The Colonial Gaze: Imperialism, Myths, and South African Popular Culture[1]
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Introduction

This article considers how imperialism, neocolonialism, and the stereotypical myth of Africa collide in popular culture at The Lost City, a South African theme park (figure 1). It argues that many of the visual and textual mechanisms that are used to suggest the notion of mythical Africa at this theme park can be traced back to the colonial gaze and the imperialist project. It has been suggested that certain colonialist codes of spatial organization have been internalized by the popular imagination, and surface in the manner in which theme parks habitually articulate space and structure narrative. The relevance of these ideas for the creators, consumers, and critics of entertainment spaces such as The Lost City is that these fantasy images position Africa in a specific manner as the site of consumption and entertainment. In so doing, entertainment landscapes have the capacity to effectively obscure true culture and history. In a postmodern world governed by postindustrial, multinational capitalism, it can be argued that an entertainment economy tends to choose the lowest common denominators, the most obvious stereotypes by which to render other cultures. This article suggests that these strategies are by no means innocuous, and are founded on ideological assumptions and mythic constructs that position The Lost City and, by extension, Africa as a definitive hallucinatory space of the colonial imagination. Indeed, it seems ironic that, while buzzwords such as postcolonialism and political correctness ostensibly inform interaction with culture and history, the colonial legacy continually asserts itself in popular culture and reinscribes a politics of power in the entertainment landscape.

The theoretical underpinnings of this article are briefly outlined before a few salient points regarding theme parks and The Lost City are sketched. The mechanisms by which colonial powers exerted authority over colonial spaces then are examined in relation to The Lost City, substantiating the notion that cultural production is invariably ideologically inflected.

1   This article is based on a paper delivered at the Icograda Continental Shift 2001— World Design Convergence Congress in Johannesburg, 11-14 September 2001.

Figure 1
Aerial view of the Lost City The Lost City at
Sun City (Johannesburg: Sun International,
2000), 15.

1   The Palace of the Lost City
2   The Sand Pool
3   The Crystal Court
4   Villa Del Palazzo
5   Statue of Shawu
6   Royal Staircase
7   Rain Forest
8   Forest Walks
9   Adventure Path
10 Crocodile Pool
11 Gong of the Sun Lion
12 Bacaranda Forest
13 Lake
14 Hippo Pool
15 Spider Web Bridge
16 The Royal Baths
17 Observation Bar
18 Islands
19 Amphitheatre
20 Roaring Lagoon

21 Beach
22 Water Slides
23 Temple of Courage
24 Slide Hill
25 Adventure Mountain
16 The Sacred River
27 Food Court
28 Sweet Discovery
29 Monkey Spring Plaza
30 Bridge of Time
31 Lost City Golf Course
32 Lost City Club House

Theoretical Framework

This article takes a critical view of a contemporary entertainment landscape, namely The Lost City, thereby following the critical stance that interrogates Disney theme parks.[2] Cultural criticism only recently has seriously questioned the capacity entertainment has to perpetuate ideological constructs. This approach still is fairly undertheorized in South Africa, but more and more academics are examining entertainment landscapes and leisure spaces such as theme parks, casinos, and shopping malls, and are asking what role these spaces play in postcolonial South Africa. Alternate readings of cultural products are always possible, and indeed imperative, but for the purposes of this article a specific interpretation is made to illustrate one way in which the built environment colludes in stereo-typing Africa, in a type of colonialism predicated on the visual. This article utilizes a post-disciplinary approach to the investigation of the cultural construction of meaning, and thus borrows freely from colonial discourse analysis, cultural geography, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies. All of these approaches grapple with issues such as systems of representation, power, and cultural hegemony, which are deeply implicated in the articulation of The Lost City.

It is recognized that modernism, capitalism, and colonialism are all associated on some level and, by extension, postmodernism, postindustrial capitalism, and neocolonialism also can be correlated. According to Zukin, multinational corporations such as Disney (or equally Sun International, which is responsible for The Lost City) have the power to impose their vision on landscape, and therefore the world is rendered, represented, and inflected in a way that reflects power structures and ideologies.[3] Accordingly, The Lost City can be interpreted as a neocolonial landscape: its creators largely ignored the historical, geographical, and demographic imperatives of the land where it was sited, and constructed a fantasy landscape that encourages a distorted reading and consumption of the past.[4] Entertainment landscapes increasingly form the backdrop against which popular culture is experienced and enacted, and blur the lines between leisure, entertainment, and commerce through the skillful marketing of fantasy and consumption. Foucault's belief that space is "fundamental in any exercise of power" assumes agency in the enunciation of an "architecture of pleasure"[5] such as The Lost City, and this tenet underlies the arguments expressed in this article.

Roland Barthe's explication of contemporary myth also is implicit in this article, since he considers that images and words are equally complicit in generating texts of mythological weight.[6] He postulates that the apparatus of myth naturalizes, renders innocu-ous, and legitimates social constructions. Mythic discourse invari-ably reduces things to the simplicity of essences or stereotypes, and "freezes into an eternal reference" that which it wishes to justify.[7] The "white mythology" of colonial discourse is an example of a text that consolidates and encodes legitimating myths or meta-narratives.

2   This critical discourse includes seminal works such as E. Smoodin, ed. *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 1994) and K. Klugman, J. Kuenz, S. Waldrep and S. Willis, *Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

3   Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

4   It should be recognized that a critique of The Lost City by no means negates the benefits that have been derived from it, such as employment opportunities and, more recently, social upliftment programs.

5   Michel Foucault "Space, Power and Knowledge" in *The Cultural Studies Reader,* Simon During, ed. (London: Routledge, 1993), 168.

