

## **CHAPTER 7: FORM AS DISCOURSE**

### **Introduction**

This Chapter synthesized the primary content of the requirements of artefact-as-home, through a process of personal evolution the results of her intentions and actions changed her lived experience.

Aesthetic phenomenology was the principle guide because the notion of communicative action was used to couple the applicability of ‘speech acts’. Communicative action was enacted by the *BaSotho* women, as described in Chapter six, they brought into existence the artefacts-as-homes to be interpreted in this Chapter; a discourse ‘spoken’ in the language of built *SeSotho*.

A material such as earth demanded participation at several levels because it so adamantly resists assignment to any one role; she became involved in a search for plausible intentions – ones that she might entertain herself, and in which she did enjoy instruction and participation – and ways of fulfilling these earthen demands of which she was not previously aware.

### **The essentials of what was taken from previous findings into this Chapter**

In previous Chapters as well as in this Chapter primary plus secondary data confirmed the existence of reciprocity. The positively identified principles aided confirmation that the creator, a *BaSotho* woman, whose actions of making homes-as-artefacts appeared to her peers, carrying with it their approval, praise and recognition. Induced from this was proof of her lived experience of reciprocity.

Through observation of the process an interactive network was confirmed. Lived experience assisted reciprocity to be accumulated, the quality of reciprocity was dependent on the extent to which knowledge was applied during the process of making a language which was interpreted as responses to forces. This gave a deeper meaning to phenomenology. The intensity of reciprocity was dependant on the depth but also how comprehensive the process of synthesis was.

The evolution of the *BaSotho* woman as maker of space started from being a baby; when she lived her experiences of space and place, her senses firstly started her continuum of learning, along her

timeline of growth learning became directed towards preparing her for her future role, to expect reciprocity as a reward for application and action, it culminated in this Chapter as critique.

## **AESTHETIC PHENOMENOLOGY; its specification applied**

### **1 Organized and meaningful totality**

Inherent in the argument of this Chapter was the intention to communicate through the act of making. The intention was to give meaning to her artefact; she had the ‘reader’ in mind as she constructed in order to evoke responses and then waited, expecting confirmation of her ‘speech’. This constituted the acting out of reciprocity.

### **2 Aesthetic objects were the products of acts of making**

Aesthetic phenomenology not only regarded the appearance of the product but also the multiplicity of decisions that lead to the correct interpretations of her original intentions, especially use.

### **3 Making created sequences of meaning**

Materials both allowed and demanded the recognition of, and participation in, any number of levels of haptic form, which may have overlapped or be nested within one another, they allowed such participation because every material had a manifold of qualities; some it shared with one material, elsewhere with another.

### **4 To grasp results of activity**

She executed the lessons learnt from childhood up to the stage of a woman making buildings-as-artefacts. Her measure of success was the confirmation of approval from members of her societal construct. The most important symbolic gifts to a maker would be praise; makers were conscious and sensitive about their mistakes made but not always of their achievements. Praise often came as a surprise especially when heard via another user and was the reward for all her dedication. Joy of use observed by the maker and confirmed by the users was another vital symbolic gift and confirmed expectations. **This particular exchange of gifts confirmed the essential form of reciprocity.**

### **5 A move from aesthetic object back to the work**

This Chapter completed the circle of making, from the intention, to the act, to the artefact, to the reading of the artefact, to describing the read intention. Evaluation of the work and procedures

realized intensions with strategies of execution had to be reconsidered. Insights and experiments lead to new discoveries and consequent actions. This repetitive pursuit increased the qualities of the aesthetic objects and set forth new methods of implementation.

## **6 Concerning the primary dimensions of the expressed world**

The *BaSotho* women-makers clearly exulted in their ambiguity of roles. They accepted (whether consciously or not) that their homes-as-artefacts were both necessarily continuous and necessarily figurative. Continuous, because they were part of a physically and temporally continuous world, figurative, because that was how they perceived things and represented them. These necessities were turned to advantages. Architecture was continuous, the making women then established their homes-as-artefacts as figurative, they succeeded in a discovery of their ‘made’ voices.

## **7 Understanding the characteristics of place, space and time**

Two characteristics of *BaSotho* architecture were; its unison of internal and external spaces but then also in particular, an interest in giving plasmic form to this unison. *Litema* resulted from a desire to describe, by way of markings (hieroglyphics), the separate characteristics of place articulated as unique within this continuous world of space. Time of day and occasions affected the dynamic use of place and space which was expressed in made languages of lived experience. By analogy; markings of the face (masks) expressed the same desire. "Like all his [Rilke's] symbols it is ambiguous and can be interpreted on various levels. It can imply a temporary disguise, a masquerade, and a playful change to a different personality; it can mean a protective colouring, a necessary form of escape from the dangers and distractions of the world. Finally, it can mean that powerful process of inner transformation which forces men [and women] to become masks" (Peters, 1960; 32)

## **RECIPROCITY**

Reciprocity was thus embodied in a communicative act, her ‘speech act’, its eminent aesthetic phenomenology. Lived experience became creative experience as lived. **Synthesis of creative intentions with its execution enriched reciprocity through active experience.** Although this was not the only way for her to achieve reciprocity, it occupied a central role; it became evident that if it was not for the *BaSotho* women, their distinctive buildings-as-artefacts would not exist but the reciprocal statement, if it was not for the building-as-artefact the identity of the *BaSotho* woman would not exist, this demonstrated the validity of the hypothesis.

## LANGUAGE

*Litema* added communicative action to *langage*, *langue* and especially *parole*: This notion is an essential feature of Habermas's theory of interpersonal communication and 'speech acts'. Speech act is a theory developed by Searle, (1979) and adopted by Habermas. Communicative action took place within the 'lifeworld'; it allowed observers and users, subjects, to arrive at a community of mutual comprehension that facilitated shared action. "They recognize the mutual compatibility of the claims of validity they are presenting. Because they are open to public scrutiny and recognized as being both comprehensible and sincere, these claims to be speaking the truth can be modified through argument and consensual persuasion. In theory, it is therefore possible to arrive at a full or ideal consensus". (Macey, 2001:69)

### Tools

Speech acts: A form of utterance that constituted an action. Searle's theory of the speech act is that both the thought and language are intentional; whatever can be meant can be said. Searle, (1979). **In a reciprocal context it follows that whatever can be meant can be done.** Sensors for perception, hands, ears, nose, mouth, eyes were all interactive agents for her to successfully execute her intentions to prompt stimulation of the senses of others. **Her experience of giving enjoyment and receiving appreciation enhanced her reciprocity.**

By picking up a book, a world is held in the hands, an enriching world to the reader, an influence of one's own life, affected by and affecting personal views, also insights into the wider world. It added meaning to human existence. The same analogy applied to the *BaSotho* home-as-artefact when 'read' by its users, not only upon first contact, but enriched by each subsequent visit.

The particular artefact contained embodied narratives ranging from its process and act of making, to the dictates of materials, suggestions of use and comfort of use. The main material was earth, when mixed with water; it became the substance of architectural monuments. Its malleability allowed surfaces to show hints of supporting structural frames, the telltale effect of gravity on materials and innovation, tools created from found objects, or the use of a component in an unfamiliar way.

She revealed as well the more pragmatic context of this artefact. The home gave protection, it provided shelter to its users against the forces of nature or other dangers. A roof to dream under, a floor to keep your feet rooted to mother earth, walls embraced you like the arms of your mother. Your mother's home is her product, different from all others on earth. When she died this home will only be the shell of a nut, the home-as-artefact lost its intention. This term was deliberately used to signify the woman maker's intention to shelter, to embrace, her arms as the enfolding walls of her dreams, the enfolding walls of the clay pot she made, not only to contain but also to be beautiful, as if wrapped in her special 'blanket', her thoughts, her insights, her values, her love, her preferences, her everyday-ness, her explanation of the 'wetness' of water. Users then saw this as a measure of their own life experience, their phenomenology of everyday. A home-as-artefact had no meaning if not continuously used as such, else not only did its air smell stale; its use felt stalled, immediately evident upon entry.

Her artefact realized a mythical context, but also a shelter against imagined myths, more fearful in the dark than in daylight when fears seemed to become more manageable. In the size of the home-as-artefact lay its soothing value, a child understood proximity, the familiar breathing sounds of calm sleep, the smells of food being prepared, and the sounds of activity.

As she and her loved ones lived and grew older in her artefact it became the container of countless memories, rich because humans have a selective memory to recall only those pleasurable. As grandmother she became the source of endless stories, some lived, others imagined of those days while her family was contained during festivities, a child born, achievements, initiation, making love, being at peace with her self. An unwilling grandmother, sometimes, she had to rise with the young, as the day dawned, to start her endless flow of advice, stories and just to enjoy being loved, she related the same story ten times, again and again sang the same song or played little games because she knew where the joys of learning lie.

