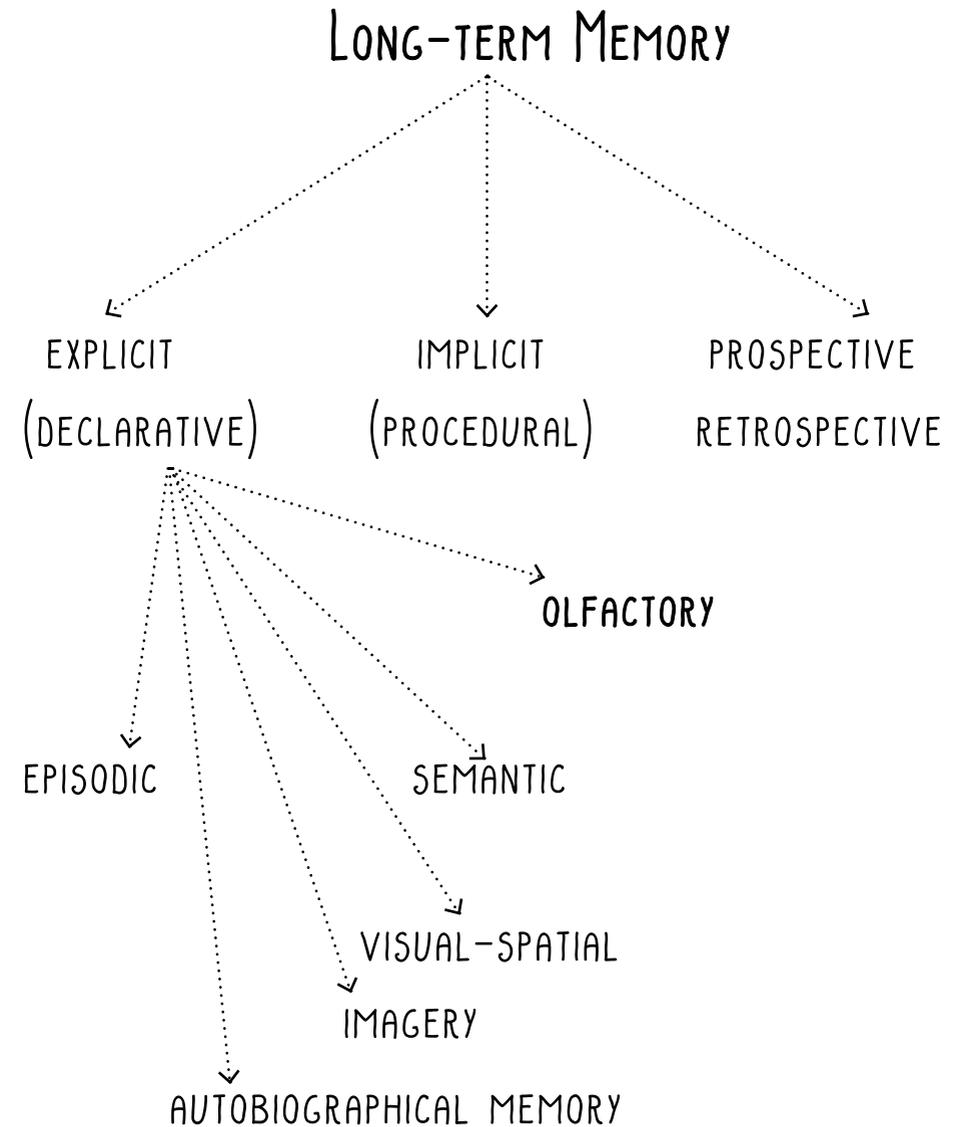
The forgetting of short-term memories involves a different process to the forgetting of long-term memories. When something in short-term memory is forgotten, it means that a nerve impulse has merely ceased being transmitted through a particular neural network. In general, unless an impulse is reactivated, it stops flowing through a network after just a few seconds.

Long-term memory

Typically, information is transferred from the short-term or working memory to the long-term memory²² within just a few seconds, although the exact mechanisms by which this transfer takes place, and whether all or only some memories are retained permanently, remain controversial topics among experts. Richard Schiffrin, in particular, is well known for his work in the 1960s suggesting that all memories automatically pass from a short-term to a long-term store after a short time.

However, this is disputed, and it now seems increasingly likely that some kind of vetting or editing procedure takes place. Some researchers (e.g. Eugen Tarnow²³) have proposed that there is no real distinction between short-term and long-term memory at all, and certainly it is difficult to

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²² Ibid 3 p.18
²³ Ibid 3 p. 19



demarcate a clear boundary between them. However, the evidence of patients with some kinds of anterograde amnesia, and experiments on the way distraction affect the short-term recall of lists, suggest that there are in fact two more or less separate systems.

Long-term memory is, obviously enough, intended for storage of information over a long period of time. Despite our everyday impressions of forgetting, it seems likely that long-term memory actually decays very little over time, and can store a seemingly unlimited amount of information almost indefinitely. Indeed, there is some debate as to whether we actually ever “forget” anything at all, or whether it just becomes increasingly difficult to access or retrieve certain items from memory.

Short-term memories can become long-term memory through the process of consolidation, involving rehearsal and meaningful association. Unlike short-term memory (which relies mostly on an acoustic, and to a lesser extent a visual, code for storing information), long-term memory encodes information for storage semantically (i.e. based on meaning and association). However, there is also some evidence that long-term memory does also encode to some extent by sound. For example, when we cannot quite remember a word but it is “on the tip of the tongue”²⁴, this is usually based on the sound of a word, not its meaning.

Unlike with short-term memory, forgetting occurs in long-term memory when the formerly strengthened synaptic connections among the neurons in a neural network become weakened, or when the activation of a new network is superimposed over an older one, thus causing interference in the older memory.

Over the years, several different types of long-term memory have been distinguished, including explicit and implicit memory, declarative and procedural memory²⁵ (with a further sub-division of declarative memory into episodic and semantic memory) and retrospective and prospective memories.

Long-term memory is divided into two further main types: explicit (or declarative) memory and implicit (or procedural) memory.

Declarative memory (“knowing what”) is memory of facts and events, and refers to those memories that can be consciously recalled (or “declared”).

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24 Ibid 3 p.18

25 Ibid 19 p.20

It is sometimes called explicit memory, since it consists of information that is explicitly stored and retrieved, although it is more properly a subset of explicit memory.

The second type of long term memory is the **procedural memory** (“knowing how”) it is the unconscious memory of skills and how to do things, particularly the use of objects or movements of the body, such as tying a shoelace, playing a guitar or riding a bike. These memories are typically acquired through repetition and practice, and are composed of automatic sensorimotor behaviors that are so deeply embedded that we are no longer aware of them. Once learned, these “body memories” allow us to carry out ordinary motor actions more or less automatically. Procedural memory is sometimes referred to as implicit memory, because previous experiences aid in the performance of a task without explicit and conscious awareness of these previous experiences, although it is more properly a subset of implicit memory.

Declarative memory can be further sub-divided into episodic memory and semantic memory.

Episodic memory²⁶ represents our memory of experiences and specific events in time in a serial form, from which we can reconstruct the actual events that took place at any given point in our lives. It is the memory of autobiographical events (times, places, associated emotions and other contextual knowledge) that can be explicitly stated. Individuals tend to see themselves as actors in these events, and the emotional charge and the entire context surrounding an event is usually part of the memory, not just the bare facts of the event itself.

Semantic memory²⁷, on the other hand, is a more structured record of facts, meanings, concepts and knowledge about the external world that we have acquired. It refers to general factual knowledge, shared with others and independent of personal experience and of the spatial/temporal context in which it was acquired. Semantic memories may once have had a personal context, but now stand alone as simple knowledge. It therefore includes such things as types of food, capital cities, social customs, functions of

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26 Ibid 3 p.20

27 Ibid 3 p.21

objects, vocabulary, understanding of mathematics, etc. Much of semantic memory is abstract and relational and is associated with the meaning of verbal symbols.

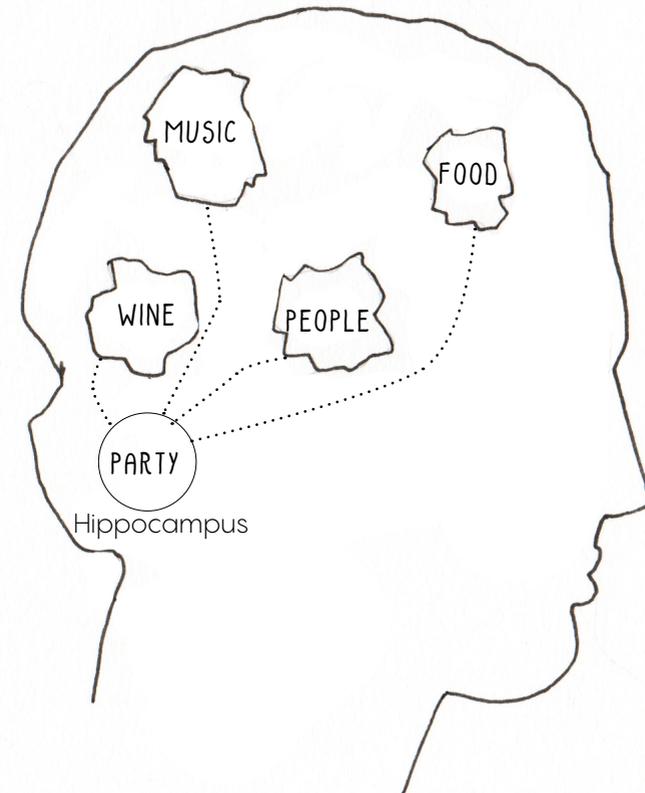
The semantic memory is generally derived from the episodic memory, in that we learn new facts or concepts from our experiences, and the episodic memory is considered to support and underpin semantic memory. A gradual transition from episodic to semantic memory can take place, in which episodic memory reduces its sensitivity and association to particular events, so that the information can be generalized as semantic memory.

For example, memories of people's faces, the taste of the wine, the music that was playing, etc, might all be part of the memory of a particular dinner with friends. By repeatedly reactivating or "playing back" this particular activity pattern in the various regions of the cortex, they become so strongly linked with one another that they no longer need the hippocampus to act as their link, and the memory of the music that was playing that night, for example, can act as an index entry²⁸, and may be enough to bring back the entire scene of the dinner party.

Our spatial memory in particular appears to be much more confined to the hippocampus, particularly the right hippocampus, which seems to be able to create a mental map of space, thanks to certain cells called "place cells". Episodic memory does also trigger activity in the temporal lobe, but mainly in order to ensure that these personal memories are not mistaken for real life.

As humans possess multiple senses, there are multiple ways to sense new information and to encode that information. Raw sensory information comes in as visual, auditory, or olfactory information, as well as in other modalities. However, memories for tastes have not been much studied and because smell so greatly affects taste, separating these modalities would be difficult. Haptic memory, referring to memory for skin sensations, is also not much studied, although kinesthetic memory (for muscular movements) is a well-studied area. Studying memory for information presented in different sensory modalities has revealed both similarities and remarkable differences in how modality affects memory performance.

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28 Ibid 3 p.21



Visual—spatial memory. Memory for scenes and spatial relationships is often referred to as visual—spatial memory or just spatial memory. This type of memory is responsible for humans navigating around town in a car and for squirrels finding buried caches of acorns. Although spatial memory and episodic memory both rely on the hippocampus and surrounding areas, some theorists have argued that spatial memory is different from episodic memory and other relational (semantic) memory systems because it requires the formation of mental maps. On the other hand, Mackintosh argued that spatial learning is not different than other types of associative learning²⁹.

