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Queering the city: A social and spatial account of the Mother City Queer
Project at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in 2003

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
the degree of Master of Philosophy in African Studies

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any
degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this
dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been
cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date:

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Glossary of abbreviations and terms used

The explanation of abbreviations and terms used in this project is informed by the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary¹ and the New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought.² Where appropriate an explanation of the use of the abbreviation or term in the text is included.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| AIDS | acquired immune deficiency syndrome |
| CCTV | closed circuit television |
| CID | City Improvement District |
| CTICC | Cape Town International Convention Centre. Used interchangeably in this project with Convention Centre and Centre |
| GDP | gross domestic product |
| HIV | human immunodeficiency virus |
| MCQP | Mother City Queer Project |
| PDA | personal digital assistant |
| Y2K | year 2000 |

Terms used

| | |
|---------------|---|
| apartheid | The systematic policy of racial segregation benefiting whites enforced in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. |
| Artscape | Artscape Theatre formally the Nico Malan State Theatre |
| black / s | While I reject the racial classification terminology of apartheid, their relevance to postapartheid South Africa remains and are consequently used here. Used here in reference to a person of African descent. |
| blog | A web log or personal online internet diary. |
| carnavalesque | A term used to describe the subversive properties of the public revelry and associated imagery of the carnival. |
| Castle | Castle of Good Hope. |
| coloured | While I reject the racial classification terminology of apartheid, their relevance to postapartheid South Africa remains and are consequently used here. Used here in reference to a person of mixed descent. |
| ecstasy | An illegal drug with euphoric effects. |

¹ Dictionary Unit for South African English. Eds. 2002. *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

² Bullock, Alan and Trombley, Stephen. Eds. 2000. *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*. London: Harper Collins.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Foreshore | Area of the Cape Town city centre close to the harbour and largely constituted of land reclaimed from the sea. |
| Madiba | The popularised affectionate nickname for ex South African President Nelson Mandela. |
| moffie | An informal and derogatory term for an effeminate male or gay male in South Africa. |
| Mother City | Popular nickname for Cape Town as South Africa's first city |
| pink rand | A term reflecting the recognition of the spending power of the South African gay community. |
| postapartheid | The period in South Africa after apartheid. |
| postcolonial | A term referring to the cultural theory that seeks to address the characteristic cultural conditions of societies until recently rendered subordinate by colonialism. |
| queer | Originally a derogatory term for gay later appropriated by the gay community and used positively. In this project queer is used inclusively, as it is by the MCQP, to refer to gay and straight people who identify with its critical and transgressive interpretations. |
| rainbow nation | Postapartheid term referring to the cultural diversity and inclusiveness of South Africa. |
| white / s | While I reject the racial classification terminology of apartheid, their relevance to postapartheid South Africa remains and are consequently used here. Used here in reference to a person of European descent. |

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1. Introduction: What is the Mother City Queer Project?

“MCQP is Africa’s biggest Queer tribal gathering. Once a year MCQP converts a public space in Cape Town into a multi-faceted party palace. On the night, MCQP partygoers wearing matching costumes, arrive in teams of two or more, onto a grand centre stage to show-off their creations. They then go on to frolic the night away at Cape Town’s biggest annual Queer bash. Local DJs cater to all musical tastes and styles from Handbag House and Cheeky Cha-Cha, to Evolutionary Electro and Golden Oldies Galore.”³

The Mother City Queer Project (MCQP) is a themed carnivalesque costume party held annually, over a single night in December, in Cape Town since 1994. The event began as a celebration of South Africa’s constitutional recognition of the right to sexual difference in the form of a location specific small scale “art party”, patronised by the friends and peers of organisers architect Andre Vorster and artist Andrew Putter. Since its inception, the MCQP has grown in size and scale to incorporate a more diverse demographic of partygoer from Cape Town residents, nationally and abroad. The development and growth of the MCQP from an underground community event to one of widespread commercial appeal, increased numbers and popular acceptance can be traced through the MCQP’s use of five venues over the course of its first ten years.

MCQP partygoers gather in celebration of queer culture by dancing and socialising through the night. This popular event, attracting thousands of partygoers annually, is characterised by its pageantry and collective sense of display. The venue is transformed each year with striking decor and musical styles, and the guests’ often flamboyant costumes. The incorporation of a changing theme each year and a continued adherence to basic principles established early on have ensured that, while no two MCQP events are

³ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 2004. *Jungle Fever*

the same, commonalities and continuity do exist despite changes to the venue. Over its first decade from 1994 the MCQP has been staged at the River Club, the Artscape Theatre, the Good Hope Centre, the Castle of Good Hope, and the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The MCQP is an example of how a single event can purposefully change the demographic of users and characteristics of a space, and of how a venue's tradition and history may be used or subverted to create new opportunities for spatial interaction and engagement.

The MCQP invites all who wish to attend to participate in an exploration or identification of their “queerness” by adopting a thematically inspired costume and to enter the event as a member of a team. The event is not exclusively gay and is attended by a varied selection of gay and straight men and women. The MCQP deliberately sets itself apart from the protest and rallying often associated with gay pride in favour of a celebration of the right to sexual difference. Nevertheless it remains a little subversive, unabashedly glamorous, purposefully outrageous, happily sensational and slightly sleazy event that despite or perhaps because of its chameleonesque qualities continues to capture local and international attention more than ten years after its inception.

The MCQP as referred to in this project includes only the costume party traditionally held in mid December in Cape Town, and excludes past attempts to export the party to Pretoria⁴, the festival week held in 2002, and any other event produced under the MCQP name. As a temporary event, the MCQP is planned each year according to a new theme, the consequent changes to design, layout, venue, décor and guest’s costumes ensure that

⁴ Mother city queers are marching to Pretoria. 26 May 2000. www.q.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

no two events are ever the same. Each year the MCQP is hosted at a venue within the city which for the night takes on or enhances the characteristics reminiscent of a public space, in these instances the temporary nature of the event is illustrated by the venue as its layout, legacy and environs are exploited and integrated to create a new party space primarily for celebration, interaction and socialisation. In this temporary space the venue's purpose, function, movement of people, main activities and user demographics alter substantially. This research project will pause to study one of these momentary events in the history of the MCQP's movement through the city of Cape Town: the tenth MCQP held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) on 13 December 2003.

- **The appeal of the MCQP to a student of public culture**

The MCQP has to date escaped comprehensive analysis and discussion within the social, cultural and spatial disciplines. An image from the MCQP does adorn the cover, and a brief reference is made in the text, of the Van Zyl and Steyn (2005) edited volume concerning the effects of democracy on the shaping and configuring of queer identity in South Africa between 1994 and 2004.⁵ Further references to the MCQP are made in the gay tourism studies works of Visser (2002 & 2003)⁶, Elder (2005)⁷ and Oswin (2005)⁸.

⁵ Van Zyl, Mikki and Steyn, Melissa. Eds. 2005. *Performing queer: shaping sexualities 1994 – 2004 – volume one*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

⁶ Visser, Gustav. 2002. Gay tourism in South Africa: issues from the Cape Town experience. *Urban Forum* 13, 1. 85-94; Visser, Gustav. 2003. Gay men, tourism and urban space: reflections on Africa's 'gay capital'. in *Tourism Geographies*, 5 (2), 2003. 168–189

⁷ Elder, Glen S. 2005. Somewhere, over the rainbow: Cape Town, South Africa as a "Gay Destination". in Ouzgane, Lahoucine and Morrell, Robert. Eds. *African masculinities: men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

None of these however discuss the MCQP in any great detail, nor is the MCQP considered as the main subject of discussion or analysis. This surprising case of understudy may possibly be accounted for by its variety of constituent elements and the range of themes these offer critical investigation. The MCQP not only incorporates visually appealing elements of festival, carnival, celebration, pageantry and exhibition but also political aspects related to identity, the body and space. The social, cultural and spatial disciplines offer within themselves a further range of approaches to the study of the MCQP. The attraction of the MCQP to a scholar of urban public culture is perhaps what has prevented the MCQP from being adopted or co-opted into any traditional analytical or theoretical framework. The MCQP has a selective and creative identity and thus demands the flexibility of interdisciplinary attention.

The spatial and urban setting of the MCQP has been, at times through its history, political and in opposition to the politics at play within the event's intent and design. The many facets of the event illustrate its influence as venues, residents and the city have adjusted, struggled with and debated their temporary subversion, transformation, reinterpretation and reinvention through the MCQP. In its first five years of operation the MCQP openly celebrated the constitutional freedom of sexual orientation that came with South Africa's new democracy from venues located in the suburban periphery. Later the event moved into two socio-cultural institutions in the city centre of Cape Town in the midst of negotiating their future with respect to their apartheid associated past. In 2003 the MCQP was staged at the latest corporate development in the city, the CTICC. The MCQP has

⁸ Oswin, Natalie. 2005. Researching 'gay Cape Town', finding value-added queerness. in *Social and cultural geography*, vol. 6, no. 4, August 2005. 567-586

had to navigate its often forced movement through five of Cape Town's more prominent social, cultural and corporate venues in its first ten years.

The MCQP is an urban expression of popular and public culture, from spatial to bodily levels where organisers and partygoers involve a variety of themes, styles and attitudes of queer celebration, popular culture, and subcultural trends that transform and transgress Henri Lefebvre's (1991) lived, perceived and conceived spaces of the city.⁹ The MCQP's spaces of encounter, contestation, experience, engagement and transformation presented to, inhabited by partygoers and intimately linked to venue are not mutually exclusive of the actions of the partygoers themselves. The selection of venue, its décor and layout offer the space for action and interaction of people invited, supported and encouraged to encounter people and ideas from outside their normal social groups, contest existing norms of the body and sexuality, take part in an extraordinary experience, engage with new ideas, and transform their bodies and identities in the act queer celebration. No discussion of the event can ignore either its spatiality or its questioning of identity through its playful manipulation of space and body.

The MCQP has grown in status and popularity simultaneously to South Africa's varied experience of its new democracy, the liberalisation of post apartheid Calvinist conservatism, the gradual and faltering social cohesion of Cape Town, the reinvigoration of the city centre and the growing recognition and acceptance of the gay community.¹⁰

⁹ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The production of space*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

¹⁰ Pieterse, Edgar and Meintjies, Frank. Eds. 2004. *Voices of the transition: the politics, poetics and practices of social change in South Africa*. Sandown: Heinemann; Pieterse, Edgar. 2005. Long-distance non-racism does not work. in *Cape Times*, 16 March 2005. 11; Pieterse, Edgar. 2002. From divided to

The MCQP has over this time become a highly noticeable vehicle for publicity and promotion establishing itself within the city's collective memory and identity, such that cultural and corporate interests have associated or aligned themselves with the event. The City of Cape Town, the tourism industry, the venue for each year, sponsors and the gay community are able to generate publicity around the MCQP by their association or relation to an event that is characterised each year by its positive statement of queer life and the media driven interest that follows, the creativity of preparation, emphasis on visual display, popularity and socio-spatial transformative appeal. The MCQP offers an alternate thread for discussion of the city's dynamic urban fabric. It has linked buildings, spaces and people at a time when the city and its residents have been exploring the freedoms of their democracy.

- **The choice of the MCQP as research topic**

My awareness of the MCQP began at the end of 1994 when my cousins, contemporaries of MCQP originators Andre Vorster and Andrew Putter from architecture and art school respectively, attended the first MCQP party, *Locker Room* at the River Club, in December of 1994. Covered in silver body paint and collectively dressed according to the theme as sporting trophies they featured in an article on the MCQP in the now discontinued South African arts magazine *ADA*¹¹, while these same pictures continue to appear in the MCQP online photographic archive of 1994 and occasionally in

integrated city? in *Urban Forum* January-March 2002, Vol. 13 Issue 1. 3-37; Van Zyl, Mikki and Steyn, Melissa. Eds. 2005. *Performing queer: shaping sexualities 1994 – 2004 – volume one*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

¹¹ Jolly, Lucinda. 1994. Mother city queer project. in *ADA* issue 13. 60-65

promotional and review publications of the event. By the time I attended my first party, *Toybox* at the Good Hope Centre in 2000, the MCQP had begun to establish itself in various social circles in the city and beyond as a highlight of the end of year holiday season in Cape Town. The MCQP had developed a reputation as a popular event that had crossed the spatial boundary from suburbia to the city centre, helped to lift the conservative cultural curtain hanging over the Artscape Theatre in the late 1990s, and narrowed the social distance between gay, lesbian and straight residents of the city.

In 2002 I attended *The Wedding* at the Castle of Good Hope, an event that I enjoyed immensely, hailed as a resounding success by partygoers and in the media.¹² The success of *The Wedding* it seemed was in no small way thanks to its staging at the Castle of Good Hope: then a spectacular, contentious and imposing feature on the city's social and cultural urban landscape. Initially I was interested in researching the redevelopment and regeneration of Cape Town's city centre and in particular the foreshore precinct of the city. The MCQP had uncharacteristically entered the media early during the course of the year as it struggled to secure the castle as a venue for the event in 2003. Like many other attendees I had never felt much of an association with the castle nor harboured much interest for it until the MCQP in 2002. I was intrigued to learn from my family that my ancestor Douwe Gerbrandtz Steyn, a master builder from Holland and the first of our family to arrive at the Cape, was intimately involved in its construction:

“The erection of the five-cornered stronghold with its bastions was done under the supervision of engineer Dombaer, master-builder Douwe Gerbrandtz Steyn and

¹² Steenkamp, Willem. 2002. Queer brigade overcomes the Castle's defences. in *The Star* 16 December 2002. 3

joiner Adriaan van Braekel. The construction began officially on 2 January 1666.”¹³

I decided to take on the MCQP as a topic for research in as far as it promised to unveil a rich research opportunity in a layered spatial context of venue and city, immediately appealing to my undergraduate urban geography and postgraduate interdisciplinary experience.

2003 marked the 10th year of the MCQP, by then an established Cape Town event, which had been relatively well documented in the media but had received little academic attention. Serendipitously the MCQP moved to the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) for the 2003 event *Kitsch Kitchen*, which reintroduced the redevelopment and regeneration of the foreshore as a possible context or reference point for research. Once the venue for the 2003 MCQP had been confirmed my research became focussed on the upcoming event in December of 2003. Mindful of the 2002 event and my experience of it, *Kitsch Kitchen* presented itself as an opportunity to study the event as it was planned, produced and experienced in a quite different context from the event in 2002. The Castle of Good Hope’s controversial and contested historical connections to the city and its administrations¹⁴ provided a useful and interesting juxtaposing point of reference and research to the newly built architecturally modern Cape Town International Convention Centre. The Centre, Cape Town’s latest corporate flagship development, opened for business on 1 July 2003 and was positioned in the

¹³ Plaque at the main entrance to the Castle of Good Hope

¹⁴ Gilbert, Cindy Lou. 1994. *The Castle of Good Hope: an examination of controversies and conflicting perceptions: a case study in public history*. University of Cape Town honours thesis; Mrubata, Mbulelo. 2001. *The production of history at the castle of good hope in the 20th century*. University of the Western Cape masters thesis.

foreshore of the city centre in the hope of stimulating further development. The success of the CTICC had been greatly anticipated as early as 2001, expected to contribute between R11bn¹⁵ and R25bn¹⁶ to the economy over ten years.

- **Researching the MCQP**

In this project I will work from the position that the MCQP as illustrated by *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003 is a temporary, transgressive, carnivalesque and transformative event that has operated in the contested spatial context of a postapartheid city.

In so doing this project has two intentions. The first is to trace a history of the MCQP that explores issues pertaining to its origin and beginning, its inspiration and reason for existing, the people responsible and those who attend in order to show that there is more behind the glitter, make-up, décor, dancing and sex than just a flamboyant gay party at the start of the festive season. By socially and spatially contextualising its influences, origin and history it will be shown that the MCQP played a particular role in contesting the social spaces of Cape Town post apartheid. The MCQP parties continue to operate annually however this project will discuss in detail only the tenth MCQP, *Kitsch Kitchen* at the CTICC in 2003, and use selected prior events as precedent. The second intention is to offer a close reading of the 2003 MCQP. A reading of *Kitsch Kitchen* that will problematise the MCQP as an intervention in what will be shown to be the contested social and political spaces of postapartheid Cape Town. While the MCQP will also be

¹⁵ Cape Town convention centre will earn R11bn. in *Cape Times*, 18 February 2001. 3

¹⁶ Smith, Ashley. 2001. Convention centre to bring R25bn into SA. In *Cape Times*, 4 July 2001. 3

considered as a contextual intervention in queer politics, the CTICC as the venue for *Kitsch Kitchen* will be regarded for its role as a new postapartheid space.

The intended discussions of this project are framed by a general interest in the history and development of the MCQP and its contribution to the refiguring of the postapartheid city. These discussions will include the temporary nature of the MCQP, the historical development of the event and its original intentions, the establishment of an MCQP formula, the queer politics involved and the event as a vehicle for these politics.

