



CHAPTER THREE
**HERITAGE IN
THEORY**

3.1// HERITAGE PERSPECTIVES

As to heritage, perhaps the first concern originates from different perspectives on heritage. Society still tends to contest and segregate our cultural heritage according to our cultural DNA. This might lead to the categorization of our heritage into different fragments, exempting us from our responsibilities to protect the greater whole.

Fragmented heritage

As a result of recent events in South Africa, the colonial-era public memorials and place names have been severely targeted and some even destroyed for their physical & symbolic representation of the former apartheid regime (1948-1994).

As a representative of the Heritage Association of South Africa (HASA), Stoltz (2015) argues that the outcome of radical contestation should enforce the revisiting of policies in respect of our collective heritage. As confirmed by the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) (Act No. 25 of 1999):

National estate must serve to reconcile the past, heal divisions and advance the interests of social justice and cultural restitution.

(Republic of South Africa, 1999)

The Act clearly states that although the law protects public monuments and memorials, it still recognises the need for change (Stoltz 2015). It advocates for the effective management of change to ensure that the actions of the current contested concerns do

not deprive future generations of accessing and learning from the remains of our material past (Stoltz 2015). In March 2015, a new protest movement was initiated at the University of Cape Town with the aim of removing a statue of the former colonial leader, Cecil John Rhodes (Barnard-Naudé 2015). Apart from the statue being removed, the greater objective was to reconsider all colonial and Afrikaner Nationalist artefacts that are associated with a painful past (Barnard-Naudé 2015).

Perhaps the contestation of these heritage artefacts is not only a reaction to that painful past, but rather a concern for the future of transformation. As a continuously evolving society, we need to be reminded of our responsibility in protecting these fragmented reminders of a historical past in order to ensure their future interpretation.

There is a general tendency to view the process of fragmentation as a result of isolation or vice versa. Yet Vesely (2004:318) argues that fragmentation has contributed to the formation of meaning, resulting in a sense of completeness. One could argue that 'collage' is a method of understanding information that configures new meaning to generate a sense of a collective whole.

Fragmentation is a modern phenomenon closely related to the method of representation. An object or a memory can only be interpreted in conjunction with the person experiencing it and not in isolation. Fragmentation therefore has a situational structure that signifies a specific context or memory, but allows for imaginative interpretation and reading (Vesely 2004:325).

The ruination of the Westfort precinct is a result of fragmentation. It represents fragments of society's failures (the negative) and the opportunity for new interpretation and meaning (the positive). The latter is a way of responding to this process of renewal with a restorative attitude to encourage a sense of completeness (Vesely 2004:334). Through a process of rehabilitation, the Westfort precinct could not only regain its cultural value but also its shared universal authenticity.

Figure 3.1: Contested heritage monuments in recent protest action (THE TIMES 2015)

Figure 3.2: Collage of fragmented heritage artefacts within the inner city of Pretoria (Author 2016)



3.1



3.1

Shared cultural heritage

The tangible and intangible fragments from the past and those created in the present are what one could refer to as shared cultural heritage (UNESCO 2015:2). It is important to understand that cultural heritage is essentially a continuous process of discovery, evaluation and documentation, which are all subjected to the inevitable change in our cultural DNA.

Neither history nor heritage is restrained by country borders. Thus there is reason for heritage conservation to cross borders.

(Clarke & Kuipers 2015:17)

South Africa and the former Dutch republic have a well-known shared history, Westfort being one of the rich residues from the former *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR) (Kuipers 2015:5). Considered a trans-national concept, 'shared heritage' represents a holistic approach to preserving heritage that is a product of multiple contributions over time (Clarke & Kuipers 2015:14).

In 2015, the University of Pretoria (UP) and the Delft University of Technology (TUD) participated in a joint venture to document, evaluate and report on the shared heritage of the Westfort Leprosy Hospital precinct. Prof. Marieke Kuipers (2015:6) was part of the advisory team to report back on the implementation of policy by the City of Tshwane, as well as possible strategies to conserve valuable shared heritage.

