The previous chapter illustrates the historical exclusion of cultural discourses and practices of the predominantly black population of the Johannesburg inner-city, from representation within the built environment. It can also be argued that to a lesser extent the present day inner city built environment remains an impediment to black cultural practices through limitations of programme (Function) and continues to exclude black discourses or narratives through architectural representation (Form). These excluded black discourses and cultural practices are collectively termed “subjugated narratives” by Noble (2007:1) who is an active South African academic and the author of the doctoral thesis White Skin, Black Masks. For the context of this study the respective forms of exclusion are termed “programmatic exclusion” with reference to the marginalization of black practices and discursive exclusion with reference to the marginalization of black rationale (discourse), in architectural representation.
Programmatic and discursive exclusion of black practices from the inner-city occurs both actively and passively. In the past, programmatic exclusion was enforced by a combination of segregation laws and by-laws which actively prohibited black practices and in many instances black people from the city. Today the lack of provision of cultural facilities continues to passively marginalize these practices. The city’s inhabitants wishing to engage in black cultural practices are often forced to use leftover spaces (informally) or to travel long distances to rural areas or townships to perform rituals such as weddings and cleansing ceremonies.

The Johannesburg inner-city built environment carries many vestiges of the bygone era of colonialism and apartheid. Many of the existing buildings in the inner-city today which have been inherited from the time of exclusion and marginalization, do not engage with black discourses in their architectural representation and thus perpetuate the discursive exclusion of the past.

The following extract from a local newspaper article is intended to illustrate programmatic as well as discursive exclusion of black cultural practices in the new South Africa. It will also be used to highlight the conflict that occurs at instances of cultural difference and the resulting cultural hybridity.

“Zulu-style house warmings are becoming more common as affluent black people move into Johannesburg’s formerly all-white suburbs. A visit from township men with knives and bloodied hands would usually have white suburbia reaching for its revolver, or at least its panic button, but not this time. These visitors were invited guests. “It’s for the ancestors,” said Sphiwe, sharpening a blade on a stone beside the swimming pool. “You must let them know you have moved to a new place and to contact them you need to slaughter something.” Beside him a tethered sheep nibbled the lawn, unaware that this was a Zulu-style house warming in one of Johannesburg’s plusher suburbs and that mutton was on the menu.

My friend Richard had just moved into a big house with high walls and armed-response signs. Invited to the party alongside his white neighbors were black work colleagues from Alexandra township. It was their idea to double up as butchers to honor Richard’s ancestors. As affluent black people move into formerly all-white suburbs so does the tradition of backyard slaughtering: a bylaw last year allowed it in residential areas for ceremonial and religious occasions.

After centuries of trying to create a miniature Europe behind hedges and walls and no-go areas, it is high time the descendants of Dutch, British and French settlers experienced an intrusion of Africa, reckon some black people. Some whites are appalled. In letters to newspapers and on radio phone-ins they have branded the practice an affront to civilized values. Others cast their protests in terms of animal welfare and consumer health. They are objecting to the idea more than the spectacle, since suburbia’s high walls block views of the slaughter. You see it only if invited to the party.

fig 4.2 urban ritual animal slaughter (Vasilieva 2008)
Richard’s house warming was not for the squeamish. Purchased that morning from a market outside the city, the sheep was transported home in the boot of a VW Polo. Sphiwe, who had recently slaughtered a sheep to honor his own ancestors when he moved just 20 yards from his grandmother’s house to a shed in her garden, was the master of ceremonies.

A wooden board was laid on the lawn, “to not stain the grass”. Four men held down the sheep as Sphiwe sliced open its throat and angled the red spurts into an orange plastic bowl. The animal rolled its eyes but made no sound - a propitious omen - and a minute later was dead. The carcass was swiftly skinned, dismembered and gutted. Sphiwe’s privilege was to eat a slice of salted warm liver. A hole was dug in the flowerbed into which was squeezed the stomach’s undigested food, a brown gloop. Sphiwe stashed the head in a cupboard for the morning after the party: “It cures hangovers.” A blue-green bulbous gall bladder the size of a sausage was carefully extracted and stored in a cup. Tradition dictated that it was to be punctured and the bile emptied over the new homeowner’s head. But Richard demurred. “No bloody way.” (Guardian Newspapers 2008)

The extract demonstrates the exclusion of Richard’s black cultural practices from his built environment. Not only was his house not designed to fully accommodate such cultural practices i.e. there is no place to slaughter but his neighbors who hold different cultural views heavily condemned the values he espouses.