6   Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Paladin, 1972), 117-174.

7   Ibid., 136,156,169.

Barthes implies that the ideological functioning of myth serves the interests of a group or society. Myth appropriates and "has at its disposal an unlimited mass of signifiers" that reinforce each other.[8] A construct such as "the myth of Africa" therefore is never founded on only one set of premises, but rather on a network of similar signifiers. Barthes believes that, when something such as landscape is appropriated by society, it becomes an empty signifier, and gains different ideological connotations, dependent upon its new mythic functions. Barthes further believes that myth dehistoricises as part of its apparatus of power.[9] History accordingly is a noticeably absent referent at The Lost City; the constructed myth of Africa hinges on time-honored stereotypes of Africa as an exotic, receptive, timeless space, a *tabula rasa* waiting to be filled by the imperialist imagination.

Theme Parks

Theme parks are invented or contrived landscapes that operate according to specific social and symbolic practices that manipulate space, culture, and history in some manner. For the purposes of this article, it suffices to note a few generic characteristics of theme park entertainment. Most important, theme parks usually pivot around the creation of a spurious past, or a nostalgic pseudo-history that encourages omissions and silences. Furthermore, theme parks invariably construct an elaborate hyperreal simulacrum[10] that is underpinned by the sophisticated choreography of space by means of themed architecture, a themed environment, and a narrative. In order to exclude reality, theme parks produce controlled, hermetic environments that dislocate space and time; and they fabricate an ambiance that connotes fun, fantasy, adventure, and escapism. It is suggested in this article that the complicated means by which The Lost City structures space and narrative can be compared to the strategies followed by imperial powers in inscribing and controlling colonized space. This creates an interesting confluence between two textual and ideological systems, namely theme park entertainment and colonialism. These, in turn, intersect with a third discourse: tourism, which can be viewed as a contemporary brand of colonialism.[11] The Lost City operates within the conventions of popular visual culture (including intertextual references to Tarzan, Indiana Jones, and other fictional texts). Consequently, it refers implicitly to entrenched coded systems of representation that situate the spectator in a space that resonates with colonial nostalgia. These ideas will now be illustrated in relation to The Lost City.

8   Ibid., 129.

9   Ibid., 131,132.

10   Two decisive texts that deal with the notion of theme parks as simulacra are Umberto Eco's "Travels in Hyperreality" in *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays* (London: Pan, 1986) and Jean Baudrillard's "The Precession of Simulacra" in *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

11   It is interesting to speculate whether the origin of theme parks in 1955 (Disneyland in Anaheim, California) and the increase in tourism from the 1960s onwards are related, in some ideological manner, to the concurrent worldwide dismantling of colonialism.

The Lost City

South African leisure entrepreneur Sol Kerzner [12] first envisioned the Sun City destination resort, consisting of a hotel, casino and entertainment complex in 1978. When Sun City opened in 1979, it was the first resort of its kind in Africa, and the first large-scale equivalent of a Las Vegas model of entertainment in South Africa. Since this resort was conceptualized around gambling and risqué entertainment, then banned in South Africa, it was sited in a neighboring black homeland of apartheid South Africa, Bophuthatswana. By the early 1990s, Kerzner's ideas regarding organized entertainment had become more sophisticated. He consequently created The Lost City theme park and The Palace Hotel on the Sun City site in 1992. The Lost City inclines more overtly towards the Disney theme park model of entertainment, which is usually theme- or narrative-driven, and includes notions regarding architectural coherence, illusionism, cleanliness, crowd management, and family togetherness. [13] Since the deregulation of gambling in South Africa in 1996, many new casinos have been built in metropolitan areas, causing serious competition for Sun City, which consequently has laid more emphasis on its theme park component.

The Lost City resulted from the systematic conceptualization and instrumentalization of space, as well as marketing strategies that provide the visitor with a prepackaged vision of exotic, mythical Africa. Hence, it is promoted as "Africa's kingdom of pleasure, where fantasy becomes reality." Kerzner chose Gerald Allison of the American firm Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo, known for their contribution to the hospitality, leisure, and entertainment industries, to realize his image of mythical Africa. Allison previously had been involved with projects for the Disney Company, and summed up his brief thus:

> The Lost City [is] a fantasy world in the heart of South Africa. The client specified a luxury hotel of unprecedented opulence and originality. The 68-acre site, in the midst of a volcanic crater 100 miles from the nearest urban center, was unremarkable and the area technologically primitive. The challenge sparked a literary blueprint: A fictional narrative of a mythical lost kingdom became the basis of design, and all public areas and guestrooms carry out this theme. [14]

Allison also formulated the now (in)famous "Legend of the Lost City," which effectively scripts and defines the preferred reading of the site. An abbreviated version of The Legend reads:

> Centuries before tall ships were ever dreamed about, long before the dawn of a Western civilization, a nomadic tribe from northern Africa set out to seek a new world, a land of peace and plenty. The tribe wandered for many years in search of such a magical place, and at last their quest was rewarded. The land they discovered to the south became

12 Sol Kerzner (born 1935) has become known outside South Africa for two leisure developments: the Mohegan Sun gaming resort in Connecticut, opened in 1996, and the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas, relaunched in 1999.

13 R. M. Weinstein, "Disneyland and Coney Island: Reflections of the Evolution of the Modern Amusement Park," *Journal of Popular Culture* 26: 1 (Summer 1992): 131–164, offers an overview of the most important generic characteristics of theme parks.