## LEARNING

### Learning from things done

Sequences of learning savoured success and internalized compliments. **Some properties of the materials used differentiated elements while others connected them, this discovery set a reciprocal process into action.** Earth was a particularly good medium for this exploration because so

many partial correspondences were available: colour but not texture, hue but not tone, solar effect but not colour. However these opposites were also effective; smooth plains accentuated hand trace marks when it was used as a plastering tool. This plain was often unified with the crisp effect by incisions of a table fork while tones of colour resultant from different mixes added rich creative variety.

### **Subconscious insight clarified metaphors and analogies**

As a direct reflection of her actions she established future customs of intentions such as:

- 1.The 'wetness' of water implied that  $1+1=3$  or 4 or 5 dependant only on her will to explore.
- 2.Ice is solid water required the components; temperature (as her tendency), water (as her material, earth), process (dictates of accumulation) and time (an object in transformation).
- 3.'Wallness' of the wall started off as an accumulation of intentions but its added meaning came from evolution during execution, but the end result was more than what was initially expected.
- 4.The 'nature of nature' in this context was its unpredictability. She anticipated that aspects of her artefact therefore had to continuously adapt; all sides of barriers became relevant shelters.

## **FORCES**

### **To communicate her excellence**

The maker's aims were often present in her subconscious intension, **a montage of ideas that was reciprocally synthesized**. When this force was too overwhelming it negated the subtlety of her creative intensions; of delight in making a beautiful artefact-as-home; *venustas*, when it fulfilled its functions; *utilitas* and will not collapse; *firmitas*. (Vitruvius)

Here was a person living through excellence, an evident commitment, which had the experience to realize a gift of being a creative thinker, in this way revealing, sharing with users, to wish her intensions to be appropriated by the user, she also treated strangers as part of her home by enfolding them with her *litema* blanket, her artefact. In the dynamic use of this artefact aspects were disclosed such as presence of someone around a corner, looking through a gap, a window, also the fourth dimension of use over time, years of growing up, the anchor of lived experience, a phenomenology lived.

### **Changefulness in the experiences of the body**

Context was affected by continuous changes in climatic temper or gentleness, when necessary it was

reacted to with clothing as boundary, such as the blanket referred to in Chapter three as wrapped-around boundary of the body or artefact, for not only practical protection against the cold but also symbolic as in ceremonies and departures especially burial.

### **Changefulness of context**

A frequent variant usually evoked deliberate responses by individuals when the walls of the built artefact controlled temperature, denoted time, re-established a place or temperament. Human ingenuity controlled nature in the way they planned, behaved, felt or thought of comfort by use. In the *BaSotho* culture this acumen to devise intensions to shelter, within a climate adverse at times to human habitation.

### **Ambiance of place and space**

Experienced pleasure of use formed an integral part of habits, ceremonies, games, play, dance, music. It grasped another form of language such as *litema*. Everyday living assigned qualities to this spatial language to allow for private or communal behaviour, accessibility, permeability and size. Place was limited space, definite space was for functions or indefinite space was for song, dance, oral and visual communication or recognition and arousal of the other senses. To avail space for proper use was ultimately as complex as lingual or physical discourse of *litema*.

### **Senses**

Without doubt sensory reactions to observations were the cradle and origin of actions. The world is what was observed through these senses; it helped humans to survive in this world, lived experience of the initiation to truth. When looking at a flower form, colour, light and shade, movement and pause, growth is seen. Scents smelt associate memories of feasts but also anticipated future delights. Passing time can be seen, morning shadows turn into evening dusk, seasons in the veldt changed experience of temperature from warm summers to cold winters. A lived sense began at birth, sensed living and a sense of the end at death.

### **Touch, smell, hearing, taste and sight**

Size of home increased the experiences of the senses; it carried the sounds and smells of the mother active while making food. Her proximity was a constant reminder of comfort as she

worked through her daily rituals. This aroused in the dependants a sense of belonging as an integral part of the family.

### **Singing while working**

The acts of sensory experience, a voice for speaking, singing for listening, signified interrelations, interdependence. Rhythmic singing generated agility in her haptic hand and body while she gave materials their materiality; such as forms that only resulted from the malleability of earth.

### **Welcome home; built homecoming**

A phenomenology of making created a scenario where materiality and dynamic consequence stated that the aesthetic lay in the hands of the women making, Architecture can thus be seen as intentional phenomenology, it imbued making, thinking, artefact, construction, landscape, climate, materials with meaning.

## **PROCESS**

### **A thesaurus of built intentions**

This thesaurus was particular to aesthetic phenomenology. The thesaurus was intended as a process of seeking and providing synonyms. Synonyms had a bearing on new associations to enrich the fervour, but essentially, appropriateness of intentions to be executed. If reversed this process provided a synonym and found its initial interpretation. Synonyms were sourced from a body of existing examples. **Mental and actual reciprocity was activated but also necessarily embodied in this process; it enriched meaning as well as understanding of a built discourse of the senses.** What was looked at but might have been forgotten was that the human making and shaping of an artefact and home-as-artefact or evolved artefact-to-home had each of its component parts considered through this process of observing precedent, internalized and made, a habit of repetitive processes.

## **THE INVENTORY OF PHRASES MADE AND USED IN AN ACTIVE GRAMMAR**

Culvahouse, (1988), inspired but was not paraphrased in this writing.

### **Context**

#### **Sky – earth**

We can add at once that the horizontal plane is no mere mental mathematical form but a very real



fact. It is the surface of the earth on which we live and divides space into two very different halves; the one is the air above us, which our gaze can penetrate, but we ourselves can penetrate but little, since we fall as soon as we are not held up. The second is the earth space beneath us, which we can penetrate even less and which is opaque to our gaze. It is on the surface between these two halve spaces that our life is cast. Bollnow, (1963)

The East-West path of the sun divided the circle of sky in half with each morning *Ikwezi* as the first light of the new day became new life and rejecting a night of fear of danger or freezing in the cold, or sweltering in the sun.



**Figure 7.1 Sky and earth; artefact-as-home snuggled into its context**

As the artefact was discovered during travels the immediate joy of recognition of a maker embedded in her earthen 'pot' was clear and legible, a woman in her element, the sweep of her arm, the pliable hand moulding and shaping till the caress of eye and hand was satisfied, it felt good and looked just right. Her homes-as-artefacts acted as regional notations, receded into the local ground, became itself a ground for the articulation of openings and ornamentation, ensembles of all kinds that contained in them notations within notations, and even human figures as '*litema*', down to the individual circle. The material nature of making buildings allowed possibilities of continuity, progressive reduction of scale which assured the user of a tangible feel to the building, a correspondence between the sensual scales of elaboration of elements of the building at any

distance. This also allowed the nesting of scales and range of lived experience, but did not make them inevitable. It was a conscious desire and intent of the maker.

It in fact enriched that context; the landscape became more visible, as it rarely was in an explicit way, being necessarily larger than the observer's field of vision. By calling attention to a notable, but often unnoticed, characteristic of either artefact or regional context the artefact became not only a notation in the landscape but also a notation for that landscape. This was one way in which an artefact occupied a ground, but, not merely as something contained within it, it defined the ground and spoke for it.

### **Grammar for a context of affiliation**

When this happens, buildings-as-artefacts no longer sit with one another fortuitously, but instead depend on one another for their realization and so knit together the settlement in which they appear, scale within scale.

The mutual interdependence of artefact and ground apparent at the largest scales introduced an extensive pattern of interconnectedness in *BaSotho* settlements, for here scale was nested within scale and figure within figure in continuous succession.

Several devices accomplished this interconnection; each depended chiefly on differences in material and colours. The most obvious was also the most familiar: the alignment, horizontal or vertical, of subordinate elements within distinct but adjacent larger elements. Most striking were the variations of colourful horizontal bands that encircled the building tops and tied earth and sky together. White bands also occurred at the eaves level of thatched roofs, reversing the usual shade line.

The white painted copings (tops of *lolwapa* walls) worked together with the bands, horizontal and vertical, to give unity to the assemblage but more importantly, were read as signs of occupancy. Often bands or panels of *litema* typically continued uninterrupted through any differentiation when punctured by elements such as door or windows, in other examples such elements became liquid synonyms. Opposing tendencies were realized simultaneously by treating the *litema* of each façade

as independent, each wall plain had its own pattern, mostly or often with no relation or influence from that around the corner, showing the range of vocabulary of the maker.