Discussion of the origins and influences of the MCQP will be informed primarily by Andre Vorster, who as the originator of the MCQP continued to produce the event annually up to and including *Kitsch Kitchen*. His input is essential as a consistent primary source, and in light of the MCQP's understudy and the absence of reference works on the subject. Discussion of the temporary nature of the MCQP will be informed by recent and alternative conceptualisations of public spaces, notably Hajer and Reijndorp's (2001) suggestion of temporary and flexible public spaces. Stallybrass and White's (1986) work concerning Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, and local cases of precedent such as Martin (1999) and Witz (2003), will inform discussion of the MCQP as a mobile and temporary event as well as its formulaic incorporation into the mainstream. The movement of the MCQP as subcultural event on the suburban periphery to a more mainstream event in the city centre will be informed by the subcultural works edited by Gelder (2005) and the South African works edited by Nuttall and Michael (2000). The works of Robinson (1996), Robins (1998 & 2000), Turok (2000) and Watson (2003) concerning the nature of post apartheid South Africa and Cape Town as a post apartheid

city are contextual to the MCQP and will also inform discussion of the event's development and its role within this context. The performative aspects of gender and sexual politics, as identified by Butler (1990), and the ensuing work of Gevisser and Cameron (1994), Van Zyl and Steyn (2005), Elder (1995 & 1999), Visser (2002 & 2003) interpreting queer politics and the variable South African queer experience will inform discussion of the MCQP origins and its politics.

Spatial discussions including the influential and contextual roles of MCQP venues and the city, the permanent conceived space of the CTICC versus the temporary lived space of the MCQP operating in a single venue will be informed by Lefebvre's (1991) discussion and analysis of social space. The duality of the CTICC's architectural vision versus its developmental and economic role will also be explored. Robinson's (1998) localised interpretation of his work and Bunn's (1998) local contribution to the nature of monumental buildings will inform discussion of the meeting of the temporary MCQP and the permanent CTICC. Established public space theory such as the works of Brill (1989), Carr et al (1992), Rivlin (1994) and Gehl (2001) and works relating to public space alternatives such as Davis (1990), Lees (1997) and Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) will inform discussions of the MCQP and its venues. In this instance the works of Hall (1995), Worden (1997), Marks and Bezzoli (2001), Robins (2002) and Bremner (2004) will provide a contextual Cape Town framework. Discussions of the role of the various MCQP venues and the city will also be informed by the aforementioned works concerning the nature of post apartheid South Africa and Cape Town as a postapartheid city as well with reference to venue precedent in this context. The expected social and

economic contribution of the CTICC will be informed not only by the aforementioned public space theory but also by the works of Beazley et al (1997), Zukin (1997), Hannigan (1998) and Graham and Marvin (2001) dealing with city development and in particular city centre regeneration.

- **Statement of research problematic**

Two interconnected principle interests concerning the MCQP and *Kitsch Kitchen* will determine the research and inform discussion of the event's origins and history, and a close reading of the 2003 MCQP at the CTICC. These questions are informed by my previous disciplinary interests in human geography and my choice of scholarly approach informed by my current interests in public culture. Such a public culture approach, a combination of urban and cultural studies, will provide a productive interdisciplinary position from which to investigate, analyse and discuss the MCQP as an urban socio-cultural phenomenon characterised by its understudy.

- **A brief thematic history of the MCQP from 1994 to 2003**

This aspect of my research project will investigate the history of and background to *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003 from the MCQP's beginning in 1994. This will include the origins of the first MCQP held in 1994: the people involved, their reasons, intentions and influences concerning the event. Subsequent selected MCQP events will be discussed as precedent to *Kitsch Kitchen* and as a means of tracing the development of the MCQP

over its first ten years. The history of the MCQP from 1994 to 2003 will be discussed as both background to *Kitsch Kitchen*, as well to trace the development of its original form and its movement from the suburban periphery to the city centre of Cape Town. The development and movement of the MCQP will be discussed in terms of their commercial and popular implications regarding the event. This socio-spatial discussion will concern both the movement of the MCQP through the city as well as the various venues that the MCQP has been staged at. Specific reference will be made to the queer context of Cape Town as it relates to the development of the MCQP.

- **A close analysis and discussion of *Kitsch Kitchen* at the CTICC in 2003**

This aspect of my research project will investigate, by means of a close reading of *Kitsch Kitchen*, the place of the MCQP in the contested social spaces of the postapartheid built environment. The origins and development of the MCQP coincided with the first decade of South African democracy, consequently *Kitsch Kitchen* took place in postapartheid urban and social contexts and as such the event will be discussed as a spatial phenomenon and social phenomenon. Discussion of the 2003 MCQP at the CTICC in detail will explore the mutual effect of the event and venue on each other. This will be done with reference to the MCQP as a social and spatial queer intervention, and the expected role of the CTICC, in the city towards an exploration of the role of the MCQP in refiguring the postapartheid city. The refiguring role of the MCQP will be discussed with reference to the event's history and context, its close association with its venues, and

with reference to the city regeneration and revitalisation context of *Kitsch Kitchen's* timing at the CTICC.

In conclusion this research project will show that the MCQP as illustrated by *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003 is a temporary, transgressive, carnivalesque and transformative event that has operated in the contested spatial context of a postapartheid city. This research project will explain the MCQP as a cultural phenomenon that has emerged from the particular urban and social context of Cape Town as a postapartheid city in the first decade of South Africa's democracy. As such its temporary, transgressive, carnivalesque and transformative nature will be illustrated at the individual level of the partygoer and at the spatial level of venue and city. The form of the MCQP will be shown to have developed from an underground and subcultural beginning to a recognisable and widely accepted form, over the simultaneous ten years of South Africa's democracy, that is intimately connected to the event's social and spatial context. It will further be illustrated that this development of form has allowed the MCQP to act as a vehicle for its transgressive and transformative agenda, informed by its urban social and spatial context, so that it has played a role in the social and cultural liberation of certain venues in Cape Town and the city itself.

2. Literature review: Reading the MCQP into the postapartheid city

The literature review is arranged firstly according to literature of a metropolitan or international focus and then literature that is of a local, South Africa and Cape Town, focus. This localised focus in some cases also includes local interpretations of the metropolitan or internationally focussed literature. The literature reviewed is for the most part spatially orientated, theories of spatial formation and spatial politics, or connected to the study of the city. This includes established spatial theorisations; discourses of public space and urban life; contextual discussions of the postcolonial, apartheid and postapartheid city; festival and the carnivalesque; queer theorisation and discussion; cultural dynamics with reference to subcultures and the role of the body.

The intention of this selection of reviewed literature is to establish the scope of potential study of the MCQP and therein its broad appeal against its current surprising understudy. The intention is also to contextualise the MCQP in the postapartheid city and its contested urban spaces. Due to this understudy and the vast availability of potentially relevant sources of information, this literature review despite its size is inevitably a selective representation of the challenge of reading and constituting an archive of information across academic disciplines. In light of the MCQP's understudy, certain authors and bodies of work have been particularly useful as frameworks for enquiry and discussion. These include the seminal spatial theorisation of Henri Lefebvre and its South African interpretation and adaptation of Jennifer Robinson, the contemporary examination of public space by Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, Peter Stallybrass

and Allon White's study of Mikhail Bakhtin and the carnivalesque, and the contextual postapartheid works contained in the book blank_Architecture, apartheid and after.

- **Metropolitan literature**

- **Spatial theorisations**

Lefebvre's (1991) work concerning the social production of space is central to the spatial analysis and contextual discussion of the MCQP and the interdisciplinary method used; as is Foucault's (1986 & 1993) consideration of alternative spaces to the everyday and the influential role of power and knowledge in their use.

Lefebvre's (1991) discussion and analysis of social space considers the city a historical product of its social, political and economic contextual relations. The social space of the city is seen as complex and diverse, from which knowledge may only be completely discerned via an interdisciplinary approach which considers the historical role and actions of people in space. In questioning the significance of the city as subject and object, Lefebvre acknowledges that there is little need to know the answer in order to enjoy the experience of the city as a social space. In recognising architectural and monumental unity, of no singular origin yet sharing a common city language, the experience is more pervasive and influential than the superficial visual experience of a tourist.

“Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. Among these actions, some serve production, others consumption (i.e. the enjoyment of the fruits of production). Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge”¹⁷

For Lefebvre the “representation of space” and “representational space” are mutually reinforcing for a picturesque city whose setting and the setting of its spaces provide an influential context to daily life. Such a city, or the experience thereof, was not planned but came about as a product of a consistent social and political project. Lefebvre recognises the city as a celebration of diverse pleasures, inventive celebration and sumptuous ritual; which cannot be worked into repetition by ignoring the historical interplay of its social, political, economic traditions.¹⁸

Lefebvre speaks of the “hypercomplexity” of social space, favouring an interdisciplinary approach warning that space treated as a singular and isolated entity ignores its constituent social relationships and promotes segmented representation that corresponds with society’s framework of division and separation for control. The dilemma of hypercomplex social spaces is their inevitable integration with one another and can only be considered on their own in abstraction; however remaining dependant on the networks, relationships and linkages of their surrounds. Visible boundaries to a space merely offer an appearance of separation that only partially hides a continuity. Thus the attributes that come to be associated with and attributed to a well functioning social space: its size, location, history, and use are clearly identifiable in hindsight once the risk of their production have been accounted for. New social form is not inscribed onto the

¹⁷ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The production of space*. Cambridge: Blackwell. 73

¹⁸ Ibid. 73-77

existing space and landscape, rather the space is a production of the social relations at work in the space. Participants in this relationship have a vested interest in the production, and consequently the city, benefiting in spatial terms from their involvement particularly in extended periods of spatial production that are politically and socially uncontested in growth economies.¹⁹

According to Lefebvre the history of a space is founded in its nature, its position and its environment; of which its unique constituent characteristics leave their formative mark on the space.

“In the history of a space as such, on the other hand, the historical and diachronic realms and the generative past are forever leaving their inscriptions upon the writing tablet, so to speak, of space. The uncertain traces left by events are not the only marks on (or in) space: society in its actuality also deposits its script, the result and product of social activities.”²⁰

Following Lefebvre’s analysis a common constituent characteristic of social spaces is the presence of people simultaneously participating in encountering the space and other people, and assembling. Lefebvre recognises the historical role of the body as a gauge of reference to a space. This social relationship of our bodies in a space and of bodies collectively interacting in and with the space presents an image of the space that is a reflection of ourselves and our bodies and while metric measurements have displaced the body it remains the means of sensory engagement allowing for visualisation of ourselves in and in relation to the space.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid. 78-92

²⁰ Ibid. 110

²¹ Ibid. 101-110

- **The triad of social space moments and the role of monumental spaces**

Lefebvre's three identified moments of social space: the perceived, the conceived and the lived keep the body in mind as social practice and activity practically imply the use of the body in relationship with a space, and vice versa, over time:

“The perceived-conceived-lived triad (in spatial terms: spatial practice, representations of space, representational spaces) loses all force if it is treated as an abstract ‘model’.”²²

Perceived space is the space of social practice involving a close association of a person's daily reality, or routine, with their urban reality, or the routed and networked linkages that connect designated spheres of activity and function. Conceived space is the space represented and conceptualised by the social and built environment specialist; the space conceived by architects, planners and social engineers. Lived spaces are representational spaces as they are lived through their images and symbols by their inhabitants or users; a symbolic space, passively experienced, where the imagination seeks to change and appropriate the meaning of objects. With the body in mind: perceived space is the outside world, conceived space is a result of accumulated knowledge ideologically influenced of the body's relations with its environment, and lived space is the space of cultural influence.²³

²² Ibid. 40

²³ Ibid. 38-40

The complexity and diversity of Lefebvre's understanding of social space and his noting of the importance of context and history resonates in his three moments: "spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period."²⁴

Monumental space has in the past acted as a collective mirror to society, offering each member of society an image of their membership. In the textured network of the city, monuments act as and constitute the nexus points of the system, and as a result of their prominent position in the city's many networks these spaces will hold a variety or range of meanings, which shift according to need or action. Thus monumental spaces provide for sway from private conversation to public discourse, and other forms of expression.²⁵

Lefebvre's notion of monumental space allows us to see ourselves as part of, or in, the monument that is accessible or useful. Monumental spaces then become part of our daily lives whether through being present in the space or through conversation and public discourse. Monuments condense social space and the spaces of social practice, and of social relations of production, work and non-work.²⁶

In her search for a framework of analysis for urban collective memory in the context of the social, cultural and economic transformation of the city Bélanger (2002) notes that the markers of memory, invested with the symbolic and material life of the city, are inducted

²⁴ Ibid. 46

²⁵ Ibid. 220-224

²⁶ Ibid. 225

into literary and visual cultures and encoded into cultural practices thus facilitating the constitution of collective memory. The transformation of cities entails a process of re-imagining and re-imagining the city in which the importance of how diverse social groups remember the history of the city is crucial in the historical process and therefore in the making of identities in various social spaces. Bélanger notes that a single version of memory can become the official or officially sanctioned history of a space as its elements are fused into an imaginary unity that creates the impression of a truthful uncontested story, and that such a process is implicated in the selling of a venue where certain histories and memories are privileged over others in an attempt to make these memories hegemonic by celebrating them as common sense; albeit inevitably invented, selective and partial.²⁷

According to Jacobs (1996) the occupation of the past in a place and its influence on the present is significantly illustrated when the memory of a place is officially sanctioned and it is attributed heritage status.

“It is not simply that heritage places symbolise certain values and beliefs, but that the very transformation of these places into heritage is a process whereby identity is defined, debated and contested and where social orders are challenged or reproduced”²⁸

The making of heritage is a dynamic political process where multiple histories compete for sanctification and recognition in the present.²⁹

²⁷ Bélanger, Anouk. 2002. Urban space and collective memory: analysing the various dimensions of the production of memory. in *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, Volume 11, Issue 1. 69-92

²⁸ Jacobs, Jane M. 1996. *Edge of empire: postcolonialism and the city*. London: Routledge. 35

²⁹ Ibid. 34-36

The workings of memory are evident in Lefebvre's conception of the representations of space, where memory is located at the intersection of spatial practice and representational spaces which involve perception and imaginative interpretation, offering insight to the role of distinctive or monumental urban buildings in the production of space.³⁰

- **The power of other spaces**

Foucault (1986) differentiates "heterotopias", or "other" spaces, from utopias, or imaginary spaces, and the physical and social spaces of everyday life suggesting that some of these heterotopias provide keen insight to our social world. Heterotopias may be variable in form and function, contradictory in nature, linked to history or the accumulation of time or fleeting and transitory, and are unlike public spaces for their conditional accessibility. According to Foucault, in their offering of a respite from the banality of the everyday and chance of insight to our social world heterotopias are politically charged and privileged spaces.³¹

Foucault, as considered by Lefebvre, is more interested in a metaphorical notion of space rather than lived space. Foucault (1986) is criticised for at times being a loose argument,

³⁰ Bélanger, Anouk. 2002. Urban space and collective memory: analysing the various dimensions of the production of memory. in *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, Volume 11, Issue 1. 81-82

³¹ Foucault, Michel. 1986. Of other spaces. *Diacritics*. Vol. 16, No.1, 22-27

nevertheless this is Foucault's most comprehensive discussion of physical space that its looseness may account for its popularity in the spatial disciplines.³²

In her critical analysis of Foucault's work McLeod (1996) notes that the mundane spaces of the everyday are conspicuously absent from Foucault's theorisation of "other" spaces. The chaotic in-between spaces are thus avoided. His seeming disdain for these mundane spaces and the needs of the less powerful and potentially marginalised, and his exclusion of minorities or non-Western culture are also absent from his conception of "other".³³ McLeod makes the point that difference has variable interpretations and variable social, historical and cultural points of reference, and that a sensory countering break may come not only from "otherness" outside the everyday but also from what may be contained within it.³⁴

Following his argument that material changes cannot be used to account for alteration in subjectivity³⁵, Foucault (1993) responds to the question whether architecture can solve social problems that architecture "does produce positive effects when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom."³⁶

³² McLeod, Mary. 1996. "Other" spaces and "others". in Agrest, Diana. Conway, Patricia and Weisman, Leslie Kane. Eds. *The sex of architecture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams. 15-16

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid. 21-22

³⁵ Foucault, Michel. 1993. Space, power and knowledge. in During, Simon. Ed. *The cultural studies reader*. London: Routledge.

³⁶ Ibid.

- **Public space, public life and public domain**

The definitions, conceptions and conditions of the spaces of public life, emanating from established spatial theorisations, are theoretically and practically contextual to the occasion of the MCQP at the CTICC, the evaluation of the MCQP as a public event and consequently the CTICC as a public space.

Carr et al (1992) refine and expand on many of the themes concerning public spaces as those of Altman and Zube (1989): the nature of public life, the qualities and usage of public spaces, and strategies of design and management. Unlike Altman and Zube (1989) Carr et al (1992) do not pay much specific attention to natural environments in urban contexts but rather support their work through case studies as opposed to presenting their work in the context of a case study.³⁷

Carr et al (1992) begin their comprehensive analysis of the needs, rights and dimensions of public space from the position that “public life in public spaces is desirable for people, good for societies.”³⁸ Public life is considered a source of opportunities for relaxation, entertainment, social contact, education, citizen action and social cohesion.³⁹

According to Carr et al (1992) people enter a public space to escape or seek refuge from the city, to interact with others either passively or actively, or to seek out specific activities in a public space. These motives account for peoples’ needs in public spaces

³⁷ Altman, Irwin and Zube, Ervin H. Eds. 1989. *Public places and spaces*. New York: Plenum Press.

