

**RECIPROCITY IN THE EVOLUTION OF SELF THROUGH THE MAKING  
OF HOMES-AS-ARTEFACTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE  
*BASOTHO* FEMALE IN HER VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Pretoria, Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Signature

29<sup>th</sup> day of October 2010

## ABSTRACT

Making and being ‘made’ is a paradigm of lived experience applicable to all human beings who have intentions of being made but must also be prepared to execute those intentions. This is a subjective statement and its validation could only be induced from observation of *BaSotho* females making their unique buildings-as-artefacts, if these women were being ‘made’ through their actions of making then it must also apply to other makers.

Prerequisites of this paradigm are that the maker is a free agent who is allowed to have intentions but who is also willing to execute these aims. Effective actions imply that the maker has been prepared mentally and physically, during a constant evolutionary growth of the mind and the body, starting from the stage of being a foetus. Lived experience is phenomenology, a lived gathering of experiences, perceived by all of the senses and integrated by the mind into an accumulated body of knowledge.

As the chapters in this thesis illustrate, being ‘made’ was at the future maker’s threshold of consciousness, her primary concern is in making space for affiliation, place for private intimacy, often alone but also at other times with others, place-capacity too, for the spontaneity of appropriation of place and its imponderable use which generate new intentions. All makers of space need to get prepared for their future roles, these roles require a life long interaction with learning. The extent of knowledge affects the depth of intentions as well as its execution. Self confidence is caused by learning and personal experiences, the intensity of lived experiences evolve into a willingness to participate.

The making women evolved along a timeline to become the makers of space, but it is not only in the physical requirements of space making that she has to live the experiences, she also has to learn how her interactions within her community affect her future role as maker. Her experience of interpersonal relationships, her *Botho* moral obligations and societal demands will make her realize the gravity of her responsibilities.

Making and being 'made'; she exists in the present and has a future of lived experiences, when and how reciprocity was accumulated during her life is identified by her existential phenomenology. The creative mind is 'made' through action but no sources in literature reviewed mentions that the makers of artefacts made their identity or that reciprocity was sought in the process of making.

Execution implies that action has a reciprocal intent, not only to shelter and change the patterns of lived experience, but also to gain rewards for the effort. Approval and praise are such rewards; a sequel for executed intentions, this reward is cognitive and physical. Cognitive because along a time line of lived experience an in depth evolution took place of; self esteem, self confidence, knowledge, insight, increase the depth of intentions, willingness to enact. Physical because along this concurrent time line, only in the execution of intentions does dexterity, agility, ability, control of procedures, manipulation of the dictates of the material – earth,

Resulting from a continuous cause to share in a process of effects there evolves an inward psychic and outward agility in the body of the individual; from the yet-to-be-born, to the baby, to the mature woman, ending with the living-dead, *Badimo*. Reciprocity, an extra sensory perception, affected their identity, self-esteem and knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of their bodies.

Reciprocity is a lived experience, phenomenology, that takes place throughout the lifecycle of the makers and especially as makers fulfill their roles within their social and cultural value system. To achieve reciprocity, sometimes unknowingly, the building-as-artefact is used as mechanism to substantiate reciprocity between an inward, by the evolution of self, and outward as the evolution of makers.

The shaping of identity and sense of self of the maker, through the acts and procedures of making is realized through a reciprocal evolution between self and artefact; self included intuition, talent, and experience of accumulated knowledge, artefact either being

executed or existed and is texts of qualities of use. Effective interaction with life affecting forces during the required execution of intentions gathered the emotional awareness of reciprocal purpose and meaning in life, self esteem and self confidence cultivated their own personalities. These makers were rewarded within their societal construct; *Botho* as the African phenomenology of expectations, if their end products resulted in successful physical manifestations of the depth of creativity in mental or psychic preparation.

Reciprocity was substantiated within the guidelines of existential phenomenology. During living their experiences humans create themselves by creating and they create because they create themselves. Success engenders reciprocity but it can also be lost through personal crises. Reciprocity was the result of most making experiences when: I can do it better, became a continuous quest and personal challenge to innovation within thoughtful lived experience.

They achieved the deeper meanings of dwelling, its 'wetness' of water. It is inevitably a circular process: in hermeneutic phenomenology there is no possibility of escaping the need to have already understood an artefact-as-home before attempting to explain the process of understanding that product and evaluating its deeper meaning.

*BaSotho* vernacular architecture within the guidelines of hermeneutic phenomenology recorded a cultural continuum as mental and physical reciprocity coupled the vernacular as historical interactive knowledge, to the woman's timeline as an evolution of interaction, and with the woman achieving reciprocity.