14 "Hotels & Resorts: The Palace of The Lost City" at www.watg.com/lostcity.html, 1997.

the legendary valley of the sun, known today as the Valley of Waves. Not only did they bring with them a rich culture, but also architectural skills which were exceptional even by today's standards. Something special was created: from the jungle rose an amazing city with a magnificent Palace, a world richer and more splendid than any they had ever known. Then a violent earthquake struck this idyllic valley, the survivors fled, never to return and left it to be found and restored by archaeologists centuries later.[15]

The whole validation for The Lost City hinges on the Legend and the notion that this mysterious civilization was tragically destroyed more than three thousand years ago, and that its romantic ruins were discovered by the intrepid explorer, Sol Kerzner. Carter reasons that *space* is transformed into specific *place* precisely through the intervention of texts.[16] Accordingly, once a space such as The Lost City is invested with a textual identity, it becomes a textualized landscape. This makes it difficult to disengage it from its textual identity, or indeed to recuperate a more authentic identity.

The rest of this article will position this idea within the framework of colonial ideology. The colonial project controlled landscape and space by means such as the following. First, it invoked the genres of exploration, discovery, and archaeology to validate the colonial enterprise. Secondly, it used techniques such as naming and mapping to appropriate space and impose systems of surveillance. Third, it often rendered the colonized land picturesque in accordance with Western aesthetic conventions. All of these methods have been enacted, perhaps unconsciously, at The Lost City, thereby situating it in a cultural code that romanticizes an imperialist endeavor. It is important to bear in mind that these mechanisms of colonial control reverberate in the cultural code of visitors to The Lost City precisely because of the mediatory role of popular culture such as films, which created the stereotypical visual lexicon by which Africa is recognized to this day.

Ideology, Space, and Power

Spatial experience intersects with issues such as power, status, ideology, myth, representation, identity, capitalism, the representation of the past, leisure, and entertainment. Not only is the manipulation of space an integral part of postmodern entertainment landscapes, it also was a component of colonialism that inflected landscapes in accordance with colonial narratives, since imperialism required other countries to almost become readable, like a book. It is recognized that landscape has the capacity to encompass cultural, political, social, and economic meanings.[17] Barthes, for instance, believes that the ideological underpinnings of landscape are naturalized, and justify the dominant values of society in the form of myth. Since Sun City is situated in a site fraught with colonial and postcolonial conflicts

15 "Fact sheet: The Palace" (Johannesburg: Sun International, 1997), 1.

16 Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay. An Essay in Spatial History* (London: Faber, 1987), xxiii.

17 J. Duncan and D. Ley, "Representing the Place of Culture," in *Place/Culture/ Representation* J. Duncan and D. Ley, eds. (London: Routledge, 1993), 11.

18 Andrew Bank and G. Minkley, "Genealogies of Space and Identity in Cape Town" *Kronos. Journal of Cape History* 25, at www.uwc.ac.za/arts/ihr/kronos/editorial.html, 1–2, 6. The current consumption of Otherness is manifested in "sextourism," which typically is a continuation of the sexual privilege accorded to colonial adventurers, but now under the auspices of tourism. For an examination of how Africa became a vast leisure landscape for the West, see J. N. Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

19 Elizabeth Delmont and Jessica Dubow, "Thinking Through Landscape: Colonial Spaces and their Legacies" in *Panoramas of Passage: Changing Landscapes of South Africa* (Johannesburg: University Art Galleries, University of the Witwatersrand, and Washington, DC: Meridian International Center, 1995), 10.

20 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4–5; Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City; or, the Man with Golden Balls," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21:2 June, 1995.

21 Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City," 181.

22 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 204.

23 John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990), 96.

24 *NuMaps Bird's Eye View of The Lost City* (Cape Town: NuMaps, 1996).

25 Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City," 190,193.

26 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Traveling Writing and Transculturation*, 219; Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 321.

27 Henry Louis Gates, "Into Africa with Henry Louis Gates: Lost Cities of the South." Television program broadcast on South African television in August 1999 (emphasis added).

28 Z. Sardar, "Do Not Adjust Your Mind: Postmodernism, Reality, and the Other," *Futures* 25: 8 (October 1993): 889.

and contested histories that are endemic to the South African situation, it is automatically implicated in Barthes's "ideological sediments" of colonialism. Landscape can be the locus for the formation of cultural or national identity; it can either be a link with the past, or (as at The Lost City) it can effectively obscure or nullify the past. This is significant in South Africa precisely because the politics of apartheid located power relations in the landscape. There is a long history of racial segregation in both South African work and leisure spaces, and Otherness and ethnicity frequently have been positioned as sites of spectacle, entertainment, and consumption.[18] The intersections between space, displacement, and nationalism, and the "topographies of colonial and apartheid power"[19] consequently are being redrawn in contemporary South Africa. The cultural meaning of The Lost City accordingly is situated precisely in the fact that its politics are retrograde.

Exploration, Adventure, and Archeology

The colonial landscape was customarily enframed to reflect the superior power of the colonizing nation; this started with the discovery of the land. The colonial travelers and explorers of the nineteenth century generated the genre of travel- and exploration-writing that celebrated the ideology of imperialism for readers in Europe.[20] This convention also can be identified in the Legend of The Lost City, since it tells of the quest of the Ancients for a magical land. Travel writing was aligned with disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, and ethnography, which were concerned with the discovery, classification, description, and recuperation of other cultures. The Lost City fits comfortably into this genre, since its "ruins" reputedly were discovered by the "archaeologist and custodian ... Sol Kerzner ... the creator, discoverer, and interpreter of this Enchanted Ruin."[21] Kerzner's identification with a romanticized Indiana Jones-figure was so complete that the press often referred to him as "Indiana Sol of the Lost City of Bop." Pratt makes the point that a discovery "only gets 'made' for real after the traveller ... returns home, and brings it into being through texts: a name on a map ... a diary, a lecture, a travel book."[22] Kerzner's "discovery" therefore was made tangible by the hotel-as-text. The cultural resonance elicited by the use of archaeology is important, since not only does it allude to the Indiana Jones mythology, it also positions archaeology as *recuperation* of a lost civilization.