Kuipers (2015:11) suggests that the main challenge concerning Westfort is the preservation of its legacy whilst balancing the needs of its current users. The solution, however, lies in an integrated conservation strategy that includes the active participation of all the relevant stakeholders.

UNESCO (2015:2) places high value on active participation in the production of all types of cultural heritage, which includes an array of artefacts such as built fabric, music, language and art. Considering the management of cultural heritage, UNESCO (2015:3) states these inter-related (environmental, social and economic) management programs must:

..meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(Brundtland Commission 1987)

With reference to the current situation at Westfort, meeting the needs of the present would mean that, apart from the economic pressures, the social viability of the cultural heritage is critical in the sustainable management process. Besides the benefits of social integration and cohesion, the rehabilitation of cultural heritage also creates employment and educational opportunities. Its success however would be highly dependent on the process of the equal participation of both the formal and informal heritage communities (UNESCO 2015:4).

Collective memory of place

Not only is Westfort vulnerable to socio-economic pressures, but also to the degradation of its ecological integrity. As mentioned earlier, the fort is situated on one of Pretoria's ridges forming part of a greater ecological network. Clarke and Kuipers (2015:1) suggest that all of these layers of informants are integral to the establishment of our collective memory of place and therefore also a new sense of belonging.

One could argue that memory is fundamentally connected to identity. Who we are as individuals influences how we perceive events and therefore how we construct our memories. However, it is the collective memory of place that is eventually documented and translated as history (Nora 1989:9).

It is a well-known fact that, due to political and social limitations, some of our cultural and traditional heritage was never recorded or documented, and is therefore excluded from written history records. The problem is that today, this exclusivity has escalated into other cultural issues of segregation and isolation, bringing the inclusivity of our shared cultural history in question. Inclusive history not only questions social or political accuracy but also individual and collective credibility.

In the field of 'memory studies', Maurice Halbwachs suggests that it is within the larger community and social networks that individual memory develops and not in isolation (Assmann 1995:126). Halbwachs argues that memory by nature represents both the individual and the collective, the specific and the multiple, which are all rooted in physical manifestations of gestures, images and objects; therefore the absolute is installed by remembrance.

History, however, belongs to everyone and to no-one specific; therefore it is bound to temporal continuities and the relationship between time, place and people (Nora 1989:9). Although the City Council of Tshwane places high value on the management of both heritage and cultural artefacts, they call on its citizens, the collective, to conserve what is left for future generations (City of Tshwane 2013:464).

However, the heritage sites concerned are in desperate need of a holistic approach in adapting their current social and functional requirements, in order to accommodate future needs and instil new meaning to place.

Meaning is not a condition or quality of the building, of the thing itself; meaning arises from situations. The meaning of a building, then, must always be a meaning for some specific one at some specific time in some specific place.

(Jones 2000:41)

Figure 3.3: Diagram of the collective memory of place as the point of origin for the documentation of our collective history (Author 2016)



3.2// THE IDENTITY OF PLACE

Managing change is an integral part of our lives and it often bewilders us. Renowned urban planner Kevin Lynch (1972:1) argues that the perception of our personal image of place is reciprocal with our individual well-being. It is possible that a desirable image of place is one that fundamentally celebrates the present condition with a strong connection to both the past and the future.

Creating a sense of belonging

As mentioned earlier, one way of establishing a desired image of place is to understand how people identify with their environment. It is critical to first determine the different users (to follow) in order to understand the point of identification.

Architect and theorist Neal Leach (2002:3) argues that it is difficult to establish the points of identification, and that it might be more appropriate to first understand the cultural identity of place in order to understand its relation to architecture.

Identifying with place is not a fixed condition and the process of identification should be interpreted as ephemeral, which could be explored through a model of 'belonging' as an active process rather than a given state (Leach 2002:12).

Leach (2002:126) questions the ongoing obsession with form which replicates so-called 'cultural identity' without even engaging with the process of subjective identification. Promoting the process of identification, Leach (2002:130) refers to the work of Judith Butler, who advocates the notion of 'performativity' that reinvents identity. Butler believes that identity is not defined by our social, political or biological existence, but rather by our actions and behaviours, and therefore our performance.

