

02

theoretical standpoint

The theoretical standpoint acts as a reaction to the layers of power that make up the place. Power is interrogated particularly through hierarchies, thresholds, and boundaries in space.



Figure 21: Boundaries of Rivertown Beerhall (Author 2021)

A THEORETICAL STANDPOINT

An Ecological World View:

The earliest layer of power imposed on site is the canalization of the Eastern vlei. In this instance, people are separated from nature and seek to have control over nature through technological and infrastructural means which is still evident throughout the way we live today.

In contrast, the main premise of an Ecological Worldview (Hes & Du Plessis 2014:45) is that man and nature are not separate but are rather both part of a larger whole characterized by interaction and interdependence (Hes & Du Plessis 2014:25). This reconnection between man and nature should dismantle former power dynamics and approaches in the way we relate to our natural environment and to do this we need to work with nature and learn from it (Hes & Du Plessis 2014:73).

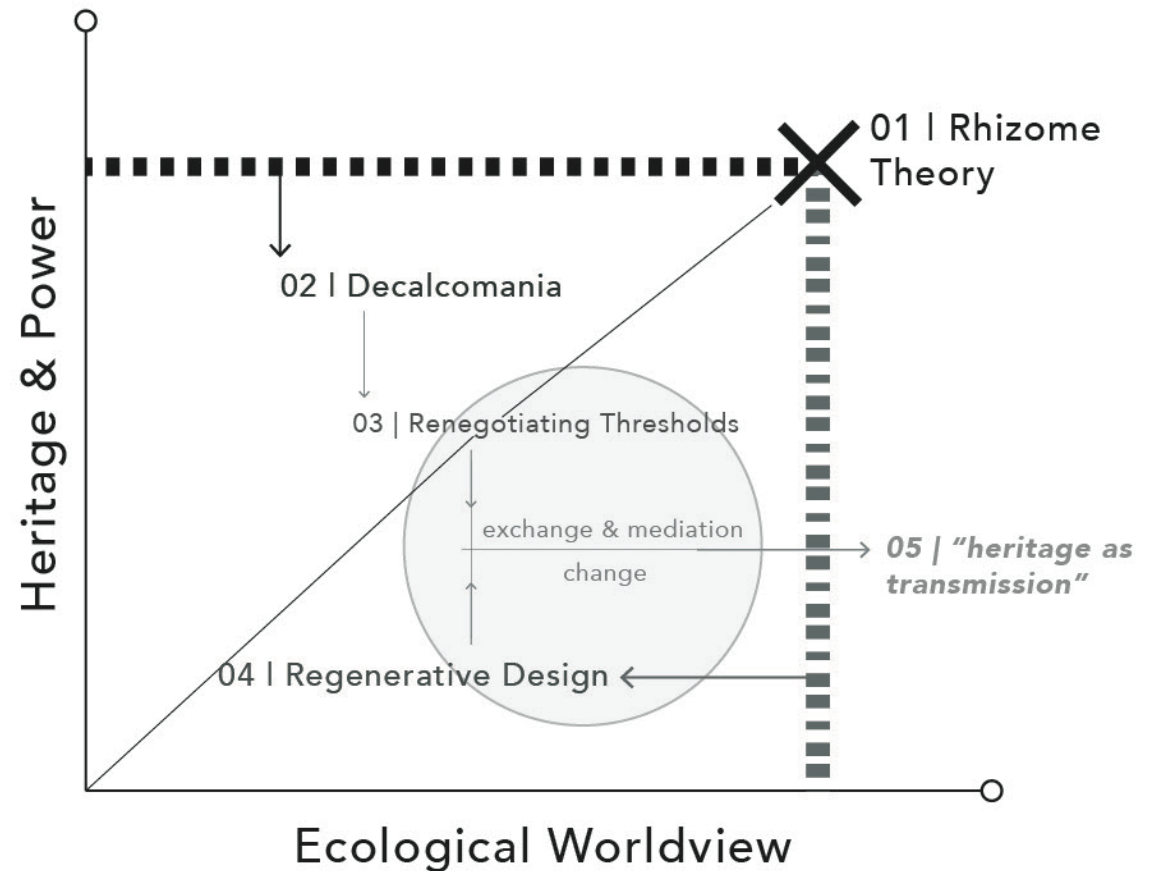


Figure 22: Theoretical Framework (Author 2021).