![Fig 4.2b: Urban ritual animal slaughter (Vasilieva 2008)](image)
The extract demonstrates that cultural hybridity as described in earlier chapters is evident in the lives of ordinary people such as Richard and those attending his ceremony. In traditional African culture neither livestock dung nor blood can be considered a stain, yet they took considerable effort not to stain the grass. Richard refused to have the contents of the gall bladder smeared onto his face which is considered an honor in Zulu culture. This shows that although Richard is African in the way he wishes to honor the ancestors, he has appropriated elements of western thinking (blood and dung disgust him). Buildings in a similar manner need to facilitate and reflect these hybrid cultural practices and discourses.

It is important to note that if Richard had moved into an inner-city apartment it would have been extremely difficult to perform this cultural practice because there would be no place for him to do so. The apartments in the inner-city draw their spatial requirements from western typologies (as demonstrated in earlier chapters) and there is no communal building typology which allows for the carrying out of such rituals within an inner-city context.

It has been illustrated in earlier chapters that the architectural representation of the Johannesburg inner-city draws heavily from western discourse and excludes African architectural discourses and narratives. According to Noble (2007:6), architectural theory and practice is dominated and derived from western architectural discourse which results in “exclusionary forms of practice”. In order to include the culture of the previously excluded blacks, contemporary South African architecture in the inner-city should embrace and include these subjugated narratives in its representation.

For the built environment to serve as both reflection and facilitation (as discussed in chapter two) of culture in a non exclusive manner, then the hybrid cultural practices and discourses of the previously excluded black people need to be included within the built environment. It has also been argued in previous chapters that post colonial cultural values are constituted through the process of hybridity. The process of hybridity results in the reconstitution of cultural values and practices due to the intermingling of separate cultural groupings that are in proximity. The above mentioned process also referred to as hybridization could be utilized by architecture to open up a dialogue between mainstream architectural dogma and the excluded discourses of blacks. To address the issue of exclusion in this manner it is necessary to understand hybridity and specifically postcolonial hybridity within the context of the built environment as theorized by Noble. It is also important to recap on what is meant by discourse and how it relates to the production of architecture.

A discourse is an underlying logic or rationale, it is a set of norms that governs a field of study. The imagination is born into a discourse, the discourse precedes it, the discourse informs it and above all the discourse restricts it. The imagery and form of a building are the result of an interpretation of certain reasoning or logic, which is the underlying discourse. Therefore a distinction between a discourse and the resulting form, needs to be made.
For example, if Glen Murcutt were to erect a building on stilts because he believes in the aboriginal idiom that “man should touch the earth lightly” (Fromonot 2003,40). The stilts cannot be considered the discourse, they are however, one of many possible resultant forms emerging from the discourse. The interpretations and imaginations are varied, however the discourse has a homogenizing effect which limits the perceived realms of possibility.

According to Noble the notion of hybridity is an ongoing process which preceded colonialism and will continue after it. Hybridity first entered the realm of architectural discourse through the writings of the post modern theorists Charles Jenks and Robert Venturi. (Noble 2007). Jencks whose theory is intended as a counter thesis to the modern movement in architecture argues against the notions of structural honesty, rationality and simplicity espoused by proponents of modernism. For Jencks, the building conveys many heterogeneous meanings and should be understood as a complex hybrid system of symbols. Similarly Venturi argues for the layering of historical styles and the juxtaposition of opposing forms to create what he terms complexity and contradiction. (Venturi 1966) According to Noble, “post modern stylistic hybridity does not address the issues of subjugated histories and power politics” (Nobel 2007:4) In this manner Post Modern hybridity is limited to hybridity within the dominant discourse and does not offer a holistic proposal on how to deal with the excluded discourses and practices of blacks. Practitioners seeking to deal with the issue of inclusion could turn to the theories of postcolonial hybridity which deal with the relationships between both dominant and subjugated discourses. According to Noble (2007:1), post colonial hybridity differs from post modern hybridity in the way it confronts and “deals with hegemonies and dominant discourses.” Postcolonial hybridity is the process in which other “denied knowledges enter upon a dominant discourse and enstrange the basis of its authority”. (Bhabha 1994: 114). Noble categorises hybridity in order to develop an understanding of its operation and determine its relevance in the built environment.