Thus it is possible that a new sense of belonging and attachment to place could be instated through performance. Through rituals and re-appropriation, spaces are reinvented and rewritten with new meaning and new memories, and then become spaces of belonging (Leach 2002:130). Instead of the preconception of 'belonging' as possession or related to a particular cultural group, Leach (2002:130) argues that it is in fact a product of performativity and that it enables us to understand the meaning of place as a collective effort over time.

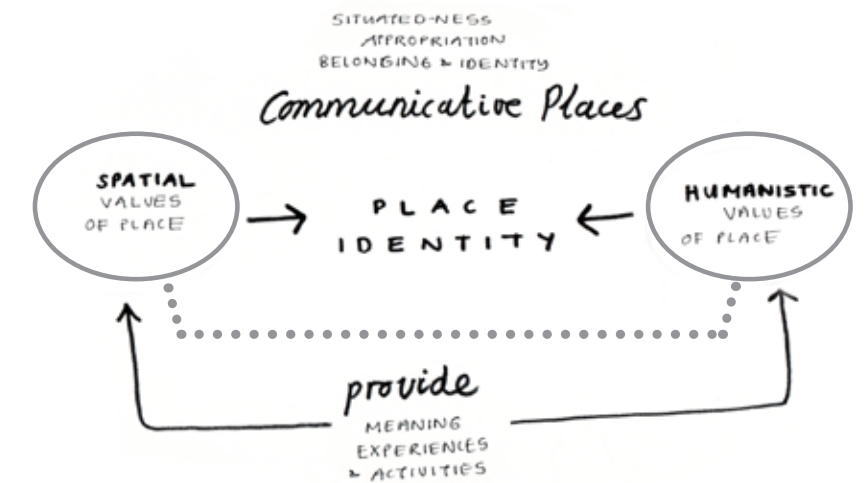
Architecture has the ability to facilitate this process of performativity in order to instil a new sense of continuity and belonging. It is not about form but rather about architectural engagement that allows for place to be imbued with new meaning and therefore also a collective cultural identity.

Understanding Sense of place

The work of Catalan architect Enric Miralles (1955-2000) represents his own theoretical interest in 'the architecture of time', which explores the potential brought about by change with emphasis on 'the journey'. This journey is simultaneously 'referential' (to past/future events) and 'experiential' (instantaneous), unifying different moments in time scales as one experience (Mackenzie, McMurray & Quiros, 2011).

It is however the interpretation of this journey through architecture that determines this collective experience or so called 'sense of place'. According to Cross (2001:1), the term 'sense of place' has become the buzzword to justify the lack of understanding of the true spirit or essence of place, which is mostly based on our own preconceptions. Cross (2001:3) highlights the complexity of the term by illustrating that each individual has different relationships and attachments to various places, as illustrated in Figure 41; therefore the relationship between place and people is transactional (give and take).

One could say that 'sense of place' is therefore more interactional than physical. It is an experience that is created by the setting and interpreted by the individual, and hopefully has an impact on collective society, both short-term and long-term.



3.4

Relationship	Type of Bond	Process
Biographical (9)	historical and familial	being born in and living in a place, develops over time
Spiritual	emotional, intangible	feeling a sense of belonging, simply felt rather than created
Ideological	moral and ethical	living according moral guidelines for human responsibility to place, guidelines may be religious or secular
Narrative (9)	mythical	learning about a place through stories, including: creation myths, family histories, political accounts, and fictional accounts
Commodified	cognitive (based on choice and desirability)	choosing a place based a list of desirable traits and lifestyle preferences, comparison of actual places with ideal
Dependent (9)	material	constrained by lack of choice, dependency on another person or economic opportunity

3.5

Figure 3.4: Diagram adapted from Leach (2002) to illustrate the concept of 'Place Identity' (Author 2016)

Figure 3.5: Different determinants that influence the individual's relationship on to place (Cross 2001:3)

3.3// HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

The problem statement of this dissertation addresses the issue of heritage value. It is therefore critical to consider the appropriate valuation approach in order to determine the value and significance of the Westfort precinct.

