

01

INTRODUCTION

IDENTITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL
IDENTITY OF THE COLLECTIVE
IDENTITY OF PLACE
AIM

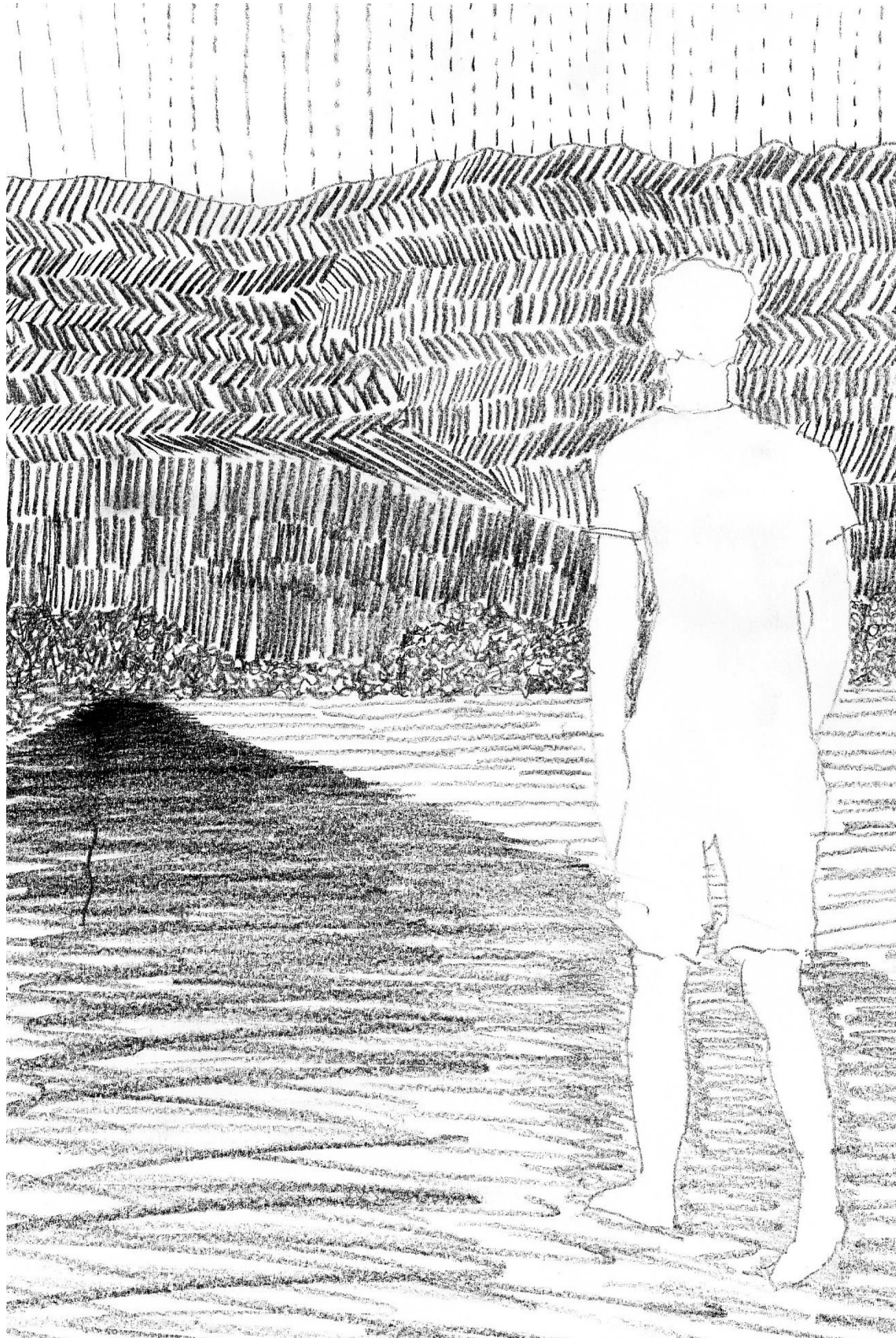


Fig.1. *The Individual.*

Identity of the Individual.