From the late nineteenth century onwards, archaeology was firmly allied with the romance of colonial adventure in the popular imagination, manifesting in the quests, discoveries, and explorations typified by Rider Haggard's novels *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *Allan Quatermain* (1887), and *She* (1887). A latter-day version of this notion is tourism, since it perpetuates the romantic gaze, which intersects with the lure of archaeological mystique at sites promoted in terms of adventure and discovery.[23] The Lost City, for instance, has desig-

29   Mapungubwe is an Iron Age archaeological site located in the Northern Province of South Africa. It is believed to have been inhabited by the Shona people, who are the descendants of the builders of Great Zimbabwe and the founders of the Monomotapa empire. Trade with the Far East thrived at Mapungubwe during the Middle Ages, and the kingdom became known particularly for its golden artifacts. The first artifacts were discovered in 1928, and the archaeological excavations were entrusted to the University of Pretoria in the 1930s. Henry Louis Gates and C. Weinek ("The Hills Are Alive," *Mail & Guardian Friday,* March 3–9, 2000, page 3) contend that the age and significance of the site were denied by the South African authorities since they could not condone proof of the existence of sophisticated Iron Age communities in South Africa, which negated the white mythology of an empty land. The first permanent exhibition of the Mapungubwe artifacts was opened by Minster Ben Ngubane at the University of Pretoria on 19 June 2000. At the time of this writing, Mapungubwe was nominated as a World Heritage Site. For pictures of artifacts from Mapungubwe, see mapungubwe.up.ac.za/history_body.htm

30   Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City," 188–193.

31   Deborah Root, *Cannibal Culture. Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), 152.

32   Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 61; David Bunn. "Embodying Africa: Woman and Romance in Colonial Fiction." *English in Africa* 15: 1 (May 1988): 9.

33   Elizabeth Delmont and Jessica Dubow, "Thinking Through Landscape," 12; J. Duncan, "Sites of Representation: Place, Time, and the Discourse of the Other," in *Place/Culture/Representation*, J. Duncan and D. Ley, eds. (London: Routledge, 1993), 50. This imperial discourse also systematically feminized Africa in much the same manner that Orientalism gendered the Orient.

34   J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (Sandton: Radix, 1988), 177.

nated "adventure paths" and "trails of discovery" in the Garden that ostensibly involve the spectator in "exploration." The map of The Lost City states that "a modern explorer stumbled upon the Lost City" and that the map "will help you discover the hidden treasures of The Lost City for yourself." [24]

Archaeology played an important part in structuring the colonial romance, and frequently was deployed to sanction the practices of imperialism. Hall comments that archaeology and imperialism conspired in offering "verification of some of the oldest images of Africa; the inevitability of inspiration from the north, and of the shallowness, poverty and violence of Africa's own history." [25] The Legend of The Lost City perpetuates this by negating local history (the inhabitants of The Lost City ostensibly came from North Africa), replacing it with an artificial Disneyfied "diorama history." It indeed was common for the colonial mindset to intimate that other parts of the world had no history or culture, [26] and likewise the architect Allison pronounced that there was *no significant architectural history* in the area where The Lost City was built. [27] Sardar condemns the relativism of Postmodern thought vigorously, and contends that since "all texts are embedded with narrative or story-telling interests, it is not possible to distinguish between factual and documented writing of history from fiction, imaginative, and simulated events. There is no possibility of ever unearthing the truth about the histories of all Others." [28] It is ironic that the heroic age of archaeology, from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, led to the discovery of "real" lost cities in southern Africa, including Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe. [29] But the hegemonic complicity between archaeology, imperialism, and politics divested many sites of their significance for African history, [30] until the dismantling of apartheid politics in the 1990s.

The Empty Land

Once colonial adventurers, explorers, and archaeologists had appropriated a territory, its status as a possession had to be expressed. The first stratagem was to proclaim the emptiness of the land, thus justifying the Western occupation of "unused" land. [31] These landscapes would be rendered meaningful only because of capitalist intervention, and the spatial metaphors of both colonialism and adventure literature were based on the enunciation of capitalist values. [32]

By summoning up the image of a *tabula rasa,* the vast, empty, pristine landscape of Africa was made receptive to the European imperial drive. [33] The myth of an empty landscape was sanctioned by "[o]fficial historiography [which] … told … of how until the nineteenth century … the interior of … South Africa was unpeopled." [34] This spatial metaphor of an "empty country" also is suggestively conjured up in a Sun City brochure: "the olive-green and ochre slopes of the Pilanesberg mountain range in Bophuthatswana in southern Africa lay sleepy and untouched under the blazing Africa

sun ... where once only black eagles rose on the midday thermals and the shy duiker scurried through the undergrowth."[35] Similarly, the Legend of The Lost City implies the uninhabited state of the land where the gentle tribe from the North settled. Moreover, people are not represented visually at The Lost City, apart from a few small paintings, reminiscent of the so-called "Bushman" art. This elision accords with that genre of travel writing that described the flora and fauna of a place, but which marginalized, or indeed negated, human presence[36] for ideological reasons.