Rhizome Theory:

In support of an Ecological Worldview, the Rhizome theory (Deleuze & Guattari 1988) acts to resist and address power structures in society by learning from nature, specifically in the form of root networks. As opposed to a hierarchical root system that is characterized by vertical successive roots in the form of a tree structure (figure 23), the rhizome is a root system that grows horizontally, thus eliminating any potential hierarchies (figure 24).

Instead of authority or dominance, the Rhizome theory is built on relational acts of negotiation, mediation, and exchange. It is divided into five principles of connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture and cartography and decalcomania (Deleuze & Guattari 1988: 6-12). Decalcomania is explored further in this dissertation as a driver for social exchange and mediation in response to power dynamics on site.

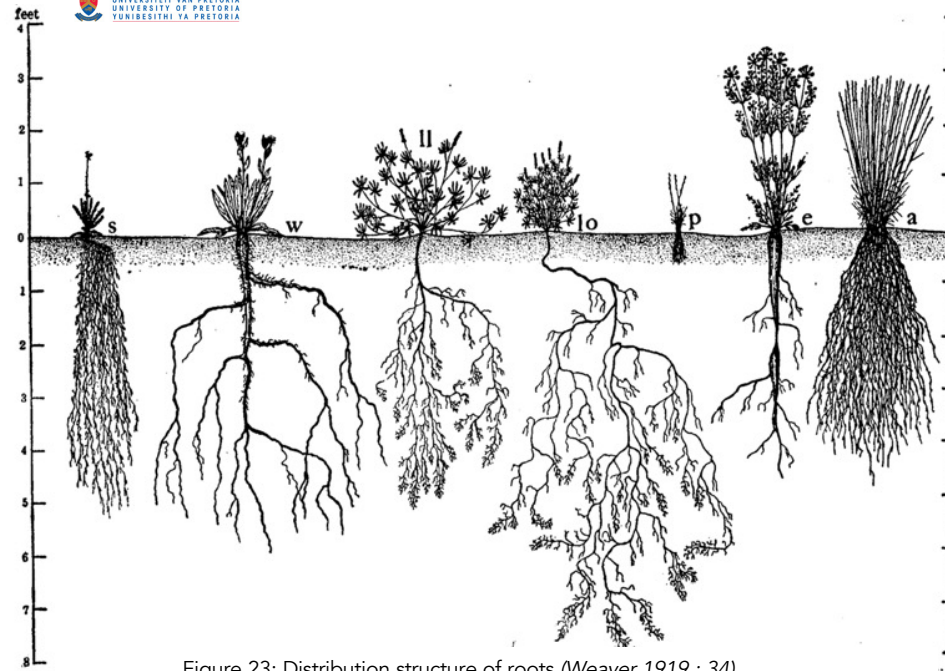


Figure 23: Distribution structure of roots (Weaver 1919 : 34).

