MEMORY AND MEMORIALIZATION IN BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

AHMED JAHIĆ[1], ÖZEN EYÜCE[2]

ABSTRACT

The paper will focus on monuments and memorials, the two being the main architectural agents of social and individual remembrance. How was the design and the realization of monuments and memorials and our position in regard to them affected by the transitory nature of time which every manmade object is subjected to? Because of its fundamental place in the definition of memorials, no study of them can be done without including memory. Our modern obsession with forgetting also made us question and eventually completely overturn the long-standing concept of memory as a database of information of the past. While the ideas of grandeur and glory have been replaced with democracy, the archetypal form of monuments and memorials, once celebrating heroes and rulers, are nearly abandoned today, the memorial culture has brought us to the conclusion that by the act of investing memories in an object or so-called prosthetic memory we may be dispersing them at the same time.. Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its turbulent past, having been through different forms of government, from imperial to socialist and finally democratic, is a fertile ground for researching the changes in memorialization practices. Establishing the major turning point and paradigm shifts in both of the subjects, the paper aims to identify how and to what extent did the changes in society, its perspective on memory, and who or what is being remembered affect form, scale, shape, spatial organization, symbols, materials and other important aspects of post-war architectural memorialization.

Keywords: memorials, memory, architecture, memorialization, Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. INTRODUCTION

Memory, after being on the sidelines of architectural discussions during modernism, experienced a significant rise in the research of its connections to architecture in the last several decades. But the interest is directed more to its role in the perception of architecture than to, as Alois Riegl calls them, intentional monuments. The first section will focus on memory and architecture, their relationship and its development, followed by a short overview of post-war architectural memorialization. The third section`s focal point will be Bosnia and Herzegovina and its post WWII and 92-95 conflict`s architectural practises while conclusion will present discussion on the findings of the previous sections and hopefully offer a starting point for a

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[1]M.S. Arch. Bahçeşehir University, Graduate School Natural And Applied Sciences, ISTANBUL
[2]Prof. Dr. Bahçeşehir University, Departement of Architecture, ISTANBUL

discussion on the complexity of the memorial practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the direction it might take in the future.

2. MEMORY AND ARCHITECTURE

In order to understand and define the concepts of monuments and memorials and the changes in their design approaches, it is essential to take a closer look at memory which is deeply embedded in their meaning. Memory comes from Latin verb memori: to be mindful, to remember and The Oxford English Dictionary defines memory as "the capacity of retaining, perpetuating, or reviving the thought of things" and as a phenomenon, memory has been discussed in many areas and quite differently in the course of time. Contemporary thought perceives memory not as a store of information, but as a plurality of functions. What we call 'memory' today, Jedlowski, (2001, p. 30) defines as:"a complex network of activities, the study of which indicates that the past never remains 'one and the same', but is constantly selected, filtered and restructured in the term set by the questions and necessities of the present, at both individual and the social levels." Sciences outside psychology treat memory more as a social rather than personal phenomenon. This recent rise in scholarly interest in memory can be coincided with our own personal preoccupation with memory and more important its counterpart, forgetting. This obsession with forgetting some scientists prescribe to the anxiety caused by modernity. Rapid changes and constant movement forward inherently meant leaving something behind. At the same time, technologically driven mass media society expanded our horizons from local to international. The collection of information from the past ceased to be a selective process and in this state, afraid of forgetting something important, we started clustering large amounts of data. As the numbers of museums, state archives and libraries increased significantly we became ever more reliant on *prosthetic memory*, a memory that Landsberg (2004, p. 175) defines as: "memories which do not come from person's lived experience in any strict form". That is perhaps why today we measure memory by gigabytes for the greatest prosthetic memory device we have invented, the personal computer.

Today, we can observe the relationship between memory and architecture going in two directions. One that treats memory as a part of perception in architecture and sees it as an important part of experiencing architecture and the other one that explores the relationship deeper on a smaller and direct scale, with intentional monuments. (Forty, 2000)

First one is prompted mainly by Italian architect Aldo Rossi and caused by nostalgic feelings brought upon by modernism and its avoidance of memory that created a rupture in the historical continuity. The city is seen as a collective memory of its citizens and any interventions in it can affect the collective memory itself. That is why in developing new forms of urban architecture is of great importance to research the existing ones.