³⁸ Carr, Stephen et al. Eds. 1992. *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 43

³⁹ Ibid. 43-49

broadly in terms of comfort, relaxation, passive and active engagement with the environment, and discovery. Comfort concerns shelter from the elements, the availability and quality of seating and other amenities, and also the social and psychological comfort experienced in terms of safety determined by visibility, layout and personnel. Relaxation is an extension of the sensation of comfort and usually generated by a space's contrast to the urban environment through natural features associated with open space. Passive engagement allows for observation of activity without direct participation and is facilitated not only by a heterogeneous group of users but also by the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural features and landscape. Active engagement involves more direct contact with people usually in the context of recreation but is also stimulated by design that encourages activity and shared experience. Discovery refers to new pleasurable experiences that are encouraged through exploration of the space.⁴⁰

In order to fulfil the needs associated with public space usage certain spatial rights, according to Carr et al (1992), are fundamental: access, freedom of action, claim, change and ownership, and disposition. The right to access concerns physical access in terms of ease and encouragement of entry, visual access which supports feelings of safety and invitation but also must be mindful of needs for privacy, and finally symbolic access where the presence of people or certain design elements may act as a barrier or be suggestive of who is welcome. Freedom of action is the ability for people to engage in activity without fear of interference, disturbance or threat to satisfy their user needs. Freedom of action is dependant on the recognition of a public space as a shared environment, and is dependant upon reasonable regulation and clear opportunities for use

⁴⁰ Ibid. 87-135

and design that is supportive of all user needs. Claim is the natural user assertion of control over space to fulfil user needs but may restrict the freedom of other users and consequently contextually sensitive regulation may be necessary. Change refers to the manipulation and modification of public space for current and future use. The concepts of ownership and disposition refer to who ultimately possesses a public space, the public or private ownership, which will influence the control of a space and the rights associated with it.⁴¹

Carr et al (1992) conclude by noting that the human dimension of public space is useful for the design, management and evaluation of public spaces as this dimension speaks to the social and cultural context of the relationship between people and places. In recognising the changing nature of context the needs, rights and meanings of spaces may be converted into working tools, dependant on both qualitative and quantitative research, that seek to strike a balance between servicing needs, protecting rights and encouraging meaningful activity.⁴²

Rivlin (1994) concurs with Carr et al (1992) and provides a useful interpretation of the link between public life and public spaces by noting some of its core qualities: reflecting the diversity of the society in which it operates to avoid the exclusion of any group; freedom of choice away from restrictive rules and management; negotiation with the rights and freedoms of others; recognition of amicable and peaceful means to addressing problems and conflicts that will occur. Rivlin presents a set of specific attractive qualities

⁴¹ Ibid. 137-177

⁴² Ibid. 243-331

of public spaces: convenience of access, use and entry largely based on location; situated at an intersection of place networks or an elevated quality of access or attraction; safety through friendly observation rather than restrictive surveillance; freedom of action as the space related parallel to freedom of choice. Rivlin concludes by noting that in the light of their scarcity, public spaces must meet the needs of their users and that these spaces can be a source of stimulation and relief from the rigours of urban living such that their contribution and position in urban life needs to be recognised by the public and authorities.⁴³

Brill (1989) asserts that many of the problems facing public life and public places stem from simplistic assumptions concerning public life and a selective misinformed nostalgic view of a European image of a diverse, picturesque and sanitised public life in decline. This is appealing however is certainly an illusion which while sustained prevents us from seeing the reality of our public life and using public resources intelligently. He identifies public life as mistakenly understood as a single entity, suggesting that it is rather constituted of three interconnected parts, namely the “Citizen of Affairs” where public life is based on a notion of civility among citizens which allows for impersonal functioning of people; “Citizens of Commerce and Pleasure” which involves consumption as spectacle where social relationships are made and reaffirmed; and the “Familiar Citizen” which is less about public life and more about small scale neighbourhood life which has declined as economic principles of organisation have

⁴³ Rivlin, Leanne. 1994. Public spaces and public life in urban areas. in Neary, S et al. Eds. *The urban experience: a people-environment perspective*. London: Chapman & Hall.

replaced social ones.⁴⁴ According to Brill “many of the public spaces we’ve built were conceived of and designed for that illusion of public life, for a diverse, democratic, and classless public, and thus these places don’t always fit the public life that we actually do have in our more segmented, pluralistic, and stratified society... There may be a crisis, but it is not about the loss of public life, but about the problems of not paying enough critical attention to its long-term transformation.”⁴⁵ In calling for a review of public life that acknowledges the new spaces it occupies Brill notes that despite its assumed decline it still exists but now in a wider variety of instances and forms which may be temporary or not even place specific; that our memory of public life and our fond nostalgic recollections are selective; and that society has changed such that what is remembered to be public life was and is something else entirely.

Gehl (2001) provides revised insight into the use of public spaces from principally an outdoor design perspective where he identifies three kinds of simplified activities in public spaces each placing different demands on the built environment: necessary, optional and social activities.

Necessary activities are the compulsory and unavoidable actions of everyday life, the majority of which are associated with walking and are least dependant on the built environment. Optional activities take place only under favourable conditions, are typically recreational and most influenced by the built environment occurring only when conditions and place are inviting. Social activities are dependant on the presence of

⁴⁴ Brill, Michael. 1989. Transformation, nostalgia and illusion in public life and public space. in Altman, I. and Zube, E. Eds. 1989. *Public places and spaces*. New York: Plenum Press. 7-29

⁴⁵ Ibid. 14

necessary and optional activities, involve either an active or passive interaction and will almost always evolve out of the other two categories. Social activities will vary according to context or the level of common interest shared by the participants from superficial to more meaningful interaction.⁴⁶ While the characteristics of a “good” public space are easy enough to identify; meaningful interaction, contact and activity of people cannot be guaranteed however planners and architects can affect the possibility for people to see, hear and meet each other. The presence and awareness of other people in the same place is crucial, further there is a need for stimulation in the monotony of lifeless city spaces where segregation and separation of functions and dependence on the motor vehicle has occurred. The experience of other people offers an assortment of sensual variation as opposed to the limited stimulation afforded by the experience of inanimate objects and aesthetic variances of the built environment; people and human activity then in turn attracts more people.⁴⁷

Gehl (2001) proposes that the design process pay attention to the social structure, or public, outside of the space. Subdivisions and groups need to be recognised as people act and make decisions both as individuals and as members of a group they identify with according to gender, age, nationality, economic status, sexual orientation; therefore they will need points of reference in the design. Physical structure should then reflect and support this social structure or the desired social structure. This support may be expressed visually by placing communal and individual spaces in relation to each other, and functionally by placing these spaces at various points or levels in the structure to create a

⁴⁶ Gehl, Jan. 2001. *Life between buildings: using public space*. Copenhagen: Arkitektens Forlag. 11-16

⁴⁷ Ibid. 21-25

hierarchy of spaces. Communal spaces provide for the unplanned or spontaneous social activity and diffuse structures need take care to avoid “dead” spaces that misconnect social processes and group size. Degrees of privacy, as with the hierarchy of spaces, must be recognised and provided for. The social structure corresponding with the supportive physical structure of varying degrees of privacy and communal spaces allows for the movement of individuals and groups from private to public offering a sense of security and belonging in the transition. The transition zones between categories and levels of space and privacy must be clearly defined, accessible, visually accessible and easy to use; and require a boundary or preferably a sensory change of surface, texture, sound, light or level. A familiarity of the functioning of the human senses and body’s effect on emotion and decision making is essential to the design process.⁴⁸

Davis’ (1990) critical urban study of Los Angeles is an indictment of efforts to create a more secure city at the expense of accessible public space and its beneficial social qualities by noting the policy acquiesced and sanctioned decline in public amenities, increased middle class demand for spatial and social insulation and privatisation of public space. In their place, Davis demonstrates not only the preference and existence of obvious social management features such as privatised policing, video surveillance, restricted entry points and parking restrictions but also more subtle designs and actions of similar intent. Davis’ vision of “Fortress LA” is one of an increasingly militarised and privatised city pandering to middle class anxiety and corporate demands.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid. 55-65

⁴⁹ Davis, Mike. 1990. *City of Quartz: excavating the future in Los Angeles*. New York: Vintage.

The idea of an urban future without public space is expanded in the Sorkin (1992) edited volume “Variations on a theme park”, as well as in Zukin⁵⁰ (1991), where Sorkin illustrates this extreme scenario by tracing a Disneyfied urban vision or “hyperreality” based on “fantasies of transport and cleanliness” extending to a dislocated copyrighted urban environment where only the sky above remains a public space.⁵¹ The thematic qualities of Disney: “its channel-turning mingle of history and fantasy, reality and simulation, invents a way of encountering the physical world that increasingly characterizes daily life. The highly regulated, completely synthetic vision provides a simplified, sanitized experience that stands in for the more undisciplined complexities of the city”⁵² but according to Sorkin this is far closer to reality than could be imagined as “it’s based on a particular urbanism, a crisp acceleration of trends everywhere visible but nowhere so acutely elaborated. The problems addressed by Disneyzone are quintessentially modern: crime, transportation, waste, the relationship of work and leisure, the transience of populations, the growing hegemony of the simulacrum.”⁵³ The concluding warning is that such a thematic environment, despite its recognisable urban influences and features, does not create a residential city with civic function but rather a commercial utopia of consumers.

Lees (1997) introduces the concepts of “ageographia”, an end to true public space, and heterotopia, the functioning of Foucauldian “other spaces” in similar public ways. Lees

⁵⁰ Zukin, Sharon. 1991. *Landscapes of power: from Detroit to Disney World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵¹ Sorkin, Michael. 1992. See you in Disneyland. in Sorkin, Michael. Ed. *Variations on a theme park: the new American city and the end of public space*. New York: Hill and Wang. 205-210

⁵² Ibid. 208

⁵³ Ibid. 231

attempts to disrupt the dualist thinking of Davis (1990), Zukin (1991), Carr et al (1992) and Sorkin (1992) et al, of public space decline and privatisation by demonstrating that both models can exist simultaneously in one place. Her critique of this dualist thinking cites a lack of clear definition of the public space being lost and suggests that its destruction is rather a besieged state which will lead to a transformation. The public is not as disempowered or voiceless as it may seem due to a lack of comprehension of their resources or agendas and the spaces considered are public but not civic. She is sceptical that the North American model can be assumed to be easily transferable to other social, cultural and economic contexts.⁵⁴

Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) offer the “public domain”, where “exchange between different social groups is possible and also actually occurs” or spaces that “are positively valued as places of shared experience by people from different backgrounds or with dissimilar interests”⁵⁵, as a guiding perspective to distinguish between public spaces that function as such, and spaces that function as public spaces but may not be so according to traditional definition. A distinction that is determined according to how these spaces are valued and experienced, and so it follows that a city may have many public spaces but few public domains. The public domain is a search for the cultural significance of places on the premise that discussions of public space have concentrated too much on the traditional and are limited by established discourses in a climate of social and spatial change.

⁵⁴ Lees, Loretta. 1997. Ageographia, heterotopia, and Vancouver’s new public library in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. Vol. 15, No. 1-3, 1997

⁵⁵ Hajer, Maarten and Reijndorp, Arnold. 2001. *In search of new public domain*. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers. 11

Hajer and Reijndorp suggest that “we seem to think too much about public space in the sense of fixed and permanent physical spaces, and we give insufficient consideration to the way in which public domain comes into being in places in flux, often extremely temporarily.”⁵⁶ The preference for “exchange” over “meeting” in determining the significance of public spaces indicates their incorporation of traditional definitions whose usefulness is in need of adjustment and extension to contextualise and present new optimistic opportunities beyond the limitations of established discourses of design, management for fear and security, and distaste for “non-places”⁵⁷ of mass anonymity.⁵⁸

- **Regeneration, improvement and redevelopment**

With its opening in 2003, the CTICC was expected to play a major role in the regeneration of Cape Town’s city centre and to feature in various management strategies of improvement and redevelopment.⁵⁹

Zukin (1997) identifies various cultural strategies of urban spatial development along the lines of gentrification, cultural reputation establishment and through the design and management of public spaces for increasingly multicultural populations. All of which result from a recognition of the impact of visual symbols used variably as commodity, marketing tool or as a source of group identity. Zukin notes that cultural strategies

⁵⁶ Ibid. 16

⁵⁷ Augé, M. 1995. *Non-places. Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. London: Verso

⁵⁸ Hajer, Maarten and Reijndorp, Arnold. 2001. *In search of new public domain*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers. 6-16

⁵⁹ Smith, Ashley. Watershed year for Cape Town partnership. in *Cape Times*, 20 October 2002. 3

establish a material base for image making which has become a key component of the international competition between cities for major or prestige development projects.⁶⁰

Hannigan (1998) traces the development of city centre regeneration strategies from eclectic mix of small shops of the marketplace in the 1970s; through the cultural revitalisation of the 1980s which included arts, festival, entertainment, sports and convention activities to support retail; to the new technology driven entertainment economy of the 1990s and the accompanying leisure lifestyle thematic developments. In the process essential facets of regeneration are noted: residents need to be kept in the city centre after work, lightly populated areas such as waterfronts or industrial areas are best suited for development, innovative public private partnerships are necessary, and investment in flagship destination projects such as convention centres is needed.⁶¹

Graham and Marvin (2001) critically introduce city improvement districts⁶² (CIDs) as a stylised form of local government organised to manage highly valued sections of the city, collaborating with local property and business owners to take over or assist with certain traditional municipal functions e.g. marketing, street cleaning, policing, public works, sanitation, environmental and public space management; the CID becomes a city within a city governed by an unelected, but to a certain extent representative, body who ensure that revenue generated is re-circulated. CIDs may become more responsive to the needs

⁶⁰ Zukin, Sharon. 1997. Cultural strategies and urban identities: remaking public space in New York. in Källtorp, O. Elander, I. Ericsson, O and Franzen, M. Eds. 1997. *Cities in transformation - transformation in cities: social and symbolic change of urban space*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

⁶¹ Hannigan, John. 1998. *Fantasy city: pleasure and profit in the postmodern metropolis*. New York: Routledge.

⁶² The term "business improvement district" is often used interchangeably in related literature.

of the middle classes where residents grow accustomed to the possible exclusion of marginalised socioeconomic groups and subcultural groups as they are actively managed out of the area to make way for corporates, tourists, shoppers, suburban commuters and potential gentrifiers. CID's are seen to compete with peripheral shopping malls and centres for high income retailers, residents and consumers; the consequent accommodation of whose needs may threaten traditionally celebrated appealing features of the city centre: cosmopolitanism and diversity.⁶³

Norris and Armstrong (1999) highlight the use of close circuit television (CCTV) surveillance in the management of CID's, as quasi-public spaces under security company rule, to direct behaviour, profile and identify undesirable persons or activity.⁶⁴

Thomas and Bromley (2000) review obstacles of fear and security anxiety to city centre revitalisation that encourages a vibrant 24-hour city in response to spatial fragmentation of suburban commuting and declining city centre residential populations. The authors note that an improved after work economy requires a mixture of a wider selection of activities namely a firmer residential function, improved accessibility, and better management of risk-perception and associated re-imagining of city centres; all of which entail safety and security considerations.⁶⁵

⁶³ Graham, Stephen and Marvin, Simon. 2001. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. London: Routledge. 232-233 & 261-263

⁶⁴ Norris, Clive and Armstrong, Gary. 1999. *The maximum surveillance society: the rise of CCTV*. Oxford: Berg.

⁶⁵ Thomas, Colin J. and Bromley, Rosemary D. F. 2000. City-centre revitalisation: problems of fragmentation and fear in the evening and night-time city. in *Urban Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 8, 1403-1429, 2000

Lloyd et al (2003) discuss the problematic adaptation of CIDs in differing administrative and social contexts. In doing so their ability to bring about enhanced service provision and broader regeneration, and delivering limited objectives in relation to city centre renewal is noted.⁶⁶

Beazley et al (1997) discuss community resistance to city centre redevelopment with particular reference to “prestige projects”, high profile developments as catalysts for urban regeneration through investment appeal, job creation and wealth generation; noting such economic development works to create and maintain interests often to the disadvantage of marginalised city residents. The authors conclude that pro-growth interests may be prioritised over disadvantaged community needs, which may entail the manipulation of the democratic decision making process to which community groups are no match. In such instances concessions gained are marginal in relative value and community participation ineffective.⁶⁷

- **Festival and carnival**

The burgeoning interest in the carnivalesque within cultural studies and the concealment of the MCQP within the dominant discourses of the built environment is served a cautionary warning of the rigorous application of the Bakhtinian example in Humphrey

⁶⁶ Lloyd, MG. McCarthy, John. McGreal, Stanley & Berry, Jim. 2003. Business improvement districts, planning and urban regeneration. in *International Planning Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 295–321, November 2003

⁶⁷ Beazley, Mike. Loftman, Patrick and Nevin, Brendan. 1997. Downtown redevelopment and community resistance. in Jeweson, N. and MacGregor, S. 1997. *Transforming Cities: contested governance and new spatial divisions*. London: Routledge.