In each of these examples, two characteristics of the material, earth mixed with cow dung, its colour and its configuration – allowed both the differentiation which made rich expressions of parts possible but also expressed connections which assured continuity of the whole.



**Figure 7.2 Continuity dictated affiliation**

### **Continuity and figuration**

The reason why phenomenological discussions of buildings-as-artefacts – architecture – was often removed from semiological discussions, was that the one attended primarily to the continuities of form, while the other attended to its figuration. To make it possible to attend to both at the same time was the offering of the earth as material, which, although not only remarkable in its many particular properties, but was also marvellous in its assemblage and combination of many forms, patterns and applications. Explored by these women, through actions, as ends in themselves.

To the *BaSotho* makers of buildings-as-artefacts work became a field for exploration in which they found new properties of space but also invented spatial tools used to increase the interconnections among figures as patterns of use and of forms to develop and maintain continuity in the midst of complex configurations of the language built. The wall as particular utensil of internal and external spaces they found the unison of their interests to describe a continuous world with plasmic form. These two characteristics were in a sense opposed, but nevertheless seemed necessary components of expression within a lived experience of a world both cultural and physical. A world of the desire to express met the equally strong desire for a stable and secure habitation.

The *BaSotho* women makers clearly exulted in this ambiguity of roles. They accepted, whether consciously or not, their buildings-as-artefacts were both necessarily continuous and necessarily figurative. “They are necessarily continuous, because they are part of a physically and temporally continuous world; they are necessarily figurative, because that is how they perceive things and represent them. These necessities may be turned to advantage” (Culvahouse, 1988). In shelter as a continuous desire, the making women culturally differentiated their buildings-as-artefacts as figurative; they found an opportunity to ‘raise’ their voices while their continuum of use was embodied in their intentions to shelter.



**Figure 7.3 Two walls prescribe an axis between sky-space and earth** Photo; FitzGerald

These two figurative walls represent a narrative of the start of something that may or may not have happened. The intentions of this home-as-artefact were transient, its execution was temporal, ceased just after starting, a pattern of barriers already traced on the ground; but while turning this pattern into walls the procedures were interrupted. The advantages that were contingent on the success of the imposition of an such an artefact stopped. The gathering of lived experiences, liable to have occurred, but not certain, traced patterns of space representing people as seen and studied became only metaphorical external forms or shapes. Ornamented containers of an expectation to shelter and provide a place to sleep, an urge that extended intentions continuously. These walls only contained a figure of speech. Why they were not realized remained as a reflection.



Space

Spatial continuity

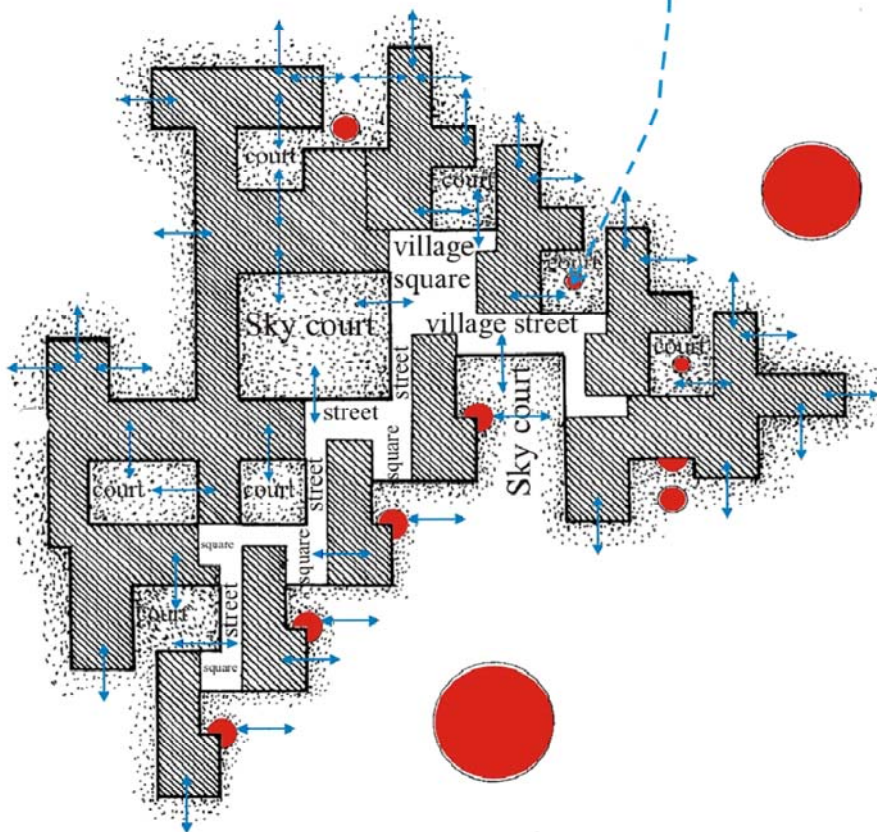


Figure 7.4 Artefact-as-container of internal and external spaces

Levi-Strauss, (1978) poetically described the shelters of the *Bororo* in South America. He might as well have described the same wealth found in the *BaSotho*. His text was paraphrased below.

These *BaSotho* buildings seemed not built but collected knots, woven, braids, wicker, lace, fretwork, garlands, and embroidery in its *litema*. Although some were built in grass, mud or stone they did not seem to overpower its users and dwellers under a weighty mass. Their presence was subtly adapted to the users, always subordinate to human presence. The settlements embraced the dwellers like a light, a flexible harness achieved with sprigs and leaves by the clever makers using only what was at hand to realize a vast effort, making homes-as-artefacts. The thatch seemed to be more velvet than building material.

Dressed as jewels the users slipped in and out of small feathery kists, their artefacts finely modelled, carved and brightly coloured within the encompassing landscape as if this was a tender passion of total culture, of substance, of their lived experience. Levi-Strauss, (1978)

### **Place versus space**

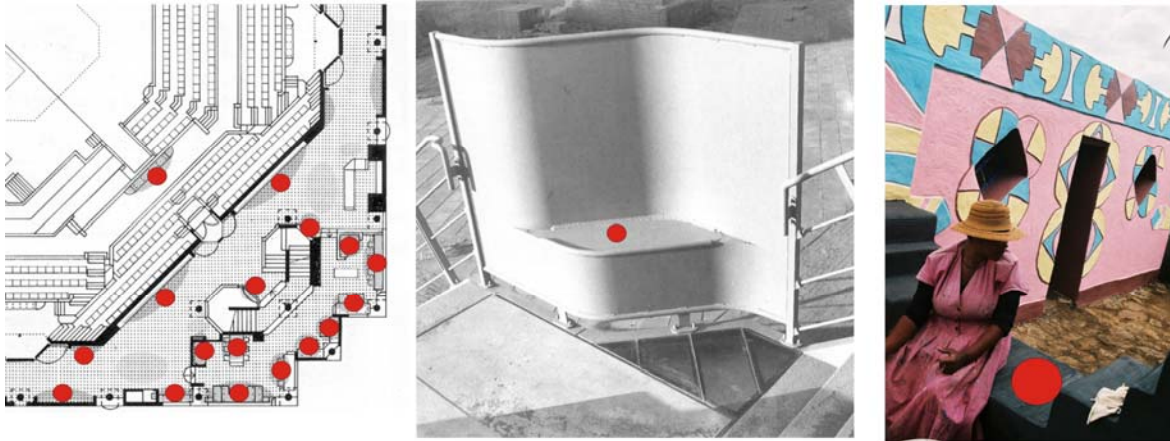
“A place is a space which has a distinct character. Since ancient times the *genius loci*, or ‘spirit of place’ has been recognized as the concrete reality man [a human] has to face and come to terms with in daily life”. Norberg-Schultz, (1980:5)

Changes to qualities for everyday rituals in spatial corners and spaces, became places, a focus of attention. A fireplace in the centre of the home was such a place; it will always be associated with the gift of being together while everyone clustered around for heat, the kitchen functioned not only as a space for preparing food, but became a centre for interaction, a place for easy discussion, free from the anxiety of expressing opinions, relaxed and pleasant. Longing for the moment of eating that which smelt so good. A threshold to hide from cold winds or a baking sun, thinking or just doing nothing, while watching others passing or busy with the everydayness of tasks.

The *lolwapa* was the place where a young girl could practice or perfect dance rituals in private before she had to perform in public. Here she was within the range of mother’s watchful presence and advice. As a toddler this place was her first encounter with the correctness of her senses and the development of her mobile agility, first when crawling and then walking, running or playing.