Imagery. Information presented either in events or pictures or words may be represented in the spatial system in imaginal form. One may see a butterfly and remember its appearance using this imaginal coding, or one may hear the word butterfly and be asked to form an image of the named insect. Converting verbal memories to images aids their memorability, either because the image is a deeply meaningful form or because coding information in verbal and imaginal codes provides additional retrieval routes to the information.

Olfactory memory is more difficult to study than visual or auditory memory. Due to limitations of human olfaction, memory for odors has generally been tested with recognition tests, not with recall tests. Olfactory memories seem to differ in some ways from other forms of memory, such as a tendency of smells to be particularly evocative of emotional memories. Indeed, the olfactory nerve is only two synapses away from the amygdala (responsible for certain types of emotions) and three synapses away from the hippocampus (which is critical for long-term memory). Olfactory memory is similar to auditory and visual memory in that performance on recognition tests decreases as the distracter set increases and as distracter similarity to targets increases. However, olfactory memory does differ from other kinds of memory in two respects. First, olfactory memory is highly resistant to forgetting: Multiple studies have shown that recognition performance for odors in a laboratory preparation is only about 5% less after 1 year than after a 30-s delay. Related to this remarkably flat forgetting curve is the

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29 Ibid 3 p.22



finding that olfactory memory is highly resistant to retroactive interference. Proactive interference reduces olfactory memory performance greatly.

A further category of declarative memory, referred to as **autobiographical memory**³⁰, is sometimes distinguished, although really it is just one area of episodic memory. Autobiographical memory refers to a memory system consisting of episodes recollected from an individual's own life, often based on a combination of episodic memory (personal experiences and specific objects, people and events experienced at particular times and places) and semantic memory (general knowledge and facts about the world).

One specific type of autobiographical memory is known as a "flashbulb memory", a highly detailed, exceptionally vivid "snapshot" of a moment or circumstances in which surprising and consequential (or emotionally arousing) news was heard, famous examples being the assassination of John Kennedy, the terrorist bombings on 9/11, etc. Such memories are believed by some to be highly resistant to forgetting, possibly due to the strong emotions that are typically associated with them. However, a number of studies also suggest that flashbulb memories are actually not especially accurate, despite apparently being experienced with great vividness and confidence. An important alternative classification of long-term memory used by some researchers is based on the temporal direction of the memories.

Retrospective and Prospective memory

The last aspect of Long term memory regards retrospective and prospective memory³¹. Retrospective memory is where the content to be remembered (people, words, events, etc) is in the past, i.e. the recollection of past episodes. It includes semantic, episodic and autobiographical memory, and declarative memory in general, although it can be either explicit or implicit. Prospective memory is where the content is to be remembered in the future, and may be defined as "remembering to remember" or remembering to perform an intended action. It may be either event-based or time-based, often triggered by a cue, such as going to the doctor (action) at 4pm (cue),

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30 Ibid 3 p.20

31 Ibid 3 p.16

or remembering to post a letter (action) after seeing a mailbox (cue). Clearly, though, retrospective and prospective memory are not entirely independent entities, and certain aspects of retrospective memory are usually required for prospective memory. Thus, there have been case studies where an impaired retrospective memory has caused a definite impact on prospective memory. However, there have also been studies where patients with an impaired prospective memory had an intact retrospective memory, suggesting that to some extent the two types of memory involve separate processes.

Now that I have this clear, I think it's time to introduce the main character of memories, the human in its complexity of remembering. As an architect I am interested in space and architecture used by the collectivity and I am fascinated to see how social groups are involved in this process. Maurice Halwachs in his book *Collective memory* helps to make clear who is the spectator perceiving memories.

CHAPTER 2

Collective memory

As my research on memory is mainly meant to see how architecture awakens in the spectator certain feelings or *loin* memories, I believe it's time to introduce the spectator in a social environment.

Maurice Halbwachs helped me to see the idea of memory from a completely different point of view. He considers memory as a collective aspect, even the individual episodes.

Maurice Halbwachs was one of the most important figure of the second generation of Durkheimians in the interwar years. He not only contributed in important papers and books in an amazing variety of sociological research but continued the Durkheimian tradition in a creative manner.

Although Halbwachs was a fairly orthodox Durkheimian¹, his admiration for Durkheim stimulated him nevertheless to develop his own creativity rather than be stifled by it. He was one of the first French sociologists to perceive the importance of such foreign scholars as Weber, Pareto, Veblen, and Schumpeter², to whom he devoted long scholarly essays, thus helping his French colleagues to overcome their parochial concentration on homegrown intellectual products. He was an accomplished statistician, coauthoring among other things an introduction to probability theory. He did statistical studies on such topics as the trend of wages in various national settings and comparative urban and rural suicide rates. He did studies of stratification, human ecology, and urban sociology, to mention but a few

1 MHalbwachs 1992, p.2

2 Ibid 1 p.2

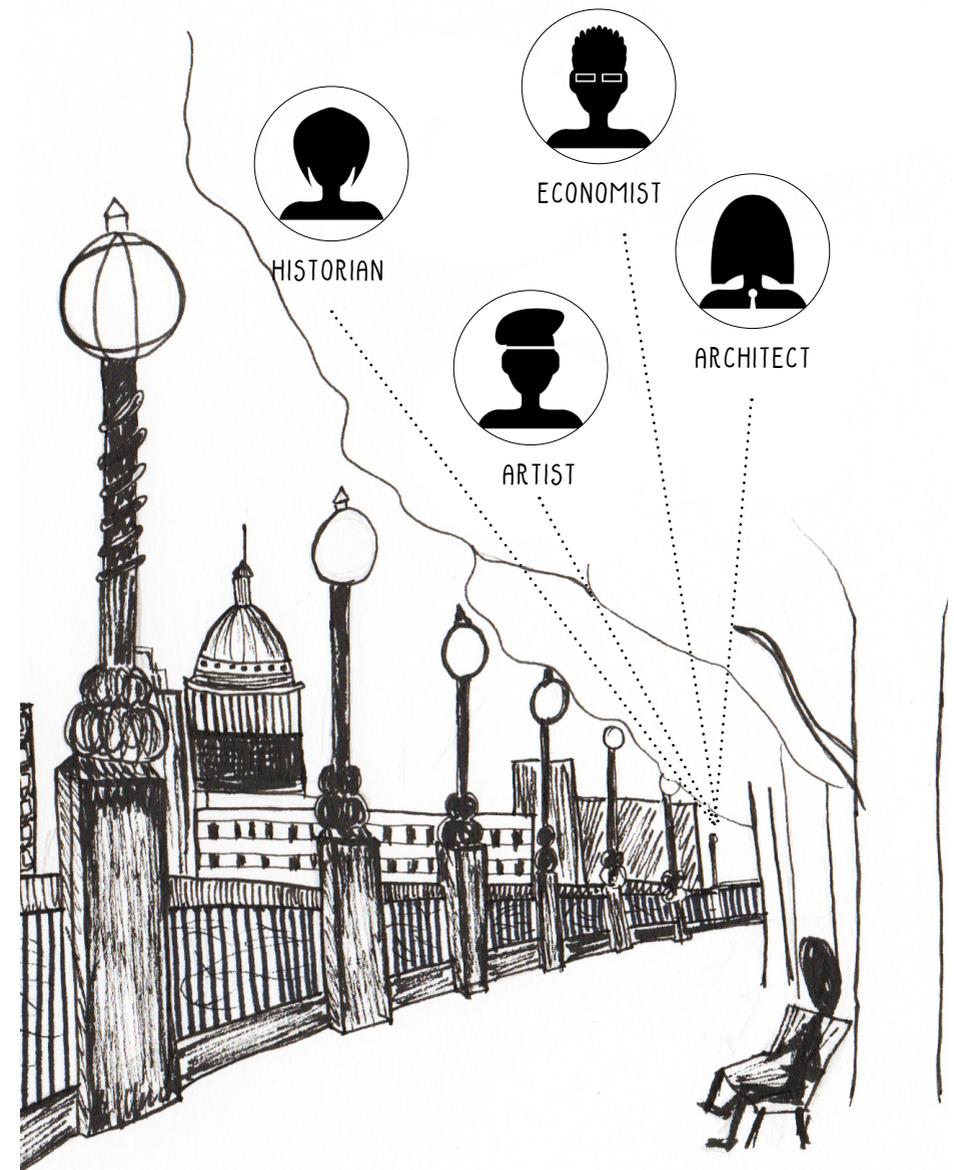
topics that attracted his ever curious mind. Large samples of these writings were translated into English and more people have access to them today. One of his main works is the definition of Collective Memory. I decided to focus on the two books concerning collective memory, the first one *On collective memory* (original title *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*) was written in 1925 and shows his first studies on collective memory. After his death in 1945, in 1950 another book was published. It contains Halbwachs' answers to the main objections and critics of his earlier work on the subject. It's not completely sure if the author himself would have been willing to publish it in what seems to be an unfinished state. The book nevertheless contains many further developments of Halbwachs' thought in regard to such matters as the relation of space and time to collective memory as well as fruitful definitions and applications of the differences between individual, collective, and historical memory³.

Collective memory is the shared pool of knowledge and information in the memories of two or more members of a social group⁴. It's interesting for me how in the second book *The collective memory* he interlaces a strong image by small examples and by explaining what is not memory, what is forgetting, and finally all the aspects of collective memory. The first witness in any past episode we can call is ourself. But when a person says, *I don't believe my own eyes*, he feels himself two beings, one that for sure testified the event and one that somehow didn't see it happening⁵.

Comparing testimony

Our confidence in the accuracy of our impressions increases, of course, if it can be supported by others' remembrances also. When we meet a friend after a long separation, at first have difficulty to re-establish contact with him. However as we start recalling various circumstances related to the same events, we can feel a stronger connection, and we can see the past more sharply because we no longer represent those facts alone but we

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 3 Ibid 1 p.8
 4 M.Halbwachs 1968, p.1
 5 Ibid 4 p. 3



have the addition of seeing them through the eyes of another as well⁶. Comparing testimony is part of collective memory. Our memories remain collective even though only we were participants in the events. In reality we are never alone. Other people don't need to be physically present, since we always carry with us and in us a number of district persons⁷. Here Halbwachs makes a very interesting example for me; if I arrive for the first time in London and take walks with different persons; an architect directs my attention to the character and arrangement of city buildings. A historian tells me why a certain street, house, or other spot is historically noteworthy. A painter alerts me to the colors in the parks, the lines of the palaces and churches, and the play of light and shadow on the walls and facades of Westminster and on the Thames. Even if I were unaccompanied, I need only to have read their varying descriptions of the city or been given advice on what aspects to see. Now suppose I went walking alone. It could be said that I preserve of that tour only individual remembrances, they belong solely to me. Only in appearance I took a walk alone. Passing before Westminster, I thought about my historian friend's comments. Crossing a bridge, I noticed the effects of perspective that were pointed out by my painter friend. Many impressions during my first visit to London (St. Paul's, Mansion House, the Strand, or the Inns of Court) reminded me of Dickens' novels read in childhood, so I took my walk with Dickens. Halbwachs affirms that, in each of these moments, *I cannot say that I was alone, that I reflected alone, because I had put myself in thought into this or that group, composed of myself and the architect or painter*⁸. Other people have had these remembrances in common with me. Moreover, they help me to recall them. I turn to these people, I momentarily adopt their viewpoint, and I re-enter their group in order to better remember. I can still feel the group's influence and recognize in myself many ideas and ways of thinking that could not have originated with me and that keep me in contact with it.

