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hp 4

DISCOURSE

DESIGN DISCOURSE:

- Space and Place
- Defensible Space
- Belonging
- The Behaviour Setting
- Conclusion

Space and Place:

“The need to get away? The desire to arrive?”
(Hertzberger, 2000; 25)

Herman Hertzberger illustrates the idea of space as a longing, an expectation of possibilities, outside, on a journey, dynamic and open. Place however, is seen as a pause, inside redemption, a home and of being at rest. These two notions are interdependent characteristics in which the one brings the other to awareness, enabling the other to exist in as a phenomenon.

Place implies that an added value has been bestowed upon space. This added value allows for the people who inhabit this space to create a link with it. The thing that can turn space into a place, is the infill given to it by its occupants or users. A location can then become a 'particular', a place coloured by occurrences, past and present, lending it associations and perceptions. When one is making place, one thus means that one is making space in such a way that the conditions for its infill endow it with the quality of space.

A space however, can already be endowed with the connotations of a place. As is demonstrated in the site next to the Synagogue, and the Synagogue itself. This place is seen as space where memories of a Jewish community lie silent, while the importance of it as a landmark of political turmoil and suffering takes over. It is a space where people found their identity and others were eventually forced to relinquish theirs through the conversion of the Synagogue to Supreme Court. This meaning of place stems specifically from the old Synagogue. As a character made up from its physical nature, cultural associations and a certain intangible essence that is given by human use over time. The Synagogue is not merely seen as a physical object in space, but with an added unique presence expressing the environment it grew out of.

This distinct character of place, relative to the site and the Synagogue can be understood through the words of Norberg-Schultz, where he states that: a place is a space which has a distinct character. Since ancient times the *genius loci*, or spirit of place, has been recognised as the concrete reality man has to face and come to terms with in his daily life. Architecture means to visualise the *genius loci* and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places where he helps man to dwell. (Norberg-Schultz, 1980)

This proposal will thus have to be seen not merely as manipulating form to create space, but rather to create an even stronger sense of place through the synthesis of the whole context of the site. The goal should be to discover the best fit between the physical context and the needs and aspirations of all users.

Defensible space:

If people require a relatively stable system of places, in which to develop themselves, then these needs endow architectural space with an added intangible emotional content. This emotional content can meet privacy demands through the provision of a boundary or definite edge. Martin Heidegger notes that a boundary is not that at which something stops, but as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing. It is from this phenomenology that the anchoring factor of my design lies.

When dealing with survivors of family violence one is forced to accommodate for an extremely traumatised person. One for whom “The threat of harm is ever present in the physical and social environment, and constant vigilance is required.” Furthermore, “survivors have resolved their victimisation when they are able to feel relaxed, connected to others and in control of their anger.” (Andrews, A, B. 1990; 212) These necessary characteristics for an appropriate response have informed the design of the family court to be a 'sanctuary' of defensible space.

Defensible space can be understood as a place where users perceive the space that affords them easily recognisable and controllable activities within. This type of environmental structure expresses a social fabric allowing for a sense of community to arise. In dealing with the privacy demands of a survivor of family violence or trauma, Jon Lang illustrates in his book: Creating Architectural theory; the role of the behavioural sciences in environmental design that these individuals are especially vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and that their defensible space needs are high. Similarly, their social- space distances are likely to be reduced. However, not only is the privacy need for a survivor high but so too does it vary considerably in different cultures.

In ascertaining the correct language for privacy in South Africa, one needs to take a step back and analyse cultural aspects of space as a public or private entity.

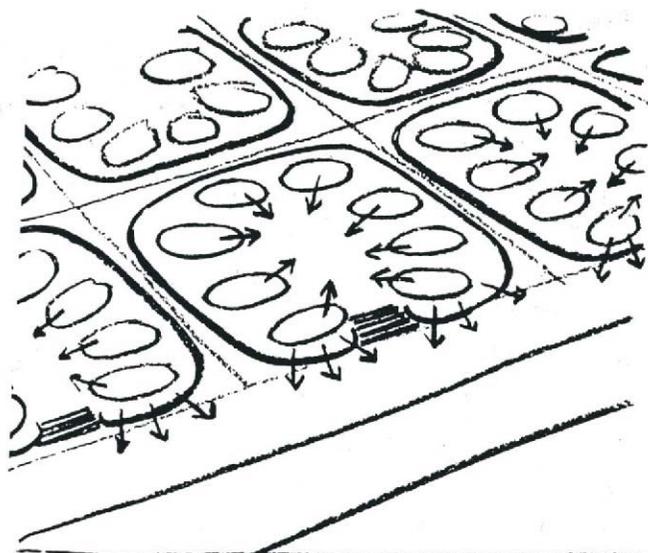
Urban society in South Africa has two major cultural views: Historically colonial settlement in South Africa imposed a European, metropolitan culture of cities. Space to this European ideology is seen to be private, except only for specifically designated and regulated public areas, defined through walls and fences.