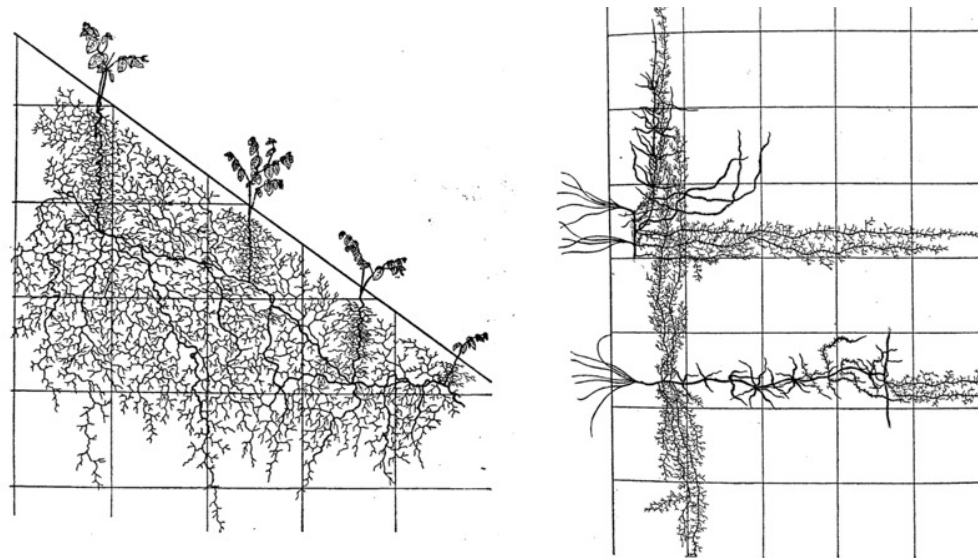


Figure 24: Rhizome (Weaver 1919 : 69 & 84).

Decalcomania :

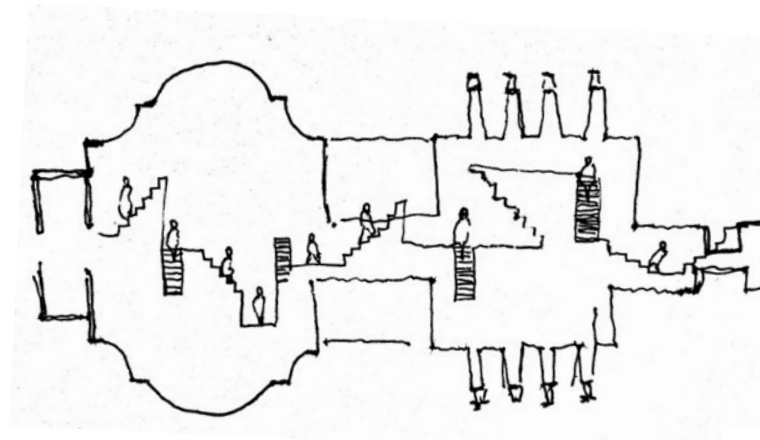
Decalcomania is an art technique of pressing or transferring paint between two folds of paper, resulting in an unexpected middle pattern (Mau Design & Art Glossary). This act of transference causes both sides of paper to relinquish their original separate images and form a merged, new, and unrecognisable shape (figure 25).



Figure 25: Decalcomania (Author 2021)

Spatially, this transference between two things into an unexpected result, is depicted in everyday life through the encounter between the 'self' and 'other'. The relationship between the 'self' and the 'other' is defined as: "a gap where the confrontation among differences takes place" (Muzzonigro & Boano 2013:10). Once folded, or once the act of confrontation between two different subjects has occurred, Bhabha (in Muzzonigro & Boano 2013:10) argues that the development of "mutual hybridisation" occurs.

This describes a process where two original identities are negotiated in the creation of a new meaning and understanding between themselves, which can act to transform the social, cultural, and political dimensions of a society (Muzzonigro & Boano 2013:10). This space of encounter or exchange, therefore, is one characterized by translation and mediation of cultural differences.



Decalcomania/Rhizome
(Deleuze & Guattari 1988)
Exchange, Collective space & Surveillance across space

Figure 26: Decalcomania on site (Author 2021)

Renegotiating thresholds as a tool for exchange:

This space of exchange is often initiated across borders. Schoonderbeek (2015:96-97) analyses borders in the context of the power it can have between self and other as a spatial territory or limit. Such borders can be likened to Apartheid 'buffer zones' that sought to prevent any exchange across cultural groups (Giraut & Vacchiani-Marcuzzo 2009 : 60-67). Beyond the obvious meaning of a border in delineating space which can create hostility, Stavrides (2010:14) argues that borders were also created to be crossed to encourage negotiation and mediation (figure 27).