The second one deals with memory and architecture more directly, in forms of intentional monuments. Together with division of history and memory, questioning history as just a distorted version of memories for the interest of the dominant powers caused for more suspicions to arise and make memory in architecture lay dormant except in one field, that of commemorating and remembering the fallen, mostly soldiers in the First World War. Thousands of war memorials were built in the affected countries with nations, for the first time, commemorating casualties of conflicts in this scale. Faced with such a trauma society once again relied upon artifacts to prolong human memory and convey to us the message that forgetting the ones who died is a great danger for the society. In the period between the wars the usage of monument and memorials in service of Nazi and Fascist ideologies paved a way in raising suspicions of their meaning and place in the public space. Fall of the Berlin wall in

1989 and unification of Germany ignited the discussion of how to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. Together with genocides commited Rwanda to Bosnia and Herzegovina and most recently, terrorist attacks across the world, made the subject of memorializing posttraumatic events an acute subject. Whitehead (2007) dates this rise of twentieth-century interest in trauma to the end of Vietnam War when soldiers returning home manifested the symptomatology of trauma. Now, realizing the fragile nature of memory and the fact that as every manmade object monuments and memorials as well are subjected to the transition of time and the society they are made in, a search is on for new forms of memorialization. Memorial culture according to Parr (2008) appears in many forms, from Memorial Day, memorials and monuments to a whole industry of memorialization, including exhibitions, museums as well as Hollywood renditions of real-life collective traumas in film.

3. MEMORIALIZATION

Throughout the centuries, in many various societies wars have played a very significant role in memory, individual as well as collective one. War is such a severe interruption of experience that can cause memory shock, making it hard to integrate these interruptions in the established narrative and collective memory. Memorials can act as a public catalyst for people to grieve and mourn their losses and incorporate their individual memory in the collective one. Jay Winter (1998) notes two functions of war remembrance: memory and mourning. Remembering a war is always a part of the official memory policy as a way of creating and upholding a certain collective identity. Additionally, it has to go beyond memory politics and offer a chance for survivors to mourn their losses. Throughout the examined period answers to two questions were the main instigators of change in the design of architectural memorialization. Who does the society remember and how?

While memory was thought of as an unchangeable storage of information and its term interchangeable with history up until the late 19th century the society was fostering a cult of heroes which can be traced back to ancient Greece. Imperial age royalty, military figures, and otherwise notable persons were celebrated through poetry, their resting places were adorned in form of glorious structures and had monuments built in their names. Monuments from this period are almost regularly located in prominent locations in the city such as focal points of squares, intersections of main avenues or in front of important edifices. They feature highly representational forms and use a range of didactic elements and symbols. Their structural monumentality is combined with the usage of high quality and "noble" materials.

The shock caused by the death toll and destruction of WWI caused a paradigm shift in architectural memorialization. Now it was centered on a soldier with war cemeteries and memorials on battlefields and Tombs of Unknown Heroes in nation's landmark locations in cities. Relatively smaller structures include representations of brave, young soldiers dying for a nation's cause. Ensuring equality in their sacrifice their names are inscribed on monuments while emotions of grief and mourning are stimulated through tomb and mausoleum allusions.

Horrors of WW2 and Holocaust were a turning point for memorials. The abuse of memory by totalitarian regimes combined with modernism's stance against it made people grow suspicious to memorials and memories being institutionalized in an object. While Holocaust unrelated memorials were being done in years after the war humanity was still reflecting on how such horrific event can be commemorated. Together with the earlier used forms, the materials mostly used in memorials were abandoned. The design of memorials was being concentrated on experience and the most suitable tool for this was abstraction because unlike representational memorials that resemble the object they represent the abstract memorial not

relating to a specific object or an image is more prone to referencing non-visual aspects like emotions and experience.