On the contrary African culture validates itself through personal and humanist values. In this culture all space is understood as public, except specifically for that defined by ritual.

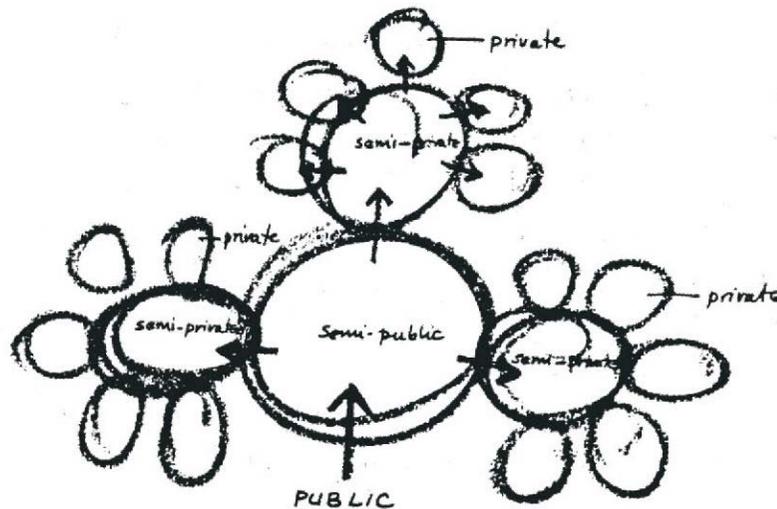
The attempt to synthesise this type of private space ideology, is demonstrated through the incorporation of specific compatible cultural spatial systems. These systems can be seen as that of Western European culture replicating African values. They will be analysed in terms of;

- Belonging in a place, and the type of philosophical identity one attributes to the place.
- The use of behavioural setting analogies, relating to memories of dwelling. Allowing for a greater connection through the ideology of spatial memory.

(Lloyd, R: Defining spatial concepts towards an African urban system, Urban Design international. (8) no 3, September, 2003; 105-118)



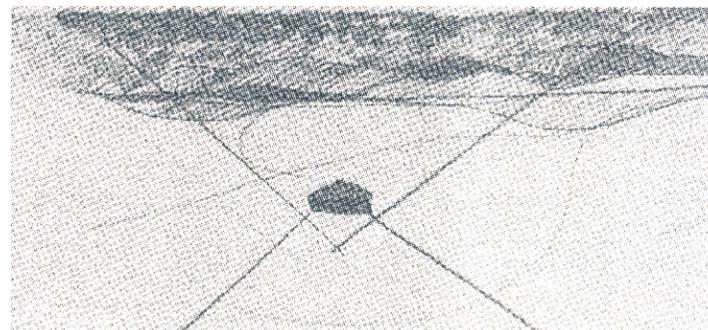
4_01
Oscar Newman (1974) demonstrates conceptually the combination of territorial definitions and natural surveillance opportunities



4_02
Newman (1974): shown here is the conceptual understanding of hierarchies between public to private. Newman found this a necessary enabling factor for persons to sense control over an environment



4_03
African 'rural dream': all space is public except for space designated 'private' through ritually contrived building 'language'



4_04
European 'rural dream': all space is private and designated so through legal and graphic orders, and also visually, to the horizon

Belonging:

"A critical process to social health is the taking of 'ownership' of an urban space, both in individual and group terms. And an essential requirement for this is legible and enabling connections between culture and space." (Lloyd, R. 2003, 115)

If particular spaces are given meaning by the practices that take place there, these spaces are dependant on keeping the memories associated to them, alive. In this sense the space surrounding the Synagogue and the Synagogue itself, has ascertained a certain character over time. However, as the new activities of a Family court take over the space and the re-appropriation of the Synagogue to a more public place allowing memories of oppression to fade. The space takes a new character of public inclusion.