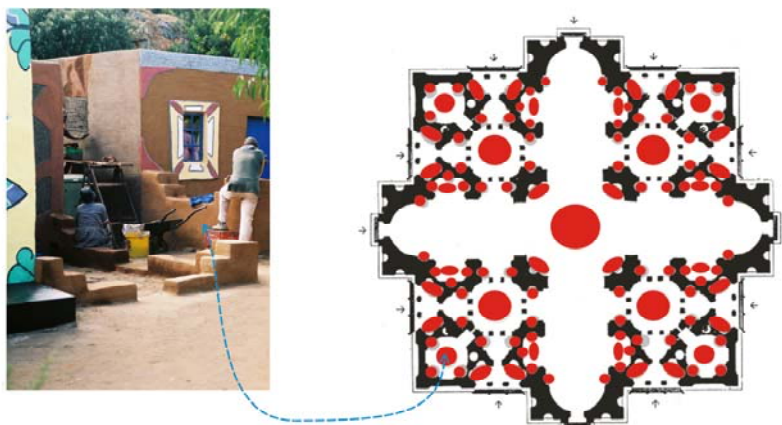
Fragmented activities and its resultant built fabric became a continuous place used for movement but also resulted in the chance of meeting, greeting and shoulder rubbing.

**Place-capacity**



**Figure 7.5 The intentional function of form to create place-capacity**

Correspondence between builders of the collective subconscious; Hertzberger and the *BaSotho* maker intended articulated floor plans to offer more stimuli for the creation of places as well as for more spatial differentiation. So, by articulation there appeared to be more imponderable things to happen. An open ended mental intention which relied on, and invited spontaneous engagement of parts, Communal or sky-space then must have place-capacity as a measure of success in the event that some use might arise. This was discussed in Chapter five.



**Figure 7.6 Place-capacity; its multivalency of use in space**

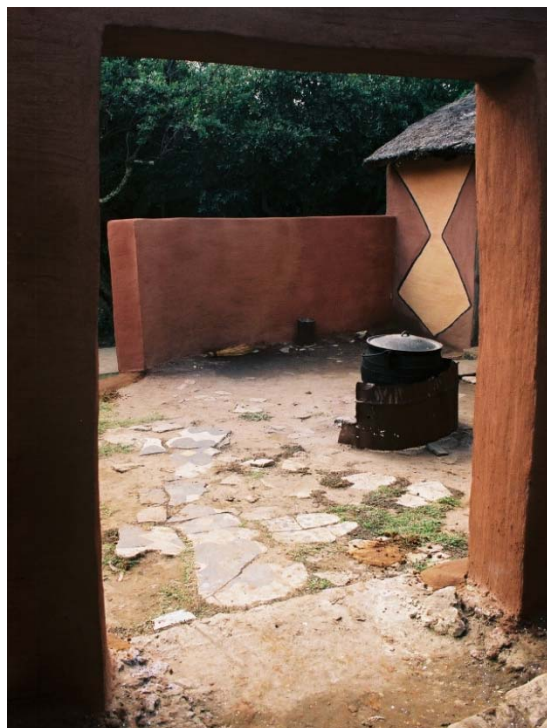
Hertzberger, (1993)



### **Space as solid matter**

Space is caused by three dimensional boundary walls; parts of it roofed others open. It was termed as solid due to it being contained, open parts were in this culture preferred places of affiliation and utility, sometimes low walls seemed to have been pulled up out of the floor but deviated from being obstacles and became tools for augmented values of space such as use; convenience and time changed the same wall into a seat, foot rest, work table or temporary store.

At other times punctured partition walls separated, as necessity, a space with a specific function, such as sleeping in privacy, a cooking enclosure connected onto the main space, the smoke from a fire needed to be deflected. This space was evaluated by users who identified special places for habitual use. Associations of complementary use prevented this space to become a deviation into a disjointed or diffused circuit diagramme.



**Figure 7.7 An adjoining but separated space with its annoying smoke**

This cosmos of space contained in it the home of dreams, Shadows and sunspots were described by walls, because of these the depth of secrets and dreams of comfort were refined. These patterns were dynamic, they changed with the time of day enabling the user to follow the circuit of places of enjoyment described and remembered the past, but also anticipated a future of comfort. What



enabled this was the direction of their memories. Secrets and memories were never topics of total objectivity, users remembered other places usually comfortable, warm or cool, but just right, also dependant on present extremes.

This home-as-artefact had an inevitable complexity, with corners, many rooms, inside and outside, gaps for peering through, as well as special personal comfort corners, for being alone. There was a place of memories for each of its users because the diagramme of lived experience in a home or room was the habitual extension of individuals. When people talked of the home as shelter, they first had to realise that the affective part of a shelter lay deeply engraved in the subconscious, dictating to either live inside or outside depending on culture, habits, heritage and memories.

Shelter also forced anticipation in the adventure of life, making it either active or pensive. Shelter also talks of the future, especially because daydreams echo those thoughts of past and future. When reaching through the labyrinth of dreams to the future, promises could be made real to hold more promises.

The human body contains both genders but also has one dominant, thus always bound into boundaries. Some can be transgressed, in human co-existence, meeting of bodies; contact is not a meaningless contact point but sets up a social boundary, a fine network of boundaries. The human body always determined the boundaries between people, person to person distance depended on familiarity or exclusion, and it gave an order to the world of interrelationships.

Due to being a human body, she was always at a specific point, present within a certain situation in her world. There was a back and front, left or right, above and below, close or far, the body gave the world boundaries and dimensions.

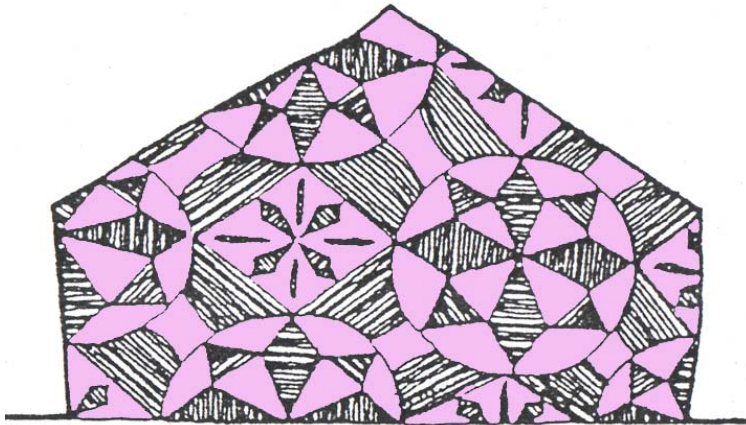
## **Boundaries**

### **‘Wallness’ of the wall**

By implication, when speaking of this wall on its own as though it was a thing that possessed its own degree of autonomy needs clarification. Such a wall would have autonomy when it was a physical object in the middle of a plain. Its existence immediately created opportunities of orientation; if it complied with solar geometries it set up places on either side dependent on preferred use, for a user to

either shelter or be exposed. It would have five linked surfaces, each with a different characteristic for things to happen as a consequence of climate, time, dimensions and a creative need for expression; signified by carving symbols. It might be more appropriately said that the surface was a characteristic of the materials of the wall

When the human erected walls to encompass a home, they recreated their cosmos. A human can only live due to boundaries creating protection. She delineated and built her own walls and boundaries but also kept the option of penetration. The woman sustained herself only because of boundaries, within which she did, through a process of living, evolve to her own self when walled and enclosed by her home. In this lived place she came to her own.



**Figure 7.8 The wall became a useful canvas for painting her variation of *litema***

Walls were internally and externally completely separate elements, each with its own decoration, more noticeable on the outside, each plane was a complete entity, depended on the whim of the maker and little continuity could be observed, bringing out both the positive and negative attributes. She often tested by experiments the application of a new rule or code to other artefacts, which could be interpreted as appropriate phenomenological findings. The observers read an artefact as a phenomenological process of making the woman

Religious festivals served such a function. So has a theatre of lived experience. From the very beginning it seemed that home-as-artefact had thus been theatrical in the sense of providing a setting that invited idealizing, re-presentations of phenomenology in everyday life. She still needed

art to proclaim more specifically the theatre, but also her *litema* for other re-presentations of life. The deeper value of lived experience lay in these peripherals, examples of the ‘wetness’ of water.

### **Walls built, shaped, plastered, and decorated by her**

The wall as utensil of internal and external spaces, in particular, we found the unison of an interest in giving plastic form with a desire to describe a continuous world. These two characteristics were in a sense opposed, but nevertheless seemed necessary components of phenomenology, in a world both cultural and physical, a world of the desire to express met the equally strong desire for a stable and secure habitation. The *BaSotho* women makers clearly exulted in the ambiguity of roles. They accepted, whether consciously or not, walls encompassing buildings-as-artefacts were both necessarily continuous and necessarily figurative.