This understanding becomes essential while examining how archaeological and actual existing vernacular artefacts formed a reference base that affected and influenced her future intentions for making. Time in a re-iterative progressive process caused the physical manifestation to be evaluated and it then reframed the cognitive insight. The lessons learnt from the *BaSotho* past are that design has symbolic as well as utilitarian meanings. Evident in the vernacular is the ecological sensitivity of the *BaSotho* makers

with their skill at clustering human habitations in networks of open space becomes vital for the creation of a sustainable future.

A life long interaction between the cognitive and physical realms existed. During the evolution of solutions the *BaSotho* makers adapted form and materials to the conditions of nature; working with natural forms and climatic cycles rather than considering forces as obstacles to overcome has hermeneutic and practical values; used by intentional makers. The cultural identity in the woman made the home, and then the process of home-making 'made' the woman; a reciprocal reward.

A culture of action: Intentions of bringing manifestations of space into existence create reactions from all the senses. This is true not only of the end product but also during the process of execution. Reciprocity from ontological phenomenology results from her staying in mental and physical control of the process of making with every decision considered, accepted or rejected and her proof of the correct decision evident in the final product and its language spoken to the members of her social construct. The observation of sensorial reciprocity as it presented itself in haptic phenomenology can be induced from the responses she received from users of her buildings-as-artefacts; her manual effort in executing components of her buildings reflected her concerns with the response to all the senses of enjoyment. The hand shapes form and the body delineates space to satisfy a basic need for a place to sleep.

Primary data consisted of action photos, each was separated into its phenomenological elements to rediscover true-deeper meanings, and drawings with text recorded these elements. Secondary references in literature were used to validate aspects of the hypothesis, these explained deeper meanings and insights.

Action as text: At a threshold of interaction during the process of execution reciprocity is a focused involvement of the whole body, all the senses and mind continuously inform the hand and during its process of execution evaluates and restructures intentions which

then appropriately instructs the hand. This haptic phenomenological procedure is inherent to all processes of execution, not only in making space but also in such as making decisions at a board room table. It starts when the maker was a baby, tactile senses are enhanced by skin-to-skin contact, not only of the hand but the whole body becomes an internal and external organ in the perception of positive or negative influences. During the making of space materials continuously dictates and controls the grammar when ice becomes solid water, this metaphor of prescribed procedures of growth is equally appropriate to the processes of achieving spatial accrual. The nature of earth is such a dictate. The quality of a threshold of interaction implies that the depth of reciprocity is dependant on the degree of participation of the makers.

Aesthetic phenomenology used a thesaurus of space, place and its formal built synonyms to interpret this unique *BaSotho* built language symbolically wrapped with its *litema*. Humans use many practices of language, from verbal to signs. This is relevant to each person who needs to be able to enter into forms of interpersonal discourse at a micro level. Verbal communicative acts are as indicative of intentions as are symbols used at a macro level, this is similarly applicable to the very act of executing communicative intentions. *Litema* as an art of the earth resulted from an interaction between ontological, haptic and aesthetic phenomena. Interpersonal discourse evolved into a *BaSotho* culture of community discourse, this evolution caused reciprocity to take place throughout the life cycle of lived experience, from birth till death of the maker, heightened especially when the maker fulfils her roles within her social and cultural constructs.

Finally, because the maker of *litema* is a master of her art, others, say trained architects who make buildings may learn, by carefully studying these buildings-as-artefacts with their symbolic form of language with their essential insights into the process and technique of appropriate response to forces affecting mindsets. It is also usual for the interest in the maker to remain only incidental, observers are often not at all interested in the proof that any particular correspondence exists between the reputable intentions of makers with their acts or that there is a reward in innovation within discovered

limitations and the work as it exists. This reward recognize the value of making and being 'made' solidified as a multifaceted paradigm of life, living and making. The hypothesis is substantiated.



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**Space**

Spatial continuity

**Place versus space**

**Place-capacity**

**Space as solid matter**

**Boundaries**

‘Wallness’ of the wall

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

**Floor**

**Edges**

**Roof**

**Penetration**

**Door**

**Window**

**Threshold**

**Diminutive scale**

**Decoration**

*Litema*

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

**Commensuration of light and substance**

**Nesting**

**Notation within grammar**

Interpretation representing her self

**Under wrap; a phenomenological scenario**

**Executed rituals of making**

**Material**

Earth

**Scale nested within scale**

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

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