The architectural problem addressed by this dissertation is based on a critique on the lack of experiential qualities in conservation projects. Specific heritage legislation will therefore be referenced as a guideline for the design approach in establishing a more holistic and engaging experience that respects historic value but also anticipates future value.

Heritage valuation

The intentions and representation of heritage artefacts have changed and with that, their inherent value. On the one hand modern interpreters assign new meaning and significance to either the artefact's artistic or symbolic value, whilst others might only respect it for its age or historic value.

In his book *Modern cult of monuments and the problem of value*, Alois Riegl argues that the artistic value of a monument is ephemeral. He therefore introduces a new valuation scheme that makes a clear distinction between present and past value parameters (Lamprakos 2014:421).

Age value, as Riegl states, embraces the representation of time that is evident in the artefact without considering its original purpose or significance. The artefact therefore becomes more

valuable for its imperfection and its temporal and incomplete state of existence (Lamprakos 2014:426). The advantages of this interpretation are that it is not subjected to a specific religious or political stance and is also not exclusive to the educated and informed reader, but is rather valued for its universal language.

Riegl's approach to the *historical value* of a monument celebrates its origin and development over time without the intervention of man. This valuation approach is also not in favour of complete restoration but rather the prevention of disintegration (Lamprakos 2014:75). The focus is then on preserving the artefact as is. Another interpretation in accordance with Riegl's valuation is the *intentional commemorative value*, which places high value on the collective memory of the artefact and therefore suggests complete restoration (Lamprakos 2014:435).

Irrespective of each individual valuation criterion, our responsibility as a society is still to preserve the collective memory of the past to allow for continuous interpretation. The bigger challenge however is presented by the standard methods used in heritage preservation. The ideal is to encourage a constant reinterpretation and adaptation of all cultural landscapes that facilitate equal participation and foster a greater patriotism towards our collective heritage.

Negussi (2012:23) challenges heritage management programmes to allow for a more collective voice that includes a variety of cultural positions and different values. Negussi (2012:26) critiques the current heritage management process as one that:

...uncritically supports conservation in situ, but is less helpful in understanding the long-term results and benefits of these conservation actions in socio-cultural terms.

Negussi (2012:26)

Figure 3.6: Diagrammatic illustration of the Fort in its current state and the possible transformation in a new state of existence (Author 2016)

3.6



Heritage legislation

Considering the range of different heritage charters, it is critical to evaluate the experiential possibilities of these prescribed documents. In light of the research problems addressed earlier, two documents are of great importance and should be considered in the design process.

1/

The 2007 ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage sites (2008:4)

This document values the importance of 'interpretation and presentation' in the process of heritage conservation and management. The following principles and objectives are quoted directly from the charter and will be used in the design process as guidelines in the experiential approach to rehabilitate the Westfort precinct.

Principle 1:

Access and Understanding

Objective:

To facilitate the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage sites and foster public awareness and engagement in the need for their protection and conservation.

Principle 2:

Information Sources

Objective:

Communicate the meaning of cultural heritage sites to a range of audiences through careful, documented recognition of significance, through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.

Principle 3:

Attention to Setting and Context

Objective:

Safeguard the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts.

Principle 4:

Preservation of Authenticity

Objective:

Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites, by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation.

Principle 5:

Planning for Sustainability

Objective:

Contribute to the sustainable conservation of cultural heritage sites, through promoting public understanding of, and participation in, ongoing conservation efforts, ensuring long-term maintenance of the interpretive infrastructure and regular review of its interpretive contents.

PRINCIPLE 6:

Concern for Inclusiveness

Objective:

Encourage inclusiveness in the interpretation of cultural heritage sites, by facilitating the involvement of stakeholders and associated communities in the development and implementation of interpretive programmes.

PRINCIPLE 7:

Importance of Research, Training, and Evaluation

Objective:

Develop technical and professional guidelines for heritage interpretation and presentation, including technologies, research, and training. Such guidelines must be appropriate and sustainable in their social contexts.

2/

1999 National Heritage Resource Act.
(1999:4)

With regards to South African national legislation and regulations, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) was established under this act and is responsible for the protection of our cultural heritage resources. It is therefore of great importance to this dissertation.