Surveying the Land

The process of controlling the land always was contingent upon sight and surveillance, which indicates that conquest was as much cognitive as military.[37] The notion of the possessive gaze is linked to the manner in which landscapes were presented for visual consumption by the traveler's eye, which is analogous to the "imperial eye ... that by seeing names and dominates."[38] The desire of the colonial gaze was to create self-referential, enclosed spaces of power wherein the "confident assurance of entitled leisure" could be played out.[39] Delmont and Dubow suggest that the enclosed colonial space lent itself to "the invention and imaging of a particular mythology,"[40] and in this respect The Lost City creates an hermetic stage on which the colonial metanarrative can be *reenacted* in a space dedicated to "entitled leisure."

The colonial landscape was invariably staged in a theatrical manner for the panoramic eye of the possessor, creating an imperial history that "reduces space to a stage [where] ... [t]he primary object is not to understand or to interpret: it is to legitimate."[41] Landscape thus was deployed as spectacle, and the omniscient viewer was situated in a detached Olympian position. The process of transforming landscape into scenery renders it a site for romantic contemplation, and suspends the constraints of temporality.[42] This convention also resonates at The Lost City, since everything has been conceptualized and landscaped to provide predictably charming views, breathtaking scenes, and romantic pensive spaces, in a location that suggests the timelessness associated with mythical Africa. Promontory descriptions and the monarch-of-all-I-survey syndrome were nineteenth-century gendered colonial tropes that signaled male power and presence in the land.[43] The elevated point of view typical of the colonial gaze is imitated in the pictorial maps of The Lost City, which use the rhetoric of staging and perspectival vision to position the viewer as the lone surveyor (and consumer) of the empty land. Interestingly, when Michael Jackson expressed interest in buying into Sun City in 1999, the press replicated this conceit by captioning his photograph "master of all he surveys."

35   Marilyn Poole, *The Palace of the Lost City at Sun City, Republic of Bophuthatswana, Southern Africa* (Cape Town: Struik, 1993), 3.

36   Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 51.

37   Jessica Dubow, "Bringing the Country into View: Baines and the Making of the Colonial Picturesque." (Paper presented at the University of Cape Town, January 1997); Elizabeth Delmont and Jessica Dubow, "Thinking Through Landscape," 11.

38   J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, 174.

39   Elizabeth Delmont and Jessica Dubow, "Thinking Through Landscape," 14–15.

40   Ibid.

41   Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, xv-xvi, xix.

42   J. Smith, "The Lie that Blinds. Destabilizing the Text of Landscape," in *Place/Culture/Representation* J. Duncan and D. Ley, eds. (London: Routledge, 1993), 78–79; T. Cusack, "Migrant Travellers and Touristic Idylls: The Paintings of Jack B. Yeats and Postcolonial Identities," *Art History* 21: 2 (June 1998): 214.

43   Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 205, 213, 216.

Naming the Land

A further device that constituted the colonial landscape was the "power of naming."[44] A country had to be discovered and named to come into cultural circulation, and naming authorized the extension of colonial space through language.[45] Naming, as an ideological construct, therefore was a fundamental gesture whereby space was transposed into specific place. Naming is empowering, since it equates knowing with naming, and in this objectification of the world, the language of white men was deemed superior in mastering the land.[46] There is a double naming at The Lost City: first, the Ancients themselves ostensibly named their new environment with suitably evocative names such as the Sacred River, the Lake of Peace, and the Bridge of Time. Second, according to the Legend of The Lost City, "The Valley of the Ancients and The Lost City were the names the expedition leader gave to his discoveries. The true names of The Palace and The Hall of Treasures came to light when a parchment scroll, entitled The Annals of the City, was unearthed during initial excavations."[47]

The Picturesque Land

The discovery and naming of colonial space were tangible procedures, whereas the representation of the land according to an aesthetic trope, such as the picturesque, was more oblique. The relevance of this is that the picturesque bears certain clear resemblances to the creation of narratives in theme parks landscapes such as The Lost City. By invoking the aesthetic category of the picturesque, colonial space was rendered familiar and manageable, since it domesticated and presented nature according to a Western schema of representation. Delmont and Dubow imply that the picturesque was a deeply coded form of representation, since it offered the "foreign landscape brought into 'being-for-the-gaze.'"[48] The picturesque hence can be understood as a method of spatial organization that encompasses the creation of bounded colonial spaces,[49] which moreover is related to the hierarchical spatial articulation found in theme parks that privileges certain modes of visuality and prescribes the unfolding of narrative.

The picturesque was defined as an aesthetic category in late eighteenth-century England, and like the sublime, denoted the exaggeration of nature is some manner.[50] Since picturesque means "like a picture," pictorial models were invoked as examples of how to look at nature.[51] The picturesque was singularly important in architecture and landscape gardening, specifically in the gardens of "Capability" Brown. The picturesque garden signified a "garden of ideas," since it evoked languorous melancholy and nostalgia through the complex staging of rocks, water, trees, broken or uneven ground, mountains, cascades, pavilions, and mock ruins.[52]

44   Ibid., 33.

45   Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, xviii, 67.

46   Ibid., 8-9, 63.

47   "The Legend of The Lost City" (Johannesburg: Sun International, 2000).

48   Elizabeth Delmont and Jessica Dubow, "Thinking Through Landscape," 7, 11.

49   Ibid., 13; Jessica Dubow, "Bring the Country into View," 1.

50   S. Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 74.

51   C. Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Cass, 1967), 4, 9.

52   Ibid., 152; Robert Rosenblum *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 114; J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing*, 46.