By crossing a border, this enables it to become a threshold that consents for the exchange and confrontation of different cultures (Muzzonigro & Boano 2013:14). When crossing this threshold, one leaves a sense of familiarity to something new, thus moving towards "otherness" (Stavrides 2016:3, Stavrides 2010: 17- 18). "To be able to experience a change in identity, to be able to rehearse, test, check and visit otherness means potentially to acquire the power, to negotiate with otherness" (Stavrides 2010:40). The act of empowerment through thresholds, contrasts to the way that urban enclaves use power to separate the self and other.

In this way, the renegotiation of thresholds on site (figure 28) becomes a spatial tool in this dissertation to initiate social exchange across diverse cultures and to redistribute power relationships. Rivertown, as an untravelled middle ground, could act as a threshold that facilitates exchange and encounter between tourists and the local community to encourage a collective negotiation of different identities.

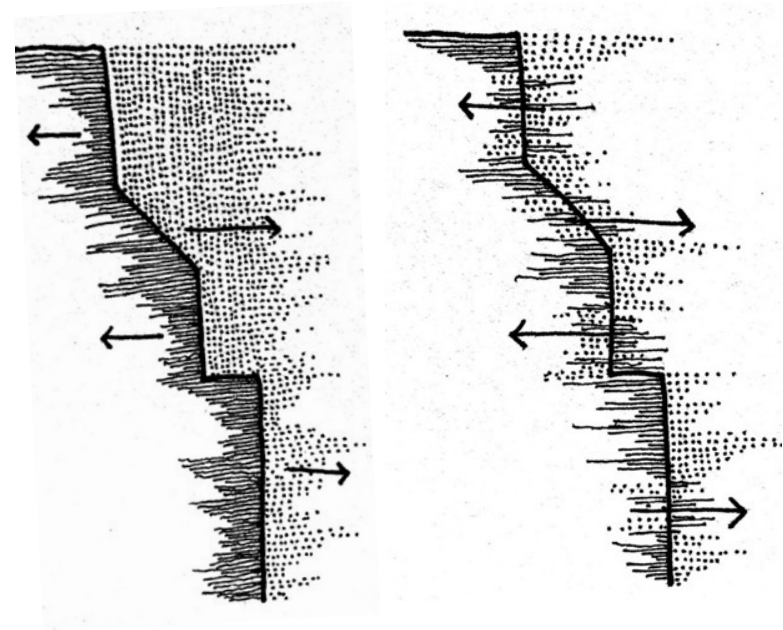
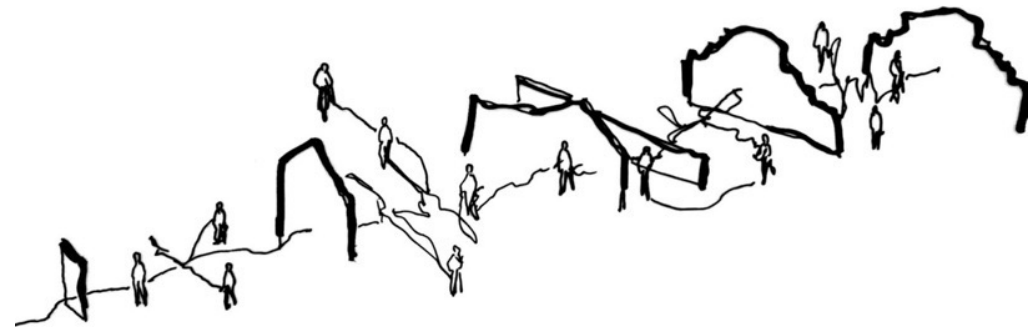


Figure 27: Borders to separate or to be crossed (Author 2021)



Threshold/ Dwell the threshold
(Stavrides 2010,2016),(Muzzonigro & Boano 2013)

*Power redistributed and redefined
through thresholds*

Regenerative design to initiate change:

Before power is redistributed on site through exchange across thresholds, change needs to occur within both social and environmental systems that make up the place. The term “regenerate” or “regeneration” goes beyond the meaning to revive or to restore but to rather change and transform systems for the better (Hes & Du Plessis 2014:111).