“They are necessarily continuous, because they are part of a physically and temporally continuous world; they are necessarily figurative, because that is how they perceive things and represent them. These necessities may be turned to advantage” (Culvahouse, 1988). In architecture, as a continuous thing, the making women may find their building-as-artefact as a figurative thing; they found the opportunity to raise their voices with the gesticulating hand as trowel.

### **Floor**

As living-plain action was outlined as scuff marks; a diary of habitual use, it allowed for a multitude of activities other than its primary function of movement; it was table, seat or daybed. Its patterns of boundaries resulted in direct routes with adjoining less used edges. The floor pattern resulted from her hand and the sweep of her arm. While standing on her knees she started at the wall opposite the door and methodically covered in circular sectors and when the limits of her arm was reached moved sideways to repeat the next sector of the floor till she reached the door. Her method of work was reflected in the aesthetic quality of the finish, a pragmatic application of *litema*. There were other raised platforms to work and cook on. Ground level as ‘community table’ (Sharr on Heidegger, 2000:58)

Floors were smeared in patterns generated by the circular reach of an arm with a mixture of cow dung, blood and earth. Cow dung was used as insect repellent. It was a bed, table and seat for an individual or as shared realm, the ultimate protection.

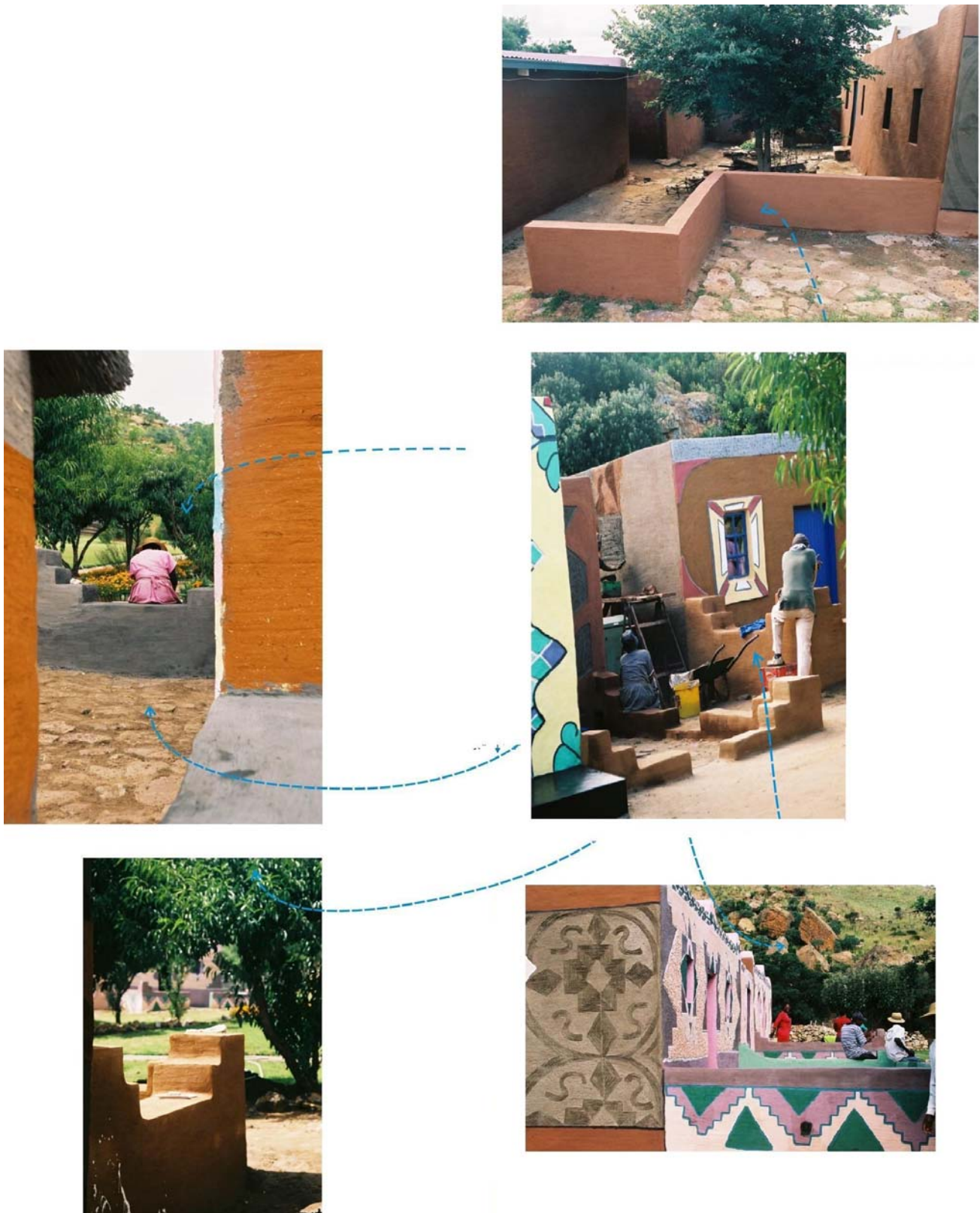
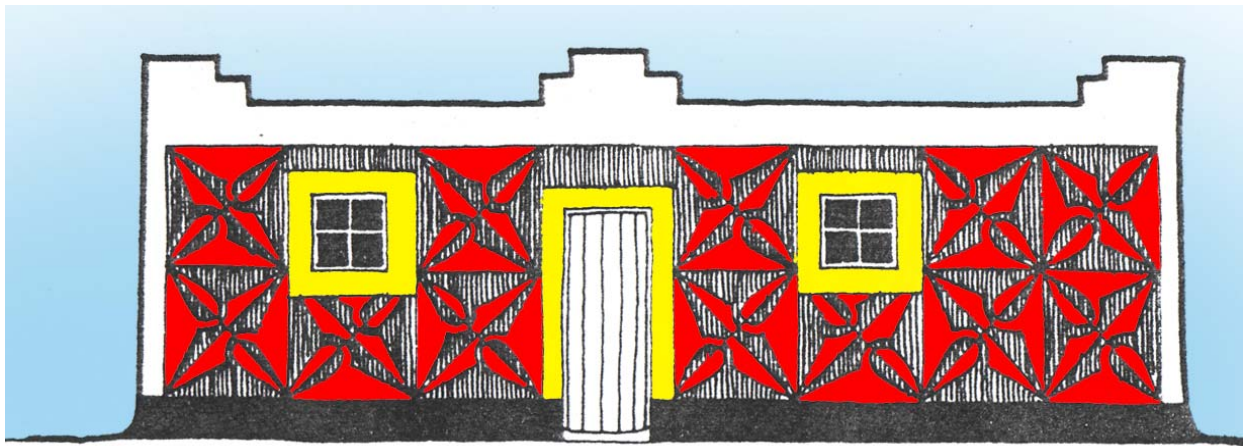


Figure 7.9 Space was articulated into place-capacity by details of boundaries



## Edges

Boundaries and edges were demarcated zones of privacy and protection, site, choice of location, horizon as infinite circle of living potential, a definite area beyond the lapa was where bodily functions, defecation, urination, leftovers were allowed. The outer limit of the public *lolwapa*, its edges not necessarily defined but known, was obviously respected; it was always where the clean swept lapa stopped or was shown by low walls



**Figure 7.10** The white painted edge at the top profiled the meeting of sky with an artefact

Most striking were the variations of colourful horizontal bands that encircled the building tops and tie earth and sky together



**Figure 7.11** Edge between artefact and floor plain

Edges gave textures to a plain such as with a floor, also framed views but allowed space to become liquid to flow up to the horizon as edge between sky and earth. Edges completed plains of *litema* to delineate it as complete. Often edges of walls had corners built up for arm or elbow rests, or seats for anticipated communal discourse.

## Roof

The roof as protection or representation of the sky was made by her husband or another specialist, with its own cosmological meanings of structural members, rings for protection, reeds trust into the thatch to protect the new born child and adult during initiation against evil spirits, also protecting the occupants of the artefact against lightning. White painted bands occurred at the eaves level of thatched roofs, reversing the usual shade line but also emphasized the connection of roof with walls.

## Penetration



**Figure 7.12 Implied movements by penetration**

With barriers came penetration. This started at the opening through her privacy screen *seotloana* into the *lolwapa*, often in a surround of darker reed to distinguish its role. The *lolwapa* was the living room of the family open to the sky and depending on the height will turn the horizon into the actual limit of her living room.



**Figure 7.13 Penetration accentuated continuity**

## Door

The door to the home had a major function, imagine a room one cannot enter, but it was quickly solved to return the room to a use. The *BaSotho* door varied from region to region and also the function of the room (hut). Doors have been discussed under the various types of huts especially their symbolic meanings, but especially its painted frame used by the initiates to denote fertility.