Since water and ruins are particularly potent images in the lexicon of the picturesque, they feature prominently at The Lost City. (It bears pointing out that all the water features and ruins at The Lost City were fabricated to conform with the script demanded by the Legend.) Water conventionally is associated with romantic notions of infinity, reflection, and contemplation. Ruins usually are connected with transience, the triumph of nature over human culture, retrospection, nostalgia, melancholic thoughts, and romantic solitude. The picturesque ruin and decay seem to validate the fact that The Lost City originated thousands of years ago.[53] This has a two-fold function: it perhaps suggests that these were "white ruins," whereas the presence of the ruins also *legitimates* or *proves* the truth of the Legend, thereby naturalizing the mythic construct. One also can speculate that the nostalgia, melancholia, and nihilism associated with ruins echo in the depthlessness and eclecticism of postmodern architecture, reflecting a world deprived of spirituality and fixed meaning.[54] Furthermore, ruins, nostalgia, melancholia, and the simulacrum all ponder on the loss of meaning: according to Baudrillard, "melancholia is the fundamental tonality ... of current systems of simulation ... melancholia is the inherent quality of the mode of the disappearance of meaning."[55] This loss of meaning perhaps is endemic to leisure spaces such as The Lost City that create a generic and bland sense of "pastness" that satisfies the nostalgic hankerings of postmodern consumers.

The picturesque garden traditionally incorporates quirks of nature and literary allusions, and is designed pictorially, signaling important correspondences with landscapes such as The Lost City that are created around a text. The picturesque aesthetic modality is governed by nostalgic sentimentalism, imagination, spontaneity, visual appeal, surprise, transience, and variety. The picturesque usually is *envisioned* as a series of planned and composed static pictures, which are meant to be seen from specific viewpoints.[56] This is reminiscent of what Mitrasinovic calls the "themescapes" that result when space is divided into narrative structures at theme parks.[57] Carter notes that the picturesque is akin to punctuation in the landscape, causing the viewer to stop and reflect,[58] which again is similar to the manner in which space is organized and planned for predetermined effect at theme parks. The picturesque formula divides landscape into background, middle-distance, and foreground to render it readable for the viewer, by using the Western notion of perspectival planar recession. This echoes the views of the designer of the Garden at The Lost City, Patrick Watson, who stated that in a romantic landscape such as the Lost City, "the view 100 kilometers away is important ... the vista has to fade out, from tropical at the center to indigenous mountainside at the edges."[59]

Since the picturesque is indicative of human intervention and staging of the landscape, it is an excellent example of what Barthes would call mystification and the ideological manipulation of scen-

53 M. Silverman, "Sun King's Lost City, Walts and All," *The Weekly Mail* September, 4–10, 1992: 30.

54 J. Roberts, "Melancholy Meanings: Architecture, Postmodernity, and Philosophy" in *The Postmodern Arts. An Introductory Reader,* N. Wheale, ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 139.

55 Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simularcra," 162.

56 M. Sullivan *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), 112.

57 M. Mitrasinovic, "Theme parks" at http://web.new.ufl.edu/~wtilson/miodrag.html, 1998.

58 Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 254.

59 "Works of Wonder," *Habitat* 114 (February/March 1993): 50.

ery. The Garden at The Lost City is clearly a romantic "garden of ideas," since it is structured around picturesque iconography such as crumbling ruins and water. The meticulous planning of picturesque vistas thus is clearly analogous to the articulation of space in theme parks, and conspires to encourage a specific reading of the textualized landscape. The picturesque is above all a marker of a civilized landscape, arranged painstakingly to render only those effects desired by the script. Consequently, all the paths in the Garden at The Lost City are paved, marked, signposted, and maintained, and no matter how dense the foliage, The Palace Hotel is nearly always reassuringly visible.

Mapping the Land

Maps are a fundamental part of the metaphorical organization and representation of space, and since they are part of the discourse of colonialism, they are automatically implicated in power relations. Maps traditionally are provided to visitors at theme parks, and generally carry forth the narrative in some manner. Not only can it be established that maps can be read as manipulative instruments of power, but also that they collude in constructing the terrain they presume to reflect. Promotional maps generally "construct a mythic geography, a landscape full of 'points of interest,'"[60] and Soja adds that "[c]olourful pictorial maps ... [are] convenient for the exaggerated representations of presences and absences."[61] This type of map intersects with the ideology of capitalism most clearly, since it indicates spaces of consumption, whether touristic, leisure, or commercial.

In terms of cultural geography, maps can be held subject to textual interpretation as they are culturally encoded mental constructs.[62] The scientific discourse of cartography presents a "scaled representation of the real ... based on a one-to-one correspondence of the world and the message sent and received."[63] Maps operate from the principles of similitude and mimesis, but also are influenced by the cultural context and political, religious, and social values.[64] Since maps are constructed images, they can be vehicles for distortion, interpretation, propaganda, and suggestion, or so-called "persuasive cartography."[65] Maps function according to rhetorical conventions that may select, omit, simplify, classify, include, or exclude information in keeping with a particular gaze,[66] and space typically is presented in a hierarchical manner that favors authority.

Maps are believed to function hegemonically to legitimate power structures, which can be traced back to Foucault's discursive triangle of knowledge, space, and power. Thus, not only does power inform map-making, but power emanates from maps.[67] A topical critique of cartography concerns mimesis, since Western strategies of perspective and representation, which ostensibly granted direct access to knowledge, have invariably been privileged.[68] Critics such

60   J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map" in *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, T. J. Barnes and J. S. Duncan, eds. (London: Routledge, 1992), 241.