The first type of architectural hybridity categorised by Nobel is subversive and disruptive hybridity. In his reading of Bhabha, Nobel highlights Bhabha’s preoccupation with momentary and disruptive hybridity. Bhabha, whose theories are derived mainly from literary analysis, emphasises the destabilising nature of hybridity upon entering a dominant discourse. As Nobel (2007) rightfully points out, buildings are not momentary occurrences and hybridity in architecture is not always disruptive. In support of this argument Nobel cites the example of the Viceroy building in New Dehli, the building is a classical colonial building that has been decorated with traditional Indian motifs. The motifs “participate calmly” (Noble 2007:11) in the composition and do little to “destabilise or subvert the colonial imposition of this classical edifice” (Noble 2007:11). Although it displays a form of hybridity, this building does little to accommodate traditional Indian discourse as the reference to Indian architecture is reduced to that of insignificant motifs. Nobel goes on to state that hybridity in architecture cannot be appreciated for its own sake but must be viewed in terms of power relations (2007).
In other words, “celebration of syncretism and hybridity per se, if not articulated with questions of historical hegemonies, risks sanctifying the fait accompli of colonial violence” (Shohat 1994:43).

Nobel gives an architectural interpretation of conscious and unconscious hybridity as theorised by Robert Young. In conscious hybridity the architectural designer consciously uses a dual code “one which speaks within but beyond the bounds of dominant discourse.” (Noble 2007:11) The outcome of conscious hybridity is usually a contestation of the dominant discourse (Nobel 2007). Conversely, unconscious hybridity results not in contestation but in synthesis. In unconscious hybridity the designer is unaware of the process and unintentionally merges different positions to form a new “syncretic expression” (Nobel 2007:14). The term syncretic expression in this context refers to the new forms that result through the processes of hybridity.

The third category of hybridity highlighted by Nobel is momentary and sublimated. Both conscious and unconscious forms of hybridity are operational in momentary hybridity. Momentary hybridity deals with the instantaneous reinterpretation and reconstitution of space by the user. In this case the entire built environment can be viewed as an open field whose use and interpretation is in a state of constant renegotiation by the user (Noble 2007). This type of hybridity is illustrated by the story of Richard who slaughtered his lamb on his front lawn. The western front garden is not a sacrificial alter neither is the African alter a garden. However in this case, the building users reinterpret the garden and allow the subjugated discourse or practice to participate within the closed western discourse. More simply, Richard changed the prescribed use of space to accommodate his excluded cultural practice. An architect’s role is to design for the facilitation of man’s activities therefore it would be inadequate to rely solely upon momentary hybridity to reflect subjugated discourses and practices in architectural representation. Noble suggests the use of sublimated hybridity which is “the result of syncretic expression in design.” (Noble 2007:13) By creating a dialogue between two seemingly irreconcilable positions, hybridity can be used to reflect the values and facilitate practices of the previously excluded black people. Through the synthesis of programme, architecture can improve existing building typologies and create new hybrid typologies that facilitate black cultural practices. Similarly the synthesis of architectural discourses and rationale would result in hybrid forms that reflect the previously excluded knowledges and discourses of blacks. Both processes of programmatic and discursive hybridisation will be termed “translation” when discussing the practical application of postcolonial hybridity in buildings. The focus should be placed upon process rather than product, and for this reason “Bhabha’s politics of hybridity cannot be reduced to stylistic, or aesthetic categories (although it may certainly include these categories)” (Noble 2007:6). When different cultural patterns collide and hybridize, the result may well, and quoting Venturi, result in forms that are “distorted rather than ‘straightforward,’ ambiguous rather than ‘articulated’, perverse as well as impersonal” (Venturi 1977:16). However, it is not adequate to merely appreciate these forms, or to reproduce them in the name of art. The crucial point here is not complex form for its own sake, but the subversion of dominant and dominating modes of cultural representation; and the inclusion of subjugated narratives. (Noble 2007)