Considering the stark conditions at the Westfort precinct, it is alarming that no action has been taken to preserve this cultural landscape. The act clearly states that an integrated, interactive plan should be implemented but, more importantly, it should be done to protect and preserve collective heritage for future generations.

To introduce an integrated and interactive system for the management of the national heritage resources;... and empower civil society to nurture and conserve their heritage resources so that they may be bequeathed to future generations;...

(NHRA 1999:4)

Under the general principles for heritage resource management, the following points are of great importance in reinstating the Westfort precinct as part of our national heritage.

1. (a) *Heritage resources have **lasting value** in their own right and provide evidence of the origins of South African society and as they are valuable, finite, non-renewable and irreplaceable they must be carefully managed **to ensure their survival**;*

(b) ***every generation** has a moral responsibility to act as trustee of the national heritage for succeeding generations and the State has an obligation to **manage heritage resources** in the interests of all South Africans;*

2. To ensure that heritage resources are effectively managed—

(a) ***the skills and capacities** of persons and **communities** involved in heritage resources management must be developed; and*

(b) *provision must be made for the **ongoing education and training** of existing and new heritage resources management workers.*

3.4// EXPERIENTIAL POTENTIAL

As a critique on heritage legislation, the author believes that architectural intervention in heritage artefacts should be directed to create a more holistic and engaging experience that anticipates their future value. In order to design for the latter it is valuable to briefly reflect on the essence of spatiality and the origin of the phenomenological movement.

The essence of phenomenology

Understanding the value of context and the experiences related to interaction with both the architecture and its surroundings, it is insightful to consider the thinking of the phenomenologists on the experience of space as celebrated in the 'essences'.

In his essay "The Origin of the work of Art", Martin Heidegger elaborates that the word 'origin' refers to the physical existence and meaning of something, which is possibly found in the source of its essence. He further questions the origin of art in terms of reference to the artwork or the artist; which one comes first or are they both a result of the origin or vice versa? (Heidegger 1935:143)

Given the history of Westfort it is interesting to consider the possible hierarchy of its origin given the historical value, the programmatic use of the site, and the richness of its location on a ridge. Thinking on the essence of spatiality, one might first seek to define the personal experience of space and context (without it being a mere projection or a replication of the self) as interpreted by sensory engagement.

As promising as this might sound, defining space and designing spatially in order to enrich human experience is not new. In fact, in the early 1920s Heidegger broadened his investigation of philosophical traditions, inspired by the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who is known as the inspiration or possibly the origin of the phenomenological movement (Habib et al. 2012:45).

Hermeneutic phenomenology

The realisation of 'phenomenology' as a specific style of thinking could largely be credited to the groundwork of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Husserl was a German philosopher interested in the human perception of an embodied experience and our consciousness of space (Merleau-Ponty 1962:2). As quoted by Merleau-Ponty (1962:4), Husserl referred to phenomenology as:

... a call to return to things themselves

These 'things' are not necessarily meant to represent objects but rather refer to certain ideals that reflect the real experiences that we are confronted with, as opposed to those experiences constructed from our preconceived perception of how a space should be experienced.

Yet, this philosophical movement was further developed by many other theorists who followed a more 'anti-traditional' style of thinking, i.e. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who was considered as one of the pioneers of the phenomenological movement. It was a quest for finding a new ontology that questions human existence and reflects on the nature of elements with a more 'mythopoeic' approach.