**Figure 7.14** A door ‘spoke’ of exuberance

## Window

Windows were holes punched into the plain of the walls but were synonymous with boundaries, two worlds, perceptible. From inside out and outside in, a here and there, but still inseparably combined. Even when inside the user is still visually part of the action. Space took on a new meaning when seen through a window; light acquires a magical quality that transformed everything within the reach of the eye in a soft light, the glare of sunlight was minimized but the size of the opening.

In general a window became commonplace, imagine the wonder it brought to the first human who cut a hole into a boundary and realised the combination of vision in and out, of how the light streaming in made the inside clear, but also let in fresh breezes; its opposite will necessitate covering the window when freezing winds blew into a warm home.



**Figure 7.15 Two perceptible worlds, inside and outside, emphasized by colour and curtains**

A view through a window is one of the first experiences of the baby of the outside world. Due to the limitation of earth it cannot span big openings, hence the windows were small.

Windows can be seen as picture frames. Small vignettes to larger frames when steel or timber frames were used. The lived experience of the window became one of inflected light when small, implying the solar geometry as sundials on the walls and floor; the colours of sunrise and sunset. A constantly changing visual frame defining a specific view of outside the window, seasons, climatic possibilities, occurrences, cold winds or clouds of eminent rain are read. To the person living inside nature, view is a constant, and not the subject of appreciation as to the urbanite. When the *bale* were wearing a *lesira* it could be seen as the mullions of a contemporary window acting as a permeable visual barrier.





**Figure 7.16** Window on the diagonal with consequential geometries



**Figure 7.17** Experimenting successfully with nesting complex geometries

## Threshold



**Figure 7.18 A phenomenological living threshold as public space and place**

An assemblage of form and figuration gave new meaning to the concept of this threshold as a collage of messages. Users read barriers, some ‘asking’ to be sat upon, others invited entry and yet others suggested permeability. Architraves, or the surrounds of openings, were either the continuation of the prevalent pattern or else not marked or even oblivious. Penetration of a barrier was often clearly demarcated with an inner ‘skin’ of bright pink, contrasted with the dark innards of a room and the colours of *litema* on the outer plain. In the words of Van Eyck, (1964) threshold was not only the transition from inner to the outer world, but the floor signified this threshold by coming out as a halve circle to meet the stranger or familiar person. To enhance the phenomenological meaning of the mythical threshold sacred signs, horns of cattle, bladders of goats, circular bands, each for its specific purpose was attached or above the door.

### Diminutive scale



**Figure 7.19 Of diminutive human scale**

None of the components used by the women builders were standard catalogue sizes.

The building-as-artefact was a direct measure of appropriate scale. Standard components negatively affected this human scale. Unfortunately, a low metal roof made the interior of the home unbearably hot in the summertime and the opposite in winter. She has captured the size of her users within scale of the artefact.

### Decoration

#### *Liteima*

Decoration, *liteima*, was a choice governed by interest and caused by an innate compulsion by virtue of talent recognized and encouraged in previous instances of reciprocity. Two results of reciprocity had been that the internal being was improved, an inward test of the extent of reciprocity and



secondly, making for others in the external world and seeing their response of her being the comforter, bringing delight, making beautiful artefacts, creating homeliness. These became her signs of success and were the inward and outward test of the extent of reciprocity. The building-as-artefact acted as mechanism between an inward and outward evolution of reciprocity. The effect of the sunlight washing the wall was the desired idea of the maker; from smooth to textured finish she relied on shadow to enhance her ‘speech act’.

***Litema* as an art of the earth; a phenomenological scenario that resulted in reciprocity.**

Her act of placing, making and decorating that boundary spoke volumes about herself and the response she hoped to elicit. With her consequent response she either reinforced or rejected the quality of the work done, if not acceptable she would have realized it during the process and would have redone and changed it. Aesthetic expectations remained in her control. **Being in control of her values caused confidence to develop; a sign of reciprocity.**

This language of plaines and its embellishment became a major vehicle of culture, bearing in mind that vernacular architecture had the material dimension of culture, there remained a continuum in the way people of similar cultural histories perpetuated their organisation of space.

**Her innate role in the *BaSotho* continuum set the stage for being valued, reciprocity.**

New challenges occurred throughout her life and answers had to be found or action needed to be taken continuously, as she matured as person, and her dependants grew through the various phases of their own timelines. Her role changed over time in relation to her timeline and her context of social constructs. **Understanding this change and its responsibilities resulted in confidence, reciprocity took effect.**

The response she received as well as gave was measured as joy and comfort experienced. **The wider meaning to this reaction was an example of the ‘wetness’ of water; reciprocity.**

The imperfections of the handmade *litema* gave it its haptic quality; Pallasmaa, (2005). Although it mainly addressed the visual senses, the hand together with its bodily movement and control made it tactile. **It imbued the *litema* with meaning caused by thought processes, thus decisions made and the resultant reciprocity.**

Further, it was a characteristic that had been emphasized by its particular *litema* to match from engraved, embossed or painted façades. The surface had been granted a unique figural status by the woman maker. The tools such as a comb, fork, or a bent index finger, used to attain the necessities of a fundamental material art such as *litema* equally attained the status of the extended hand and innovative brain.

### **Commensuration of light and substance**

The *litema* glowed on the low setting sun. It was executed for this bright quality of sunlight, it was firmly in place, precisely because of the dynamic relationship between these patterns while the changing angles of the sun made the earth colours interact as textures and patterns engraved. The effect of the sunlight washing the wall was the desired idea of the maker; from smooth to textured finish she relied on shadow to enhance her ‘speech act’.



**Figure 7.20** Inflected qualities of local light on a curved plain varied from legible to invisible

Dependant on its 'wetness' earth is matter with more or less uniform properties, these made a rich variety of incisions possible dependant on the tool used. It was illegible without sunlight, more or less intense, affected by its angle and cloudless sky. Sunlight is the agent that stimulates the sense of sight. The presence and effect of the bright and dark parts of an image, this degree of darkness or glare depended on the depth of the incision. The brightly lit surface revealed the aesthetic intentions of the woman maker to become known. The essence of *litema* 'spoken' or made, was its wealth and possession of two materials; earth and light.

Such commensuration of light and substance was one way in which the materially conceived artefact-as-building became regionally specific, as Frampton, (1983), suggested, "the contingencies of climate and the temporally inflected qualities of local light." – The peculiar quality of afternoon light in that most representative of eastern Free State seasons, the cross season of late autumn and early winter.

It would be appropriate to suggest that periodic changes of colour and brightness carried these homes-as-artefacts back and forth between two scales of commitment. Synthetic bright colours made it stand out from its surrounding winter grey. In summer its choice of contrasting colour or luminosity contrasted with its immediate vast context of a softly undulating natural coloured landscape to take its place within the larger geography.



**Figure 7.21** *Litema* as primary geometry disregarded the intrusion of a window



These patterns were as appropriate in the proximity of barren towering mountains, the contrast of bright colours immediately stimulated visual sense with the consequent patterns of thought. These became signs of habitation, the primordial need for shelter and a place to sleep. It was the counter effect of bright colours against a grey background that elevated intensions to profound symbols.

### Nesting

The nesting of figures one within another was a device which made the simultaneous continuity and differentiation of elements possible, the idea was that the world was perceived as nested wholes. Gibson, (1979)



**Figure 7.22 Earth mixed with water gave the artefact monumental properties**

This nesting afforded the visitor or everyday user a perceptual association from any distance, made the approach a richly continuous experience, seen from afar it was continuously redefined, enriched as distance was decreased. This was accomplished through the exploitation of an inherent possibility of material things – which they manifested in the simultaneous continuity of figuration as characteristic to the visual world.

### **Notation within grammar**

The repetition of smaller notations was another form of nesting which interconnected elements of *litema*. Individual notations were repeated in groups, which formed larger notations within the façade as a whole in every instance, the individual element was made, through its repetition, a systemic part of a larger whole. Each pattern in *litema*, at every scale, was for her a perpetual whole and yet at the same time was in one or more ways made continuous with other notations at adjacent façades and scales so these wholes nested one within the other and depended one upon the other.



**Figure 7.23** A clash of geometries, texture and colours gave this *litema* its wealth

Often bands or panels of *litema* typically continue uninterrupted through any differentiated element such as a door or window.

### **Interpretation representing her self**

Whether nomadic or pastoral these components always were signs of occupancy, safety, security, versus nature, animals, fire, rain, snow, water, sun or winds. Settlement, kraal (cattle culture), homes define the spatiality, each home was an assembled series of components, walls were graphically not connected. Household extensions, fuel for fires, grain store, cow dung stacks, dried corn cob containers formed part of the bigger aesthetic demands of the whole ‘home as artefact’.