61   Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 237.

62   J. Pickles, "Texts, Hermeneutics and Propaganda Maps" in *Writing Worlds. Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, T. J. Barnes and J. S. Duncan, eds. (London: Routledge, 1992), 194.

63   Ibid.

64   J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 234, 236.

65   J. Pickles, "Texts, Hermeneutics, and Propaganda Maps," 197, 193.

66   J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 243; J. Duncan and D. Ley, *Place/Culture/ Representations,* 2.

67   J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 244-245.

68   J. Duncan and D. Ley, *Place/Culture/ Representations,* 2; J. Pickles, "Texts, Hermeneutics, and Propaganda Maps," 193; S. Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," in *Describing Empire: Postcolonialism and Textuality*, C. Tiffin and A. Lawson, eds. (London: Routledge, 1994), 115.
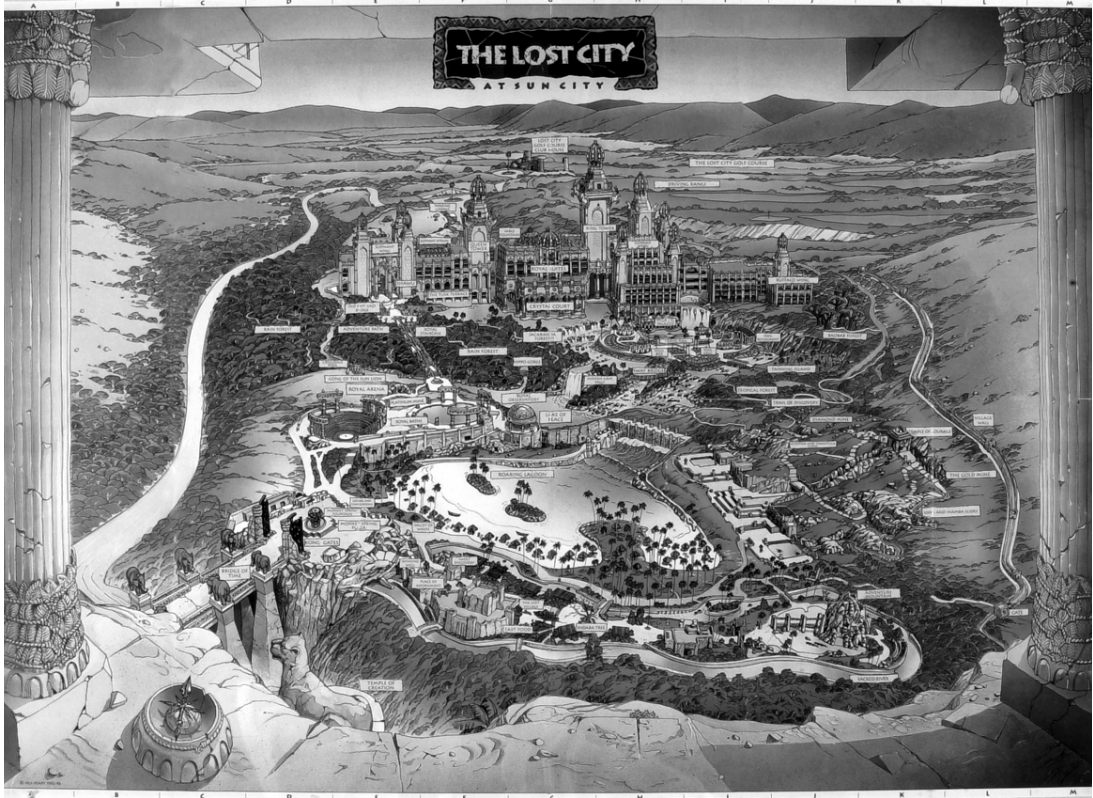
Figure 2
Map of The Lost City, *NuMap of The Lost City*. (Johannesburg: Sun International, 1996). Original size 60 x 42cm.

as Sardar have deconstructed the West's obsession with mimetic representation, and indicate that it must be understood that the map is never the reality, since it is never a neutral equivalent.[69] This intimates that maps, supposedly premised on denotation, invariably invoke the connotative code, signaling that they can be interpreted as mythic and ideological constructs.

Two pictorial maps of Sun City and The Lost City illustrate these notions by privileging a Western, perspectival, totalizing gaze (figures 2 and 3). They present a three-dimensional, pseudo-naturalistic, disembodied bird's-eye view of the resort and its attractions. These maps are not, however, to scale, and the size of the features is manipulated at will. Both these maps have orienting compasses, grid references, and textual explanations on the reverse, which situates them in the discourse of promotional pictorial maps. Yet the graphic medium and the informal illustrative style, evoking fun and fantasy, represent and interpret rather than guaranteeing mimetic resemblance. These maps perhaps can be interpreted as simulacra, since the views they present ostensibly simulate reality, but conversely postulate a new reality. The specific vantage points chosen for depiction, for example from the lofty perspective of the Temple of Creation in the map of The Lost City, cannot be emulated by visitors, who are therefore presented with a predetermined, picturesque view that structures their perception. Seemingly once

69   Z. Sardar, "Do Not Adjust Your Mind."

the territory has been mapped, the visual abstract of the map not only orients and corroborates, but also shapes peoples' expectations, giving lie to its putative similitude.