Forgetting due to separation from a group

Halbwachs takes in consideration a professor who has taught for fifteen years at a lycée. He meets one of his former pupils and hardly recognizes

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⁶ Ibid 4 p.2
⁷ Ibid 4 p.3
⁸ Ibid 4 p.3



CLASS

GROUP

IDENTITY

LEARNED CONCEPTS

SHARED CONCEPTS



TEACHER

NO GROUP

ROUTINE

A FUNCTION

DIDN'T THINK ABOUT
THEM AFTERWARDS

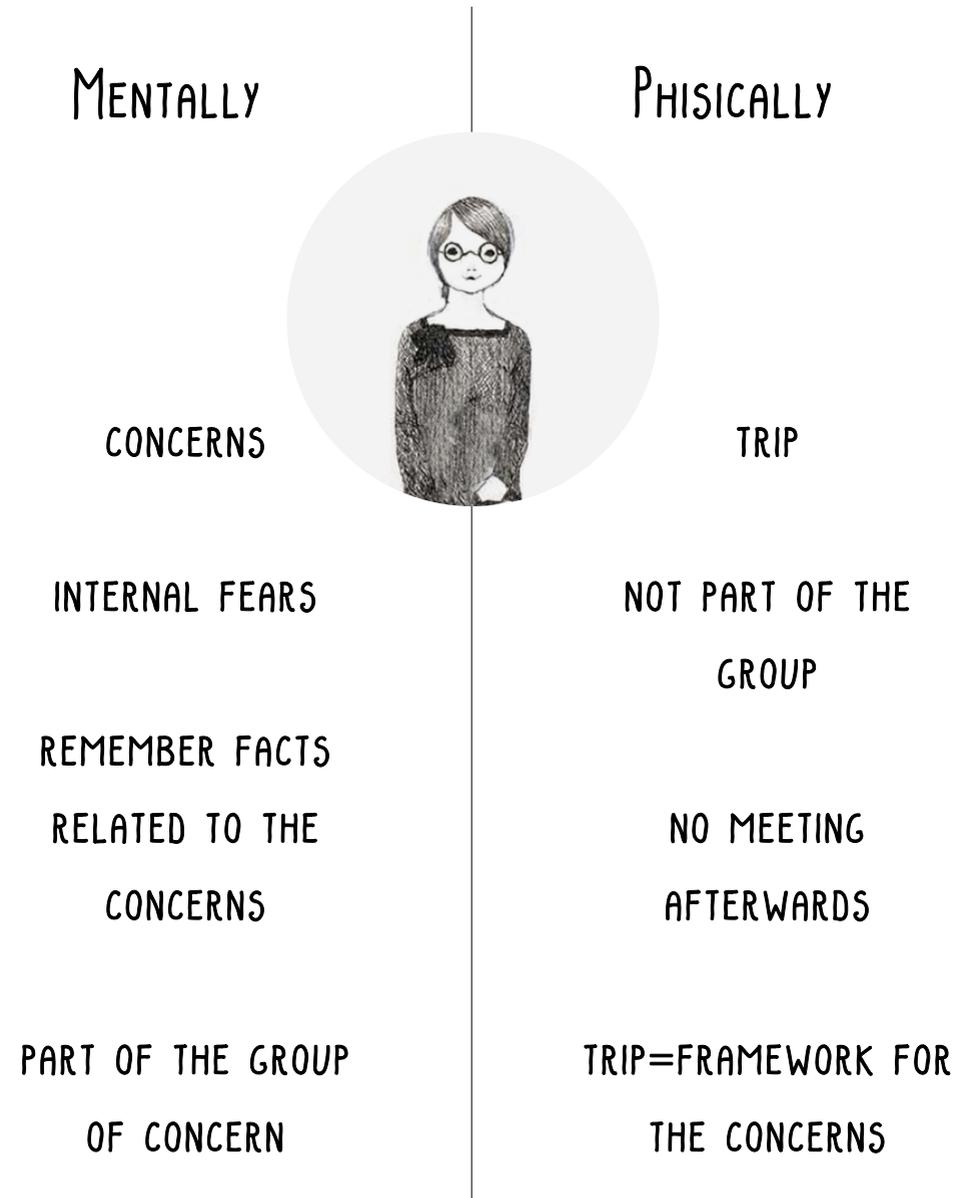
him. The student speaks of his old classmates, recalling where each had to sit in class. He evokes many incidents that took place in his class during that year, the peculiarities or inadequacies of others, portions of certain courses, and certain explanations that particularly interested the students. Even though the pupil's recollections are accurate, it is quite likely that the professor has kept no remembrance of any of this. Moreover, during that school year, the professor was definitely very aware of the character of this class. He could recognize each student and knew about all the events and incidents and built a specific history of its own. How is it possible that he forgot all of that?

Halbwachs gives two main reasons why this happened. First of all the class has a strong identity, the students had almost the same age, they met during the year and recalled together what have happened in the classroom and they also met after the end of the academic year. Also, the teacher have thought them important concepts and overtime while thinking again about this or that concept, they often perceive the teacher who first presented it to them, as well as their classmates who shared its reception.

On the contrary for the teacher the citation is quite different. In class he carried out his function. The technical aspect of his activity is the same for all such classes. In effect, the teacher repeats the same course, and each year of teaching is not so clearly contrasted to any other as each year is for the students. His instruction, from his exhortations, reprimands, and expressions of sympathy for each student to his gestures, accent, and even his jokes, are new to his students, but may be for him only a series of habitual actions deriving from his occupation. None of this can be the basis of a body of remembrances relevant to any specific class. There exists no durable group to which the professor continues to belong, about which he might have occasion to think, and within whose viewpoint he could place himself to remember with it the past. The class is a solid group, for the teacher the class is almost a routine.

This discontinuity happens not only because the group doesn't exist physically anymore but also because we don't think about it anymore or we don't feel part of it⁹.

.....
⁹ Ibid 4 p. 26



The necessity of an affective community

All memories that we have, for Halbwachs, could be placed within the sphere of collective memories, because in one way or the other we belong to a physical or even mental group. Even though, he claims that personal memories that have a strong emotional impact on ourselves are more likely to stay in our memory in time¹⁰.

Suppose we took a trip with a group of friends whom we have not seen since. Our thoughts at the time were both very close and very far from them. Something very personal happened, and we couldn't share this information with them. We talked with them and shared interest in the details of our route and various incidents during the trip. But, simultaneously, our reflections followed other paths unknown to them. We carried with us, feelings and ideas originating in other real or imaginary groups; we conversed inwardly with other persons. We peopled the passing landscape with other human beings, and a certain place or circumstance gained a value not present for our companions. Later on, we might meet one of our traveling companions. He refers to certain particulars of the trip that he remembers. We would also remember those facts if we focused more on the conversations. But we have forgotten everything that he evokes in vain to make us remember. By contrast, we recall what we then experienced unknown to the others, as if this type of remembrance had left a much deeper imprint in our memory because it concerned only ourselves. Thus, in this example, the testimony of others is powerless to reconstitute a forgotten remembrance and, on the other hand, we remember, apparently without the support of others, impressions that we have communicated to no one.

Here the author, confutes himself on the possibility of the existence on an individual memory, that it is contrasted to collective memory and it is sufficient condition to recall remembrances¹¹. But then he explains why even these personal memories are still part of a group.

First of all you have to be really part of the group in order to remember events that happened in that specific time. The person who doesn't remember parts of the trip has been sometimes mentally part of another group with different concerns and he has also been mentally absent during

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10 Ibid 4 p.27

11 Ibid 4 p.28

some events in the voyage.

On the other hand, he can't evoke it because he has shared nothing with his former companions for so long. There is nothing to fault in his memory or theirs. But a larger collective memory, encompassing both his and theirs, has disappeared. They no longer "speak the same language¹²."

But the key of this personal memory is the mental belonging of the person to his original group of people whom he has problems or concerns with. It is as if he had never left that distant group of human beings who are the basis for his concern. He incorporates into that group every element assimilable from his new milieu. By contrast, he holds to the new milieu, considered in itself and from the viewpoint of his companions, with the least significant part of himself. He recalls them only as their persons were included in the framework of his concerns.

On the Possibility of a Strictly Individual Memory

On the basis of the last analysis, its conclusions may permit a reply to the most serious and, moreover, most natural objection to the theory that a person remembers only by situating himself within the viewpoint of one or several groups and one or several currents of collective thought¹³.

Halbwachs affirms that a great many of our remembrances reappear because other persons recall them to us. Even in those instances when others are not physically present and we evoke an event that had a place in the life of our group, it might be granted that we can speak of collective memory because we once have been part of that event, as we still do now in the moment we recall it, from the viewpoint of this group.

But, there are moments when we are physically alone, a person returning home by himself for example, has definitely spent some time *all alone*. Halbwachs affirms that he has been alone in appearance only, because his thoughts and actions during this period are explained by his nature as a social being and his not having ceased for one instant to be enclosed within some group. Even though, there are some remembrances that reappear that can in no way be connected with a group. Moments where we are really alone not only apparently, such remembrances would not be placed

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12 Ibid 4 p.4

13 Ibid 4 p.5

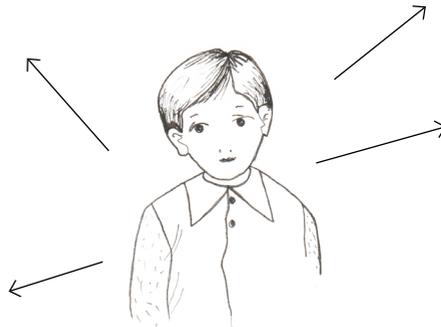
INDIVIDUAL> COLLECTIVE

CHILD

FAMILY

CELLINI

BLONDEL



FAMILY IS SAFETY

SPACE IS DESCRIBED BY FAMILY



FAMILY ACTS
FOR THE CHILD

ALONE FEAR AND

NO RELOCATION



LOOKS FOR THE
ADULT INSIDE HIM

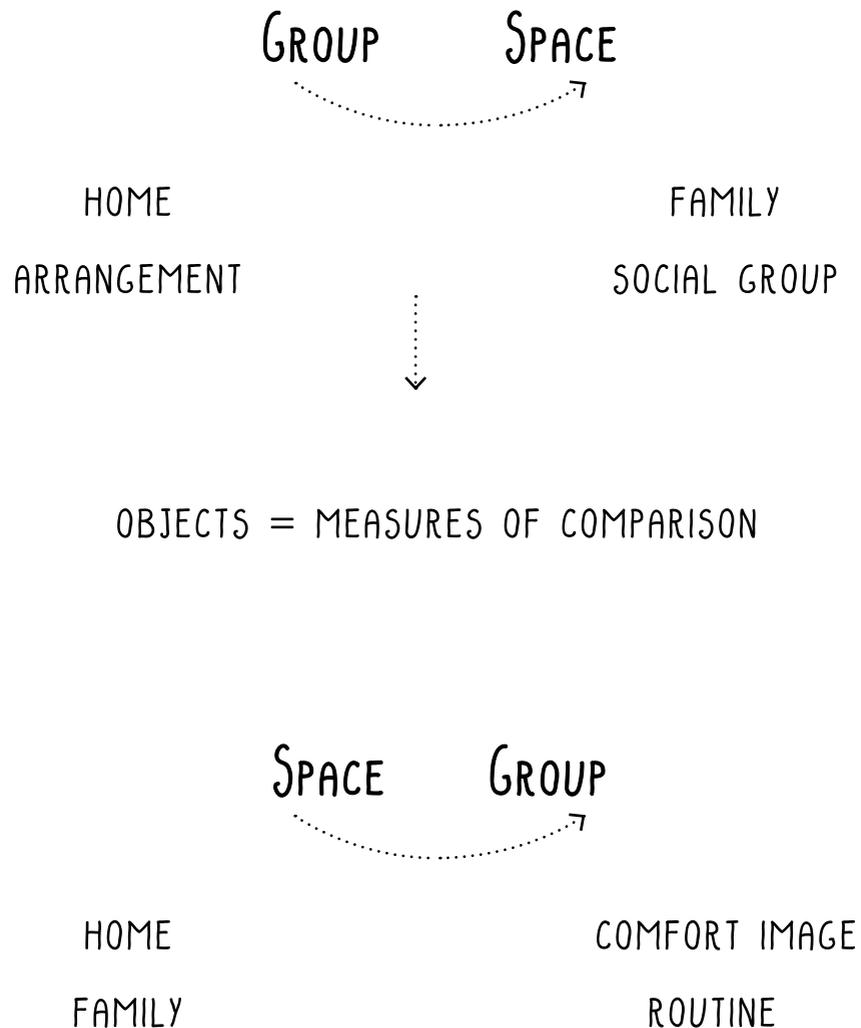
within the thought of any body of individuals, and we would recall them by placing ourself within a viewpoint that could only be our own. Even if this moments are very rear and exceptional, it means that collective memory cannot account for all our remembrances and alone cannot explain the evocation of any remembrances. The author then admits, that at the basis of every remembrance there is, the recollection of a purely individual conscious state that, in order to distinguish it from perceptions permeated by elements of social thought, could be called a "sensory intuition"¹⁴.