(2000).⁶⁸ Nonetheless the work of Stallybrass and White (1986) provide useful analysis of Bakhtin's carnival and its contemporary incorporation as a temporary form of public space or strategy for cultural strategy for redevelopment.

Stallybrass and White (1986) trace the historical repression and exclusion of the carnivalesque in Europe noting its transformation, commodification and incorporation by officialdom as means of its control and submission to a modernising and industrialising society; however carnival did not disappear, according to Bakhtin's grounding work covered in Stallybrass and White, with its elements visible in modernism. The carnivalesque was rather divided according to its combined practices and marginalised according to geographic location and social class and a reconstruction of the carnival as a culture of the Other: "Carnival had always been a loose amalgam of procession, feasting, competition, games and spectacle, combining diverse elements from a large repertoire and varying from place to place."⁶⁹

According to Stallybrass and White (1986), Bakhtin's carnival is both a populist utopian vision of the world as seen from below and a festive critique of 'high' culture, which includes various forms of ritual spectacle incorporating the body as a central unifying and connecting element. The "grotesque body" is important to the carnival as a site for the contestation through dress and action of dominant values, norms and standards which are expressed via the socially accepted body. Carnival is thus a potentially powerful social

⁶⁸ Humphrey, Chris. 2000. Bakhtin and the study of popular culture: re-thinking carnival as a historical and analytical concept. In Brandist, Craig and Tihanov. Eds. *Materializing Bakhtin: the Bakhtin circle and social theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

⁶⁹ Stallybrass, Peter and White, Allon. 1986. *The politics and poetics of transgression*. London: Methuen. 178

and political action and the carnivalesque a threat to middle class conservatism and established power groups for its subversive or counter hegemonic potential; its “symbolic inversion” and transgression of commonly held cultural or social norms, values or codes.⁷⁰

- **The body, space and queer studies**

The body is not only central to the spatial theorisation of Lefebvre (1991), but is also key to the formation and expression of identity and the establishment of community in space. This is relevant to the MCQP for its collective costumed expression and celebration of queer and its spatial politics.

Synnott’s (1993) study posits that the body is “the prime constituent of personal and social identity”⁷¹ and, with the senses, is variably socially constructed and reconstructed by different groups over time; consequently there is no agreement on the meaning of the body and that its constructions reflect ever changing cultural and individual values.⁷²

The work of Butler (1990) problematises gender, sexual orientation and identity as categories and lenses for enquiry. In particular the influential challenging of the naturalness of conventional notions of gender and sexuality by Butler (1990) highlighting the performative and interdependent aspects of concepts such as male and female, and

⁷⁰ Ibid. 1-26

⁷¹ Synnott, Anthony. 1993. *The body social: symbolism, self and society*. London: Routledge. 3

⁷² Ibid.

homosexual and heterosexual⁷³; however it is the spatial applications of this work that is most pertinent to this project. Geographers' understanding of socio-spatial concepts offer queer studies the chance to ground theories of sexual politics and identities in everyday landscapes which may respond to criticisms of queer studies for being too Western orientated, holding implicit assumptions of gays as white or too concerned with issues and instances of performance and style.⁷⁴ Conceptions of queer and expressions of queer are relevant to the MCQP, not only in name, but also for the event's affirmative and transgressive politics.

Bell and Valentine's (1995) edited work contains a variety of spatial interpretations of sexuality applicable to the spatial study of the MCQP. According to Bell and Valentine the appeal and seduction of queer is its flaunted inclusiveness, it plays with the constructions of gendered sexuality by flirting with definitions and subverting traditional binaries such as masculine or feminine, embracing anyone who does not comfortably fit into existing and prescribed definitions of sexual identity or refuses to play according to the rules of "heteropatriarchy". In this queer is a principled and responsible positive statement on sex, in response to the perceived puritanism of the state.⁷⁵

Knopp (1995) makes the point that the concentration of marginalised movements or subcultures in cities has made them easier to demonise and control, with the opposite sanctification of majority cultures and spaces occurring too, however by moving these

⁷³ Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

⁷⁴ Puar, Jasbir Kaur. Rushbrook, Dereka and Schein, Louisa. 2003. Guest editorial. in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 2003, volume 21, 383-387

⁷⁵ Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. 1995. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge. 20-22

marginalised groups to the centre the control or demonisation is destabilised and questioned.⁷⁶ Davis (1995) identifies various acts of queer politics e.g. “coming out” as a performance and claim on identity. Parades, marches and demonstrations as strategies for social and cultural change that can create safe spaces, increase political power, change culture and institutions. In pointing out the importance of residential territory in establishing identities and mobilising support in queer politics, he notes that while legislative progress is both needed and symbolic genuine acceptance can only be achieved in the cultural sphere.⁷⁷

According to Valentine (1996) the street, as an example of public space, undergoes a spatial “heterosexing” through acts naturalised through repetition and regulation, such as heterosexual displays of affection or interaction and advertisements: “repetitive performance of hegemonic asymmetrical gender identities, like repetitive performances of heterosexualities, also produce a host of assumptions about what constitutes ‘proper’ behaviour/dress in everyday spaces which congeal over time to produce the appearance of ‘proper’ i.e. heterosexual space.”⁷⁸ Consequently the freedom of heterosexual action presumes a heterosexual space such that gay or queer space is then marginalised either physically or made temporary i.e. through festivals, parades or marches.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Knopp, Lawrence. 1995. Sexuality and urban space: a framework for analysis. in Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge. 149-161

⁷⁷ Davis, Tim. 1995. The diversity of queer politics and the redefinition of sexual identity and community in urban spaces. in Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge.

⁷⁸ Valentine, Gill. 1996. (Re)negotiating the “heterosexual street”: lesbian productions of space. in Duncan, Nancy. Ed. 1996. *Bodyspace: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. New York: Routledge. 147

⁷⁹ Ibid. 146-155

Duncan (1996) notes the depoliticisation and shrinking of public spaces in pointing out that spatial and political practices of marginalised groups undermines the coherence of the public private spatial binary. While noting that public spaces may seem “heterosexist” to gays and lesbians by virtue of the naturalised heterosexual actions which take place, Duncan acknowledges that this may be resisted however she questions the effectiveness of stylistically transgressing popularly held stereotypes and rather argues that significant social change requires organised action in the public sphere and access to resources such as the media.⁸⁰

Betsky (1997) connects the performative acts of desire with architecture and queer space making from fleeting momentary spaces to established institutions.⁸¹

Ingram et al (1997) explores the interaction of queer identity, experience and activism in both public and private spaces that notes the function of social space in shaping identity, the implication of communal spaces for marginalised groups and the importance of public spaces for social visibility.⁸²

Binnie and Valentine (1999) examine the growth of work on the geographies of sexuality and argue that while sexuality has become an area of considerable interest within social and cultural geography, much remains to be done to tackle homophobia within the

⁸⁰ Duncan, Nancy. 1996. Renegotiating gender and sexuality in public and private spaces. in Duncan, Nancy. Ed. 1996. *Bodyspace: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. New York: Routledge. 127-145

⁸¹ Betsky, Aaron. 1997. *Queer space: architecture and same-sex desire*. New York: William Morrow and Company.

⁸² Ingram, Gordon. Bouthillette, Anne-Marie and Retter, Yolanda. Eds. 1997. *Queers in space: communities / public places / sites of resistance*. Bay Press: Seattle.

discipline. They continue to critique the ease with which sexuality as an object of study has become assimilated into the discipline while homophobia remains and discuss how feminist geography has been both supportive and restrictive in this respect. In reviewing the development of work on geographies of sexuality, Binnie and Valentine argue for more than a simple mapping of lesbian and gay spaces towards a more critical treatment of the differences between sexual dissidents.⁸³

Day (1999) introduces gender to the critique of privatised public space noting that women's use of both public and private spaces is often constrained in alternate ways to those facing race and class groups, such that gender based stereotypes are unknowingly reinforced.⁸⁴

Brown (2000) employs the spatial metaphor of the closet in varying scales and locations to describe its effects on the denial, concealment and ignorance of gay men in society and its influence over power relationships.⁸⁵

Ivy (2001) incorporates an infrastructural focus in his analysis of the spatial distribution of gay tourism internationally, and recognises the importance of certain identified centres away from the main clusters of gay tourism. In this instance the existence of a "gay

⁸³ Binnie, Jon and Valentine, Gill. 1999. Geographies of sexuality – a review of progress. in *Progress in Human Geography* 23, 2 (1999). 175-187

⁸⁴ Day, Kristen. 1999. Introducing gender to the critique of privatized public space. in *Journal of Urban Design*, Vol. 4 No. 2, 1999. 155-178

⁸⁵ Brown, Michael P. 2000. *Closet space: geographies of metaphor from the body to the globe*. London: Routledge.

landscape”, or the favourable conditions for the spatial and infrastructural expression of a gay community, is situated as supportive of gay tourism industry development.⁸⁶

In her study of the role of dance and club culture in “queer world-making” Buckland (2002) recognises the centrality of the body in establishing a social or community life by noting: “Many queers are worldless, cut off in many instances from family, church, and other institutions of community building. They have to fashion their worlds from their own bodies out.”⁸⁷ In noting the importance of a deliberate shared activity, dance, in claiming a space as queer she continues: “it was not enough to be in the same place at the same time. Participants needed to demonstrate that they shared a sense of its importance, codes, conventions, and values.”⁸⁸

Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) provide an comprehensive anthropological discussion of the role of the body in space employing the comprehensive term “embodied space” as a model for making place via spatial orientation, movement and language; where incongruent notions of the body as physical entity, lived experience, source of agency, location for action and language are drawn together. Emotion, social relations and cultural tendencies influence the space occupied by the body and the experience and perception of the space, the body is thus individual, social and political; the relations from which produce body spaces and their representations. Included in their discussion, and of relevance to the MCQP, is the role of the body in constructing and using gendered

⁸⁶ Ivy, Russell L. 2001. Geographical variation in alternative tourism and recreation establishments. in *Tourism Geographies* August 2001, Vol. 3 Issue 3

⁸⁷ Buckland, Fiona. 2002. *Impossible dance: club culture and queer world-making*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. 38

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 53

spaces; the body space relationship with the broader environment; the role of narrative; contested space; hegemony and memory; use of space a strategy for social control.⁸⁹

Waitt (2003) explores issues of community, performativity, bodies, space, belonging, oppression, resistance and their relationship to culture within the context of Sydney's 2002 Gay Games. In doing so the oppressiveness of the spaces created through sport to many gay men is shown, against which the Gay Games is introduced as a site of varied resistance and counter to the stereotypes of heteronormativity in sports. Participation in the games is shown to depend on varied understanding of personal performance which the author argues illustrates essential issues about the connectedness of bodies and space through the discursive body as space and the material body in space.⁹⁰

- **Subcultures**

Sontag's (1966) essay Notes on "Camp" provides insight to the nature of camp and camp style that is relevant to the style of artistic execution of the MCQP. She likens camp to a cipher or a marker of identity for small urban cliques. Sontag considers camp to be a particular aesthetic mode that emphasises style over content and is essentially concerned with the artificial and the exaggerated. Accordingly camp is recognisable for its extravagance, however a distinction is made between deliberate and naïve camp. Camp further offers an alternative mode of purely aesthetic experience that does not consider

⁸⁹ Low, Setha M. and Lawrence-Zúñiga, Denise. Eds. 2003. *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1-3

⁹⁰ Waitt, Gordon. 2003. Gay games: performing 'community' out from the closet of the locker room. in *Social & Cultural Geography*, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 2003. 167-183

quality or meaning and is the opposite of serious. Sontag draws a connection between gay taste and camp but notes that this is not an exclusive link.⁹¹

The second edition of The Subcultures Reader, edited by Gelder (2005), provides a useful and broad introduction to the recognition and reading of the MCQP as a subcultural phenomenon in the city:

“Subcultures are groups of people that are in some way represented as non-normative and/or marginal through their particular interests and practices, through what they are, what they do and where they do it.”⁹²

Gelder continues to note that subcultures “are always seen in terms of their relationship to, and function within, the broader social system”.⁹³ According to Gelder subcultures express themselves in any number of ways e.g. dress, music, language, media which all work together to formulating a social identity for the subcultural participants. Subcultures can represent themselves with an awareness of their differences, which may be incorporated in any number of ways such as the MCQP’s purposeful celebration of sexual orientation difference. Subcultures may also be represented by others which in turn may lead to classification and regulation, such as the academic understudy of the MCQP.

⁹¹ Sontag, Susan. 1966. Notes on “Camp”. in Sontag, Susan. *Against interpretation: and other essays*. London. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 275-292

⁹² Gelder, Ken. 2005. Introduction: the field of subcultural studies. in *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge. 1

⁹³ Ibid. 1

Dick Hebdige's (2005) 1979 study of the British punk subculture and his observations on subcultural style as an intentional form of communication and the implications thereof sees subcultures as mobile and adaptable. The author notes that the emergence of a "spectacular subculture" is followed by frenzied media attention, and that style may extract both a positive, celebration, and a negative, ridicule, reaction. For Hebdige the incorporation of a subculture into the mainstream culture is possible through the conversion of the style into a mass produced commodity, which presents the difficulty of maintaining a distinction between commercial exploitation and creative originality. A subculture may also be incorporated ideologically through the labelling of the subcultural participants in an ideological way, which may lead to its exoticisation and ultimately to its denial or meaningless transformation.⁹⁴

Hebdige's (1979) notion of a hybridised subcultural style⁹⁵, formulated from a mix of different styles, that is relatively unstable is taken up by Becquer and Gatti (1997) who note its "ideological baggage" and the purity of a subcultural style's constituent elements implication of the product of hybridisation's lack of authenticity. While Hebdige suggests that hybridity is only a part of a subculture, this criticism and the lack of attention it has received accounts for Becquer and Gatti's preference for syncretism over hybridity. Accordingly they support a syncretic approach for its emphasising of the porous borders

⁹⁴ Hebdige, Dick. 2005. Subculture: the meaning of style. in Gelder, Ken. Ed. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge. 121-131

⁹⁵ Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture: the meaning of style*. London: Methuen.

between identities and its allowing of contradiction to thrive along with consistency within presumably fixed identities.⁹⁶

Iain Borden's (2005) Lefebvrian spatial subcultural study of skateboarding in the city views the subcultural use of space as "non-normative" and a "romantic" counter narrative to social and corporate domination of space. Subcultural territorialisation of space is considered to be at odds with the dominant discourse, as spaces are occupied through distinctive practice. For Borden, subcultures use the spaces of the city in creative and extraordinary ways that often fall outside of its daily use or commodification of spaces.⁹⁷

Jon Stratton's study on the origins of the surfing and biker subcultures in the United States after the second world war, in the first edition of the same volume edited by Gelder and Thornton (1997), notes the difference between "spectacular", more culturally based; and "commodity orientated" subcultures, more consumerist in nature. Stratton further notes that mass culture is usually more accepting of a "commodity orientated" subculture, on the basis of their shared capitalist consumerist similarities.⁹⁸

The study of subcultural phenomenon also finds contextual expression in South Africa in edited volumes such as Senses of culture: South African culture studies (2000) and South African Visual Culture (2005). Extracts from these and other sources are dealt with in the

⁹⁶ Becquer, Marcos and Gatti, Jose. 1997. Elements of vogue. in Gelder, Ken and Thornton, Sarah. Eds. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge.

⁹⁷ Borden, Iain. 2005. Performing the city. in Gelder, Ken. Ed. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge. 256-268

⁹⁸ Stratton, Jon. 1997. On the importance of subcultural origins. in Gelder, Ken and Thornton, Sarah. Eds. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge. 183-188.

following section, focussing on local interpretations and examples, but are not thematically separated as subcultural literature.

- **Local literature**

This research project and therein this literature review seeks in part to contextually explain the MCQP with reference to South African interpretations and examples of international issues, themes and phenomena. Recent and contemporary study of the postapartheid city is characterised by two moments of critical engagement for the urban and spatial disciplines.

The book, following the exhibition, blank Architecture, apartheid and after (1998) is considered an influential moment in South African architectural and built environment studies. Both sought to situate South African architectural practice in colonial and apartheid contexts, raise disciplinary interests in issues of culture and identity, and awareness of the social and political contexts of disciplinary practise and use. The interdisciplinary approach chosen to describe the complexities of the South African built environment includes work from photographers, artists, writers as well as architects. Local ignorance and poor reception of the interdisciplinary work, despite its international acclaim, indicates a reluctance of the spatial disciplines at the time to critically engage with their social, cultural and political contexts.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Murray, Noëleen, Shepherd, Nick and Hall, Martin. *Desire lines: space, memory and identity in the postapartheid city*. Routledge forthcoming.