Maya Lin (2000) in designing the Vietnam War Memorial chose abstraction saying that: "A specific object or image would be limiting. A realistic sculpture would be only one interpretation of that time. I wanted something that all people could relate to on a personal level." and Yılmaz has a similar opinion stating that: "A direct denotation between the event and its representation minimizes the variations in the collective remembering process" (2010, p 8). Abstraction, however, may not resonate well with those directly affected by the event being commemorated. In the case of the Vietnam War Memorial it resulted with adding "The Three Soldiers" sculptures upon the request of the veterans. Various materials, such as concrete and rusted steel, are now being used what may be credited to its anonymity and other values treasured by modernism. The search on how the Holocaust should be memorialized, especially in Germany where in the late 80s artists and architects use extremely abstract forms, negative space, voids and everyday objects to represent absence gave way for counter-monument movement. The spirit of the movement can be best described in Young's (2000, p.92) words: "only an unfinished memorial process can guarantee the life of memory". Our perception of memory has also changed drastically. "Today we think of past as memory without borders rather than national history within borders; today memory is understood as a mode of re-presentation and as belonging to the present." (Huyssen, 2003, p.4) This new mode of critical consciousness in democratic societies gave way for new memorials being built as an acknowledgment of inflicted difficult memories, past injustices, and collective traumas across the world as a step towards reconciliation. Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, dealing with its relationship with slave trade or the Komagata Maru Memorial in Vancouver, dedicated to Indians deported from Canada to name a few. Another interesting memorial "The Ring of Remembrance" was opened in France on the first centenary of the First World War. It features a massive ring with plaques of over 600.000 names of friends and former enemies, French and German, this time, mingled together, with no rank and no nationalities.

It is relatively easy to discuss memorialization for those directly affected by the event being commemorated, since they are able to draw upon their memories, compared to those with no recollection of the event. It begets the question on how the event can be remembered and thus memorialized. So how do we design memorials in a democratic society? How to decide what memory and whose memory is to be commemorated? First of all, Julian Bonder warns us of submitting to sentimentality, symbolism, artificial meanings and metaphors, because it might lead to what he calls redemptive aesthetics which he describes as "kind of aesthetics that asks us to consider art as correction of life, that art may repair inherently damaged or valueless experience" (Bonder, 2009, p.65)

Todays memorials are designed rather as site-specific, landscape, urban, spatial and artistic solutions inviting visitors on reflection, inciting discourse on the past through present and warning for the future while not claiming to understand or represent the suffering of others since no art can compensate for human trauma. It is in the interaction of the visitor and the memorial that they are to fulfill their function of dealing with traumatic events and form a process towards understanding on both individual and collective levels. Nicolai Ouroussoff cites Eisenman's Memorial as an example "how abstraction can be the most powerful tool for conveying the complexities of human emotion." (Ouroussoff, 2005) While abstract forms of 9/11 Memorial and The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe are both accompanied with a comprehensive didactic space in the form of a museum which offers detailed information on the memorialized event the 9/11 Memorial and others, when it is possible, have the names of

the victims inscribed. This can be attributed to the "ability of a name to bring back every single memory you have of that person is far more realistic and specific and much more comprehensive than a still photograph" (Lin, 2000). Both of these memorials are envisioned as highly active urban spaces inviting engagement with life in the present moment.

4. ARCHITECTURAL MEMORIALIZATION PRACTISES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

4.1. After WWII
An estimated number of more than 60 million people died, with civilian casualty ratio being 60% (40% in WWI). Aside from human casualties, war laid waste and destruction all over Europe. With fallen ideologies, borders redrawn and cities in ruins, this time there was no mass construction of memorials for the dead after the war. Initially, the war cemeteries from the WWI were expanded, a similar situation can be observed with Tombs of Unknown Heroes. The first priority was the rebuilding of the infrastructure and the cities. As the modernity progressed, the years that followed were not keen on intentional monuments. Used by the Nazi and Fascist regimes to promote nationalism and invoke militarism the public grew suspicious towards monuments and their construction. This led to several of them being destroyed in Italy and Germany after the war, the best example being The Tannenberg Memorial.
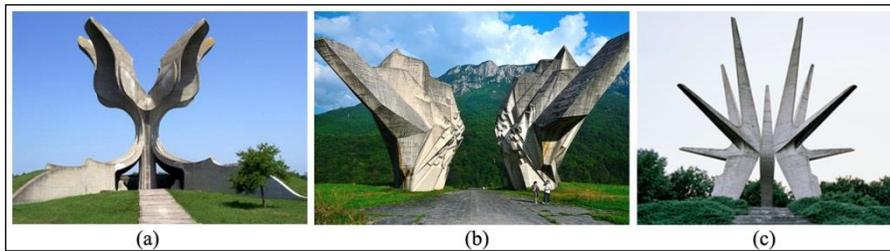