The social and hydrological systems of the Rivertown Beerhall that are in need of change are disconnected. To oppose the past approaches towards this site that have allowed man to evolve separately from nature, Rivertown Beerhall needs to be changed in such a way that initiates harmony between social and environmental (hydrological) systems. In order to sustain this reciprocal relationship that stems from the premise of an Ecological Worldview, the co-evolution of social life together with natural systems must be cultivated on site (Hes & Du Plessis 2014:112) (figures 29 & 30).

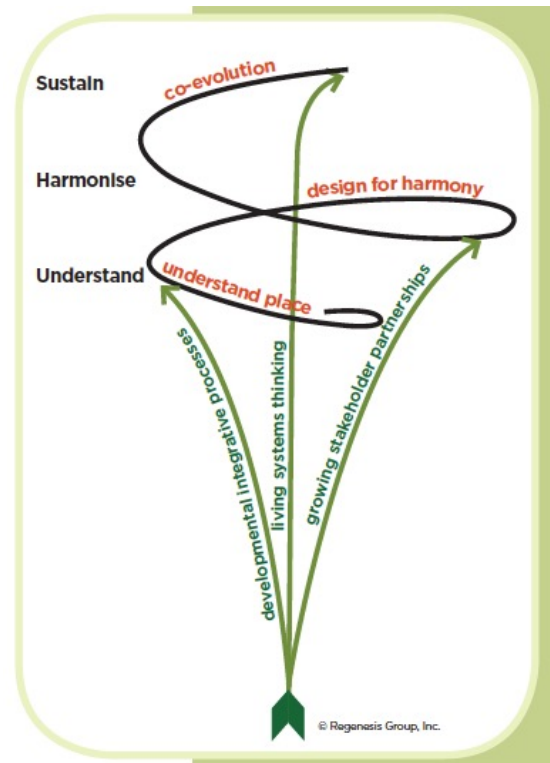
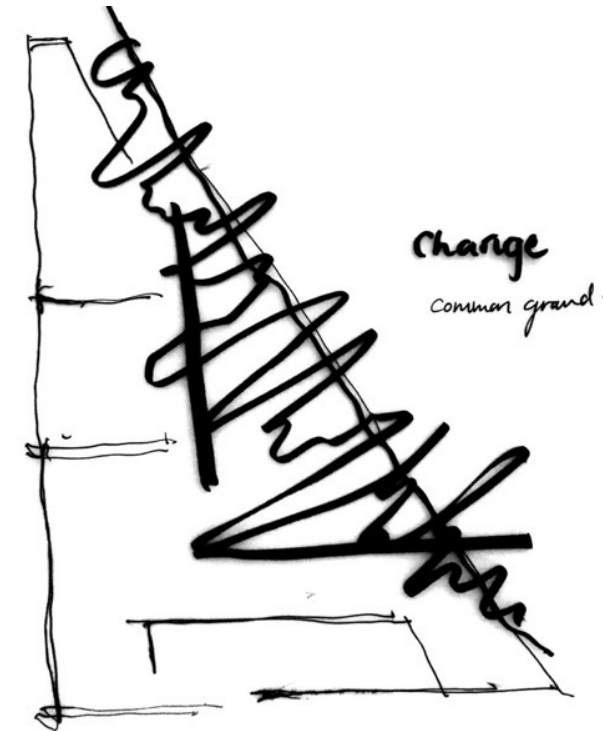


Figure 29: Regenerative Design Framework (Regenesis Group: Hes & Du Plessis 2014: 121).



Regenerative Design
(Hes & Du Plessis, 2014), (Mang & Reed, 2012)

Change
Co-evolution
Adaptive Capacity