This inclusive nature "suggests a way in which communities might colonize various territories through the literal performances- the actions, ritualistic behaviour and so on- that are acted out on a given architectural stage. It is through those performances users can achieve a certain attachment to place." (Leach, N. 2002; 79)

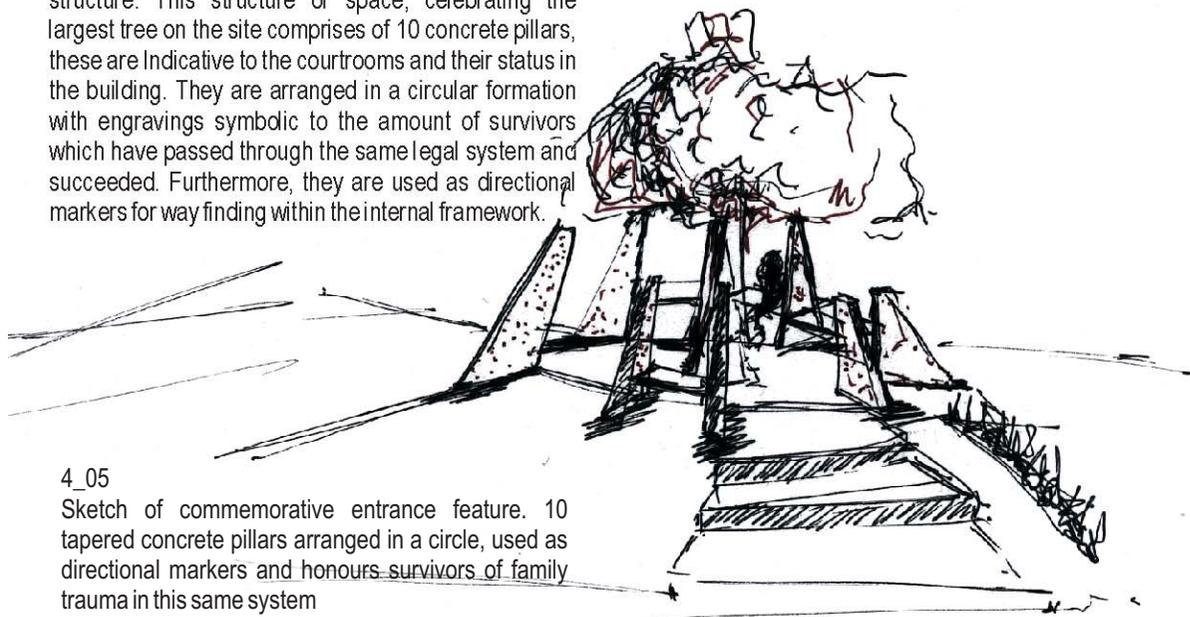
The architectural stage in question would be the internal private areas catering for the users of the legal system. One could further this notion of a theatrical dramatisation, by allowing the implication of mimesis to inform a ritualistic act of acceptance and identification within the cosmos. Through the interpretation of society, viewed as a city, the building attempts to re-interpret this by its configuration of a small city or village. Once in society the users can re-associate themselves back into the perimeter of the building and in so doing 'back into society'. This understanding of society can be seen to the users as re-inscribing themselves, to the space which allows them an escape from their previous problems.

As a combined result of the echoing and re-enforcement of these two sets of experiences over time, a sense of mirroring and consequent identification is achieved. This mirroring can thus allow one to feel like they belong, not only in a place such as the family court but also in a public society.

If one is to find a common ground between the understanding of a western philosophical self (one in which death can be seen as a culmination of life on earth) and an African philosophical self (which naturalizes death, by recognition of it as more than just a material function, and thus seen as another form of social relationship with ancestors). (Lloyd, R. 2003, 107) Then the only manner in which to fuse these two contradictory understandings of self is to view it as a system. This system can be seen as a fusion between; *logica*, central to a European tradition dominated by mystic and emotional values and that of an African thinking.

This cultural unifying factor can be seen in the side entrance to the Family court. Users of the private domain of the court area are greeted with a memorial type structure. This structure or space, celebrating the largest tree on the site comprises of 10 concrete pillars, these are Indicative to the courtrooms and their status in the building. They are arranged in a circular formation with engravings symbdic to the amount of survivors which have passed through the same legal system and succeeded. Furthermore, they are used as directional markers for way finding within the internal framework.