More recently South African urban studies has been challenged by the special edition of the journal *Public Culture*, themed “Johannesburg: the elusive metropolis”, where editors Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall identify the problematic and incomplete representation of and engagement with the African city such that it loses its sense of operating as a “site of fantasy, desire and imagination”.¹⁰⁰ The editors make the following recommendations: to focus on the innately conflicting and incomplete nature of cities and their inclination to elude and destabilize dominant ideas; to be attentive of the overlapping nature of city and township, and less so of its marginality; to look for and uncover existing hidden narratives and histories of the city. The question of the African metropolis subsequently became the topic of debate in following issues of the same journal.¹⁰¹

- **Contextualising theories of social space**

The social theorisations of Lefebvre (1991) and Foucault (1986 & 1993) are not only applicable to an analytical discussion of the socio-spatial aspects of the MCQP, but are also contextually relevant to the event through their localised interpretations.

Robinson (1992) presents a historical overview of and engagement with the practices and discourses that have shaped urban areas in South Africa, incorporating a Foucauldian reading of the apartheid city that prioritises power, knowledge and spatial arrangement.

¹⁰⁰ Mbembe, Achille and Nuttall, Sarah. 2004. Writing the world from an African metropolis. in *Public Culture*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Fall 2004. 355-356

¹⁰¹ Murray, Noëleen, Shepherd, Nick and Hall, Martin. *Desire lines: space, memory and identity in the postapartheid city*. Routledge forthcoming.

According to Robinson, for Foucault, power and knowledge linkages underpin modern society and consequently social change through revolution or transformation will not necessarily bring about freedom or liberation as new forms of power will inevitably emerge. Subtle differences of power are, and will remain, embodied and influential in post apartheid cities as will many characteristically urban problems remain after the end of apartheid. Similarly technical and professional practice and discourse will continue to influence urban form, albeit it from a varying position in the social and political context. Robinson introduces the concepts of differentiated citizenship, segregation from and variable incorporation into the city according to race and the persistent “location strategy”, the use of the township as a mechanism for territorial racial domination, as necessary to understanding the role of power and space in the apartheid city.¹⁰²

In discussing spatiality and social power Robinson develops her apartheid city interpretation of Foucault’s theorisation of power and space stating that: “Foucault explains spatial distributions and the division and arrangement of space in much more than a purely metaphorical sense. Spatial strategies are seen to operate as key mechanisms for the exercise of power in modern society” and goes on to add to a Lefebvrian interpretation of the production of space noting that “The production of space and place is not always associated with strategies of power, of course, although general processes such as the circulation of capital or investment in productive, reproductive and speculative aspects of the built environment produce spaces and places which mediate

¹⁰² Robinson, Jennifer. 1992. Power, space and the city: historical reflections on apartheid and post-apartheid urban orders. in Smith, David M. Ed. *The apartheid city and beyond: urbanization and social change in South Africa*. London: Routledge

and facilitate power relations”¹⁰³. For Robinson the linkage of space and power is well illustrated by strategies that involve territoriality in space e.g. the segregatory use of the township and its contributory link to state power under apartheid (Robinson’s “location strategy”). This is complemented by varied sources of social power in a discussion of the state and spatiality as an instance of the wider ingraining of power relations in space.¹⁰⁴

Robinson (1998) in questioning our ability to look beyond the spaces of apartheid towards a new society identifies the role of imagination, in rejecting normalised negative conceptions of the apartheid city, in changing perceptions and possibilities and suggests that Lefebvre’s (1991) conception of “abstract space” is particularly relevant to South African cities for its domination of the modern city form and because abstract space “is exemplified by the homogenization and division involved in the capitalist commodification of land and the construction of alienating environments in which the possibilities for alternative spatialities are repressed.”¹⁰⁵

According to Robinson, Lefebvre is nevertheless optimistic about the possibility for change, citing the contradictory nature of abstract space and the inconsistencies of apartheid cities’ organisation of power and resources concentrated in the centre creating an explosive relationship with the periphery by virtue of its domination. Another potential, although ambivalent according to Lefebvre, source of change is the spatiality of representational space drawing on cultural and historical resources. In the search for new

¹⁰³ Robinson, Jennifer. 1996. *The power of apartheid: state, power and space in South African cities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. 19

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 18-29

¹⁰⁵ Robinson, Jennifer. 1998. (Im)mobilizing space – dreaming of change. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. *Blank_ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI. 165

spatialities the body, the unconscious and imagination become central for Lefebvre as these are the means through which new spaces are encountered in everyday life and in the production of the meaning of space and its possible transformation away from the rational realm of spatial professionals. Lefebvre's alternative to the abstract space of the apartheid city is, according to Robinson, a heterogeneous "differential space" of difference and diversity.¹⁰⁶

Robinson further recognises the high expectation of change in South Africa and the appeal of Lefebvre's notions but is concerned with the possibility of negative change citing current privatisation, security obsessed, middle class anxiety driven trends. In addition the difficult reality of producing new integrated, compact and sustainable spaces is identified; to which an improvement of network flow, improved spatial relations and interconnections of people in existing segregated spaces is suggested as a more realistic intervention.¹⁰⁷

The possibility for an imaginative response to the spatial dilemma of the postapartheid city is similarly suggested by Bremner's (1998) discussion of a crime influenced postapartheid landscape. Bremner notes that "A new city is emerging, in which certain of apartheid's social and spatial divisions are being deepened, at the same time as other, largely illicit ways of controlling, managing and using urban space challenge its rules."¹⁰⁸ By way of a criminal example, Bremner suggests the existence of and a need for a

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 165-169

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Bremner, Lindsay. 1998. Crime and the emerging landscape of post-apartheid Johannesburg. in Hilton Judin and Ivan Vladislavic. Eds. 1998. *Blank_: architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI. 49-63

creative engagement and use of city spaces that seeks to overcome the omissions of apartheid planning and perhaps more significantly the shortcomings of immediate postapartheid responses.

Bunn (1998) problematises monumental architecture in a colonial context citing that South African monuments “find it almost impossible to be the bearers of collective meaning; instead, they are inhabited by contradiction, because of their reluctance to imagine the idea of citizenship outside the boundaries of race.”¹⁰⁹ South African monuments are noted for their problematic relationship with colonial site and contested local memory; overcome by tendencies to broadcast their meaning over the heads of surrounding African communities.¹¹⁰

Robins’ (2002) discussion of spatial forms of governmentality in post-apartheid Cape Town indicates the city’s movement towards the “fortress city” of Davis (1990), characterised by privatised suburban middle class security, shopping centres and gated communities juxtaposed by wealth, race and class against urban ghettos of increasing poverty and daily violence. Robins asserts that socio-spatial inequalities will continue to be reproduced despite desegregating planning initiatives and notes that despite the media’s highlighting of crime and violence, the structures of inequality fuelling criminal growth that reproduces crises of governance and inequality are ignored.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Bunn, David. 1998. White sepulchres: on the reluctance of monuments. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. *Blank_ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI. 94

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 100

¹¹¹ Robins, Steven. 2002. At the limits of spatial governmentality: a message from the tip of Africa. in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 23, No 4. 665-689

The proximity and relevance of themed urban development to the South African and Cape Town context are demonstrated by the works of Hall (1995) and the incorporation of a Eurocentric fantasy of Africa in the tourism development of the Lost City¹¹²; Worden's (1997) account of the selective nostalgic nautical history employed in Cape Town's Victoria and Alfred Waterfront¹¹³; Marks and Bezzoli's (2001) postmodern free market driven Century City¹¹⁴; Bremner's (2004) study of thematically driven large scale privatised development in Johannesburg¹¹⁵; and van Eeden's (2005) examination of the emergence of shopping malls' iconic status in South African visual culture.¹¹⁶ The romanticised theming of bygone Cape Town history at the GrandWest Casino, operated by CTICC financiers SunWest¹¹⁷, can also not be ignored in this instance.

- **Postcolonialism and the city**

Cape Town, the home to the MCQP, is both a postcolonial space and a post-apartheid city and is consequently subject to and affected by these histories. A spatial study of the MCQP requires reference to and recognition of these discourses. Areas of postcolonial theorisation to be considered in an analysis of the MCQP are that of universalism, representation and resistance, the body and performance, and place.

¹¹² Hall, Martin. 1995. The legend of the Lost City; or, the man with golden balls. in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21: 179-199

¹¹³ Worden, Nigel. 1997. Contesting heritage in a South African city: Cape Town. In Brian J. Shaw and Roy Jones, Eds. *Contested urban heritage: voices from the periphery*. Ashgate: Aldershot.

¹¹⁴ Marks, Rafael and Bezzoli, Marco. 2001. Palaces of desire: Century City, Cape Town and the ambiguities of development. in *Urban Forum* January – March 2001, Vol. 12, Issue 1

¹¹⁵ Bremner, Lindsay. 2004. *Johannesburg: one city colliding worlds*. Johannesburg: STE Publishers. 118-137

¹¹⁶ Van Eeden, Jeanne. 2005. "All the mall's a stage": the shopping mall as visual culture. in Van Eeden, Jeanne and Du Preez, Amanda. Eds. *South African visual culture*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 39-68

¹¹⁷ Loxton, Lynda. 1999. SunWest to fast track R1,5bn Cape Casino. in *Cape Times Business Report* 1999-12-06. www.iol.co.za accessed 4 April 2006.

Of the select key aspects of postcolonial theory that provide useful direction for a spatial discussion of the MCQP in Cape Town, the notion of universalism is most evidently applicable to the MCQP case. The MCQP's incorporation of the term "queer" as a recognition of differing social experiences of space in Cape Town and its questioning of the dominant heterosexual norms of representation can be better understood in terms of the concept of universalism, and the ensuing marginalisation of a society's distinctive and differing characteristics, and the resulting postcolonial discourse that provides a way for considering the dialogue of similarity of experience and difference in response to this experience.¹¹⁸

Representation and resistance are areas of postcolonial discussion that are influential for their examination and subversion of the dominant set of social relations, and the conditions of their continued dominance, by recognising the projected fear and inadequacy of mainstream constructions of difference. By including spatiality in this conception, the built environment of the post-apartheid city as more than just the context of the postcolonial, the spaces that are seen to embody dominant social discourses become influential and central to the act of resisting dominant forms of representation and marginalisation of differing experience.¹¹⁹ Spivak's (1997) subaltern may not truly speak here, but those in the dark of colonial production are brought closer to the light.¹²⁰

The MCQP further confronts didactic notions of representation and resistance by

¹¹⁸ Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. 1997. *The post colonial studies reader*. London: Routledge. 55-56

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 85-86

¹²⁰ Spivak, Gayatri. 1997. Can the subaltern speak? in Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. *The postcolonial studies reader*. London: Routledge.

claiming celebration and artistic creativity as a medium for expression of a largely self defined inclusive and positive queer Other that begins to tip Said's (1997) hegemonic scale of representative domination.¹²¹

The othering of the postcolonial subject, by way of their "difference", is most obviously felt through the superficial differences of body and voice as indication or proof of their inferiority, so too are the "differences" of queer subjects commonly recognised or identified by these negating superficial standards of Fanon's (1997) inescapable body. The result is a forced heightened body consciousness of the subject, where one's body becomes both a "text" onto which the dominant order has inscribed its message as well as a site of resistance or struggle for control and expression of identity.¹²² While Fanon introduces the centrality of the body to the postcolonial discourse but elects to determinedly rise above this superficiality, the body at the MCQP is visibly celebrated either through exposure or adornment.¹²³

Place in the postcolonial context is a complex interaction of language, history and environment where both the investment of culture in the construction of place and a sense of colonial dislocation or displacement exist. In some respects within postcolonial discourse place can be language as the writer or inhabitants' position, the place's representation and possession are negotiated; accordingly postcolonial writings feature a

¹²¹ Said, Edward W. 1997. Orientalism. in Ashcroft, Bill. Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. *The postcolonial studies reader*. London: Routledge.

¹²² Ashcroft, Bill. Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. 1997. *The post colonial studies reader*. London: Routledge. 321-322

¹²³ Fanon, Frantz. 1997. The fact of blackness. in Ashcroft, Bill. Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. *The postcolonial studies reader*. London: Routledge.

concern for developing or recovering and appropriate identifying relationship between the Self and place. In considering the place making attributes of the MCQP the manner in which the event is discussed, its history and its socio-spatial context are relevant as its relationship with the people and city of Cape Town develops. As with postcolonialism the naming of a space, as part of transforming a space into a place, becomes a powerful act that allows for familiarity, accessibility and the continued reinvention of a place.¹²⁴

Kroetsch (1997), in considering the tension between appearance and authenticity, calls for a demythologisation or “uninvention” of existing systems and methods of describing and defining the postcolonial subject and postcolonial experience. Similarly a discussion and spatial analysis of the MCQP must recognise the potential limitations of a spatial discourse in working with queer conceptions. In seeking a valid claim for authenticity of postcolonial representation, Kroetsch calls for a new method or approach to accurately represent the postcolonial situation.¹²⁵

In Scott’s (1990) discussion of “public transcripts” as instances of conspired misrepresentation that are skewed by the ultimate prevalence of the dominant group versus “hidden transcripts” which take place beyond direct observation, public performance is considered as an elaborate act of subordination. The public performance of the “hidden transcript” that disrupts the etiquette of power relations is powerful and

¹²⁴ Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. 1997. *The post colonial studies reader*. London: Routledge. 391-393

¹²⁵ Kroetsch, Robert. 1997. Unhiding the hidden. in Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. Eds. *The postcolonial studies reader*. London: Routledge.

symbolic declaration of hostility but is not spontaneous in content, requiring a socially secure space to develop and may take the form of a personal version of the transcript.¹²⁶

Queer partygoers, with the aid of the exposed or adorned body through the MCQP, rival the state for the articulation of standards for social and moral acceptability as well as to determine the condition of their delivery. Even though art and creative performance stems from the struggle to break with confinement, it is what waThiong'o (1998) calls the "politics of performance space" that determines what is constituted as national, official or mainstream; and in so doing identifies the marginal and the minor. In this instance the openness or accessibility of the performance space can be used as a measure of the repressive interests of the state (demarcation, limitation, control).¹²⁷

- **The postapartheid city**

A selection of work from the 1990s to the 2000s offers social, spatial and historical accounts of apartheid and post-apartheid city urban life that is contextual to the MCQP.

Editors Swilling, Humphries and Shubane (1991) present the origins, nature and challenge of the problems facing South African cities in the urban transition of their function as part of the social system beginning in the 1970s and climaxing in the 1990s.

Thematically this includes a history of the urbanisation and development of the apartheid

¹²⁶ Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

¹²⁷ wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. 1998. Enactments of power: the politics of performance space. in *Penpoints, gunpoints and dreams: towards a critical theory of the arts and the state in Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 37-69

city, city and local apartheid government and administration mechanisms, the financing of the apartheid city and the financial challenges facing the local government, service provision, the role of local politics, and urban strategies. Urban transition in the apartheid city is conceptualised according to a series of interrelated systems: spatial based on macro level employment and micro level residential policies; urban services or infrastructural access and provision; housing distribution; land development, acquirement and ownership; and local government reorganisation.¹²⁸ Smith (1992) offers a similar overview thematically arranged to highlight key issues concerning urbanisation and associated social change of the South African apartheid city, working from the position that the accelerated urbanisation of South African cities in the latter stages of apartheid will allow divisions and differences of class and ethnicity, beyond that of race, to continue to negatively influence urban life. Highlighted issues and themes include the history of urbanisation and changes to the context of local government, housing and community, case studies of informal settlement, formal and informal service and resource provision, concluding with the challenges facing the future of the apartheid city.¹²⁹

Robinson (1996) demonstrates the connection between the state, power, economy and spatial practice of the apartheid city through references to case study work focussing on black housing policy and practice. The spatial dimension of the apartheid state's policy and the ensuing spatiality of its government are presented as essential and core to the persistence of apartheid stating that it was "much more than simply an expression of a

¹²⁸ Swilling, Mark. Humphries, Richard and Shubane, Khela. Eds. 1991. *Apartheid city in transition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹²⁹ Smith, David M. Ed. 1992. *The apartheid city and beyond: urbanization and social change in South Africa*. London: Routledge.

political order, the spaces of apartheid constituted and sustained that order.”¹³⁰

Differentiated citizenship in urban space, linked to a territorial management strategy influenced by modernist thought on urban form, was not only applied according to race but also gender as state control over housing, recreation and franchise extended to the family through preconceived notions of women as no more than keepers of the nuclear family prevented their incorporation into city life in what could be characterised as a paternal exercise of power by the state. The concept of spatiality linked to state power and an institutional understanding of the state with competing internal power relationships finds expression in urban form, practice and discourse. Modernist influence on planning discourse is expressed through concerns over efficiency, spatial form, development, function and a city’s economic contribution; the relevance of the social and political context is illustrated by continued modernist influence post apartheid working for compact, integrated, accessible cities and a maximal use of resources.¹³¹

Robinson concludes by making a case for the continued importance of urban issues post apartheid: “the urban crisis has been at the centre of the crisis of apartheid, and that its resolution will be essential to the success of the new government”¹³² and notes that the problems and challenges facing the apartheid city, and its government, will persist in the post-apartheid city.