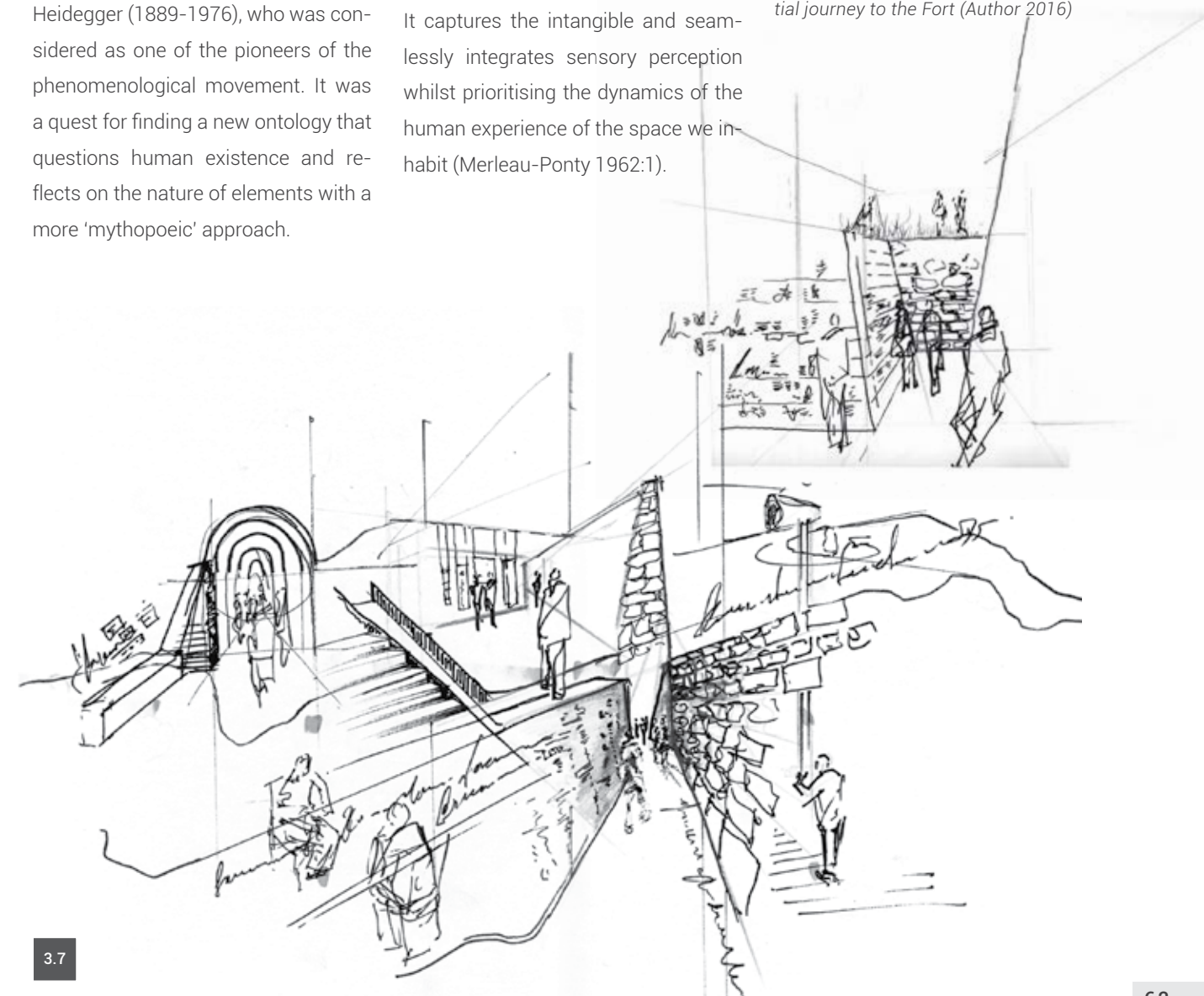
Heidegger managed to establish a link between phenomenology and architecture, which illustrates the experiential qualities of a sensory experience as an ongoing, dynamic and culturally dependent spatial tool (Habib et al. 2012:45). French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1906) argues that phenomenology should be understood as:

... a discipline that puts essences back into experience.

It captures the intangible and seamlessly integrates sensory perception whilst prioritising the dynamics of the human experience of the space we inhabit (Merleau-Ponty 1962:1).

Apart from the physical setting of external objects, space should also be interpreted as an experience based on our own subjective perception and interaction with our spatial surroundings within a particular time frame (Merleau-Ponty 1062:4). This interaction or interpretation process could further be explored and understood through the dialogues of narration, as will be discussed next.

Figure 3.7: Intuitive drawing of the spatial journey to the Fort (Author 2016)



3.4// HERITAGE NARRATION

In order to enable the continuity of collective heritage in support of the experiential, the methodologies used for narration should also be considered for their value in heritage interpretation and representation.