The connection to this thesis was the human being, the woman, as maker using intuition and memories from her past. This was not only used in the decoration of the face, mask or façade for



exaggerated ritual purposes, but also in the stance and movement of forms as in the torso, arms, hands, legs, feet, hair; not only have the appearance of joy but also fear, rebel or conform, peace or aggression. In architecture the nature of the façade and overall form is in-laid with the same intentions as mask making or with marking the face. The process of making the façades or boundaries of her spaces as surfaces becomes a reflection of the woman-maker's creation of an aesthetic of making. **It was therefore a reciprocal reflection of social and cultural values.**

### **Under wrap; a phenomenological scenario**

Home-as-artefact was integrated with the *BaSotho* blanket. In her art of the earth she might have been inspired by the designs of the blanket. By painting the blanket on her home-as-artefact she wrapped her loved ones into protection and warmth, with all her inner feelings and emotions, love, concern and her own projection. **Reciprocity was also in giving a gift and to experience the appreciation as the bond.**



**Figure 7.24** The making woman ‘wrapped’ her home in a *BaSotho* blanket

The subtlety of form and profile was complimentary to the complexity of patterns. Appropriate because of the proximity of the users of these external spaces. Its tactile surfaces could be felt, its colours and patterns stimulated visual sense. Other senses were stimulated by lived experiences. Its humility did not inhibit the wealth of emotions and psychic awareness of shelter.

The decorated walls of her home as inspired by the blanket also became the wrapped around cover that will protect her loved ones. This same concern was the content of her act when she gave a blanket to her child at departure to initiation school or when leaving home. **Reciprocity lies in that here *BaSotho* culture imbued a ‘thing’ (blanket) with human meanings; the mother has given the ‘thing’ her being, and her human emotions.**

The embodied message of the blanket represented the continuum culture of making and the reverie of the mother in every step of the process while making artefacts to express love; the outward message of the blanket was clear to the outside world; it stated that the person wearing it is a *MoSotho*. The blanket became part of the everyday life of the *BaSotho* when wrapped around the home. **Reciprocity was in experiencing togetherness.**

### **Executed rituals of making**

It meant that her participation in the act of plastering was essential to her experience of the strain, pain and understanding of procedures. Personal participation in the act of plastering was essential to also experience of the exertion required, feel the fatigue in the body, the mass of earth she repeatedly picked up and held in her hand, the wetness and consistency of the mixed ingredients and then the force, and counterforce of the body, needed during application. This she willingly provided in order to give effect to her intentions.

Shortly before one visit, it was that time of year autumn, when the *litema* had to be redone. Multitudes of patterns, white, pink, red, ochre or black earth were again bright and clear. **A visual collage resembling a patchwork quilt retained a communal coherence, group reciprocity was claimed, a social affirmation.**

### **Accrued spatial differentiation was rooted into specific functional rituals**

Gathering and storing foodstuff and utensils turned the interior of the home into a miniature of her creative organization of space, every container and shelf had a designated function and position and usually remained as such over long periods of time, until a new comfort or tool may change the procedure to a new order of placing.

Spatial location and time (of when it was ready for use) became knowledge of sources of building materials, developed and discovered over time. During her process of gathering intentions she already knew where to dig for certain colours of earth and especially the kinds of grass to use for a particular detail of the home. Bark from specific shrubs and trees were used for tying and knotting, when still fresh and pliable, but it shrink when drying out and tensioned joints of parts assembled to make components.

Artefacts, tools, clothes all have a set of rules and body of knowledge of appropriateness, sources, methods and procedures of making peculiar to each. Confidence in tools generated new solutions and visa versa lead to the invention of new tools, or simply using a found object like a table fork to scratch patterns of *litema* in the wet earth. She consulted with her members of the community who were specifically knowledgeable and will work with them in order to learn skills, which she will again teach newcomers. She became known within the community for her special gifts and abilities will be consulted and specifically involved in the making activities organized by surrounding communities.

## **Material**

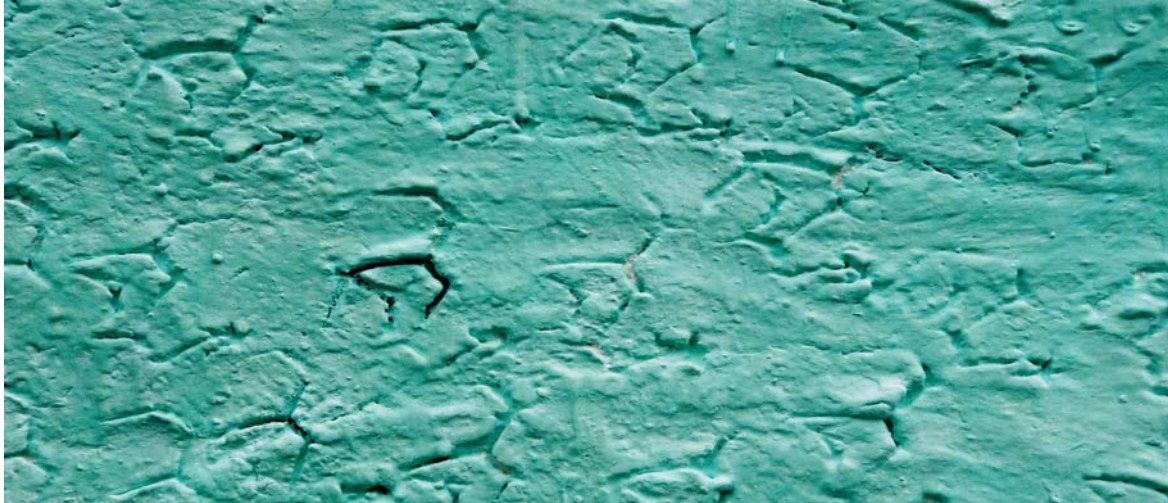
### **Earth**

This is a material with which to express a multitude of possibilities while executing intentions. Mixing earth with water allowed this woman maker to create monuments for lived experiences as well as the seemingly mundane things and activities of day to day human living.

The dictates of the material she had to overcome to accomplish success. It was innate in her mindset to accrue knowledge, accumulated over time but also copied and success when she was being copied. The material only sustained itself within its inherent strength to span small openings without support. It has no ability to prevent erosion necessitating constant maintenance. These dictates were not only restrictive, it challenged habits because of its malleability it easily joined with other materials. With the haptic hand of *Homo faber* did mould to suit every intention of the makers and when dry will retain that form with the proviso of its limitation; getting wet from damp that normally became evident in decay.

Some properties of the material differentiated elements while others connected them. Earth is a particularly good medium for this exploration because so many partial correspondences are available: colour but not texture, hue but not tone, solar effect but not colour. Hand traces can be seen as smooth plastering tool while the effect of incision by a table fork offers contrast.

As material it both allows and demands the recognition of and participation in any number of levels of plastic form, which may overlap or be nested within one another, they allow such overlap because every application of the material has a manifold of qualities it shares with other materials such as inlaid pebbles, dexterity of her hand enhanced its embodied plasticity.