Human nature allows us to be in a constant search for understanding what our individual identity is.

David Wood studies the work of Paul Ricoeur and Ricoeur's concepts of identity in his book, *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*. Wood (1991 :188-191) writes that Ricoeur analyses the notion of identity in two distinct questions: '*What am I?*' This question tries to understand identity in the sense of the self-same .

'Who am I?' This is the second part of the discussion, where identity is discussed to reveal the sense of self-hood (Wood, 1991:188-199).

These two questions build on the ideas of a narrative identity, which is a compilation of stories of the individual. We reveal our identity through the stories we tell ourselves and the stories we tell of ourselves.

We reveal our aspirations, hopes, promises, secrets, feelings, and our journey through a narrative of self (Noble, 2014:113).

Our existence defines us, yet we define our existence. The daily 'questions of self' builds a narrative that we share.



Fig.2. The Collective.

Identity of the Collective

Collective identity is the grouping of individual narratives which are part of, or respond to, conditions at any given point during existence. These narratives form part of a cultural identity. The collective is in search for a sense of belonging, a rootedness which grounds our very humanity. The individual identities are not only in dialogue with just the physical or personal settings of self, but rather as a collective, the individual grows through the countless interactions with *contexts, and cultural, social, linguistic, geographic, as well as aesthetic identities* (Pallasmaa, 2014: 19).

Our identities are not attached to isolated things, but the continuum of culture and life; our true identities are not momentary as they have their historicity and continuity. Instead of being mere occasional background aspects, all these dimensions, and surely dozens of other features, are constituents of our very personality (Pallasmaa, 2014: 19).

Individual and Collective identities are in constant change and flux, and this dynamic state of being helps us navigate through our existence by a matter of change and exchange. We shape our spaces and places through this flux, and in return, spaces and places shape us (Puschak, 2015). Therefore, identity is not a mere stage in our lives, but rather it is intertwined in our everydayness.