Oral history

Oral history is all about narration. It is about giving lost cultural and historical heritage a public voice and recognizing its value in order to have a deeper understanding of history.

Oral histories reveal the narrator's effort to make sense of the past and to give a form to their new lives

Allesandro Portelli (1998:69)

As part of South Africa's transformation process, the ongoing contestation and documentation of our cultural history plays a critical role in building the nation. Testimony as oral history is part of this process of recognizing past historical events which were detrimental to those excluded from our written history.

Wieder (2004:23) argues that testimony should be considered as a method of analysing oral history as a changing and living process. This method is not only based on a process of reporting on oral history through research, but is largely founded on mutual trust and the relationships between people.

African traditions have used the method of storytelling for centuries to testify about undocumented historical events. In South Africa this tradition is valued for its contribution to our shared history and elevates the voices of marginalised groups (Wieder 2004:24).

Perhaps society still questions and underestimates the power of recollection and reflection through this method of storytelling, as it is based on subjective memory. In the early 1970s, oral history was highly criticised for its lack of accuracy and credibility. There were too many questions about nostalgia, physical deterioration and the personal bias of both the interviewer and interviewee (Thomson 2007:50).

This argument was soon turned around by oral historians who believed that the so called 'unreliability of memory' was in fact its most valuable asset. They argued that the subjective memory leads to a more accurate relationship between the past and the present, between memory and identity, as well as between individual and collective stories (Thomson 2007:54).

Storytelling

Storytelling is an art dependent on equal participation. Apart from the entertainment it brings, it has the potential to translate shared and individual values, traditions and history into a new sense of identity (Banerjee 2008:148). For the purpose of this thesis project, it is important to focus on the art of storytelling as a collaborative

effort of exchange in order to accurately represent the collective memory of our South African heritage.

Contemporary storytelling has evolved into entertainment, where the storytellers often overshadow the story itself. Sadly, so much effort goes into the creation of the persona, the individual, the ego and the performance and not enough into the storytelling itself. What makes this problematic is that we tend to value the teller and the telling more than the actual story itself. Ryan (2008:72) argues that this phenomenon reinforces the idea that society has lost interest in the act of genuine storytelling.