Seen as mimicry of Stone henge and of primordial man it can be interpreted as the thinking of *thesis* and *logica* becoming overshadowed by a longing to understand nature and its origins. As Stone henge's gateways were placed to predict natural events and *chronos* (time) they linked the earthly and man to that of the heavenly world. It is the metaphorical relation between astronomy to rebirth and regeneration. Becoming a gathering space where people constantly moved to and fro from, creating a sense of pilgrimages. With the entrance design in the family court of concrete pillars tapering up to the heavens one can almost see how placing this as a pause area of orientation, can just as Stonehenge affiliate man to a higher power or celestial being. Viewed as a portal from 'us to them', further emphasising the idea of a stage. A making of place from a foul thing of trauma, and struggle, emerges something exciting, creating a sense of serenity from the chaos that was. This site and space, thus becomes appropriated by the to and fro movement giving it a ritualistic pilgrimage relative not only to an African ideology but to an ideology to which anyone can relate.



4_05

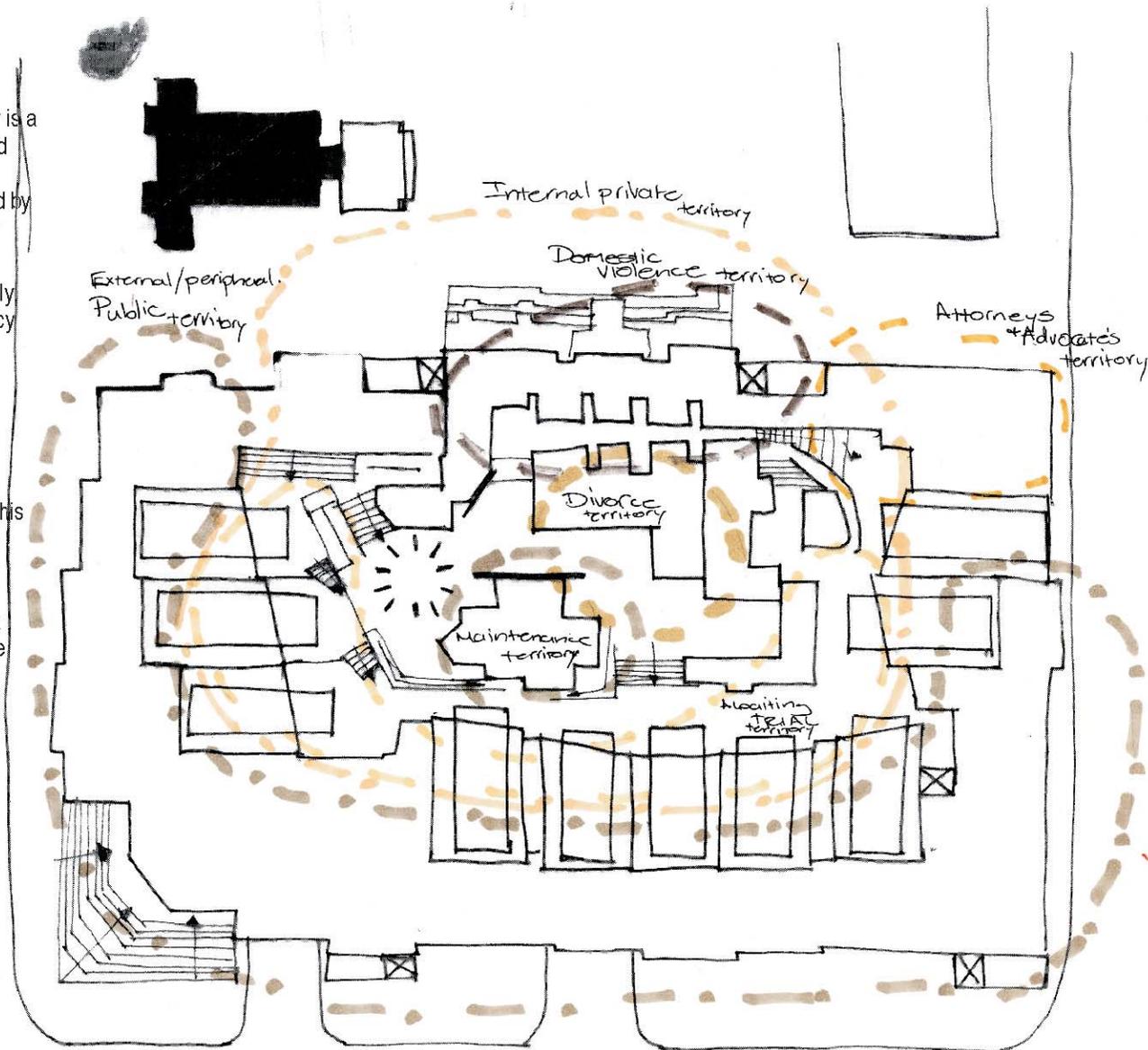
Sketch of commemorative entrance feature. 10 tapered concrete pillars arranged in a circle, used as directional markers and honours survivors of family trauma in this same system

In adding to the notion of culturally unifying belonging. The design of the Family court cannot overlook the understanding of territoriality.