Childhood remembrances

Childhood memories are difficult to define for the author. We recall barely nothing of early childhood because our impressions could not fasten onto any support so long as we were not yet a social being. The small examples that Halbwachs makes from Stendhal or even himself, about early childhood memories are not certain to be memories or later narrations from the parents that recall those events. Even if I think of my first memories, most of them are events where I hurt myself by falling or stumble somewhere and I still have scars on my face or knees, I could not really say if those are real memories or reconstructions from what my parents told me later on. One of the stories come from Benvenuto Cellini's Autobiography, he is not certain that it is a remembrance but there are important elements to be taken in consideration.

"I was about three years old. My grandfather, Andrea Cellini, was still living and more. than a hundred years old. One day while the pipe for the sink was being changed, a giant scorpion crept out of it. Unseen by the others, he got to the ground and hid under a bench. I saw it, ran to it, and picked it up. It was so big that its tail stuck out from one side of my hand while its claws stuck out at the other. I ran joyfully, so I am told, to my grandfather saying "Look, grandfather, at my beautiful little crayfish." He immediately recognized it as a scorpion and in his love for me, he almost died from fright. He begged me for it, with many caresses, but I held onto it all the more tightly, crying that I would not give it up to anyone. My father, who was in the house, came running at the outcry. Thunderstruck, he did not know

.....
14 Ibid 4 p.16



how to take that venomous animal from me without its first killing me, when suddenly his eyes fell on a pair of scissors. Armed with them and coaxing me at the same time, he cut off the tail and the claws of the scorpion. Once the danger was over, he considered the episode a good omen.

This episode involved the whole family. Even if we grant that the child recalls this event, the image is still situated within the framework of the family, because it was initially enacted there and has never left it ¹⁵."

But what happens when the family is not present in the event, and they are not even aware of what happened? Charles Blondel writes a letter to Halbwachs giving his experience of an early childhood memory:

"I remember once, as a child, exploring an abandoned house and, in the middle of a dark room, suddenly falling up to my waist into a hole which had water at the bottom. I quite easily recognize when and where the thing occurred, but my knowing is totally subordinated in this case to my remembering.

We can understand that the remembrance occurs as an unlocalized image. He doesn't recall it, therefore, by thinking first about the house, by placing himself in the viewpoint of the family living there. This is all the more true because, as Blondel says, he never told his parents about the incident nor has he thought about it since then. And he adds:

In this instance, while I needed to reconstitute the environment of my remembrance, by no means needed to reconstitute the remembrance itself". In memories of this kind, it seems correct to say that we have a direct contact with the past which precedes and conditions the historical reconstruction."

These two narratives are very different. Cellini indicated time and place, and Blondel doesn't really know how to contextualize the fact. More importantly Cellini is surrounded by his family and has a certain sense of safety, while Blondel not only is far from his family and his familiar environment but he is alone and afraid, and he has to act as an adult in order to get safe. So his memory belongs both to a child and an adult because the child was for the first time in an adult situation. Halbwachs affirms that Blondel was used to judge events by the standards that his parents had taught him, and

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15 B.Cellini p.43

his surprise and fear were caused by his inability to relocate these new experiences in his little world.

Space and Collective memory The group in its spacial framework

Auguste Comte remarked that mental equilibrium was, first and foremost, due to the fact that the physical objects of our daily contact change little or not at all, providing us with an image of permanence and stability¹⁶. They give us a feeling of order and tranquility, like a silent and immobile society unconcerned with our own restlessness and changes of mood. So true is it that our habitual images of the external world are inseparable from our self that the breakdown is not limited to the mentally ill. We can also experience a feeling of uncertainty, as if we left behind our personality, when we move to new surroundings that are not familiar to us and we haven't adapted to them yet.

In the last chapter of his book Maurice Halbwachs, deepens the study of the relationship between people and objects or spaces. Why does a person become attached to objects?

Left aside the considerations about convenience and aesthetics, our physical environment bear our own imprint. Our home, with its specific furniture, arrangement and room decor, will recall us family. Our tastes in arrangement and objects will explain our attachment to specific social group. This everyday objects, circulate within the group, they are the measure of comparison, they show the fashion of the moment and recall older customs and social distinctions. In a vintage store, different ages and social classes come face to face in a whole new world of objects from this and that moment in time. Of course as soon as you see them, you try to contextualize them, or interpret their meaning as their style, the type of decor or arrangement as some kind of new language to be interpreted. If this objects grouped appropriately they will be the image of life common to many people. Even if these objects don't speak, we can understand them because they are easily explained.

On the other hand, the home of a family, imposes a comforting image of continuity of the family itself. It represents the routine of the everyday life.

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16 Ibid 4 p.160

Not only the group shapes the space, but it also adapts around its physical surroundings. If a group changes location, they will still be united because they have the image of their old home.

Halbwachs adds:

"The place a group occupies is not like a blackboard, where one may write and erase figures at will. No image of a blackboard can recall what was once written there. The board could not care less what has been written on it before, and new figures may be freely added. But place and group have each received the imprint of the other. Therefore every phase of the group can be translated into spatial terms, and its residence is but the juncture of all these terms. Each aspect, each detail, of this place has a meaning intelligent only to members of the group, for each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society, at least of what is most stable in it¹⁷."

So, space and group have a unilateral relationship, they influence one each other. And if something extraordinary happens then neither the group neither the space will remain the same.

Stones of the city

Strangely enough, if a major event happens in a nation, a national revolt for example, the citizens in the city will continue to read the newspaper, drink their coffee at their favorite café but all these troubles happen in a familiar setting that appears totally unaffected. Might it not be the contrast between the impassive stones and such disturbances that convinces people that, after all, nothing has been lost, for walls and homes remain standing?

The inhabitants would pay disproportionate attention to what Halbwachs called the *material aspect of the city*¹⁸. The great majority may be more sensitive to a certain street being torn up, or a certain building or home being razed, than to the gravest national, political, or religious events. The passivity of these people make them be more attached to their own narrow circle than to what happens beyond its immediate horizon. The immobility of things gives them an idea of wellbeing. Same happens when in smaller groups disagreements, death or passion intervene. Under a big personal

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17 Ibid 4 p.163

18 Ibid 4 p.133

shock, it's quite comforting seeing life going on around us as nothing had happened. It is as society around us is formed of many particles that obey to the law of inert nature and even if their insensitivity may insult us it also calms and steadies us.

The best way of understanding the influence the physical environment of the city exerts on groups that have slowly adapted to it is to observe smaller cities lying outside the mainstream of modern life where local traditions are more stable. Habits related to a specific physical setting resist the forces tending to change them. This resistance best indicates to what extent the collective memory of these groups is based on spatial images. Even if the group evolves rapidly the surroundings change appearance slowly.

History indeed changes the city, new buildings come next to older and smaller ones, new roads, new city plans, but although older districts, encircled by newer and taller buildings, seem to perpetuate the life of former times, they convey only an image of decay, and were their former inhabitants to return, it is doubtful that they would even recognize them.

But even if stones are movable, relationships established between stones and men are not so easily altered. If we suppose to demolish these houses and streets, the stones and other materials will not object, but the groups will. What matters is the fact that the design made by the original people was embodied in a material structure. The force of local tradition comes forth from this physical object, which serves as its image.

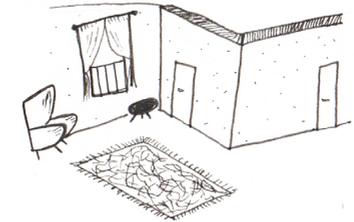
The implacement and displacement

If the spacial framework of a group is partly demolished or if the group has to change location, it will indeed affect the personal habits, some may not find their picturesque bench in the park or favorite spot, but this individual sorrow will not affect the collectivity, for the collectivity will have the force of the tradition to reshape the space to its own habits. New second-hand shops will rise after some time or certain crafts or small businesses that are not so suited anymore to the modern city. Halbwachs affirms that for some of them to loose the walls, their location in the pocket of a certain street, or in the shadow of some wall or church, would be to lose the support of the tradition that recommends them and gives them their unique reason for existence.

GROUP> SPACE

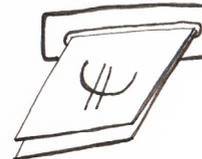


DISTRICT

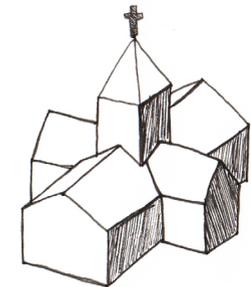


HOUSE

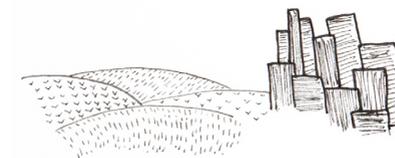
GROUP> NO SPACE



ECONOMIC SPACES



RELIGIOUS SPACES



LAW SPACES

Groups without an apparent spatial basis: legal, economic and religious.

So far Halbwachs considered groups that are united because they are together in the same area. A family is also a small society but living under the same roof or a mass of individuals living alongside one another. It goes without saying that this is not the only condition necessary for the existence of such groups, although it is an obvious and essential one. Other types of groups can arise in different conditions. Legal relationships are based on the individuals having the same rights. Economic groups are based on the position in production, types of remuneration and distribution of goods not on the space. The bond is even stronger with the religious groups. They establish invisible relationships between their members and emphasize the inner man¹⁹. Indeed they subdivide the latter according to rules that take no account of spatial configuration. Therefore; the fact that men live in the same place and remember its image never suffices for the discovery and recollection of the group to which they belong.

Legal groups

While describing the legal groups, it appears to me how Halbwachs is a man of his time. He makes examples that may be today are more unusual considering our lifestyle. For the author it is more difficult to describe this groups if we have to avoid the spatial imagery. We can relate to the rights and obligations, but in former times the two were strictly connected, for a slave was bound to the soil, only by joining an urban community he could escape slavery²⁰. In the Middle Ages knowing a man's habitation meant for the others to know his legal status. According to Halbwachs law must in its applications disregard local circumstances. But collective thought is bound to these very circumstances and thus finds the law irrelevant.