The following examples of built architectural projects show instances of hybridisation and are intended to give some practical insights into the process of hybridity termed translation in the built environment.
It has been established in earlier chapters that the San people were among the first inhabitants of the Witwatersrand. These people have suffered what Bonner refers to as a “double erasure” (2001:177). The first erasure was through physical removal and the second was the intellectual erasure through the denial or lack of acknowledgement of their existence. (Bonner 2001) Archaeologists and anthropologists believe that the eland which is depicted in many San rock paintings possessed mystical powers and was a symbol of identity for the San. Urban practitioners in the Johannesburg inner city have therefore attempted to give a glimpse of this lost narrative by the erection of the eland sculpture shown in fig 4.4 - 4.7. The sculpture was erected in 2008 C.E. on Jan Smuts Road in Braamfontein. The excluded or forgotten narrative of the San people is told through the use of conscious hybdridity as theorized by Noble, in this hybridity there is evidence of contestation as theorized by Young. In this depiction of the eland the artist Clive van den Berg takes the Western tradition of three dimensional sculpture and fuses it with the two dimensional tradition of San rock art. He takes the two dimensional image of an eland and extrudes
this into a three dimensional object. The result is an eland from certain perspectives but two walls or blades projecting from the ground from other perspectives as shown in fig 4.5 and 4.6. Through this double speak and contestation the artist manages to speak within and beyond the bounds of dominant discourse. For the San the rock is the gateway to an alternate reality, it forms the surface that divides the realm of man and that of spirits (Bonner 2001). In this sculpture the artist cleverly reveals another world between the two eland or rock surfaces. In this sculpture the translation of a subjugated discourse into the dominant sculptural discourse results is a hybrid sculptural form that oscillates between eland and a garden bound by walls, depending on the viewer’s perspective. This hybrid is consistent with Noble’s reading of Venturi when he states that the resulting forms are likely to be “distorted rather than straightforward, ambiguous rather than articulated”. (Noble 2007:4) This hybridity may be celebrated for its artistic value but more importantly, it should be celebrated for its social value. This artist has successfully translated black artistic discourse and made an important contribution to the creation of an inclusive built environment in the inner city.
Architectural translation is exemplified by the work of Gabriel Fagan in his own Camps Bay fig 4.8 house designed in 1963. According to Marshal, inspiration by context and the local vernacular have long been a tradition in the Cape because the existing architectural heritage constitutes an important aspect of Afrikaner cultural identity. (Marshal 2000) The Camps Bay house is undoubtedly a modern building yet it resonates with the ambiance of vernacular Cape Dutch architecture. The bright white walls and the undulating roof resembling gables are reminiscent of traditional Cape Dutch architecture. In a description of the building, Marshall speaks of the symbolism of the chimney, as it marks the family gathering space and visually symbolizes the heart of the house from the outside, which is a common feature in Cape Dutch architecture and an essential element of Cape family life (Marshal 2000). Although this building is undoubtably a contemporary building (or at the very least not a Cape Dutch building), the unconscious processes of hybridity are evident in the fusing of the modern with the traditional, resulting in a building that is neither one but is both at the same time i.e. a syncretic expression.
Renowned South African architect and retired academic, Peter Rich provides an example of an almost imperceptible syncretic expression. In his Parktown home designed in 1986, Rich studies traditional Ndebele architectural discourse and translates it into his contemporary house (Marshal 2000). He does not mimic the forms or the imagery of Ndebele architecture, instead he takes the underlying principles and rationale of thresholds and a spatial hierarchy of courtyards as demonstrated in fig 4.9 and fig 4.10 (Marshal 2000) resulting in a house that looks deceptively dissimilar to the Ndebele house. Unlike Fagan, Rich’s syncretic expression is not visual instead he engages the subjugated narrative on a purely discursive level. It does not however imply that a visually syncretic expression cannot display discursive hybridity.
In recent years attempts to correct imbalances and to incorporate the cultural value systems and practices of the marginalised groups in the city have been expressed in new developments like the Faraday muti market. Designed by MMA and Albonico Sack Architects, the market was built to accommodate the traditional healers who had operated informally in the inner city for three decades. Despite their long term habitation of the city, the function (programme) of traditional healers is one which had been historically excluded from official representation in the city. The building of the muti market recognizes that traditional medicine is an important aspect of many inner city inhabitants culture. The official inclusion of this programme into the city is a reflection of the people’s cultural values and traditions; it serves the purpose of de-marginalizing and legitimizing the cultural practice of blacks.