¹³⁰ Robinson, Jennifer. 1996. *The power of apartheid: state, power and space in South African cities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. 2

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. 205

Maylam (1995) offers an explanation of the apartheid city by way of a 20 year review of South African urban historiography that seeks to synthesise the varying approaches of the discipline while noting the relevance and importance of the subject: “If one wishes to study almost any aspect of modern South African society one can hardly avoid the urban dimension.... The apartheid order came up against its most fundamental contradictions in urban areas.”¹³³

Morris (1998) presents a useful and straightforward, if bleak, overview of the future of the post-apartheid city by relying on historical factors and social indicators: “The possibility of the city post-apartheid becoming a post-apartheid city - that is, deracialized, less polarized, socially cohesive, safe, and with all segments of the population having access to adequate shelter and infrastructure - is not strong.”¹³⁴

The continued dominance of apartheid history in South African cities: unequal distribution of resources, poor infrastructure according to the apartheid racial hierarchy, limited upward social mobility; is accompanied by the potential for inner city decline and increased suburbanisation of the middle class coupled with the influence of unemployment, housing shortages and crime: “The post-apartheid city remains an inhospitable environment in which extreme, mainly white affluence coexists with desperate, mainly black poverty. Amelioration of the urban predicament, although

¹³³ Maylam, Paul. 1995. Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography. in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, March 1995. 19-38. 20

¹³⁴ Morris, Alan. 1998. Continuity or rupture: the city, post-apartheid. in *Social Research*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Winter 1998). 759-775. 770

progressing, is still limited, and all the indications are that it will remain so for some time.”¹³⁵

Chipkin (1998) provides keen observations of the modernist apartheid building boom of the 1960s and 1970’s, noting its grand overbearing scale, alienating nature and power expressed in its assembly, and its divisional and divisive use.¹³⁶ Posel’s (1998) complimentary work concerning the penetrative power of the apartheid state cites its interventionism, bureaucratic size and decreased capacity.¹³⁷

○ **Postapartheid Cape Town**

Robins (1998 and 2000) in engaging with the “new South African brand of multiculturalism” notes the homogenising effect of a modernist city planning tradition and the selective potential of multiculturalist discourses to hide the more ordinary and routine social realities of the urban landscape in Cape Town. In paying particular attention to tourism and advertising discourses Robins notes that it is the resultant racialised poverty of the apartheid era that “continues to plague Cape Town’s city planners’ visions of creating an integrated, multicultural post-apartheid tourist friendly city.”¹³⁸ According to Robins planning discourses have not been very affected by multiculturalist discourses and consequently continue to homogenise South Africa’s

¹³⁵ Ibid. 773

¹³⁶ Chipkin, Clive. 1998. The great apartheid building boom: the transformation of Johannesburg in the 1960s. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. 1998. *Blank_ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

¹³⁷ Posel, Deborah. 1998. Does size matter? The apartheid state’s powers of penetration. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. 1998. *Blank_ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

¹³⁸ Robins, Steven. 1998. Spicing up the multicultural (post-)apartheid city. in *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* No. 25, pre-millennium issue 1998/1999. 280

apartheid created differentiated population¹³⁹ however he also warns of the ahistorical exoticising potential of multicultural discourses operating in a similar way to apartheid¹⁴⁰ which questions how planners will “allow for the expression of difference, without succumbing to the temptation to exotise (sic) cultural difference in ways that obscure the more mundane spatial legacies of apartheid”.¹⁴¹ Robins also notes the rise in calls for an Africanisation in South African culture, illustrated spatially by an architectural search for an African and Cape vernacular, coupled with a rise in heritage practice.¹⁴²

Turok’s (2000) recognition of the polaric social and spatial divisions as a result of apartheid in South African cities, uses Cape Town to examine the impact of development trends on the city’s fragmented and segregated structure. Turok suggests that Cape Town is a typical post-apartheid city segregated, inefficient and inequitable in its structure and city form which is reinforced institutionally; while there is policy consensus for the need for urban integration, a focus of spatial planning, to reverse inefficiency and inequity there exists a variable level of commitment and a diversity and lack of consensus of approaches. In acknowledging some progress Turok argues that “the fundamental pattern is one of divergent development trends across the city, which implies continuity with the past rather than transformation”¹⁴³ and he continues to note that the legacy of apartheid is embedded in institutional practice.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 282

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 287

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 92

¹⁴² Robins, Steven. 2000. City sites. in Nuttall, Sarah and Michael, Cheryl-Ann. Eds. *Senses of culture: South African cultural studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴³ Turok, Ivan. 2000. *Persistent polarisation post-apartheid? Progress towards urban integration in Cape Town*. Discussion Paper No. 1. Urban Change and Policy Research Group, University of Glasgow.

Watson (2003) provides a summary of the “spatial problem” of Cape Town as an apartheid city and an analysis of the obstacles to, and reservations of, an effective planning response. The early 1990s agreed aspects of this “spatial problem” are listed as access or transport, the need for urban and social integration, environmental concerns, and urban quality concerns¹⁴⁴ to which the city responded with a large scale planning effort, the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework. The “MSDF was based on a simplified and homogenized understanding of the city, which allowed it to present the problem of Cape Town as the simple dual-city model...and it has been subject to a range of influences and forces, both within the bureaucracies and within the space economy of Cape Town, which have made any kind of effective intervention in the spatial form of Cape Town very difficult.”¹⁴⁵

Watson uses Cape Town’s experience of the difficulty in implementing an effective planning response to the “spatial problem” of the post-apartheid city to make a case for a conceptualisation of research which recognises and understands the contextual power relations in which the researcher and planning practitioner operate; and argues for urban research which “challenges notions of standardization and homogeneity, which shows just how complex the “real” world actually is and which shows the importance of recognizing diversity and difference.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Watson, Vanessa. 2003. Urban research, planning and action – their relationship in the context of metropolitan Cape Town. in Haferburg, C and Ossenbrügge, J. Eds. *Ambiguous restructurings of post apartheid Cape Town: The spatial form of socio-political change*. Hamburg: Lit. 55-56

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. 62

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 63

Mabin (1995) notes the problems facing new government and power structures in overcoming the segregated and fragmented nature of South African cities in the light of their modernist beginnings and influences facing the postmodern challenges of South African cities such as Cape Town.¹⁴⁷ Pieterse (2002) discusses the participatory governance and democratisation proposals for Cape Town and speculates on their feasibility in facilitating integration, city renewal and improved quality of life for the city's poor.¹⁴⁸ Simone (2004) controversially suggests that the fragmentation of South African cities presents opportunities beyond survival for some residents.¹⁴⁹ Pieterse (2005) proposes a holistic approach to urban integration in Cape Town that amongst other important elements highlights the need for improved social integration across class and cultural boundaries.¹⁵⁰

Nahnsen's (2003) discussion and analysis of the discourse of inner city decay in Cape Town and the responsive city management of the public private Cape Town Partnership and its constituent and supporting bodies contends that "the very aim of urban social and spatial integration will fail, if reconciliation in the sense of healing emotional divisions and transforming self/other relationships and in the sense of the transformation of conceptions of the (sic) Cape Town as a European and modernist city do not take

¹⁴⁷ Mabin, Alan. 1995. On the problems and prospects of overcoming segregation and fragmentation in Southern Africa's cities in the postmodern era. in Watson, Sophie and Gibson, Katherine. Eds. *Postmodern cities and spaces*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

¹⁴⁸ Pieterse, Edgar. 2002. From divided to integrated city? in *Urban Forum* January-March 2002, Vol. 13 Issue 1. 3-37.

¹⁴⁹ Simone, Abdoumalig. 2004. The right to the city. in *The Wisser Review*, No. 1, 2004. in *Mail & Guardian*, July 2-8, 2004. 11.

¹⁵⁰ Pieterse, Edgar. 2005. Long-distance non-racism does not work. in *Cape Times*, 16 March 2005. 11.

place.”¹⁵¹ The public discourse of inner city decay mainly concerns the marginalised communities of informal business and the homeless, to whom responsibility for the process is attributed for their appropriation of inner city space that redefines and reinterprets prevailing modernist conceptions of urban public space, is interpreted as an extension of an internalised psychological fear of otherness of White minorities seeking to maintain their position of colonial hegemony¹⁵² and as the related fear of White minority loss of political power and controlling hegemonic status¹⁵³. Nahnsen concludes that a new conception of public urban space, supported by city management practice that reinterprets the city as a representative socio-cultural construct, is necessary.

In her discussion of the influence of globalisation and tourism on the marginalised communities of spraycan artists and the homeless in Cape Town’s city centre Klopper (2003) refers to the established tendency for the dominant centre to effect cultural meeting of the value of cultural phenomena on the periphery; the increasing mobility and transference of the meaning of value attached to cultural phenomena; that such instances are not necessarily indicative of the centre’s power or the periphery’s loss of autonomy and diversity; and the stratifying, segregating and exclusionary consequences of globalisation¹⁵⁴. In making the point that the local globalisation influenced tourism industry has had a negative impact on marginalised people in Cape Town Klopper states

¹⁵¹ Nahnsen, Antje. 2003. Discourses and procedures of desire and fear in the re-making of Cape Town’s central city: The need for a spatial politics of reconciliation. in Haferburg, C and Ossenbrügge, J. Eds. *Ambiguous restructurings of post apartheid Cape Town: The spatial form of socio-political change*. Hamburg: Lit. 138.

¹⁵² Ibid. 141

¹⁵³ Ibid. 144

¹⁵⁴ Klopper, Sandra. 2003. Global tourism, marginalised communities and the development of Cape Town’s City Bowl area. in Chidester, David. Dexter, Phillip and James, Wilmot. Eds. *What holds us together: social cohesion in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. 224-227.

that “recent attempts to transform Cape Town into a ‘cleaner’ city capable of attracting large numbers of wealthy tourists has, effectively, led to the systematic removal of all overt – and covert – signs of difference and resistance... [and the] increasing tendency to marginalise, and even deny, the participation of diverse social groups in the construction of Cape Town’s cultural environment.”¹⁵⁵ This promotion of the city centre to the detriment of the lives of already marginalised communities, according to Klopper, raises questions of public space access and effective civic action and articulations of citizenship, such that new or unusual means are sought as a result of this disempowerment.¹⁵⁶

- **Festival and carnival in Cape Town**

The establishment, recognition and promotion of group identity and interests through festival and carnival activity is not a new phenomenon to Cape Town, nor is it limited to the MCQP.

Martin’s (1999 and 2000) work concerning the new year celebrations of the “Coon Carnival” held regularly in Cape Town from the 1920s is a useful and contemporary example of precedent for the MCQP. The carnival is “a discourse on one communal identity continuing to express pride in belonging to a group that survived all attempts as denying the humanity of its members, as well as anxieties regarding what the future has

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 227

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 229-235

in store for them.”¹⁵⁷ Rich in history, it was similarly ignored by scholars in relation to comparable events elsewhere, nevertheless a uniquely Cape tradition shaped by both global influences and local contexts it employs many carnivalesque, pageantry and masquerade aspects and is intimately linked to the development of South African society and local identity.¹⁵⁸

Rassool and Witz (1993) and Witz (2003) provide a historical account of the 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival, a city wide festival that included activities in the recently reclaimed foreshore area of Cape Town where the CTICC now sits, as a case of precedent for the MCQP. The “government-sponsored festival, conceived as being integral to the construction of a past and future South Africa based on a form of racial exclusivity, which simultaneously proclaimed itself to be nationally inclusive”¹⁵⁹ offered the newly independent ruling National Party an opportunity to extend its support base beyond the limited scope of its Afrikaner nationalism election policy. The festival as a conciliatory act to the descendants of British settlers, and others of European origin, set about to promote a new white settler nationalism in South Africa by promoting Jan Van Riebeeck as its symbolic founding father and Cape Town as its mother city.¹⁶⁰ The accomplishments of Jan Van Riebeeck received little attention in South Africa’s public history prior to the 1940’s, the 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival was staged to promote and strengthen the National Party’s position. The festival’s theme, “National

¹⁵⁷ Martin, Denis-Constant. 2000. Cape Town’s coon carnival. in Nuttall, Sarah and Michael, Cheryl-Ann. Eds. *Senses of culture: South African cultural studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵⁸ Martin, Denis-Constant. 1999. *Coon carnival: new year in Cape Town: past to present*. Cape Town: David Philip.

¹⁵⁹ Witz, Leslie. 2003. *Apartheid's festival: contesting South Africa's national pasts*. Cape Town: David Philip. 84.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Unity”, was intended to forge a bond between English and Afrikaans speaking white South Africans along the lines of racial as opposed to cultural unity; through the display of white settler domination and supremacy embodied in the form of Jan Van Riebeeck.¹⁶¹

More recently the Cape Town Festival has promoted a socially and culturally integrated vision of Cape Town across the city through its various incarnations since 1999¹⁶², while at the CTICC the Cape Town Jazz Festival, formerly the North Sea Jazz Festival, now in its third year at the convention centre, the occasional theatrical production or art show and some of the more social trade and industry shows or events have attracted visitors to the centre for reasons other than business.

- **Queer South Africa and Cape Town**

Two edited volumes of academic work and personal history present an insightful and engaging account of the South African, and Cape Town, queer experience before and after apartheid. Gevisser and Cameron (1994) edit and present a range of gay and lesbian experiences in South Africa under apartheid and how these have shaped the sexual politics that have contributed to the establishment of democracy in South Africa.¹⁶³ Van Zyl and Steyn (2005) explore and present the effects of democracy on the shaping and configuring of queer identity in South Africa between 1994 and 2004.¹⁶⁴ Despite their

¹⁶¹ Rassool, C & Witz, L. 1993. The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck tercentenary festival: constructing and contesting public national history in South Africa. *Journal of African History*. 34: 450-451

¹⁶² Cape Town Festival website. www.capetownfestival.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

¹⁶³ Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. 1994. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

¹⁶⁴ Van Zyl, Mikki and Steyn, Melissa. Eds. 2005. *Performing queer: shaping sexualities 1994 – 2004 – volume one*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

ambitious, and to a large extent accomplished, scope of study neither book makes any great mention of the MCQP. The MCQP is a postapartheid phenomenon and thus is predated by the first volume. The second volume however only contains two brief mentions of the MCQP, one a note of thanks for the use of a photograph on the cover, illustrative of the event's understudy.

Elder (1995) notes the complicity of the apartheid state in moralistic sexual repression as part of its campaign of social domination: "The control of sexuality was accordingly an important (although seldom noted) tool of the apartheid state".¹⁶⁵

Elder (1999) writing from his perspective as a gay, male, South African emigrant provides working spatial definitions of queerness as an inter-related complexity of national, intellectual and sexual identity and an insistence to study relationships between social boundaries such as race, class, gender and sexuality.¹⁶⁶ Queer theory thus seeks to transcend the boundaries of academic disciplines however debates concerning its nature betray its insistence on the fluidity of identity and consequently it is useful to consider there to be many queer theories. Queer theory seeks to exit essentialist debates on identity and rejects dualisms such as hetero- and homosexual, femininity and masculinity, male and female, black and white. Queer theory tries to rethink urban coalition politics, interdisciplinary intellectual work, and fluid visions of space and identity.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Elder, Glen. 1995. Of moffies, kaffirs and perverts: male homosexuality and the discourse of moral order in the apartheid state. in Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge. 56.

¹⁶⁶ Elder, Glen. 1999. 'Queering' boundaries in the geography classroom. in *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. Vol. 23, No. 1, 1999. 88.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 88

Croucher (2002) examines the surfacing of the gay and lesbian liberation movement in South Africa as both a result of, and contributor to, the country's democratic transition. Made all the more remarkable considering the weight of the political and social agenda post apartheid and the questioning of the autonomy and strength of the country's civil society at the time.¹⁶⁸

Visser (2002) in his study of the emergent gay tourism market in Cape Town, in the context of substantially increased tourism to South Africa, notes a strengthening and growth of an assertive gay and lesbian urban community actively involved in the generation and promotion of spaces through and in which they can express their identity. He continues to note the importance of Cape Town as a gay-friendly tourism destination by referring to its related increased exposure in the international and local gay and mainstream media ranking the city alongside internationally recognised gay cities. The economic opportunity and benefit of this status is then illustrated by recognising the value of the international gay tourism market, in particular the role of specific large scale events, and the tendency of American and European gay tourists to travel further and outspend their straight counterparts.¹⁶⁹

Visser (2003) notes the stratification of the gay community in Cape Town and the consequentially exclusive nature of gay spaces in the city as predominantly male, middle

¹⁶⁸ Croucher, Sheila. 2002. South Africa's democratisation and the politics of gay liberation. in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 28, Number 2, June 2002. 315-330.

¹⁶⁹ Visser, Gustav. 2002. Gay tourism in South Africa: issues from the Cape Town experience. *Urban Forum* 13, 1. 85-94.

class and white as a result of the race, class and gender bias of apartheid ideology. In addition the effect of the growing tourism industry, of which Cape Town's status as gay tourism capital of South Africa, on the urban form is also noted.¹⁷⁰

Oswin (2005) studies the marketing of Cape Town as an international gay and lesbian tourist destination in the context of the normalisation of queerness and globalisation of gay identity formation outside of Western debates. In Cape Town she notes a commodification of queerness, an unstable undercurrent to its mainstreaming and a local uncertainty in the represented image of that queerness; where the queer product of this tourism industry is surprisingly struggling to carve out a niche for itself perhaps as a result of the uncertainty of its identity.¹⁷¹

Smith (2005) explores the variety of contemporary ways in which lesbian and gay people are portrayed in the South African media, and further comments on these portrayals and their influence on social attitudes. She concludes that there is a clear need for the education of the mainstream media concerning their reporting.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Visser, Gustav. 2003. Gay men, tourism and urban space: reflections on Africa's 'gay capital'. in *Tourism Geographies*, 5 (2), 2003. 168–189.