In the mind of a rural commissioner or village mayor, meadows, fields, woods, farms, homes, all evoke property rights, sales contracts, easements, mortgages, leases, a whole series of legal actions and situations that a

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19 Ibid 4 p.141

20 Ibid 4 p.145

simple image of this land as it appears to a stranger would not contain, but that are superimposed on it in the legal memory of the peasant group. These remembrances are connected with different parts of the land. They mutually reinforce one another because the parcels of land to which they relate are side by side. These remembrances are preserved in group thought because they are founded on the land, because the image of the land endures outside them and may be recaptured at any moment.

Economic groups

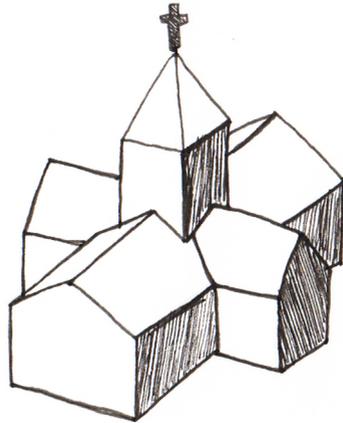
For the economic exchanges it is different because we cannot see a worker's labor or a doctor's skills, they are not objects that occupy a definite space. Nevertheless, services are given to the citizens and tasks are executed and their value depends on the fact that they are executed in a specific office or factory. Financial and banking activities are placed within a spacial framework and specifically in the institutions where we must go to sign papers or withdraw funds. We know just some of the activities that take place there but the notary public or mayor or union secretary are selected as examples because their memory has to explain all the other activities and connections between the occupations. They represent the focus of a memory that is itself collective and the fact that it is based on an image of a certain place proves that the same is true for all members. This is why we no more need to visit the country to know that a farm is both a place of habitation and work and we need to walk the streets of an ancient city and read signs saying "Tanners Street" or "Goldsmiths Street" to recall a time when occupations were grouped by location²¹.

The small groups within the economic bound are based on a spatial framework. We know that the large cities may have a predominance of industry or varying grades of poverty and wealth and almost every part of the urban landscape bears the imprint of one social class or another.

Religious groups

Religions are spread in the world because ideas rooted the land because communities of believers distributed everywhere. Today we may visit

.....
21 Ibid 4 p.144



DISTINCTION SACRED/PROFANE

CONTINUITY IN TIME

GUARANTEE OF FAITH

SYMBOLIC

holypplaces in a disrespectful way only because we don't know the meaning of a specific stone, engraving or symbol. Originally those places were full of religious meaning in every altar, state of pictures. As Halbwachs states: "We fashion a well-nigh inaccurate conception of the way their memory arranged remembrances of ceremonies and prayers, of all the actions and thoughts that make up the devout life, if we are ignorant of the fact that each found its place in a specific location²²."

The insertion of collective memory into space

Every collective memory happens in a specific space, and while our impressions and associations are ephemeral and may leave nothing behind in our minds, we can recapture the past only by understanding our physical surroundings. We must focus on the space if we want a category of remembrances to reappear²³.

Halbwachs affirms that every group has its own space but it might be argued that this fact alone doesn't explain how the image of a place conjures up thoughts about an activity of the group associated with that place. While each mental image has a framework we cannot give for granted the reverse; the framework doesn't evoke the picture.

This objection would be valid if we take in consideration the space as a totality of colors and shapes; this is not how we perceive space. We would need to know how a genuinely isolated man from society would perceive space. Or we should take the point of view of a physicist or a painter that focuses on the shades of a river bank or a landscape. In any case it is very unnatural, remembrances of interest to other groups cannot find a place to be preserved in the space of the scientist or painter since they are constructed by the very elimination of all other spaces. "But this does not prove that these other spaces are less real than those of the scientist or painter²⁴". Various groups will perceive different remembrances from the same space.

Religious groups

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22 Ibid 4 p. 137

23 Ibid 4 p.146

24 Ibid 4 p 147

Let's take in consideration now the religious groups. They may recall certain remembrances on viewing specific locations, buildings or objects. The mere distinction between sacred and profane is realized materially in space. While entering the church the believer knows he will recover a mental state he experienced many times. The church is place where the community gathers in a spatial and mental unity, it keeps remembrances formed and maintained there through the ages. "For all saint is saintly"²⁵ the christian will evoke God in other ordinary spaces as well but the faithful experience need to congregate periodically in buildings consecrated to holiness, it's the mental disposition common to the faithful when gathered in a place of worship that provides the most important basis and content of the religious collective memory. There is no doubt of its preservation at consecrated areas, for as soon as we return to such areas, we recover it.

Even if the building remains closed and silent for some periods when the community gathers there is no reason that something has changed, the physical building of the church gives the guarantee for their faith, and a religious group more that any other the support of some objects, it must guarantee its equilibrium through physical things and in given areas of space.

The church is also the place that protects from the profane, its interior differers from any other collective space, its arrangement reflects devotional needs and is inspired by the traditions and thoughts of the religious group. A church is like a book whose printed characters are understandable only to the very few. It demands of members a certain physical distribution and bodily posture as it deeply engraves in their minds images that become fixed and immutable as the rituals, prayers, and dogmas. Some areas may be separate from the rest. Finding images of God, apostles, and saints everywhere, surrounded by lights, ornaments, and ecclesiastical vestments, the faithful picture the sacred beings, heaven, and the transcendental truths of dogma in such a framework.

That's why the altars of the ancient Gods must be destroyed in order to obliterated from the memory of men, whereas each time a new church is raised, the religious group feels that it grows stronger and stronger.

But every religion has a history. It usually comes from tradition from

.....
25 Ibid 4 p.140

far in the past in a specific location. In most cases we know about that place not because we visited it but just because it is possible to do so, it is guaranteed by testimony and witnesses. If we take for example the christian religion. The Crusaders, arriving in Jerusalem took possession of the holy places, they were not satisfied with the locations from the Bible, they also took the places that were chosen quite arbitrary, later on when the pilgrims started worship those spaces new traditions were born. Today it is difficult to distinguish those remembrances of places going back to the early centuries of the Christian era from everything the religious imagination has since added. Since places participate in the stability of material things themselves, some similar procedure is a primary condition of memory itself: the collective thought of the group of believers has the best chance of immobilizing itself and enduring when it concentrates on places, sealing itself within their confines and molding its character to theirs²⁶.

In conclusion, most groups engrave their form in some way upon the soil and retrieve their collective remembrances within the spatial framework thus defined. In other words, there are as many ways of representing space as there are groups.

This said about the studies on memory, I feel ready to dive into the mysterious world of poetry and arts. More importantly how memory and architecture are considered through the eyes of the poets and artists in time.

.....
26 Ibid 4 p.148

CHAPTER 3

Arts and Memory

"An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory, this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was myself. [...] And once I had recognized the taste of the crumb of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-flowers which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like the scenery of a theatre to attach itself to the little pavilion, opening on to the garden, which had been built out behind it for my parents (the isolated panel which until that moment had been all that I could see); and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I was sent before lunch on, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine¹."

The passage of Marcel Proust is the perfect definition of how I conceive the strength of memory. The madeleine can be a sound, a smell or a space, or also a building. It leads you to a past time, happy moment of a strong

.....
1 M.Proust, p.80

memory related to that feeling.

Although Marcel's moment with the madeleine ultimately leads to the recapturing of memories of his childhood village of Combray, it is not an instantaneous process. Proust actually faces a struggle to make sense of his feelings at the moment of tasting the madeleine. Further tastings don't work, at least not initially. "It is plain that the truth I am seeking lies not in the cup but in myself²." The only way forward lies in deep, repeated plunges of introspection, after which, eventually, something starts to stir: "I can feel it mounting slowly; I can measure the resistance, I can hear the echo of great spaces traversed³." It is as though the gustatory memory needs to make contact with the visual one, and they take some time to meet. The struggle that Proust feels the first time he tries the madeleine in the tea, is what fascinates me the most, when you see a shape that is familiar and you struggle to contextualize it; when you finally find the original environment the ocean of memories and images in your head you can almost feel the atmosphere of the moment, like an imagery trip in time.

In this chapter I want to dive into the literature and see other aspects of memory that cannot be shown by science or sociology in particular in relation to architecture.

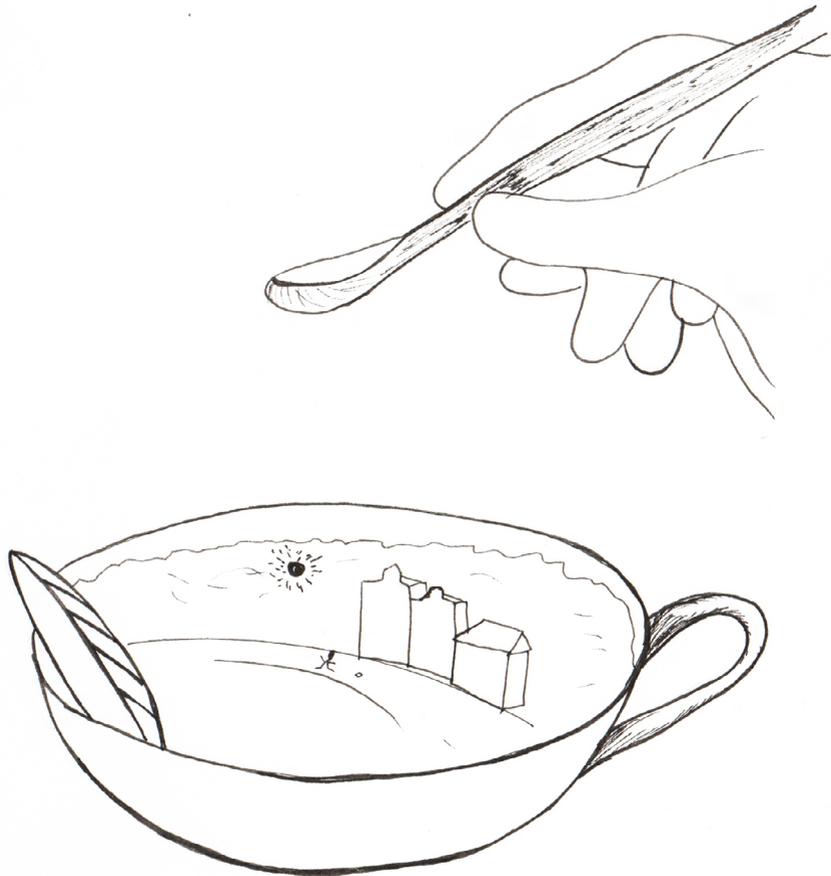
As an architect I believe in the memory of the images, in Chapter 1 we saw how etymologically (see p.3) the word memory derives from latin "mindful" or "remembering" but the legend that I prefer the most comes from the greek root of the word memory- mneme, by the goddess Mnemosyne⁴. The myth wants Mnemosyne to be the Titan daughter of Uranus, she was also a goddess of time. She represented the wrote memorization required to preserve the stories of history and the sagas of myth before the introduction of writing. In this role she was the mother of the Muses who were originally patron goddesses of poets of the oral tradition. Memory was the mother of arts and poetry. Ancient poets used to invoke a muse to aid them in telling the story. I clearly remember the start of Iliad by Homer , he asks the muse to help him narrate of the rage of Achilles, the greatest Greek hero to fight in the Trojan War.

"Sing, O Muse! in what ill-fated hour

.....
2 Ibid 1 p.80

3 Ibid 1 p.80

4 M. Gislou; R.Palazzi, p.458



*Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended power
Latona's son a dire contagion spread ⁵,[...]"*

Homer asks memory to come and help him to narrate the story. This is how I understand memory a well, it must be a force that helps us to go forward with we already have in our mind, as a poet, artist or architect.