Figure 1. (a) Jasenovac; (b) Tjentište; (c) Kosmaj

WWII memorialization in socialist Yugoslavia was very important for celebrating the victory and liberation by the Partisans and in building the new society with multiple national and religious backgrounds. Most of the monuments were built on the sites of the partisan struggle locating them outside cities and in the open landscape as is the case with Jasenovac (Croatia, 1967), Tjentište (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1971), Kosmaj (Serbia, 1971) and others. (See Fig. 1) All of them include a massive monument built in the spirit of Socialist Modernism. However, it should be stressed that "not many Yugoslav monuments to the partisan struggle fit into the genre of the massive Socialist Realist monuments that were typical in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union". (Burghardt and Kirn, 2014, p. 84) These monumental structures, dominating the landscape are often accompanied by historical, educational or leisure activities infrastructure. Avoiding any national and religious symbols they are mainly abstract forms that refer to a modern future of freedom, equality, and independence that is possibly only because of the ultimate sacrifice of the Partisan fighters. The abstract forms leave some openness that allows self-reflection and as Burghardt and Kirn (2014, p. 84) notice "it allows for an appropriation of meaning that bypasses the official narrative, making the monuments accessible to even those who disagree with the official political line".

4.2. After 92-95 Conflict

The complicated nature of the conflict that engulfed most of the Balkan following the dissolution of Yugoslavia left the three ethnic groups (Bosniak, Serb and Croat) living in Bosnia and Herzegovina without an official narrative. In accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina is now organized into two entities: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (dominantly Bosniak and Croat) and Republic of Srpska (dominantly Serb) and District of Brčko. Since then they have developed their own but almost parallel narratives. A phenomenon that Vinitzky-Seroussi (2003, p. 32) calls "fragmented commemoration" and defines as the existence of "multiple commemorations in various spaces and times where diverse discourses of the past are voiced and aimed at disparate audiences." These parallel narratives stay in the way of conceiving a closure for such a conflict and reconciliation of the three ethnic groups. When analysed side by side the memorials display several similarities. They display array of ethnic or religious symbols and motifs, names of the fallen, plaques or inscribed in marble and all three sides stipulate that the fallen died defending their homeland. (see Fig. 2) The forms and the language used in these memorials tend to tell the person why she/he is different from his neighbour and thereby covertly promote segregation. Taking into account the multiethnic structure of Sarajevo and its victims of the 92-95 conflict the examples analyzed in this section aside from Srebrenica, which is the site of the only genocide commited on European soil after WWII, are located in Sarajevo (Sarajevo Roses, Memorial for the Children Killed During the Sarajevo Siege, and Sarajevo Red Line Memorial, see Fig. 3.) and in a way stand out of the fragmented commemoration phenomena.

Figure 2. (a) Bosniak Martyrs Memorial, Sarajevo; (b) Serb Memorial for the fallen, Pale; (c) Croat Memorial, Brčko

4.2.1. Memorial Center Potočari, 2003, Srebrenica

Srebrenica is a small town in eastern Bosnia which was surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces in 92-95 conflict. By a UN resolution it was proclaimed a secure enclave but in July 1995 it was taken by the Serb forcesand in the course of 3 days an estimate of 8000 men (from the age 15-70) were executed and their bodies scattered and hidden in mass graves. According to the Dayton Peace Agrentment places Srebrenica in the Republic of Srpska which did cause some problems so OHR (Office of the High Representative, created to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement) had to designate the boundaries of the memorial and create the Foundation for the Srebrenica/Potočari Memorial and Cemetery. The memorial center Potočari was built on the site next to UN base (former car battery factory) where some of the execution occurred. (See Fig. 3) It consists of two parts: the cemetery and the base which is preserved a museum. The cemetery plots have a floral shape and the tombstones are standardized and done out of white marble. In The center, there is an open site used for funeral ceremonies and near

to it the central memorial stone with names of the victims inscribed. The factory is preserved as it was and is now used as a museum and educational center.

Figure 3. (a) Potočari Memorial; (b) Center Stone; (c) Inscribed Names of the Victims

4.2.2. Sarajevo Roses, 1995

Lasting 1425 days, the Sarajevo siege is the longest siege of a capital in modern history. During 44 months of siege, an estimate of 50 000 tons of explosives was fired upon the city, leaving 14 011 dead and 46 000 wounded. The shape shrapnel leaves at the spot of the impact on ground resembles a flower. Sarajevo Rosses are these traces filled with red paint. (See Fig.4a) The idea for their design came from a professor of architecture at the University of Sarajevo, Nedžad Kurto but no one is really certain when did the first ones started to appear. Even though these traces were present and are still visible on some facades of the buildings in the city, only those on the ground are filled with paint and considered as Sarajevo Roses. Technically they are three-dimensional but might appear as two-dimensional as their thickness remains hidden below ground level. They have no text to accompany them, no map pointing to them and no explanation of their origin. Junuzović (2006, p. 229-230) says that: "making any conclusions on the nature of their sites and messages they communicate can be rather amorphous and may lead to asking more questions than actually offering answers." They can be found at city's main market, pedestrian zones, and courtyards, squares, around religious buildings, sports courts, and school grounds mapping the life in the city during the siege.