Leon Pastalon, (quoted by Lang, 1970) gives the following definition of a human territory: A territory is a delimited space that a person or a group uses and defends as an exclusive preserve. It involves psychological identification with place, symbolized by attitudes of possessiveness and arrangements of objects in the area.

The overall design of the Family court is essentially split into zones of territoriality. This afforded privacy through territorial control, is important because it allows for the fulfilment of the needs of identity, security, stimulation and a frame of reference.

The design is split into territorial hierarchies comprising of a peripheral public territory encompassing an internal semi private territory. This semi private territory is split further into smaller territories of a more private nature. According to Lang these hierarchies of territoriality seems particularly important in societies where there is a great need for security. Thus, further enforcing the adequacy of this type of design.



BELONGING

DESIGN DISCOURSE

4_06

Diagrammatic sketch of territories in the design of the Family court

The Behaviour Setting:

An architectural environment is more able to provide for basic needs of people – those of shelter and security- than it is in meeting the needs that are a product of interpersonal and social relationships. Yet even here the built environment is important, because it does at least partially meet the need of self esteem, affiliation and the use of aesthetics through the symbolic messages it provides of status, identity and values.

A building design imposes on people's lives through the affordances it possesses. But not all people perceive these affordances in the same way. Because of this we need to study the social environments where a user feels the most comfortable, and for lack of a better term 'at home'.

This "'commodity' is one of the basic concerns for an environmental design. It has to do with the way the built environment houses activities, international patterns, and individual movements to attain, at least partially, the specific goals of the individual or organization." (Lang, J. 1987; 109) The concepts of 'behaviour settings' embrace the attainment of all these goals of design and provide a foundation for environmental analysis and design in responding to human needs. In table 4_07 one can see the correspondence between the human needs identified by Maslow juxtaposed to Steele's list of functions of the built environment. Here a same mechanism can attain the many functions of the built environment, and the same type of contact can meet a number of goals.

Therefore, one can deduce that an appropriate environment can be seen as being a nested set of behaviour settings. The ways in which these behaviour settings are laid out or perceived are major contributors to subjective feelings of environmental quality.

The layout of the environment is not only the planning or setting of the environment; it can also be seen as a cognitive notion of the building or area. This wayfinding and spatial orientation is very important to an efficient environment.

Activities within a building affect the images one associates with it. These in turn affect the association one has with the building and its spatial behaviour patterns on the psyche. Spatial layout and orientation can thus be seen as a form of a cognitive mapping process.

Cognitive maps contain information about the physical setting, establish the position in space, show direction and facilitate tasks of wayfinding. A person continually acquires new information in interacting with the environment, and the map becomes more accurate. Cognitive maps are furthermore modified by memory and learning. (Passini. 1992; 46)

The necessary environmental settings for the Family court are legibility and association. Creating a highly imageable building, assisting in the perception of ones cognitive map finding abilities. "A highly imageable city, building or interior is one that is perceived as a well structured system of components that are related to each other. (Lang, J. 1987; 137)

Main problems in forming a coherent image of a building are due to difficulties in grasping spatial organization, spatial enclosure, and spatial correspondence. However this does not imply that the building should be simplified to such an extent that it becomes lifeless. "Simplistic functionalism must be avoided, as this leads to uninspiring and monotonous environments. Spatial complexity and the unknown awaken curiosity and the desire to explore." (Passini. 1992; 22)

In an African context restorative environments or merely behavioural settings can be perceived differently through cultural and personal dissimilarities. In relating to cultural diversity these factors can be associated with the ideology of spatial memory. As shelter means varied things to various cultures, so too is the imagery invoked within the term different.