Invisible cities

The vision of Proust and Homer are very poetical, but there are also other aspects that are more problematic especially in the relation with architecture or space. The book "Invisible cities" by Italo Calvino is an example of a very colorful image of memory, that faces some risks as well.

The book explores imagination and the imaginable through the descriptions of cities by an explorer, Marco Polo. The book is framed as a conversation between the aging and busy emperor Kublai Khan, who constantly has merchants coming to describe the state of his expanding and vast empire, and Polo. The majority of the book consists of brief prose poems describing 55 fictitious cities, all of them with women names, that are narrated by Polo, many of which can be read as parables or meditations on culture, language, time, memory, death, or the general nature of human experience. Short dialogues between Khan and Polo are interspersed every five to ten cities discussing these topics. These interludes between the two characters are not less poetically constructed than the cities, and form a framing device that plays with the natural complexity of language and stories. In one key exchange late in the book, Khan prods Polo to tell him of the one city he has never mentioned directly, his hometown. Polo's response: "Every time I describe a city, I am saying something about Venice⁶."

Calvino blends real and imagined details into a concoction of seemingly irreverent tales. Invisible Cities is a travelogue to places that do not exist. It is a work that brushes aside conventions of form and narrative to ruminate on ideas of memory and place, touching on everything from trajectory of

⁵ Homer, p 234

⁶ I. Calvino 2015, Introduction



civilizations to the limits of communication. What makes these short stories transcend mere gimmickry is Calvino's sheer writing prowess and scope of imagination. Revelling in wordplay and ambiguous meanings, each fantastical tale nevertheless contains some kernel of insight, demands to be mulled upon and relished, to be revisited again and again. I think I read this book a hundred times and not even once. Sometimes I just browse the book randomly looking for some insight and inspiration, every time that I read one of the tales I feel the need to draw what I'm reading in order to understand it better.

Calvino himself called the book, one last love poem to the cities⁷. Invisible cities are a dream that take birth from the Unlivable cities⁸. He makes a very structured division of modern cities in 11 categories: memory, signs, desire, subtle cities, exchanges, cities and the eyes, names, cities and the dead, sky, continuous cities and hidden cities. For every category he narrates the story of five different cities. The cities of memory are also 5 but I am going to focus on the cities that show a different face of memory: Diomira, Zaira and Zora.

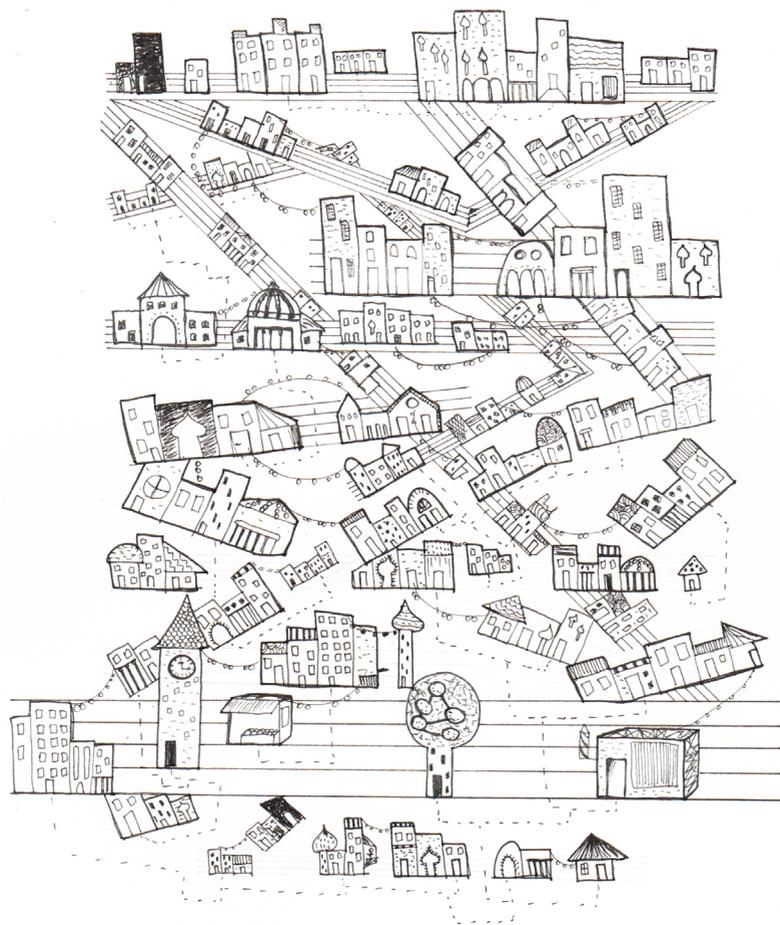
Zaira and Relationships

Marco Polo says it's useless to describe all the marvelous features of this city, he would be able to describe *how high are the bastions and how many steps make up the streets rising*⁹, but it would have no point to know about them since the city doesn't consist of this. It's the relationship between measurements and of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamppost and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper's swaying feet; the line strung from the lamppost to the railing opposite and the festoons that decorate the course of the queen's nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn. Zaira is a big maze of shapes and stories from the past, it's difficult to read the city. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all of Zaira's past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the *lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the*

7 I. Calvino 1983, p.37-42

8 Ibid 7

9 Ibid 6 p.10



ZORA

flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls¹⁰.

In this city I found the concept of memory that interests me the most: the relationship between the parts of the city, the past and human activity. The past is hidden like the lines of the hand but it has its own signs in the structures of the city and its possible to read them only by knowing the past. Memory is important but it stays alive only if the stories continue to be told otherwise the layers are overlapped by something different. Part of the memory are also the three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen's illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock¹¹.

Zora and Freezed Memory

Zora is an unforgettable city for an unusual reason. Every visitor would remember everything, Zora has the quality of remaining in your memory point by point, in its succession of streets, of houses along the streets, though nothing in them possesses a special beauty or rarity. It is constructed in a very schematic way, like a pattern everything has its own place. It's secret is how everything is organized in a musical score where not even a note can change spot or be altered.

This city which cannot be expunged from the mind is like an armature, a honeycomb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember: names of famous men, virtues, numbers, vegetable and mineral classifications, dates of battles, constellations, parts of speech. It's like a statue in marble of the image of the city, and everything stays the same, always.¹²

The fate of this city is the most tragic of the, memory cities. Even if the traveler wanted to visit the city now it's impossible. Forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered, Zora has languished, disintegrated, disappeared. The earth has forgotten her.

I think this city is the example of what happens if we are too attached to the memory. If everything has to stay the same, then there is no space to

10 Ibid 6 p.10

11 Ibid 6 p.10

12 Ibid 6 p.14



The architect's dream, Thomas Cole, 1840

change and therefore to grow and to become something else.

Zora shows one of the risks of being too connected with the memory. This risk can be tied to architecture, arts or just everyday life choices.

Hal Foster calls the phenomenon of *frozen memory* "the problem of the past seen as a picture"¹³: *in the modern times, society has the inability to grasp the past except scenographically as a series of pictures or tableaux and project the future except in terms of entropy or apocalypse*¹⁴.

Modern society tends to freeze the past and by putting pieces of art, objects or pictures in museums, that Foster defines as a rhetorical *theatre of exclusive memory performed strictly for us*, they occlude more than clarify historical practices. Moreover architecture is the most emblematic of periods of history visualized as a sequence of pictures or a series of monuments. Just like the painting by Thomas Cole the Architect's Dream, that is more of a diagram of the dynastic or imperial model of history. It is a model in which the architectural- the monumental- stands in for the historical. This fetishism of the monument serves two purposes, to commemorate and disavow historical change. The main character the architect on a central stand gazes at a vanishing point having behind him a series of iconic architectures from the main historical cultures: from the pyramids to the greek and roman architectures. The figure of the architect can almost be compared to the Angelus Novus by Paul Klee and Walter Benjamin:

*"A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."*¹⁵

Memory is about looking to the future with the eyes of the past. Hal Foster

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13 O.Bouman, p.159

14 Ibid 13 p.159

15 W.Benjamin, p.120

raises an important problem and I think that it is easy to fall into the freezing of the past just like the city of Zora did but at the same time the solution to this would be knowing those images, what they stand for, it's an old Freudian problem. In an early passage in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud relates the dream to the rebus in order to suggest the folly of a pictorial reading opposed to a linguistic interpretation¹⁶. You cannot understand what happens in your dreams just by looking at the crazy images that come out of them. Foster is against the cult of monuments just for the sake of them I think that having the monuments sustained by the knowledge of the meaning, gives them a reason to exist.

Memory needs a meaning, on the other hand the memory model by Craik and Lockhart is based on the deepening of the meaning in order to endure in time (see p.17)

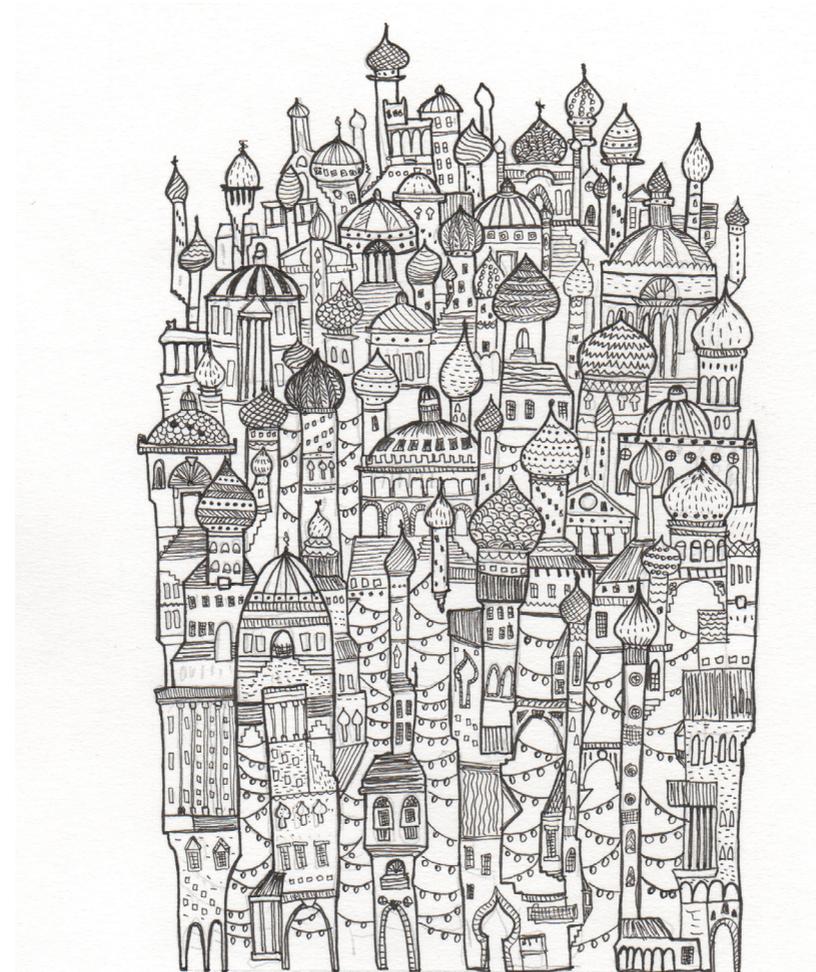
We study history from a young age not just for the sake of knowing facts. During high school almost every beginning of academic year there was some pupil asking why we study ancient or medieval history, facts and people that do not matter so much today, the answer that my history teachers usually gave made think a lot: only by knowing the reasons why certain tragedies happen we can avoid to make them happen again.