4.2.3. Memorial for the Children Killed During the Sarajevo Siege, 2010

The memorial designed by Mensud Kečo aims to preserve the memory of more than 1500 children killed during the Sarajevo siege. (See Fig.4b) It is located in the main park in the city center and composed out of four elements. The glass sculpture in the middle of the fountain, made out of two forms symbolizes a mother trying to protect her child. Water symbolizes purity and passing of the time and runs on the bronze ring of the fountain. The bronze ring which was cast out of bobm shells is imprinted with footprints of children related to the ones the memorial is dedicated to. On the left side of the memorial on a stone pedestal, seven rotating, stainless steel cylinders contain inscribed names of the children. The memorial won several prises in Bosnia but due to its abstract form its selection and unveiling caused much controversy among the parents of the children.

Figure 4. (a) Sarajevo Rosses; (b) Memorial for the Children Killed During the Sarajevo Siege; (c) Sarajevo Red Line Memorial

4.2.4. Sarajevo Red Line Memorial, 2012

This was a temporary installation that took place on the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the siege of the city and was designed by theater and film director Haris Pašović. He used multiplication of one object in order to dramatize the representation of absence. The installation consisted of 11541 red chairs, arranged in 825 rows. (See Fig.4c) Every chair represents one person killed during the siege while 643 of them were smaller in scale symbolizing the children killed during the siege. The red line formed by the chairs stretched on the main street ending at the WW2 Eternal Flame Memorial, where the stage has been set up. It was the first time that the victims of the siege were commemorated and a concert was to be held for 11541 empty chairs. Giovanucci (2013, p.451) describes the memorial as: "a strong example of Andreas Huyssen's conjectures about the evolution of memorials. Huyssen explains that society changes and thus the way society memorializes things should change: "A society's collective memory is… by no means permanent and always subject to subtle and not too subtle reconstruction.

5. CONCLUSION

The complex nature of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina produced a situation where three constituent ethnic groups have their own narratives which are incompatible with each other. With wounds still fresh and committed crimes being processed in ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) and local courts Bosnia and Herzegovina has a long and difficult process of healing and reconciliation ahead. Victims should have an inalienable right to recognition of their status and memorialization can be a key component in transitional justice and eventually pave way for reconciliation. Srebrenica is a symbol of the failure of international community to stop mass killings, ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nothing but prayer site, monument and tombstones can be found at the cemetery and the simplicity and the number of white tombstones strikes the visitor and compels her/him to think of the ordinary people who were killed there. However what memorials like this tend to displace are the narratives of the lives lost, the wounded and the displaced. Projecting particular messages about the war they do remind us of the past and the need to discuss it but it's hard to tell how they will enable us to reconcile with it. To see how the war is described in urban areas we turn to Sarajevo. The idea for the design of Sarajevo Rosses came from a professor of architecture at the University of Sarajevo, Nedžad Kurto but no one is really certain when did the first ones started to appear. He explains that he did not want to make some "grandiose, soc-realistic monument", instead Sarajevo Rosses were "not to be overly stimulating and too much of a monument", his idea was to point on the ground,

where the explosions happened. (Junuzović, 2006, p. 242) Since they offer no narrative their presence is focused on creating individual memories that can disrupt the dominant narrative. Since there is no map or record of them, no one can be sure if some were lost during pavement reparation so it is up to citizens and their memories to recall weather a Rose used to be there or not. Their silence allow multiple narratives to coexist and paves a way for the possibility of reconciliation. This anonymity together with the negative form of Sarajevo Rosses, and using repetition of an everyday object, such as chairs, to represent absent citizens of Sarajevo without dividing them on ethnic or religious lines, can attribute them characteristics of counter-monument movement and map the route for future projects. As we have seen from the cases of WWI memorials, by intentional misuse a place designed for remembering, grief, and healing, can easily become a place of accusations, not only the perpetrators but bystanders also. That is why a much cautious approach to memorialization is advised so that by the further alienation of the groups it doesn't become an obstacle in the post-war reconciliation process.

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