To rural people, their experiences from childhood of unstructured veldt; would have trees and rocks and water, in all its forms creating place, boundary and landmark in complex, varying arrangements. To city dwellers, experiences from childhood are made up mostly of spatial experiences with geometric, man-made form. Space would be seen as predominantly hard-edged and surfaced, often devoid of planting, trees and a limited sense of sky. Their inherit sense of spatial complexity fails to develop. Diurnal time and rhythm are predictable and modified by artificial lights. (Lloyd, R. 2003; 109) Cultural meaning can be increasingly interpreted by known environmental influences, in which space must be seen as having value unique in each society.

Pathologies of social behaviour are also exacerbated through intense urban experience. Acute sensitivities due to this were studied by Freud. His theory on the Nirvana principle specifically relates to this. The nirvana theory centred around the conflict between Eros and Thanatos, between love and death. These related back to the memory of the prefect state in the womb, a refuge, striving only for the satisfaction of the pleasure principle. This would be a state where psychic equilibrium and the highest level of universal harmony would be found.

Lloyd suggests that it is this 'drive for harmony' that manifests in pleasure derived from aesthetic values, most notably those of spatial harmony, balance and proportion. He goes on to say that mimetic identification with objects can be seen as a form of narcissism: a compulsion to identify oneself with 'the other'.

Onians illustrates that the meaning and the origin of historically formalised architectural 'objects' develops directly from environmental factors, in particular to those essential for social or group survival.

Therefore, through all of these analogies of spatial sense and memory it is imperative to design the Family court in such a manner as to be comfortable to all cultures and personalities. Allowing all users to achieve a sense of dwelling and of spatial memory to which they can associate with the notion of home. Some aspects in the design which aspire to this concept are:

- The hierarchies of territoriality or zones, as discussed previously can be understood as variously scaled 'objects', allowing for re- association of all cultures and personalities.

- The restorative environment within the semi- private realm of the building will include restorative gardens, consisting of indigenous plants associative to both urban and rural settings. In addition water streams and reflective ponds will be incorporated for one to reflect and have a symbolic association through the cleansing of ones hands.

Human Needs and The Sociophysical Mechanisms Required to Afford Them

Need	Steele's Concerns	Sociophysical Mechanisms/Design Issues
Physiological	Shelter and security Task instrumentality	Shelter, access to services
Safety	Social contact	Access to services, privacy, territoriality, defensible space, orientation
Belonging	Social contact Symbolic identification	Access to services, communal settings, symbolic aesthetics
Esteem	Growth, pleasure	Personalization, symbolic aesthetics, control
Actualization	Growth, pleasure	Choice, access to developmental opportunities, control
Cognitive/aesthetic	Growth, pleasure	Access to developmental opportunities, formal aesthetics

4_07

Table demonstrating the mechanisms in designing appropriate environments with human needs and sociophysical concerns. (Lang, J. 1987;110)

CONCLUSION:

In order to enhance the *genus loci* of the Synagogue and the site proposed for the Family court. One needs to take the distinct character of the space and the Synagogue into consideration. It is an even more challenging site as the Synagogue has already been endowed with a memory of place. This memory of place is one imbued with Jewish identity and the struggle of the treason trials. An appropriate intervention would be one of public inclusion within the surrounding area and the Synagogue itself, thus allowing a new memory to be born and assimilated.

The high need for privacy in this building has informed the design to that of a village or city layout. However, for one to design adequately within the context of South Africa one must understand the cultural differences in our country. A synthesis of these private space ideologies has been incorporated in the design through an amalgamation of Greco- Roman origins of Western European culture replicating African values.

Belonging in a place, and the type of philosophical identity one attributes to it, must be analysed through a culturally unifying or community building front. This can be seen through a sense of territoriality enacted through literal performances of 'rituals' and actions. Further implying mimesis depicting a 'ritualistic' act of acceptance of their situations and their identification within the cosmos.

Symbolic metaphors throughout the design permit the correlation of European mysticism and African rituals to relate not only to specific cultures but to humans in their most primordial nature.

The uses of behavioural setting analogies, relating to memories of dwelling, allocate a greater connection with the building through the ideology of spatial memory. This spatial memory can yet again be viewed as being influenced by varying cultures and personalities. The connotation of a dwelling as a home can be perceived differently. Depending on the numerous spatial complexities pertaining to the many subjectified understandings of a house. These understandings are necessary to implement in an environmental design specifically geared to accommodating people. The proposal further aims to use the idea of empathy through the use of *chronos* and connotations within this environment to link with a more humanistic approach of the legal system. Thus, leading to a much more conducive setting for everyone.