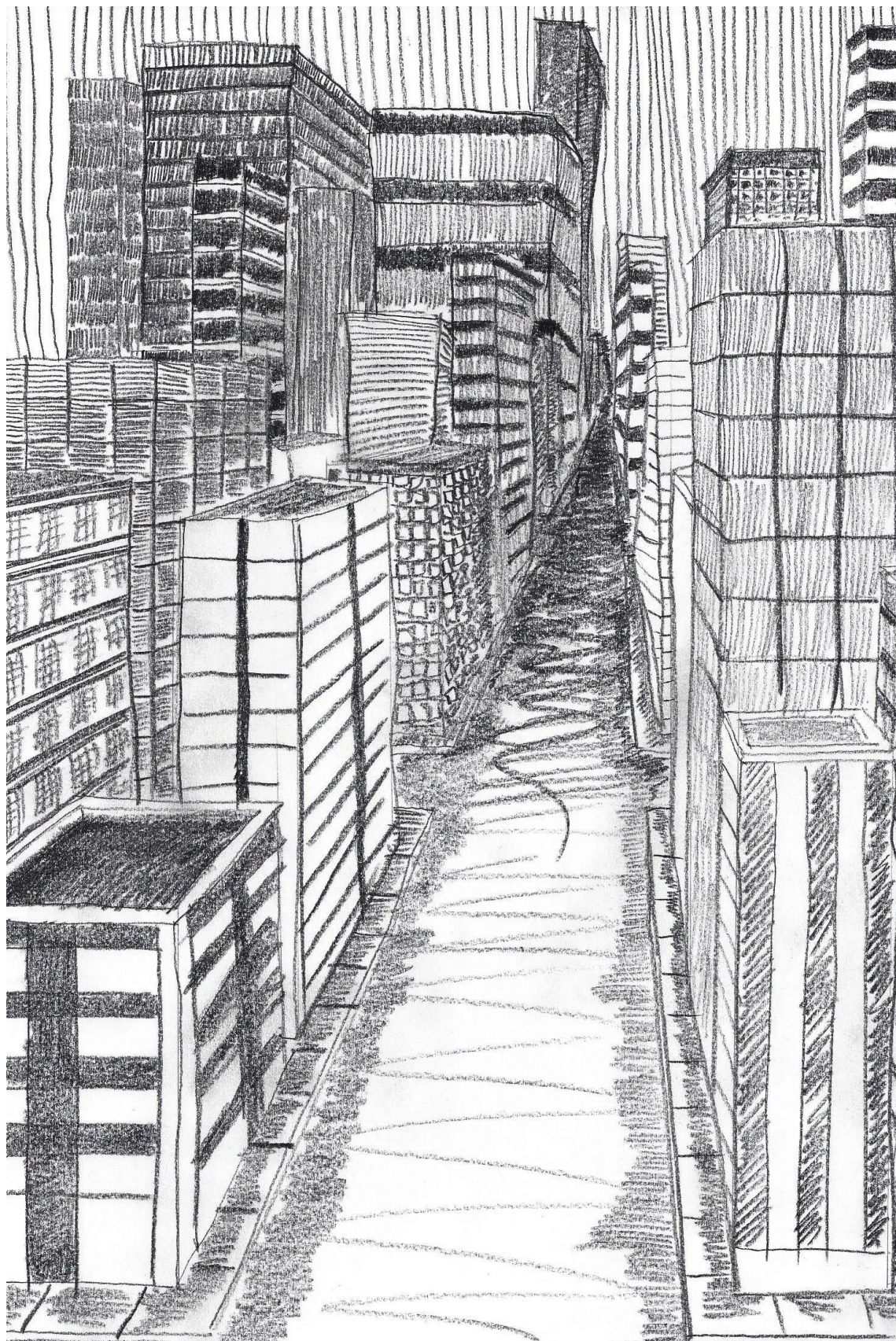


Fig.3. The Place.

Identity of Place

Michele Foucault (1984: 3) reminds us that the place and space we inhabit is drawn from us, it draws out our lives, and our time. This is where historical identity of place occurs. We are part of a heterogeneous space, which means that we do not occupy voids where we merely place individuals, but rather, we live in space where a set of relations delineates place and space which is not irreducible to one another, and cannot be superimposed onto one another.

The identity of place in a South African context is a constant reminder that we need to address the scars of a Colonial presence both in terms of the British and Boer occupation. These regimes brought an identity of their own which they implemented both culturally and in the built environment. Whilst developing an identity of their own in South Africa, they did this concurrently by *suppressing and often times erasing many aspects of local, indigenous cultures* (Noble, 2014: 112).

Now that South Africa is a democratic nation, trying to develop an identity of place cannot be achieved over night. South Africans cannot ignore the past to build a contemporary heritage for the future, nor can they latch onto narratives of a global identity in the sense of the modern or post modern movement to develop an identity of place.

Lawrence J. Vale writes in his book, *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, that national identity is not a *natural attribute that precedes statehood, but a process that must be cultivated for a long time after a regime has gained political power* (Vale, 2008: 49).