¹⁷¹ Oswin, Natalie. 2005. Researching 'gay Cape Town', finding value-added queerness. in *Social and cultural geography*, vol. 6, no. 4, August 2005. 567-586.

¹⁷² Smith, Donna. 2005. From the other side: the representation of lesbian and gay people in popular visual media – a personal view. in Van Eeden, Jeanne and Du Preez, Amanda. Eds. *South African visual culture*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 188-201.

3. Research process: A queerly spatial investigation

This research project began in July of 2003 with the identification and selection of the MCQP as a topic for research towards the completion of a masters degree. Prior to this decision I had been exploring a research topic that would focus on the redevelopment of Cape Town's foreshore precinct but had struggled to identify a project of suitable interest or to formulate an appealing research question that would incorporate my spatial interests, urban geography and urban studies experience and a developing interest in public culture studies. I began to explore the possibility of researching the MCQP in the context of the city for the purposes of this project whilst surveying the range of festivals, public and cultural events of appealing spatial dimension in the city. Initially this entailed the recognition of those elements of the MCQP that could be usefully included in formulating a research problematic such as its history, its social and cultural elements, and its media coverage. The identification of relevant theory and a search for applicable cases of precedent shortly followed. In the course of these actions I formulated a research problematic and decided upon a suitable methodology.

- **Getting to know the MCQP**

Despite having been familiar with and aware of the MCQP for some time and having attended the event twice before, most recently in 2002, it soon became apparent how little I knew of the MCQP beyond being a popular party event and how interesting and involved its history in and with the city was. My research into the MCQP began with my

contacting Andre Vorster, MCQP co-founder and then still main organiser, who remained readily available for discussion and information throughout the research period and put the MCQP archived material of the past ten years at my disposal.

Since the latter part of 2003 I remained in regular contact with Vorster and benefited from access to a range of primary MCQP material from the first few groundbreaking years of the event. Vorster had over ten years haphazardly collected and saved various kinds of information and mementos from the MCQP events. Although not in any consistent format, each year of the party was afforded its own drawer or box into which was placed an assortment photographs, news articles, receipts, letters, flyers, posters, tickets and almost any object of fancy. In addition files of financial expenses, faxes and copies of communication for each year were also kept. Glen Thompson of Event Research International, with whom I would later assist in evaluating the 2003 MCQP, had just prior to my involvement worked with Vorster to format and prepare these items into an archivable collection of material in preparation for sending it to the Gay and Lesbian Archives at the University of the Witwatersrand. Consequently when I began to work through the now archived MCQP material in September and October of 2003 the information was accessible, interesting and inspiring however often not of direct importance to my study. Few of the items archived were of a spatial nature, floor plans and planning drawings of previous MCQPs had not been retained, exact figures for the number of partygoers did not exist, nor was there any information on the demographics of partygoer, and little information existed that was relevant to the venue of each archived year. The MCQP archive, despite its variety and interest, was not well

documented: records were incomplete, photographs were kept loose and without captions, items were kept for personal interest without explanation, and there was often a discontinuity of what was kept from year to year.

In part the problem of the MCQP archive is that the event is designed each year to be forgotten and reinvented with a new theme, décor, costumes and on occasion venue the following. In a similar way this inconsistency of recording memory made my archival work of the MCQP difficult, as what was largely Vorster's inventory of keepsakes and personally important items did not assist my own research beyond my own interest. My research soon became an act of constituting my own archive in the absence of relevant academic work and no single complete archive of MCQP material or information. That archives have traditionally been seen to preserve memory and hold onto the past is problematic in both the postcolonial and postapartheid context. Furthermore this is aggravated by the MCQP's timing with South Africa's democratic transition and the developing complexity of digital documentation. What has been selected, described and accessed in both the MCQP archive and my own collection of information has been singularly influenced by Vorster and myself respectively despite any awareness of the pitfalls to this process. So just as Vorster kept a limited selection of personal interest items in his yearly "memory boxes" for each MCQP, so I broadly added to my own academic archive of the MCQP unsure and unwilling to be too selective.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Hamilton, Carolyn. Harris, Verne. Taylor, Jane. Pickover, Michele. Reid, Graeme and Saleh, Razia. 2002. *Refiguring the archive*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Vorster, whose pivotal role in the production of the MCQP did not diminish in ten years proved to be an invaluable source of information regarding the history and original intentions of the MCQP. From our earliest informal discussions from September 2003 at the MCQP office in Bree Street in the city centre of Cape Town and the casual conversations while I worked through the archived material it became clear that much of Vorster's character and personality was entwined with the MCQP. Over the event's first ten years he became both the regular face of the MCQP and its only spokesperson. A role he was as of late both aware and weary of. His value as a source of information, in light of limited documented MCQP material, cannot be overstated, particularly concerning the spatial elements of the event which have benefited from his architectural background. For this reason I chose to delay my formal interview process until I had had a chance to work through the MCQP archived material, begun a formalised archival and bibliographic search so as to better inform my questions, gotten to know him and the other MCQP staff and allies better, gained their confidence and could schedule time for interview in a less busy time of the year for the MCQP that would allow for a consolidation of the 2003 MCQP process on which I planned to focus. In this I hoped to be more informed and prepared to conduct in-depth interviews, never the less notes taken in conversation and from our regular informal discussions have proved to be most valuable.

- **Participating in and observing the MCQP**

The prospect of becoming involved and participating in the MCQP, as a form of qualitative research, made the issue of impartiality both important and applicable. I was

forced to reflect on my own position as researcher in the context of my interest in the MCQP and favourable impression of Vorster. Geertz (1988) warns of the researcher's difficulty in remaining neutral, with regard to their field of study, and that a researcher may easily become uncritically involved or believing of their subject. Geertz suggests an idealistic balance of familiarity and critical distance in the course of qualitative research.¹⁷⁴ Planned, deliberate and active observational and research methods would provide a rich understanding of the social phenomena of the MCQP and underpin my application of spatial theory with postapartheid and postcolonial contextual reference. Qualitative field research in this instance would take the form of a case study, the 2003 MCQP, leading to an extension of the case method as I began research with certain preconceptions, framed in my research questions, of the space making attributes of the MCQP informed by the event's history. By applying a combination of established spatial theory and new spatial conceptions to the case study I hoped to offer new understanding of the MCQP and its role in the city and not, in the purist sense of the extended case method, to discover flaws or improve existing social theory.¹⁷⁵

The participant observation balance of familiarity and critical distance is further affected by Willis' (1997) notion of "surprise" in qualitative research. Because surprising findings are not calculated into a researcher's original hypothesis or research plan they have the power to sway opinion and narrow critical distance without warning.¹⁷⁶ By the time I began my field research of the 2003 MCQP, on Vorster's invitation, my limited

¹⁷⁴ Geertz, Clifford. 1988. *Works and lives: the anthropologist as author*. California: Stanford University Press

¹⁷⁵ Babbie, Earl. 2004. *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth. 242-311

¹⁷⁶ Willis, Paul. 1997. Theoretical confessions and reflexive method. in Gelder, Ken and Thornton, Sarah. Eds. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge.

awareness of the MCQP had comprehensively developed through my contact with Vorster and the MCQP archives. Participant observation, as a research method of the MCQP, was both problematic and useful. While the “environment” of the research was unfamiliar as Willis suggests, I still found the MCQP and Vorster’s enthusiasm and support for my research very appealing. There is no doubt for me however that had our relationship not been as congenial, Vorster would not have been as forthcoming and generous with his time, enthusiasm and knowledge. The challenge of the participant observation method, to observe and involve oneself in a critical way or to make that which is familiar strange became increasingly complex and difficult as my research progressed.¹⁷⁷

My initial experiences of participating in and observing the MCQP process were consolidated in the installation of an exhibit for the required Centre for African Studies class Collection, Representation and Display entitled “Mother’s Invitation” (see figures 1 and 2). Mother’s Invitation consisted of a four part display of personal objects sourced from people with whom I had discussed the MCQP and who had attended the event from which the object was displayed. The objects included were the pink feather duster three dimensional ticket from *Shopping Trolley* in 1997, luminous plastic stars used as accessories for *Heavenly Bodies* in 1999, a silver crown worn as part of a costume to *Toybox* in 2000, and the costume jewellery gold chains I wore to *The Wedding* in 2002. Each display stood for one of the then previous venues of the event and was branded accordingly with pink stencil logos that graphically represented the venue. Objects were

¹⁷⁷ Clifford, James. 1986. Introduction: partial truths. in Clifford, James and Marcos, George. Eds. *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

displayed in boxes, pedestals symbolically turned on their side, with the object in the foreground and pictures, sourced from the MCQP archive and website, from that year's event forming the background. In these boxes viewers were able to see elements of the event's pageantry, personality, display, history and spatial arrangement in a collage of images forming the background to a personal element of the event; while being invited by the accompanying text to look beyond the MCQP as just a party or queer event to discuss its place or role within the city. Mother's Invitation was an attempt to consolidate information gathered to date, find possible areas of critical reflection, trace it's interaction and role within the city and to begin a conversation over the MCQP with its supporters and role players. With the conclusion of Mother's Invitation the CTICC was announced as the CTICC and concluded months of speculation regarding the tenth MCQP's venue.

On Vorster's invitation I became regularly involved in and informed of the build up to the 2003 MCQP, from the initial décor meetings convened at the CTICC in early November 2003 to explain thematic and spatial décor goals to volunteers and potential exhibitors, through to the installation of the décor and spatial arrangements of the venue in the three days before the event on the night of 13 December. At décor meetings held on site at the CTICC and also at the MCQP offices I observed and discussed with the group of exhibitors, under the direction of Vorster and MCQP Décor Manager for 2003 Ralph Borland, their intended interpretative installations and décor plans of the *Kitsch Kitchen* theme. Of these the most impressive were a giant frying pan with fried egg and bacon cushions as a seating area, a toast and heating element installation, giant fridge poetry for projection and Styrofoam cup and hula hoop chandeliers.

In addition to Vorster and Borland from the MCQP, members of the CTICC staff were usually at hand to answer questions of a practical and functional nature concerning the venue. Due to prohibitive costs of venue hire and storage much of the décor was designed and where possible built off site, much of it at the hive-like MCQP offices, and then assembled at the CTICC during the three days of venue preparation. During this time I observed, assisted and involved myself with exhibitors, MCQP staff, CTICC staff and volunteers gathered at the CTICC for final preparations of the venue. Every year the MCQP relies on the work of young volunteers, traditionally students, who assist in the final preparation stages of the décor working in return for a free ticket to the party. During this frantic period décor was assembled and installed while sound and lighting were prepared, bar and catering facilities erected, and the party area demarcated.

On the eve of *Kitsch Kitchen* I acted as a Kitsch Inspector (see figures 3 and 4) for Event Research International (ERI) an event research company coincidentally conducting an economic, social and environmental evaluation of the MCQP. Glen Thompson of ERI had earlier used his training and experience as a historian to assist the MCQP with the archiving of their material. On the night I administered a brief survey from a PDA¹⁷⁸ designed by ERI to partygoers from 8pm till approximately 11pm as they waited in the entrance queue, the results of which supplemented the research conducted by them before and after the event made available in their evaluation report published in February 2004 and presented to the MCQP, event sponsors, representatives of the CTICC.

¹⁷⁸ A handheld personal digital assistant

Partygoers were voluntarily questioned about their income, place of origin, sexual orientation, amount they spent on their costume, knowledge of the sponsors, where they had heard of the MCQP, knowledge of the MCQP, holiday expenses and additional activities in Cape Town. The evaluation, the first of its kind to be applied to the MCQP, included a triple bottom line social, economic and environmental analysis of the 2003 event in addition to a management evaluation, partygoer profile and assessment of the venue.¹⁷⁹ In return for my services at the MCQP and my contribution to the evaluation process, ERI kindly made their research and findings available to me and sponsored my ticket for the party. Once my responsibilities as Kitsch Inspector were concluded I entered *Kitsch Kitchen* to meet with other partygoers and to take photographs. Unfortunately the camera I was using that night broke, and the pictures were ruined, when I dropped it on the Dishwasher Disco dance floor.

- **Archive / media / bibliographic research**

Following my field research of the 2003 MCQP I began my archival research of the MCQP, which would soon reveal the limited academic attention and relatively minor popular interest the MCQP had received. This began with an online archival search of the media for any information concerning the event, as could be expected the majority of results pointed to the English language daily newspapers serving Cape Town, the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus*. An “advanced search” conducted at the beginning of July 2004 of the Independent Online website (www.iol.co.za) which supports and archives the

¹⁷⁹ Event Research International. 2004. *Evaluation report: Mother City Queer Projects 2003 costume party – Kitsch Kitchen*. Cape Town: Event Research International.

Cape Times and the *Cape Argus*, as well as daily newspapers and national weekly papers for other South African cities, for all and any articles between 1 June 2003 and 30 June 2004 containing the search term “MCQP” returned six results, of which one was completely unrelated. These dates were informed by my field research time spent with the MCQP and my initial interest in finding information relating only to the 2003 MCQP.

A search of the nationally syndicated Sunday Times website (www.sundaytimes.co.za) archive conducted at the same time for articles from the print edition in the last two years containing the search phrase “Mother City Queer Project” returned three articles of which one was unrelated. A similar search of the same website for articles containing the term “MCQP” returned only one result included in the previous search results. Surprisingly searches of the nationally syndicated Mail and Guardian newspaper’s website (www.mg.co.za) regularly returned no usable results, however this could be ascribed to the website’s inconsistent and changing archive search protocols and variable restriction of content to its print edition subscribers. In a surprisingly similar result a search of the print edition of the weekly Mail and Guardian from 1994 to 2003 showed a limited MCQP media presence, even around what proved to be the more contentious events staged at the Artscape Theatre and Castle of Good Hope. The early years of the MCQP however did receive regular, if extremely limited coverage, in the listings of weekend events for Cape Town.

As I extended my search date parameters it became clear that articles in the Cape Town daily publications were by and large limited to promotional media coverage in the weeks

and months prior to the event, of limited substance and typically restricted to a brief description noting the date, theme, venue, advice on what to wear and what to expect: “Dancing queens get set to boogie”¹⁸⁰ being typical of this light hearted tongue in cheek fare. Follow up articles reported on the event’s staging and reception highlighting personal points of interest or setting them in context to previous years: “Partying with Osama Bin Liner and naked chefs”¹⁸¹. Not surprisingly the nationally syndicated press rather than regularly reporting on the MCQP tended to pick up on contentious issues: “Condom gripe puts gay party venue in doubt”¹⁸² referring to the MCQP’s difficulty in securing the Castle of Good Hope as a venue for a second year in 2003, or topics of broader appeal: “Brits charter two 747s for Cape’s biggest gay party”¹⁸³ linking the event to seasonal Cape Town tourism. This category of news coverage was also covered in the daily press in Cape Town: “Brits flocking to attend Kitsch Kitchen camp”¹⁸⁴, “Gay-friendly Cape Town tickled pink”¹⁸⁵.

The mainstream print media’s reporting and writing on the MCQP has been, as could be expected, limited to coverage over the end of year period when the event takes place. As my research progressed and I consistently looked for any relevant academic or critical work on the MCQP, it became evident that this limited interest in the MCQP extended to “serious” writing as intellectual, academic or popular publications. According to my final comprehensive citation search of 10 March 2006, conducted with the assistance of a

¹⁸⁰ Dancing queens get set to boogie. in *Cape Times*, 12 December 2003. 1

¹⁸¹ Partying with Osama Bin Liner and naked chefs. in *Cape Times*, 15 December 2003. 9

¹⁸² Schoonakker, Bonny. 2003. Condom gripe puts gay party venue in doubt. www.sundaytimes.co.za accessed 1 July 2004.

¹⁸³ Brits charter two 747s for Cape’s biggest gay party. www.sundaytimes.co.za accessed 1 July 2004.

¹⁸⁴ Brits flocking to attend Kitsch Kitchen camp. in *Cape Times*, 3 December 2003. 1

¹⁸⁵ Gay-friendly Cape Town tickled pink. in *Cape Argus*, 24 November 2003. 22

librarian from the Humanities Library at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the MCQP has not been the subject of any academic work. This search included local and international sources using the Academic Search Premier database, the databases covered by the Biblioline, Sabinet Online and Silver Platter database platforms, and the UCT library catalogue. The terms of search used were “MCQP” and “Mother City Queer Project”. I also searched these sources using the MCQP venues as search terms, but none of the results were relevant to this project. Further internet research was conducted four days later, again with the assistance a UCT librarian, using the Google Scholar search engine and the same search terms which returned no usable results. At the same time I conducted my final internet search for information on the MCQP, again using the same search terms which, using the Google search engine. The search results returned over 25 000 hits of which the MCQP website (www.mcqp.co.za) was the first. Of the twelve pages of search hits reviewed the majority were gay travel and interest websites and news websites. The first personal website was that of Craig Sydney from New Zealand, with whom I later corresponded and some of whose photographs I have used. A number of blog sites, such as The Rites (<http://rory.sharp.fm/rites>) and Cherryflava (www.cherryflava.com) also positively mention the MCQP albeit briefly.