In a description of the building in the JDA publications architect Monica Albonica says the building “responds to the shifting urban-rural boundaries.” (2008) Through a study of traditional healers in rural and township areas, the architects were able to perform a programmatic translation which led to an appropriate urban response. It is important to note that the architects have not mimicked or recreated a rural setting in the city, instead they have applied the set of requirements and principles gleaned from their studies in an urban manner. The muti market provides an example of how previously excluded black practices can be included into urban environments by the creation of new hybrid building typologies, in this case an urban muti market.
The design of constitutional court shows evidence of an attempt to engage with the subjugated narratives of black people. The architects have made a conscious effort in the words of Makin (2006:46), (architect on the project), "to contrast colonial building" paradigms and expectations of what a court should be. The symbol of the tree as a place for gathering depicted by Sandile Goje in fig 4.15 (Makin 2006:60) was upheld as the design aspiration through out the project (Makin 2006). An image of the foyer depicted in fig 4.14 shows the slanting trunk-like columns and light fittings disguised as clusters of leaves. The space evokes the feeling of being under a group of trees. In this syncretic expression we see an intentional contestation of western imagery and a more than obvious attempt to create a dialogue with the historically subjugated narratives of blacks. The next chapter will illustrate that although the abstraction of the tree is an attempt to include the marginalized black people in architectural representation, it does not necessarily constitute discursive hybridity. This building engages in a profound discursive dialogue with the subjugated narrative which will be covered in greater detail in the next chapter.
A brief study of Glen Murcutt, Australia’s most celebrated architect and winner of architecture’s most prestigious global award the Pritzker Prize, can offer some valuable understandings of the process of hybridity in architecture. Murcutt’s education in Australia, much like the average South African would have been based on western discourses. Murcutt’s early work is heavily influenced by the modern movement but his career reveals a gradual process of translation and a dialogue between rural agricultural buildings and aboriginal dwellings, resulting in what Fromonot (2005) refers to as a series of light weight buildings clad in corrugated sheeting.

According to Fromonot (2005), Murcutt entered the profession during the 70’s; the era of European modernism and the proliferation of the International Style. Murcutt’s early work clearly shows an appropriation of what Fromonot terms a “Mies-like modernism” (2005:20). His first house for his mother shown in fig 4.16 is obviously influenced by the Fansworth house designed by modern master Meis van der Rohe. The walk around, free plan with a compact service core and the repetitive steel frame structure are derived from an interpretation of Mies’ work. The influence of Mies is further exemplified by the house for his brother Douglas, in which “the
structural details are direct copies of Mies’ Tugendhat house” (Fromonot 2005:22). At this stage of his career Murcutt espouses and promulgates the rhetoric of the international style which advocated simplicity, rationality, clarity and fluidity of plan among other things.