The ideal picturesque view and colonial gaze are best reflected in the map of The Lost City (figure 2), which presents an omniscient, lofty view structured in the monarch-of-all-I-survey manner. The two proscenium-like columns direct the possessing gaze over the site, which unfolds like a narrative or panorama, and fades out into a pleasingly picturesque "luminous distance." This map excludes all reference to Sun City and the Entertainment Centre sections of the resort. The point of view focuses on The Palace Hotel, and there are telling distortions and omissions: the Vacation Club time-share resort and the delivery entrance to The Palace are totally elided, and the asphalt road is demoted to a rough dirt track. Furthermore, the height of the Bridge of Time is definitely exaggerated, and the rendition of picturesque aging at The Lost City is suggestively overstated. These misrepresentations sustain the fantasy of a timeless world: close to nature, passive, and the site of endless possibilities for the spectator. The reverse of this map carries an abbreviated form of the Legend of The Lost City, and takes the position of a travel guide, explaining (and mythologizing, in terms of Barthes) each site for the visitor. It colludes in the textual intervention in the landscape, by emphasizing the constitutive function of narra-

tive to structure experience. The map of Sun City (figure 3) does not exclude information to the same extent, but it also simplifies reality and focuses attention on The Lost City. The reverse of this map has textual information about the facilities of Sun City.

It is significant that the maps generated by theme parks bear traces of both colonial maps and promotional maps. Louis Marin instigated an inquiry into the narrative and ideological function of maps at Disney theme parks, and concluded that they structure the narratives, thereby constraining free interpretation by visitors.[70] More important, he postulated that through map, space takes on meaning,[71] or as noted earlier, space is irrevocably transformed into place with a scripted theme, history, narrative, and meaning.

It previously was mentioned in this article that the colonial gaze postulated the white mythology of an empty land, which reified "space as a blank text, ready to be inscribed by the impending colonial process."[72] Similarly, cartography systematized and naturalized the unfamiliar by means of an existing language, and therefore was a vital part of conquest, colonization, and the containment of power.[73] European imperial maps usually perpetuated the notion of the emptiness of the land, which not only hinted at its availability, but also the supposed lack of a history.[74] Indeed, many early maps of South Africa virtually obliterated "the presence of indigenous people... from the landscape."[75] Archaeologists, explorers, and colonial travelers were free to fill in the cartographic blanks with legend and myth.[76] The link between archaeology, cartography, and the colonial romance is significant, since novels such as Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and *She* make explicit use of the map as a metaphor for "masculine colonizing zeal" in a feminized Africa.[77]

This type of imperial map is epitomized by the fresco map in The Palace Hotel, since it presents an edited version of Africa's history and indigenous peoples. It depicts the vast African subcontinent, punctuated only sporadically with names such as Congo and Angola; virtually the whole of southern Africa is represented only by the one word Monomotapa and an iconic rendition of The Palace Hotel. An Italian inscription, which detaches it from an African context, dedicates the map to all the creators of The Lost City. This map effectively perpetuates the idea of the empty land, and shows conclusively how maps can dissimulate and fabricate.

Conclusion

This article has suggested that the colonialist strategies outlined above, as replicated at The Lost City, conspire in creating a vision of mythical Africa and perpetuate stereotypical views of Africa. The Western mind generally has represented Africa either as the Dark Continent and the white man's burden, or as the home of the exotic noble savage. The Lost City subscribes to the latter category by many sophisticated means that are beyond the scope of this article. The creators of The Lost City proclaimed that they wanted to repro-

70   Louis Marin, "Disneyland: A Degenerate Utopia," *Glyph* 1 (1977).

71   Ibid., 58.

72   S. Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," 126.

73   J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 242.

74   S. Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," 126–127.

75   B. Rostron, "Redrawing Africa's Mind Map" *Mail & Guardian,* September 10–16, 1999: 29.

76   S. Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," 124.

77   David Bunn, "Embodying Africa," 10–11; Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City," 186.

duce the *essence of Africa.* In terms of postcolonial critique, the use of essentialist stereotypes to represent so-called Otherness is highly questionable. Neocolonialist capitalism exploits the mystical lure of other cultures worldwide, and The Lost City reverberates with imperialist texts in its controlled hermetic space that eliminates contrary narratives. Deborah Root points out that contemporary popular culture and tourism frequently betray a nostalgia for the "good old days of colonialism,"[78] and what concerns critics is that third world countries thereby are doomed to become the exotic playgrounds for Western tourists. The Lost City unequivocally colludes in this by effectively re-exoticizing Africa for consumption by a jaded postcolonial generation.

The dilemma is that tourism is essential to the economies of developing countries (including South Africa), but many tourists seem to prefer the clichéd statement and the romanticized image of other cultures, and the sway of the stereotype holds. The challenge for South Africans is to move beyond myth and stereotype, and in terms of the envisaged "African Renaissance" to engage with issues such as identity in a critical and sustained manner. Africa as a rule has been represented and constituted by the West, but now it must represent itself with images and stories that reflect its diversities more candidly than the saccharine confection of The Lost City. There is nothing essentially wrong with fantasy, but when it distorts, mystifies, obfuscates, and mythologizes culture and history, fashioning a kitsch simulacrum in their stead, the ideology underlying the fantasy machine becomes questionable. This trend is evident in the increasing conception of themed entertainment spaces such as Montecasino and Caesars Gauteng, which recreate mythical Tuscany and imperial Rome on the outskirts of Johannesburg. Barthes pointed out the power of myth, and the myth of Africa successfully consigns Africa to the status of entertainment; The Lost City reveals an insidious cultural politics of Africa that upholds the myth of a continent without its own culture or history.[79] The constructed history of The Lost City is invidious precisely because it fuses and confuses history, myth, and legend, creating a fairy-tale historyland for the wistful postmodern consumer.

78 Deborah Root, *Cannibal Culture*, 1996.
79 Cf. Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City."