Diomira and Nostalgia

Freezing memory has as a next consequence the nostalgia just like the next city from the invisible cities. Diomira is the city of sixty silver domes, bronze statues of all gods, streets paved with lead, a crystal theater, a golden cock that crows each morning on a tower. It has the scenario of a fairytale but as all the description of the cities by Calvino, after a powerful image of the city he describes a tragedy that occurs in the idyllic environment. All the beauties of the city seem already familiar to the visitor, who has seen them in other cities as well.

Still this city has something special and the magic happens only when the human being comes in this scenario: "But the special quality of this city for the man who arrives there on a September evening, when the days

.....
16 Ibid 13 p.159



DIOMIRA



Angelus Novus, Paul Klee, 1920

are growing shorter and the multicolored lamps are lighted all at once at the doors of the food stalls and from a terrace a woman's voice cries ooh!, is that he feels envy toward those who now believe they have once before lived an evening identical to this and who think they were happy, that time¹⁷."Suddenly everything takes life, only architecture was a mere still nature.

What makes Diomira fix in your memory was her beauty in September sunny days, when the darkness started to descend and the first multicolored lights illuminate the perfection of the shapes, in a game of reflexes. When the traveler hears the astonishment of a woman in front of the wonders of Diomira, a well-being sensation persuades him, recalling past moments of happiness. In this case memory is stimulated by the sensations of the visitor. Nostalgia is presented as part of the process of memory, but it's a positive feeling in the eyes of the human. The real key of this city is not only the architecture but the contact between the traveler and the wonders of the city, that produce a nostalgia kind of memory. The poetical nostalgia in the eyes of Diomira's visitor is a burning feeling, but nostalgia can also be a negative aspect for memory. Hal Foster expresses his opinion on this connecting to the picturized past, our tendency to reduce the past (personal and collective) to so many tableaux for esesthetic contemplation, which, take often the way of melancholy and nostalgia.

In conclusion, memory has to push us to the future like a living force. In this three chapters I had an overview of what is memory, how it works, and what risks you may take if you look too much to the past. Now it is time to make my own statement of what is memory.

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17 Ibid 6 p.7

CHAPTER 4

Memory maps

Conclusion

With the memory maps I introduce the building of interest in my anatomical model. The Cinema Palace in Maastricht, fascinated me since the first days here, when I have got lost in the small streets of the center to find the hidden wonders of the city. Every time I went in front of that building I imagined fantastic worlds inside, it was the testimony and theatre not only for the movies but also for lots of human tragedies and stories. From 1927, year of construction, that massive facade faced lots of changes in the city, in history and in itself of course.

It was the communicative features of the facade that first made me think of how I perceived and imagined all the history behind the building and what precisely made me think and rebuilt a certain scenario around the Cinema Palace; in the end what and where is the memory of this building? After this research I feel like the real answer is very personal. The definition of collective memory of Maurice Halbwachs made it quite clear for me, the fact that we tend to create and be part of certain social groups makes us collect the aspects of certain periods as well, collective memory also helps to convey certain ideas in time and through generations.

In order to come to a personal definition of memory, I started with the observation of the Cinema Palace, and I tried to put together all the associations, fantasies and memories that I had connected with that building. From October until December 2017, I went in front of the building several times a week and I took notes of things that I noticed for the first time, smells or general atmospheres around the building. This observation

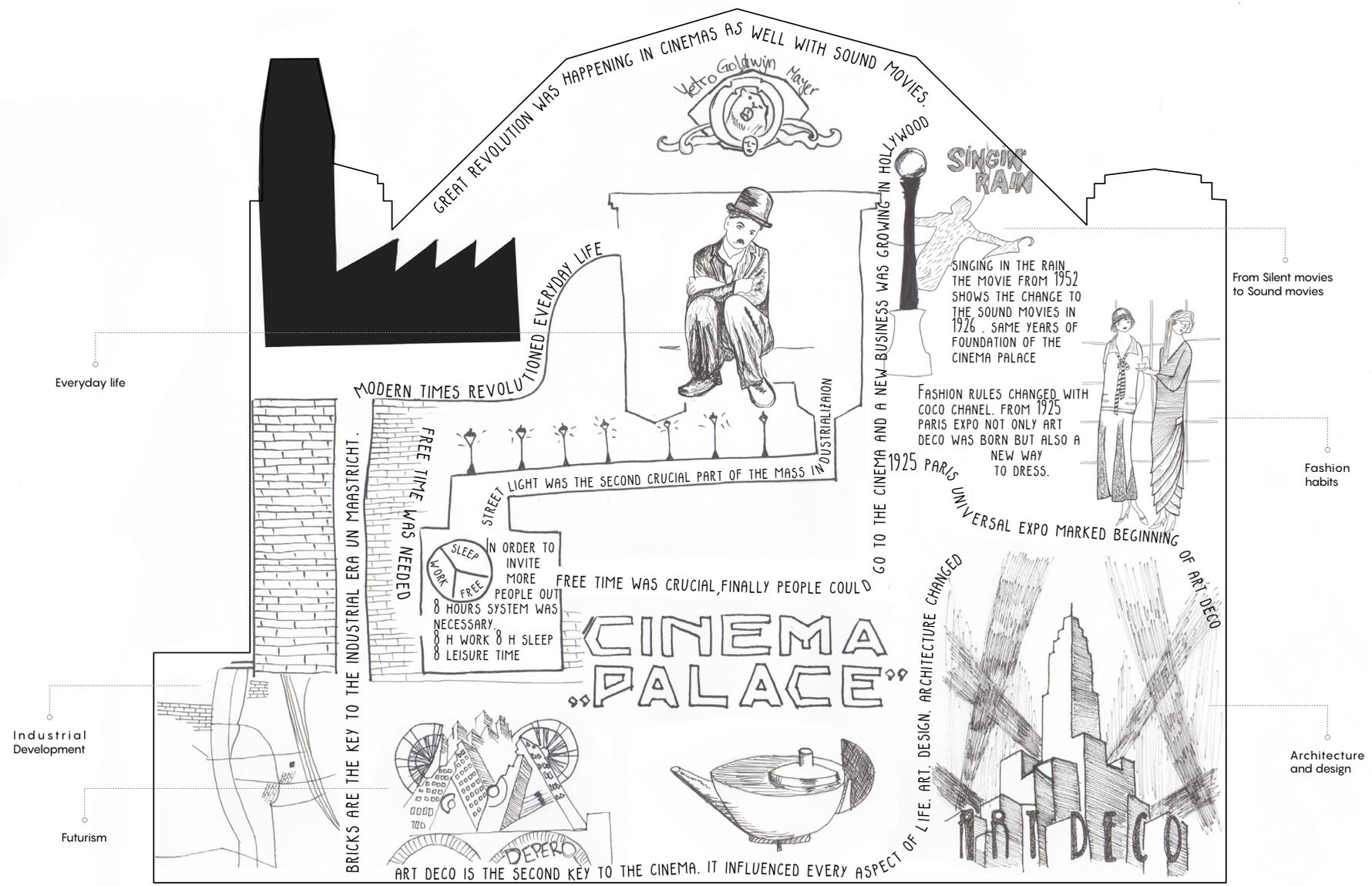


process helped me to have a catalogue of images that I had associated mainly with the facade. The fact that I had some time to spend next to the building made me play with some elements that took me back to my childhood in Moldavia, or I thought of the years when I studied cinema in high school and everything that I knew about the first years of the cinema with Charlie Chaplin, the passage from silent to sound movies and the later years that took us to the blockbusters from today. On one hand, it was very interesting for me, as well, to explore and visualize, my own mind and images I had already there. On the other hand I needed a certain structure in order to give a shape to these images and narrate them.

First of all I needed to know what is memory and how does it work in our heads. Here is where the definition of Atkinson and Shiffrin (see page 14) helped me to understand that not only episodes from a long time ago are memories, but also associations and even the day-to-day observations where memories to become. More importantly the architectural elements that made me go back to a certain period or idea where *index elements* (see page 23) that pushed me towards that episode.

In this way I made my own definition of memory in connection with the Cinema Palace. I grouped my memories in three categories: childhood associations, cultural association, and first impressions. In order to narrate my stories I mapped the episodes within the facade of the building, as the facade was the first thing that attracted me, it had a strong language of the art-deco period and it was definitely the only part of the building I could freely make my observation on.

Starting with the cultural associations from the facade. Everything I thought about was the general atmosphere around the building in the 20's, the fact that I was outside made me contextualize the building in the beginning of the century. The structure is made in bricks because in the early 1900 Maastricht had its industrial revolution. The main entrance has a very strong art-deco lettering title that awakens the imagery of the fashion of those days, of the design of everyday objects and art. Moreover the mapping was also a way to research more on what I already knew in order to be precise in my memories, in this way I had even more information about some facts. For example, I knew the general story of *Singing in the Rain*, was about the passage from the silent to sound movies, but by watching it again I noticed more details, and the movie is from 1952 but it is set in 1927 when this change took place. Charlie Chaplin, not only is one of the main characters of that period but he also depicted in his movies the social



MEMORY IS THE SUM TOTAL OF WHAT WE REMEMBER, AND GIVES US THE CAPABILITY TO LEARN AND ADAPT FROM PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES AS WELL AS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS. IT IS THE ABILITY TO REMEMBER PAST EXPERIENCES, AND THE POWER OR PROCESS OF RECALLING TO MIND PREVIOUSLY LEARNED FACTS, EXPERIENCES, IMPRESSIONS, SKILLS AND HABITS. CINEMA PALACE IS JUST AN "INDEX" SHAPE TO WHAT I ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THE BUILDING. A RESEARCH WITHIN MY KNOWLEDGE THAT IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THE SEMANTIC MEMORY.

situation of the people and how modernization took place especially in the movie *Modern Times*. The life tone changed for everyone and the fact that Maastricht had a cinema in the 20s means that it was quite a rich city, and people had really free time to spend at the cinema, that the city had lightning in order for the citizens to feel safe to walk in the nighttime. All these thoughts were part of the first map.

The second map contains the associations with my childhood environment. The materiality, the weather and some habits are more close to my life in Moldavia than the big city life in Italy, so I had lots of index elements that took me back to my childhood. First of all the chimney made me think of the fireplace somewhere in the building, the chimneys had quite their own language in wintertime when I was a child, if the smoke went straight out of it, it meant the weather would have been very cold but with no rain or precipitations, on the contrary if the smoke was blown and messy then wind and precipitations had to be expected, thinking of the long winter days I thought of how we used to get warm, with the fireplace, my grandmother had to take the wood from outside and it took a lot to get the fire started. I dived into this scenario and took as many aspects as possible.

The third category of memories takes in consideration the atmospherical notes, the first impressions, smells and all kind of small things that I noticed every time I made my observations. For instance the balcony on the facade made me think of a private room to watch the movie like the special stage for the important people in old theaters. It is the most realistic description of the building that opens up to the possible changes and material things that the building needs. If the spectator doesn't have cultural knowledge on the building and the autobiographical episodes aren't recalled, then the building has other means to stimulate our memory or imagination. It might have broken windows, or graffiti on the doors that let us think of what happened to the building to arrive to a certain status.

Memory for me is the human ability to recall past episodes, out of personal experiences (based on the long-term/autobiographical memory)¹ that are visible in my childhood maps; collective knowledge based on collective memory and semantic memory², like in the cultural maps; and last the associations, based on the sensory memory and collective memory, visible in the first impression maps.

In this definition architecture might seem to have a passive role, but the

1 See p. 32

2 See p. 27

individual is the object of the research and it gave me guidelines on how to use architecture in order to influence memory and perception.

All the map memories made the index elements (see p.23) become the meaningful parts of my project. I have also translated these memories in a more technical language but more importantly I defined 9 elements that are the practical translation of vintage and memory: entrance, chimney, windows, balcony, bricks rhythm, everyday life objects, staircase, wall paintings and ceiling paintings.

