

**'A TALE OF TWO CITIES? AN EXAMINATION OF THE RE- IMAGINING OF GOLD
MINING HISTORY AT GOLD REEF CITY AND IN JOHANNESBURG'S MAIN
STREET PRECINCT.'**

Philippa Sarah van Straaten

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the
Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts.

Johannesburg, 2008

Abstract

This research report attempts to examine how the story of gold, and gold mining, is told, and is being retold, at both the Victorian- themed Gold Reef City theme park and in within the Main Street mining precinct in the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD). The report will therefore look at how imbued ideologies have resulted in a particular formation of the mining heritage shown in both themed spaces. Works by de Certeau (1988) and Eco (1990), for example, form a framework for academic discourse around practiced space within the 'city', and the nature of hyperreality. Overall, and including results from participant observation at the theme park, and sample surveys undertaken in the Main Street precinct, one is able to better attempt an understanding of how the story of gold at both sites has been created by certain ideologies, and examine them in light Johannesburg's changing persona in light of global influences.

Keywords: theme park, 'city', ideology, agency, 'world-class African city', urban renewal/regeneration, hyperreality, visuality, mining.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Heritage) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Name of candidate

_____ of _____, 20 ____ .

Dedication

To my family, and Nico- much love and respect always.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to my supervisor, Cynthia Kros, for all her assistance, guidance and patience.

Thank you to Monica Newton and Brett Pyper for their help.

Abstract	ii
Declaration	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Contents	vi-vii

1. Chapter 1- Orientation to the report

1.1 Aim	p. 1
1.2 Rationale	p. 2
1.3 Literature Review	p. 3
1.4 Theoretical orientation and framework	p.11
1.5 Methodology	p.14
1.6 Chapter outline	p. 25

2. Chapter 2- An orientation to the two cities

2.1 The idea of the 'city'	p.27
2.2 Built environments and meaning- making	p. 32
2.3 Rush to the Rand- the beginnings of a 'city'	p. 35
2.4 Rollercoasters and randlords- the creation of the Gold Reef City Theme Park and Casino	p. 38
2.5 Johannesburg's changing persona- from 'City of Gold' to 'World-class African city'	p. 41

3. Chapter 3- 'Pure Jozi. Pure Gold'- Gold Reef City's story of mining

3.1 Theme parks and themed spaces	p. 48
3.2 Eco's hyperreality	p. 53
3.3 The Gold Reef City tour narrative	p.54
3.3.1 The 'Rich Beginnings' introduction	p.55
3.3.2 The Underground Mine Tour	p. 60
3.3.3 The House Museums	p. 64
3.3.4 The Gold Pour	p. 66
3.4. The GRC 'museum'	p. 67
3.5 An imagined Johannesburg as mining town	p. 78
3.5.1 GRC imagery- 'tribal' dancers and headgear	p. 84
3.6 Issues and events affecting the mining industry	p. 87

4. Chapter 4- Main Street- a re- imagining of a mining past	
4.1 Urban re-newal and the framing of Johannesburg 'city' space	p.95
4.2 Greenblatt's resonance and wonder	p.100
4.3 Identity and space- the 'discovery' of gold?	p.104
4.4 Views on Main Street, and its ideological implications	p.109
5. Chapter 5- Conclusions	p. 121
6. Appendices	
6.1 Transcriptions of Gold Reef City heritage tour material	p. 123
6.2 Consent form and transcribed survey results	p. 127
References	p. 139
Bibliography	p. 146
List of maps	viii
List of charts	ix
List of illustrations	x
List of photographs (all taken by researcher)	xi
List of interviews	xii

Please note: All visual elements within the report are referred to as ‘Figures’, for ease of cross- reference here. Full references for these figures are given in the References section.

List of maps

Figure 43– Street map, showing mining precinct area discussed in this report _p. 97

List of charts

Figure 1- Methodology matrix_____ p.19

List of illustrations

Figure 2- Cartoon from *The Guardian* newspaper _____p. 40

List of photographs (all taken by researcher)

Figure 3- The 'Rich Beginnings Theatre'	p. 56
Figure 4- Posters at the underground safety stations	p. 62
Figure 5- 'Philemon the Miner'	p. 62
Figure 6- Digging in a new direction, setting up the framework	p. 64
Figure 7,8,9- Interiors of the mining houses on the Gold Reef City tour	p. 65
Figure 10,11,12- Signboards outside the three mining family houses	p. 66
Figure 13- Participants are given a chance to see gold being poured	p. 67
Figures 14 and 15- Views of the interior of the 'museum'	p. 70
Figure 16- 'Mine boys'	p. 71
Figure 17- 'Mine boys leaving the Rand...'	p. 71
Figure 18- 'Natives in the Witwatersrand Labour Association...'	p. 73
Figure 19- 'Johannesburg street life...'	p. 73
Figure 20- 'The roll call...'	p. 73
Figure 21- 'Chinese coolies(sic) at work underground'	p.73
Figure 22- Life on the compounds	p.73
Figures 23, 24- Back wall with Chinese tapestry	p.77
Figures 25,26,27- Mining safety display	p.77
Figure28 - A man stands overlooking restaurants	p. 84
Figure 29 - The 'Kenyan Tumblers'	p. 84
Figure 30 - Performers in red European – inspired costumes	p. 84
Figure 31 - A parade of Gold Reef City staff in 'tribal' dress	p. 84
Figures 32, 33 - Gum boot dancers and staff in 'tribal' uniforms	p. 85
Figure 34 - Fire performers	p.85
Figure 35 - Minstrels	p.85
Figure 36 - Rickshaw operators	p. 85
Figure 37 - Ladies in traditional costume	p. 85
Figures 38, 39- The mine shaft headgear and the Victorian fun fair	p. 86
Figure 40 - The 'Lost Reef'	p. 86
Figure 41, 42- European ideals and the 'future city'	p. 86
Figures 44, 45 - The Mapungubwe gold rhino as seen in Main Street	p.99
Figures 46, 47, 48, 49 - A sample of the information boards	p. 104
Figures 50 (inset), 51, 52- A section of the Main Street mining precinct	p. 113
Figures 53,54,55- Some of the mining- themed exhibits	p. 113
Figure 56- A close-up of the 'Jo'burg Man'	p.115

List of interviews

Graeme Reid. Ex-Johannesburg Development Agency
7 December 2007- Rosebank, Johannesburg.

John Dewar. Director of the Johannesburg Land Company.
February 2008- email correspondence.

Surveys undertaken in Main Street mining precinct, January and February 2008.