During the mid seventies Australian architects were beginning to take an interest in the direct functional agricultural buildings that had developed in parallel to the imported styles of the colonial era. (Fromonot 2005) The Marie Short house in Kempsey fig 4.19 represents an important turning point in Murcutt’s career. In this house the Meisian modernism is fused with the farm shed. The flat roof is ruled out and instead of the Meisian detailing, local farm building technology is employed. (Fromonot 2005) Although the house takes on a shed-like appearance, the influence of Mies is still decipherable in the planning, the short open flight of steps and more overtly the building on stilts. This house is neither a shed nor the Meisian international style building. Murcutt successfully translated the utilitarian shed to speak within the discourse of the international style but also beyond it.

In the mid seventies the Australians experienced an Aboriginal renaissance similar to the current reawakening of African consciousness dubbed the African renaissance by politicians in Africa. According to Fromonot (2005), architects were not immune to the renewed interest in aboriginal art and culture. When designing the home of famous aboriginal artist Banduk Marika Murcutt says “I have lived with my client in a very first hand way… they taught me the significance of kinship ties, customs, beliefs and their
spatial implications” (Fromonot 2005:40). Murcutt does not attempt to create an aboriginal looking aesthetic instead he uncovers some of the underlying rationale of aboriginal shelters which is best articulated by the aboriginal proverb “one must touch the earth lightly” (Fromonot 2005:40). This aboriginal philosophy resonated with Murcutt’s architecture, and gave a greater sense of legitimacy to Murcutt’s sensitively sited buildings, which touch the earth lightly on stilts. Meaning, in his buildings was pluralized through the inclusion of the aboriginal rationale that “mans existence on earth is transient” (Fromonot 2005:42), therefore his buildings should reflect this reasoning and create only a momentary connection with the earth. It is interesting to note the uncanny resemblance between the aboriginal bark shelter shown in fig 4.21 and the Marie Short house. Murcutt’s stilts come from Mies but in the aboriginal architecture he has found their counterparts.

This illustrates the notion that subjugated and dominant discourse or forms are not always different. There are areas in which either discourse overlaps or the resultant forms of two discreet and dissimilar discourses share imagery. To highlight these areas of intersection between dominant and subjugated discourse creates multiple references for the architecture, which serves to pluralize its identity making it more inclusive.
To reflect the cultural practices and values of the previously disadvantaged black people living the inner city, the form and function of the built interventions have to conform with the cultural values of these inhabitants but also exist in a modern built environment. Urban practitioners would be forced to study these predominantly non urban cultural practices and value systems and creatively reconstitute them to create urban interpretations. According to Marschall (2000:13), “The development of Architecture based on an understanding of African traditions and culture would result in a built environment that is more relevant to the majority of South Africans.”

To deal with programmatic exclusion in the Ritual centre, it is necessary to study the rituals of these previously excluded black people in order to determine the brief and the programmatic requirements. These rituals must be dissected and translated without losing sight of the diverse and plural nature of culture expressed in earlier chapters. The cultural practices that these people engage in should be included in the built environment with ultimate aim of facilitating culture.

Before discursive post colonial hybridity can take place there has to be a process of discovery, internalization and understanding of black discourses. The aim of post colonial hybridity in architecture should not be, the celebration of hybridity for its own sake. (Noble 2007) According to Bhabha postcolonial hybridity occurs when subjugated discourses enter into dominant discourse (1994). Therefore architectural postcolonial hybridity is legitimate only when it engages with the discourses of the previously excluded blacks. Though it is laudable, (as it creates a dialogue) it is not legitimate postcolonial hybridity to engage only with the imagery resulting from a certain rationale without interrogating the underlying logic or reasoning. Hybridity resulting from imagery alone should be classified under post modern hybridity which is a legitimate but separate form of practice. The dangers of image based hybridity are that, while it can display an African or black image it continues to exclude real architectural understandings (discourses) of blacks. Architectural expression that include and engage with black discourse would result in the reflection of black spatial concepts creating a more inclusive built environment. The chapter on discursive hybridity will attempt to unveil a few discourses or spatial understandings with the aim of translating them into contemporary forms of practice. it will be a subjective exercise which aims to awaken a creative consciousness that is dominated by western discourse to the possibilities offered by marginalised black discourses.
fig 4.22 radoma court 1938 (Van Der Waal1986:66)

fig 4.23 zulu architecture (Marschall 2000:82)