**Figure 7.25** Chicken wire created shadows to express ‘lettering’ as script for their language



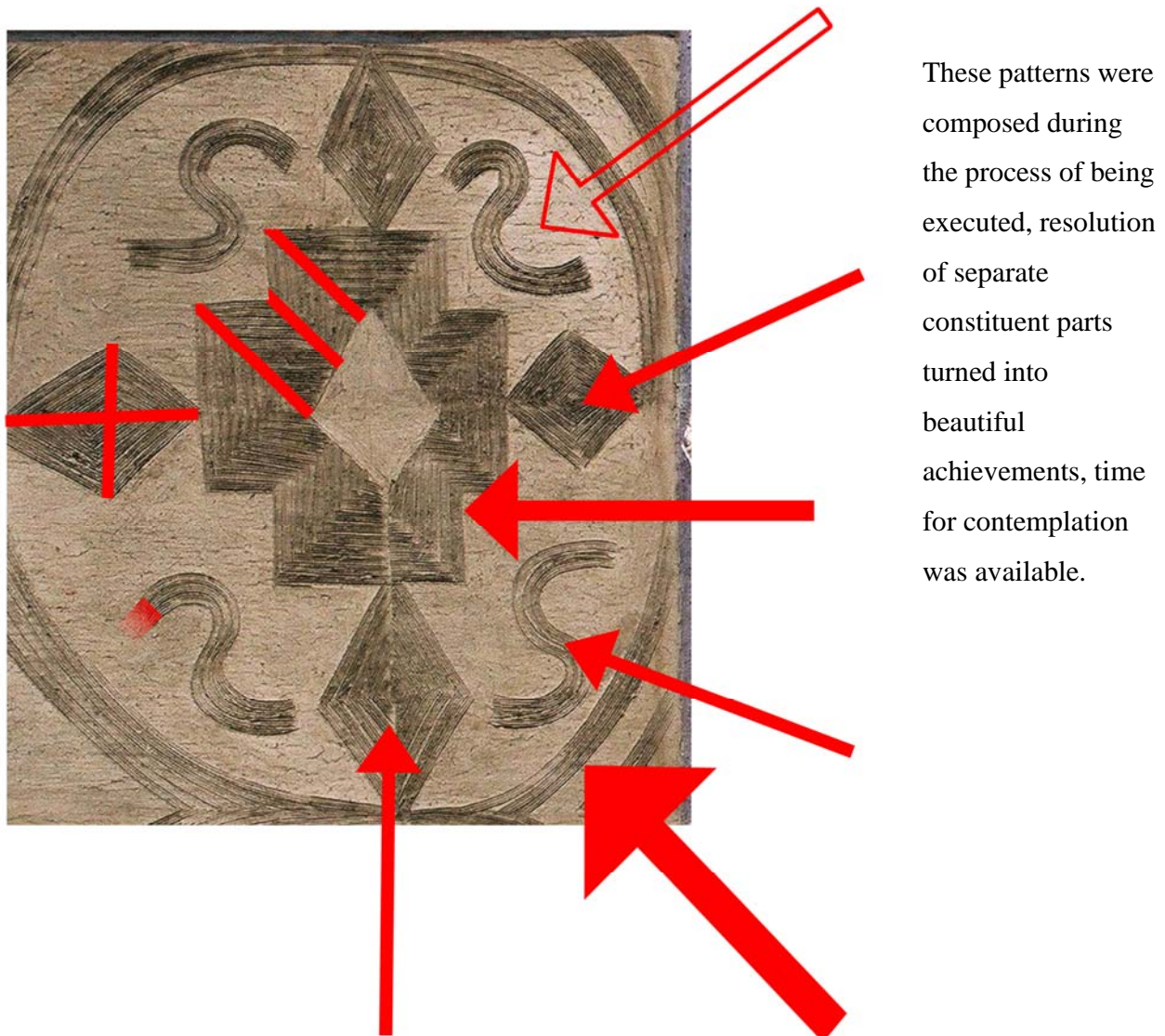
**Figure 7.26** Earth canvas treated with chickenwire, hand, bent index finger, and paint



### Scale nested within scale

The search began from a scratch, with what she found at her fingertips, what she got under her nails. Having only the surface in front of her, she could begin only with it. This initiated the mutual interdependence of artefact and ground apparent from the smallest to the largest scales, introduced an extensive pattern of complexity in *BaSotho* ornamentation, here scale was nested within scale and figure within figure in continuous successions.

Several devices accomplished this interconnection; each depended chiefly on differences in colour. The most obvious was also the most familiar: the alignment, horizontal or vertical, of subordinate elements within, distinct, or adjacent to larger descriptive elements.



**Figure 7.27 A hierarchy of figures within figures**

### **Destruction of her home, her nest-as-artefact**

Upon encountering a ruin in the veldt it was similar to having a discussion with an elderly couple about their past, their homes left, sometimes forced to leave with no choice of their own. What was the lived experience of the play acted out between these walls, the views out of the windows, of pleasure, fear, and hope or despair, pleasurable or forced entry at the door, arriving back at the door after a traumatic or enjoyable experience? A complete life; birth and death, the laughter and crying of kids, love, arguments, disagreement, force, intimacy.

Each ruin contained and anchored a meaningful existence, becoming an earnest bond between occupants and enclosure. Often the first signs of 'death' were the missing windows and doors of an abandoned home. Similarly a nest 'dies' and turns into an object, and almost immediately started disintegrating. What kept the nest alive while it contained life? Is this the reason why we are moved when we find an abandoned bird's nest under a tree? (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 2006)



**Figure 7.28** Destruction of her home, her abandoned nest-as-artefact

Considering this close association between the female body and the home-as-artefact in the mind of the *BaSotho* woman, it was clearly possible to associate the destruction of the home-as-artefact with the death of herself or a loved one. The destruction of her home was usually a result of war, strife or a climatic disaster. A home being struck by the 'lightning bird' was a bad omen, often seen as a sign from the *Badimo* of displeasure, similarly with floods or fires. She will consult with *Badimo* to find out what the problem was and what remedial action should be taken.

Destruction carried with it the associations, dreams, positive memories, and a peaceful life, drama, hence the trauma of loss. Her efforts, possessions and objects treated with fond attention nullified. Associations of the home as a representation of the womb, its destruction would invoke anger, connotations of rape, violation, with death of self as well as death of an artefact- as-loved-child. She mourned this destruction, accepted this in dignity, which added to her self esteem, esteem from peer group and allowed her reciprocity to grow.

## **CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER SEVEN**

The home-as-artefact existed as evidence for inductive enquiry of a language of intended symbols executed to verify meanings and to focus and revive the haptic senses, in this Chapter specifically visual, to confirm beauty and tactile to allow the eye and hand to feel the quality of line and its texture.

### **Links and connection points between components of work, thoughts or ideas**

There were also consequences to the appreciation of aesthetic phenomena; in the case of this Chapter, the synthesis and unification, within the buildings-as-artefacts, of all the factors present in an interactive process of inductive inquiry. Such factors were; phenomenology, reciprocity, also influences by outside factors such as the process of evolution of a made mode of applying symbolic language, an effective application of learning as well as forces that respect social constructs within *Botho* expectations.

## INTERACTIVE COMPONENTS

### **Aesthetic phenomenology was an aesthetic reciprocity**

Every home-as-artefact is a 'person', in each such 'person' there remained a joy to discover together with users its memories in textures, colours and moulded forms. Her effort was born out of reverie and love, reverie as a state of day-dreams – a passion for making, love was the result of getting to know and realize herself. Similar to her artefact she developed but added value to herself.

### **Reciprocity**

It was experienced when positive responses or spontaneous uses were evoked from others, be they peer group, users or readers and occurred along the timeline of each individual's lived experience (phenomenology)

Reciprocity exists in all fields of human endeavour. *BaSotho* women makers created them selves by creating a unique aesthetic and they created because they were creators of them self. Success engendered reciprocity.

### **Language**

Humans use many practices of language, from verbal to signs. This was relevant to each woman making aesthetic manifestations out of homes-as-artefacts. These acts enabled them to enter at a micro level into forms of interpersonal discussion or at a macro scale their societal discourse. Verbal communicative acts were as indicative of intentions as were signs used. *Litema* became a continuity of a *BaSotho* communicative culture.

### **A thesaurus of built intentions**

This thesaurus was particular to aesthetic phenomenology. The thesaurus was intended as a process of seeking and providing synonyms. Synonyms had a bearing on new associations to enrich the fervour, but essentially, appropriateness of intentions to be executed. If reversed this process provided a synonym and found its initial interpretation. Synonyms were sourced from a body of existing examples.

### **Learning**

A process of continuous insights was the undercurrent for the flow by the execution of aesthetic intentions. It gave a deeper meaning to phenomenology by guiding makers through references from previous endeavors. Evolution of innate



knowledge, within an individual, engendered confidence and the accumulation of reciprocity. Informed senses knew what to expect and to be receptive was a prerequisite agent.

### **Forces**

Making women had to constantly respond to forces, cultural and societal (*Botho*), were mental interpretations while the nature of nature or else the dictates of materials compelled its physical resolution. This response was informed by an aesthetic instinct of seeking out positive results within social constructs. Moral affirmation, reciprocity was a reward achieved when shelters against all the forces resulted in beautiful buildings-as-artefacts.

### **Process**

While an individual remained in a process of making natural qualities of mind brought new insights into existence, but only through this involvement did insights generate further insights into what constituted a *BaSotho* aesthetic. It confirmed that through acts of making a cultural continuum of lived aesthetics, but also reciprocity was achieved. By making humans are made.

### **A thesaurus of built intentions**

This thesaurus was particular to aesthetic phenomenology. The thesaurus was intended as a process of seeking and providing synonyms. Synonyms had a bearing on new associations to enrich the fervour, but essentially, appropriateness of intentions to be executed. If reversed this process provided a synonym and found its initial interpretation. Synonyms were sourced from a body of existing examples. Mental and actual reciprocity was activated but also necessarily embodied in this process; it enriched meaning as well as understanding of a built discourse of the senses.