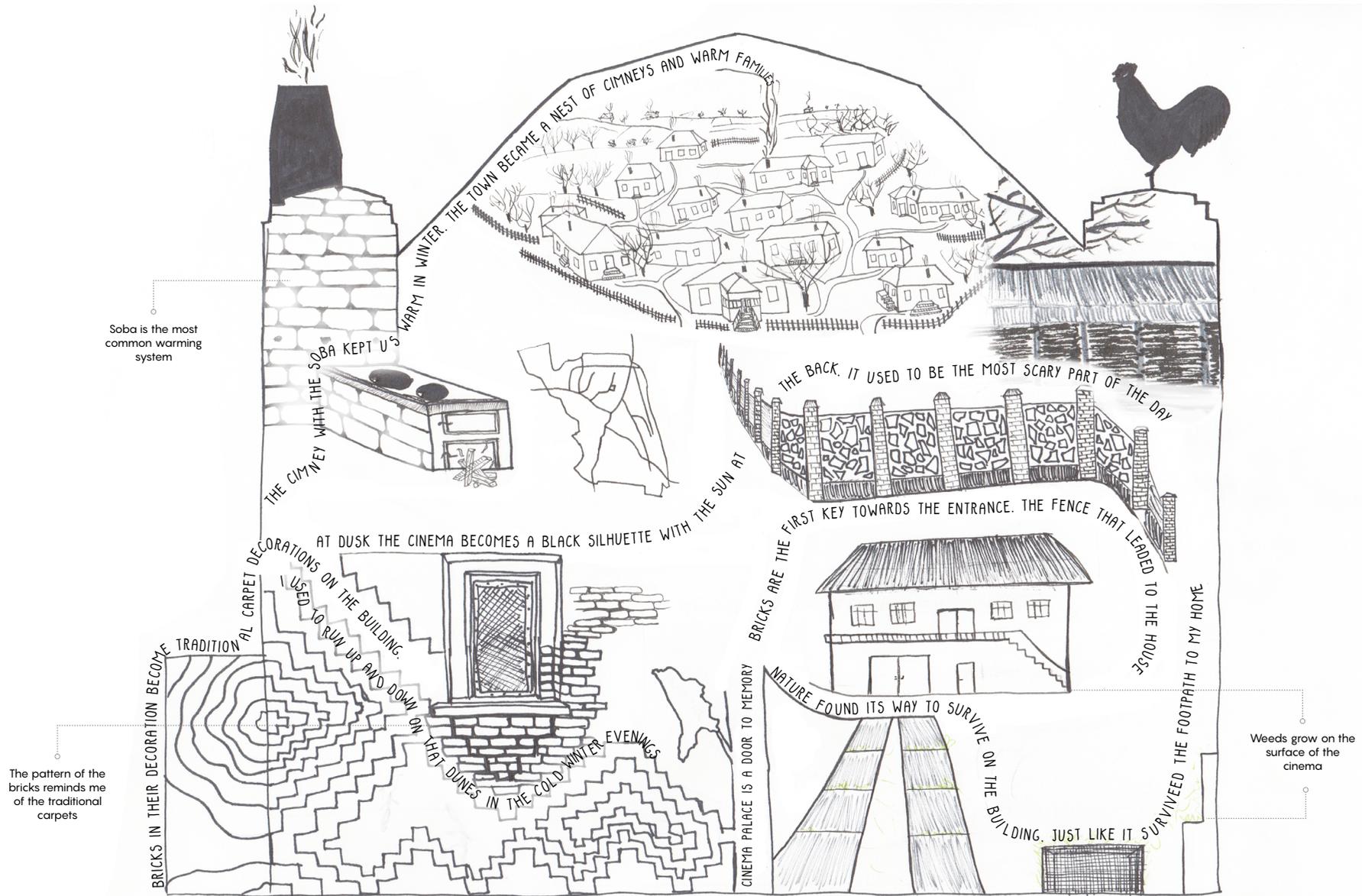
Looking at the maps I can notice at once the aspects that are important in the *Madeleine effect*³. The spectator is the protagonist, his experiences, knowledge and notations will change the perception.

I take in consideration the phenomenological point of view on memory, I consider memory on the mean of my maps on the building of my interest. My method is definitely an ongoing definition or consideration of memory in architecture, and probably if I come back in a few years my maps and memories will be different also on the basis of my future experiences.

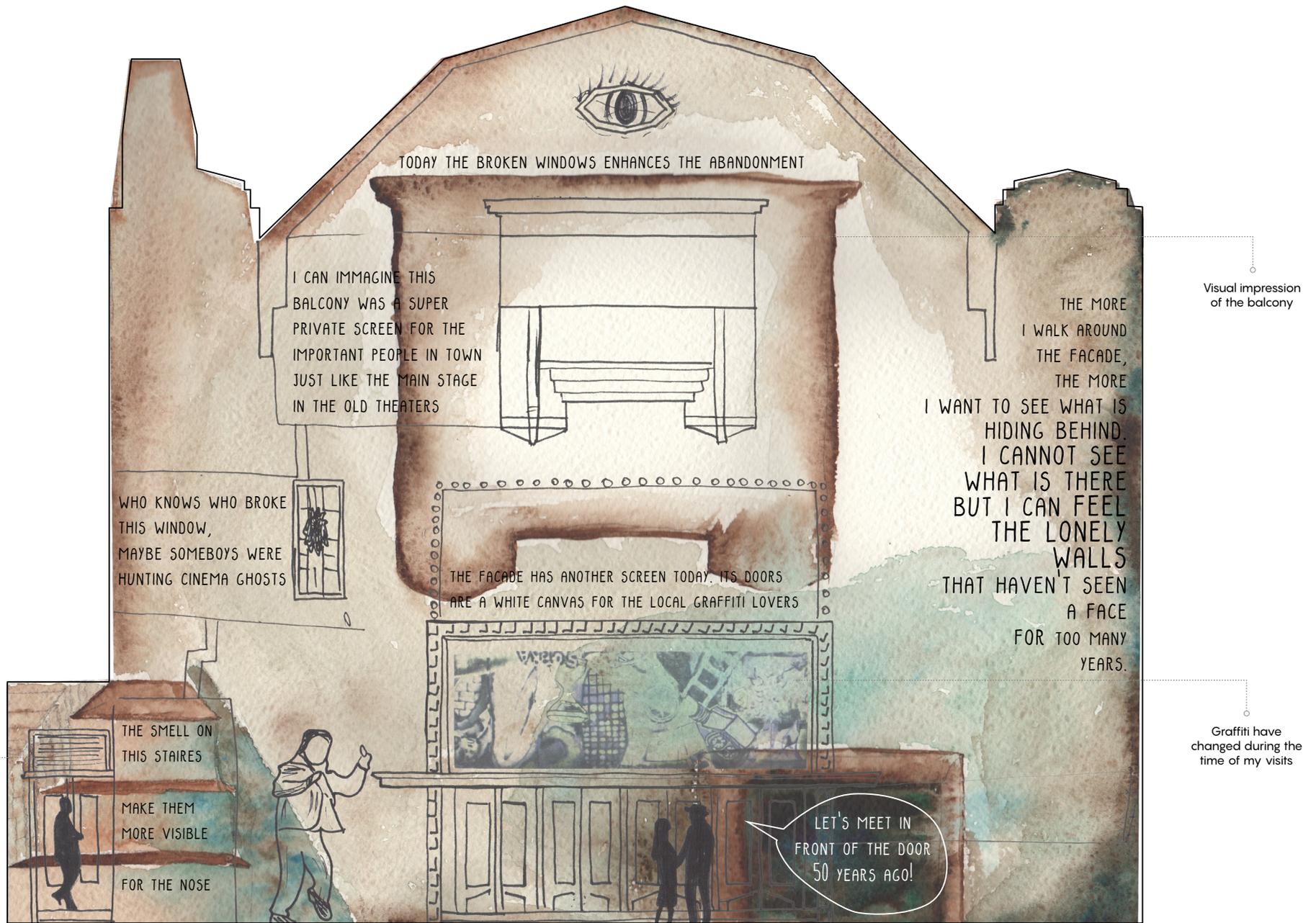
As a conclusion I would like to draw to your attention that memory is very personal even in architecture, but nevertheless we are all part of the society, considering the idea of memory of Halbwachs, in a way or another we are part of a social group and we consider or perceive things just as someone else does as well, and we can have a very personal insight on some elements but on the other hand we also have a point of view that comes from the social group we come from that can be connected with studies or family or personal interests. The spectator might have three reactions as I did in the maps. If the spectator has a background knowledge on the building, for example, he would imagine a scene that has more cultural aspects, on the other hand if the spectator comes in contact with a specific place for the first time then he would have more space for personal interpretation either autobiographical or first impression. On the contrary the building, is easily readable if it shows signs from the past, the decorations, the doors, the materials establish the language of the building through which it is possible to interpret it.

As an architect, I believe, it is important how I make use of the memory in the space. The artists took in consideration in Chapter 3 have showed me that is important to look at the past just as it is important to look at the future, that memory needs to be the pace to the future.

3 M.Proust p.26



I'M IRINA, I WAS BORN IN A SMALL TOWN IN THE NORTH OF MOLDOVA, I GREW UP THERE. UNTIL ONE DAY, WHEN I WAS 12 YEARS OLD I MOVED TO THE BIG CITY OF MILAN IN ITALY. NEW LANGUAGE, NEW FRIENDS AND NEW HABITS TOOK ME IN A COMPLETELY NEW WORLD. 10 YEARS LATER I MOVED TO MAASTRICHT BUT MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES ARE ALWAYS VIVID IN COMBINATION WITH SPECIFIC SMELLS, SHAPES, COLORS AND EVEN WEATHERS. THE CINEMA PALACE IN MAASTRICHT IS THE INSTRUMENT TO DIVE INTO EPISODES FROM MY CHILDHOOD.



TODAY THE BROKEN WINDOWS ENHANCES THE ABANDONMENT

I CAN IMAGINE THIS BALCONY WAS A SUPER PRIVATE SCREEN FOR THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN TOWN JUST LIKE THE MAIN STAGE IN THE OLD THEATERS

WHO KNOWS WHO BROKE THIS WINDOW, MAYBE SOMEBODYS WERE HUNTING CINEMA GHOSTS

THE FACADE HAS ANOTHER SCREEN TODAY. ITS DOORS ARE A WHITE CANVAS FOR THE LOCAL GRAFFITI LOVERS

THE MORE I WALK AROUND THE FACADE, THE MORE I WANT TO SEE WHAT IS HIDING BEHIND. I CANNOT SEE WHAT IS THERE BUT I CAN FEEL THE LONELY WALLS THAT HAVEN'T SEEN A FACE FOR TOO MANY YEARS.

Visual impression of the balcony

Graffiti have changed during the time of my visits

Secondary entrance is also the most intimate entrance

THE SMELL ON THIS STAIRES

MAKE THEM MORE VISIBLE

FOR THE NOSE

LET'S MEET IN FRONT OF THE DOOR 50 YEARS AGO!

CINEMA PALACE HAS MULTIPLE FACES AND ASPECTS. EVERY TIME I VISIT THE BUILDING I SEE SOMETHING DIFFERENT. DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERES, SMELLS AND IMAGES MAKE ME DO DIFFERENT ASSOCIATIONS TO WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO THAT PART OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS BUILT IN A CERTAIN WAY AND NOW IT DEVELOPS WITH ITS OWN LIFE INTO SOMETHING WITH A NEW SOUL AND AURA.

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