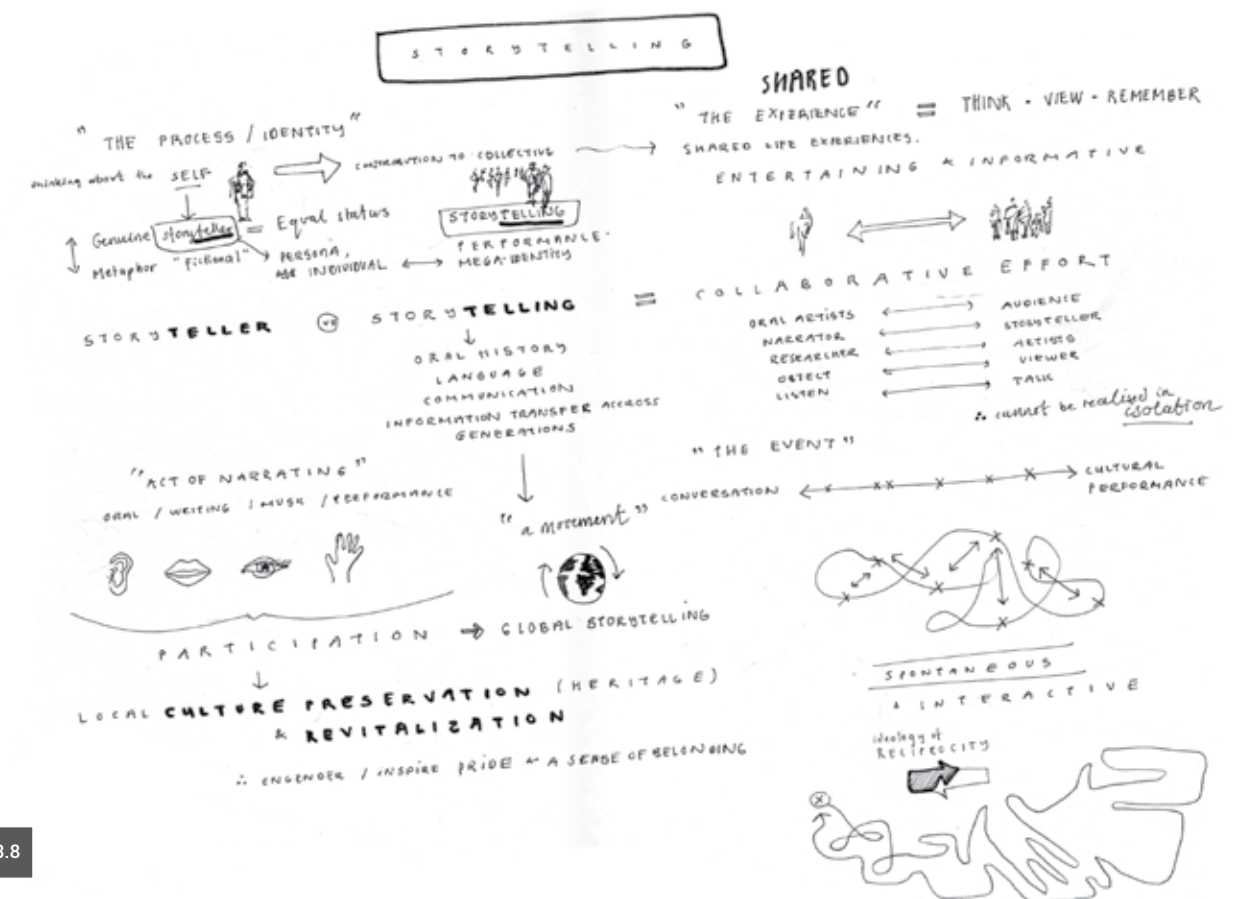
It is easier to change individuals into storytellers than to change society into one with a culture of storytelling

Ryan (2008:72)

The act of genuine storytelling requires the equal participation of the tellers and the listeners, both with equal status and sharing their life experiences (Ryan 2008:65). This collaborative effort encourages equal participation and replaces the inflated ego of the individual with integrated social transactions that include the collective.

This interaction is not only subject to oral stories but includes the performance of storytelling through multiple mediums of communication such as music, dance, and digital and physical display. Another possibility for promoting the culture of storytelling might be to reconsider the act of story sharing rather than storytelling. This will encourage the participation of a wider community even further, and will therefore enable a more accurate understanding of the collective memory of place, time and people.

Figure 3.8: Exploration of theory to understand the potential of heritage narration (Author 2016)



Conclusion

Perhaps we need to reconsider the importance of the way we understand, interpret, display and celebrate information – visual or written. The understanding that there is more value in the way we interact with each other and with our heritage is of great interest to this dissertation.

Storytelling is valued as a method of connecting, not only with different generations or cultures but also with global communities. Countless international organizations are now dedicated to fostering cultural transformation through the process of storytelling. It is a method of reconnecting with place, with time and with people.

Global storytelling has also proved to be a method of preserving and revitalizing the heritage of cultural communities. Given the ideology of reciprocity through storytelling, various global storytelling projects have been successful in nurturing a new sense of engagement, especially in marginalised communities (Tossa 2012:196). Tossa (2012:194) fears that young children today are deprived of local cultural heritage and therefore search for methods to inspire local pride through story sharing.

Perhaps architecture should also be accountable for its ability to tell stories. We as architects carefully curate spatial experiences based on our understanding and perceptions of individual and collective experiences. We use volume, materials and technology to narrate these experiences. But as mentioned earlier, it becomes problematic when the value of the storyteller overshadows that of the actual story or, more importantly, the individual interpretation.

In order to propose a new future value for the Westfort precinct, some of the key drivers of the research exploration should be emphasized:

- To understand the importance of securing a future value;
- To protect our collective heritage;
- To appreciate the uniqueness of place; and
- To build towards a holistic and continuous heritage experience.