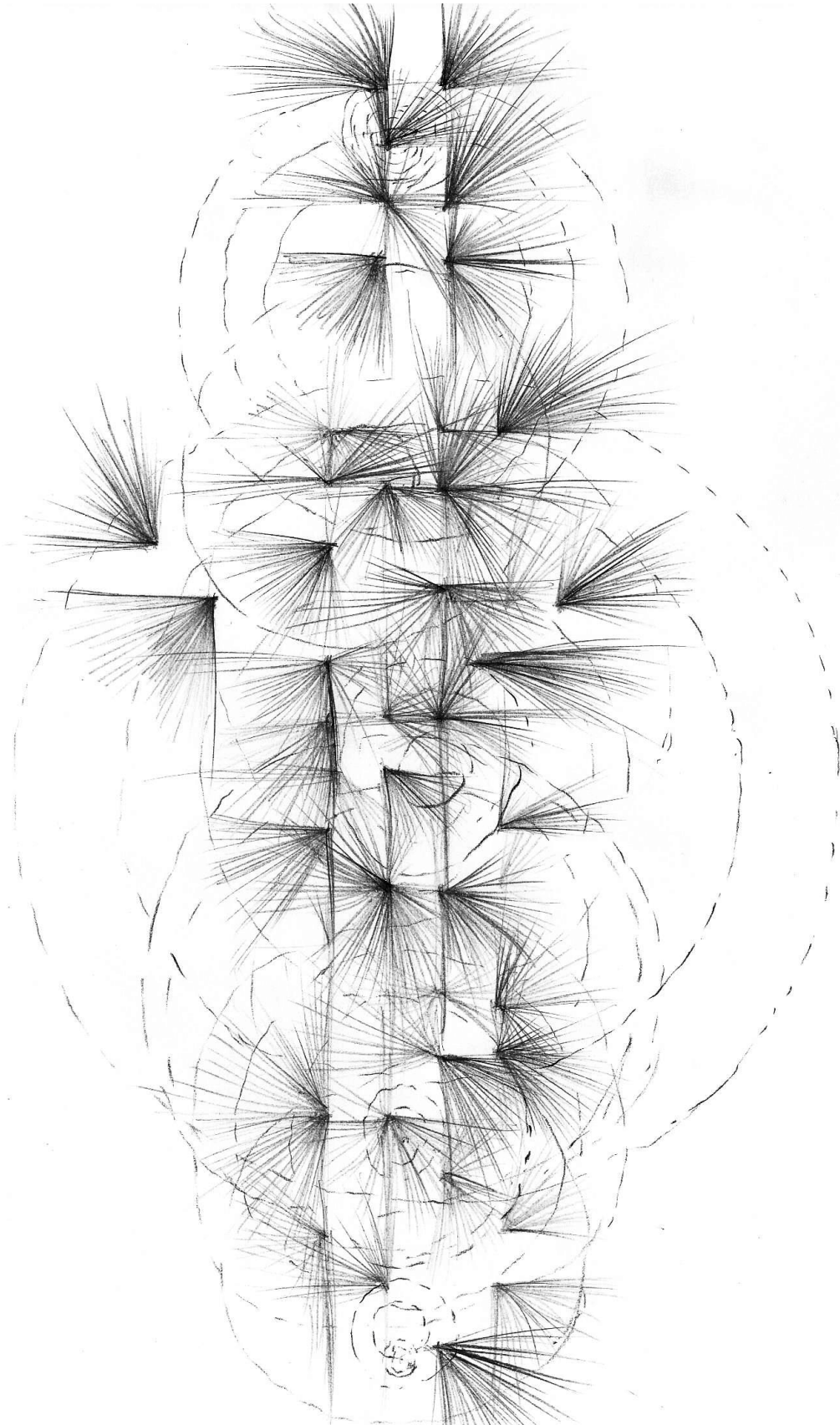


Fig.4. Concept diagram of the ripple effect of the “everyday”.

Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate identity of the individual, the collective, and of place. Understanding that these are not separate, but rather that they play a role in developing each other, one cannot examine these ideas in isolation. The idea, rather, is to study all three aspects in conjunction, and from that try to then add to the continuum of the body of work that is the South African context.

The research is not to find a “new” identity, such as a monument or museum typology, or a specific type of architecture, but rather to understand the current conditions of the individual, the collective, the place, and the *everydayness*.

‘Can architecture facilitate the various aspects of identity and the *everydayness* to build a contemporary heritage of the now?’

02

THEORY

WHAT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT?
IDENTITY OF TODAY?
WHAT IS THE EVERYDAY?
EVERYDAY AND THE EVERYDAYNESS.
CONTEMPORARY HERITAGE OF THE NOW.
CONCLUSION.