To the best of my knowledge no aspect of the MCQP has served as the topic of a dissertation, been incorporated as a chapter in an edited volume of reviewed academic work or appeared in any peer reviewed journal. The MCQP has however received brief mention in a few academic papers and book chapters For an event of visual appeal and popularity as indicated by its online presence the MCQP has not regularly featured in any

popular publication format apart from the occasional, and brief, magazine article; although whilst doing my research rumours emerged of a coffee table book to mark the MCQP's tenth anniversary.

- **Reading project and literature review**

The reading project and literature review started in preparation of "Mother's Invitation" in the latter half of 2003 and has purposefully formed an integral part of this research project particularly as I became aware of the academic understudy of the MCQP from the beginning of 2004. What began as a purposefully broad reading project, and later therein a more focused literature review, was undertaken without any previous MCQP orientated academic work against which to reference my own research, a MCQP archive of limited socio-spatial use, to avoid dependence on my participant observation and to maintain a critical analytical distance from my research subject.

As I learnt more of the MCQP and as my grasp of the scope of its interaction with and influence on the city grew, my theoretical and precedent reading began to guide my research and in particular fuel my MCQP orientated conversations. The influence of my literature review reading was none the more so apparent than in my research into the MCQP at the castle in 2002, where cases of precedent abound for the venue and an established record of work exists concerning their production, yet the material and recollections of the MCQP are limited and faded.

The main body of reading in the literature review accompanying and informing this research project has been spatially orientated. This has included classic foundation spatial theorisation on the components and experience of space; its contextual applications to the elements of public spaces and other urban spaces and spaces of the city; and various relevant issue driven conceptual revisions pertaining to contemporary city experience. In particular works of subcultural and social phenomena as part of the cultural city have been considered, this includes theoretical and works of precedent concerning the festival and carnival. Works specifically related to queer theory have also been read, beginning with the formulation of queer theory and its later social and contextual applications.

The use of spatial theory, and to a lesser degree queer theory, in this research project is contextual to the postapartheid South African city. Accordingly works specific to the spatial aspects of the post apartheid city, and the postcolonial tradition, have been integral to the research process particularly works dealing with city form, reinventing and reinterpreting the apartheid city, cultural activity and the integration of the city. Many of these works deal with Johannesburg rather than Cape Town and consequently their methodological use is more often as concept rather than contextual precedent.

- **Interviews**

Four in-depth personal interviews were conducted for the purposes of this project in May and July of 2004, each lasting forty to sixty minutes in duration structured around a core

set of relevant questions unseen by the interviewee.¹⁸⁶ I interviewed Andre Vorster on three separate occasions at the MCQP offices in Bree Street. The first interview on 25 May 2004 was directed towards a retrospective general history of the MCQP, the origins of the event, its influences, role players and original intentions. The second interview on 26 May 2004 focussed specifically on the 2002 MCQP at the Castle of Good Hope, and the third interview on 19 July 2004 focussed on the 2003 MCQP at the CTICC. The last interview with Vorster was delayed in part to allow him time for consolidation and conclusion of the 2003 MCQP, realising that some financial matters with the CTICC were still outstanding for the MCQP I did not wish for Vorster to be distracted or to subconsciously focus on a singular aspect of the preceding year's event. In addition I interviewed Ralph Borland, Décor Manager for the 2003 MCQP, at his home in Observatory on 26 May 2004. As he oversaw the conversion of the CTICC into the MCQP decorated party space and was responsible for coherent interpretation of the theme by the volunteers and exhibitors his role was limited to the design, planning and implementation stages of the MCQP. A similar interview for the 2002 MCQP was not possible as the Décor Manager position was not occupied due to the minimal décor directive in favour of highlighting the Castle itself to act as background to the event, for which Vorster himself took control.

A notable exception to the interview process was artist Andrew Putter, who together with Andre Vorster originated and co-produced the first MCQP in 1994, whose role and influence in the event has steadily declined since that date as demonstrated by his absence from the design, promotion and implementation of the 2003 MCQP. Although

¹⁸⁶ Interview tapes and transcriptions are in my possession and are available on request.

instrumental in the conception of the event, its unavoidable deviation from the original format and intention over ten years has caused Putter to somewhat distance himself from the MCQP's production but remains a regular attendee and supporter. I spoke to him informally on several occasions, often only in passing, including the night of *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003 when I singled him out for a Kitsch Inspector survey interview as he watched the partygoers assemble in the entrance queues. Always open to conversation but usually not readily available I often found his answers more probing and challenging than my questions, nevertheless in conversation when I was able to contact him he remained a valuable if sometimes obscure source of information and suggestion.

- **Interdisciplinary methodological conclusion**

The confirmation of the CTICC as the MCQP venue for 2003 prompted a decision to focus my research contextually on the two most recent years, 10th and 9th respectively, of the event: *Kitsch Kitchen* at the CTICC in 2003 and *The Wedding* in 2002 at the Castle of Good Hope. In so doing I planned to use a detailed study of the 10th MCQP as an opportunity to look backwards to the first establishing years of the event and to highlight key moments related to my research question. Despite having attended the MCQP in 2002 it was decided not to structure the research process in order to present two similar sets of information for a comparative analysis, as I had not begun my research in 2002 nor was it conceivably possible to acquire sufficiently comparative information from a retrospective research process due to the incomplete nature of the MCQP archive. As I was able to prepare, plan for and attend the 2003 MCQP for the purposes of research I

decided to concentrate on that event as a moment in the history of the MCQP in the city and use the previous year's event as a primary point of reference and introduction to key spatio-historical moments.

The research methodology for this research project has, by choice and design, not been dictated by a particular disciplinary convention. This is responsive of the MCQP's understudy and limited body of work available and the opportunities this poses for a research problematic that is by design interdisciplinary. Additionally it was also my decision to extend my research scope beyond my experience of urban geography to incorporate public culture and cultural studies. This resulted in a lengthy and interesting research period characterised by many opportunities to archive and explore the MCQP in varying contexts and disciplinary frameworks, unattainable through a singular and structurally dictatorial methodology, reflected by my varied archive and resultant discussion and analysis.

4. A brief history of the MCQP: From *Locker Room* to *Kitsch Kitchen*

“In 1994 Nelson Mandela ushered in the new South African constitution, which included the crucially important "freedom of sexual orientation" clause. The new Constitution blew-off the closet door - and out came Africa's pent-up queer creative energy which needed a platform on which to express itself. Mother City Queer Projects (MCQP) was born.”¹⁸⁷

- **Born in the bulrushes**

The creators of the MCQP, architect Andre Vorster and artist Andrew Putter, conceived of the idea for the event after attending a performance of Peter Hayes' one man play *Get Hard* at the Grahamstown Arts Festival; where after retiring to some nearby bulrushes to smoke some marijuana they returned to Cape Town inspired by the play's challenging of audiences on sexual grounds and began to explore options for creative production and collaboration. On a personal level for Vorster the *Locker Room* was a constructive direction of a mourning process and a dedication to his late boyfriend, Craig Darlow, who would have celebrated his birthday on the night of the party but died a week before the elections that year from AIDS.¹⁸⁸

With Vorster, Putter's original interest in focussing on homo-erotic art in sport grew collaboratively out of their experience of audiences attending only the opening night of exhibitions and seldom returning, thus the initial intention was to focus on attracting as many people as possible to the opening event. This then outgrew a traditional single artist show that Putter had already begun to prepare (to be exhibited in the men's changing

¹⁸⁷ MCQP website www.mcqp.co.za accessed 6 December 2004

¹⁸⁸ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

rooms of the University of Cape Town Cricket Club), small collaboration, procession or dance as interest grew and the River Club was secured as a venue. The event became formulated not only around the art but also the venue and people attending, consequently the “Art Party” idea was initiated. An opening night event and collaborative exhibition combined, with a theme to bind the event together and to set it apart from other collaborative shows, costumes to stimulate guest involvement, and décor designed to showcase guest’s costumes as mobile works of art or moving sculptures. All these factors coupled with the spatial layout of the original venue and the insistence on attendance in a “team” of two or more ensured guests’ interactive participation in the event.¹⁸⁹

The first MCQP themed *The Locker Room Project* described itself as a “mega-deluxe ultra-vivid, lush galore fancy-dress sporty-art-party designed to celebrate and showcase Queer culture in the Mother City”, held at the River Club in Cape Town’s student suburb of bohemian reputation: Observatory. Using the only just privately acquired grounds and building of the River Club, previously a municipal workers sports club, the *Locker Room* offered “fourteen fabulous party-playgrounds under one roof” where “Leaping Latex Lesbians”, “Moffie Mountaineers”, “Gorgeous Goalkeepers” and “Raving Rollerbladers” could mingle, drink, dance and relax in an atmosphere where sport was played with in “an outrageously camp way” to deliver a “lush, over-the-top, eccentric, bizarre, outlandish, odd, hysterical sporty experience”.¹⁹⁰ The theme was considered essential as a

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

unifying element for the various artist collaborations at the event, and to set it apart from other collaborative shows.¹⁹¹

The sporting theme of the *Locker Room* at first may have seemed like a strange choice for an art or queer event such as the MCQP, but in sport the organisers found “a rich, multi-faceted subject abounding with images” and “a wealth of material waiting to be transformed into art”.¹⁹² In addition the end of apartheid and sporting sanctions on South Africa in the early 1990s had marked the readmission of South Africa to the world sporting arena as national teams once again began to compete internationally. The timing of the *Locker Room* coincided with Cape Town’s much hyped, but failed, bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games and the country’s preparation for the hosting of the 1995 Rugby World Cup and football’s 1996 African Cup of Nations. In these events both the city and country invested support and expectations of Rainbow Nation building and “Madiba euphoria”¹⁹³ not that the MCQP necessarily harboured intentions of similar proportion, but was able to capitalise on the related excitement and goodwill promoted in the media.

The right to freedom of sexual orientation provided for in South Africa’s then interim constitution and the newly elected democratic government presented reason to celebrate for the MCQP. It also offered an opportunity for Vorster and Putter to create an event around their interests: art, sex or sexuality, and the city of Cape Town. According to them the art scene in Cape Town had become marginalised and was in need of being revitalised, made relevant and exciting through rigorous curation and collaboration that

¹⁹¹ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

¹⁹² MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

¹⁹³ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

promoted resourcefulness and ecologically friendly practice. They identified a need, prompted by the AIDS crisis and personal tragedy, to talk openly about sex and sexual difference, to share and celebrate this difference, and that this needed to be supported and developed towards an end of sexual stereotyping. Cape Town could provide more than just the context for this by adopting an inspirational “peninsulocentric” attitude that developed and supported a local city orientated culture.¹⁹⁴

A further instance of fortuitous timing, according to Vorster, was the isolation and naivety of the party scene in South Africa and Cape Town in 1994:

“Fortunately when the Locker Room happened there were no drugs in the country, I mean a little bit of coke was coming in, but ecstasy hadn’t even hit South Africa and as that started to come in and change party culture, parties were then not just synonymous with alcohol but also the consumption of drugs.”¹⁹⁵

The timing of the first MCQP meant that the event avoided association with the advent of social recreational drug use after the country’s isolation, which in turn did not negatively affect their future success in securing higher profile venues such as the Artscape Theatre and Castle of Good Hope. The rise of ecstasy use also became synonymous with base driven dance music and large scale venues, both of which the MCQP continually tried to avoid in favour of their more intimate design. As a later further result of the increase in drug use the MCQP became aware of more people having sex at the party to which the MCQP responded by promoting responsible and safe sex practices at the event.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1995. *The locker room project revisited / the secret garden project revealed.*

¹⁹⁵ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

The initial venue for the first five MCQP parties, the privately owned River Club, was in Vorster's view influential to the design of the event as was the safely liberating space of a costumed queer event:

“[The *Locker Room* MCQP] had to happen in private space, it couldn't be in a public street. There were women showing off their tits and stuff and they were quite happy doing that at a private party but not in the street and they said if it was a march through Adderley Street they wouldn't show their tits painted blue but they were quite happy to do it at what they saw as a big private party. It was also very consciously designed like that at the River Club, that you always felt that you were at someone else's house”¹⁹⁷

For the design and preparation of the *Locker Room* the MCQP was given almost two months carte blanche to curate the interior décor, much of which was retained after the event, which allowed artists, lighting technicians and DJ's or musicians to collaborate on specific spaces. The original layout of the building had large double sided doors in all major rooms which facilitated a flow of people through and an interconnectedness of the party areas which allowed for an intimate feel. These spaces were then populated by friends of the design and décor collaborators or by fans of the music being played.¹⁹⁸

- **Marketing the MCQP to friends, peers, kings and queens** (see figure 5)

The *Locker Room*, and therein the MCQP, was at first marketed to the very people the organisers sought to collaborate with and contribute to the event: their arts and architecture friends and peers. A selection of the list of contributors to this first Art Party

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

continues to read like a roll call of the contemporary art scene in Cape Town and South Africa: Brett Murray, Sue Williamson, Beezy Bailey, Tracey Payne, Kevin Brand, Barend de Wet.¹⁹⁹ The artists' involvement generated credibility for the MCQP as a serious art event, increased attraction for volunteer art student involvement and in attendance to view the artworks. Vorster discovered seven years later that in retrospect because he had then recently lost three boyfriends to AIDS there was an assumption that he too was sick and that the *Locker Room* was also his pre-emptive farewell, and that this encouraged the involvement of so many friends and peers in a show of support.²⁰⁰

From this group and from the gay community key social personalities, or subcultures, were identified who would generate further support and who could inform the MCQP as to their different group interests or needs.²⁰¹

“we found a few key people which we called Kings and Queens, sort of Queer Kings and Queens in the city, and we found if they were coming they would bring their friends and we had to really market around that, and that’s where the thing started to break into different tribes: like the lesbian dog walkers were completely different to the muscle queens that go to the gym, so we had to have a different marketing campaign and we knew that they liked different music. So we had to market it to make it sound like this party was just for them and found out what their needs were”²⁰²

In keeping with the MCQP’s policy of non-ageism and its beginnings as a collaborative art party, Vorster notes the importance of marketing the event to younger creative people.

¹⁹⁹ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1995. *The locker room project revisited / the secret garden project revealed*.

²⁰⁰ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²⁰¹ Gelder, Ken. Ed. 2005. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge.

²⁰² Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

“The majority of partygoers are the people who started coming in ’94 and now they are 10 years older so we have to have an active campaign to get youth, a new younger group of people in, and that’s a whole different marketing campaign, by lecturing at universities and Tech and getting different art schools to design posters and flyers is one way that we are doing it quite successfully.”²⁰³

By identifying queer tribes and their leaders, by recognising that their needs were varied, and creating spaces of corresponding appeal the MCQP set a precedent for future responsiveness. This is apparent in later events which have included more African influence in naming and music for the benefit of the growing number of international partygoers, although this does not respond to the extremely small number of black partygoers. Similarly more DJ’s and fewer live bands have played at the MCQP as popular tastes changed; awareness of sexual practice at the MCQP of a small group of men having sex at the party for which the MCQP provided the “dark room” as a private space serviced by the Triangle Project (a gay and lesbian organisation advocating for safe sexual health); and providing “walk safe” routes to the party once located in the city centre and addressing the request from older partygoers for grassy outdoor spaces from which to view the sunrise and Table Mountain.²⁰⁴

The MCQP was established through the staging of the *Locker Room*, and the subsequent four parties, at the River Club with its accessible interconnected layout. This, combined with the MCQP’s policies of non ageism, non sexism and non racism²⁰⁵ and the key elements of costume, team participation and a unifying creative theme around which to collaborate was effectively promoted as an art event incorporating a celebration of sexual

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

difference and queerness. In the ten years after 1994 the annual staging of this originally unexpectedly successful and unintentionally repeated²⁰⁶ event illustrates the MCQP's popularity despite its movement between five different venues.

- **The MCQP comes to town but doesn't find a home** (see Table 1)

To trace the path of the MCQP through the city over the first ten years of its production provides an informative and revealing view of the growth in significance of the event, its popularity and acceptance, its ability to link disjointed parts of the city and seemingly unconnected city sites. This is the same ten year period that saw the establishment of democracy in South Africa and the encouraged popularisation of Cape Town as a world tourism destination, providing the platform for the development of the CTICC, while the MCQP simultaneously played out through the city to contribute to its social liberalisation and popular tourism status. The movement of the MCQP from its suburban home at the River Club to the city centre facilitated a raised profile for the event, due in no small part to the staging of the event at the Artscape Theatre, Good Hope Centre, Castle of Good Hope and CTICC; all highly visible and, with the exception of the CTICC, established and contested spaces in the city's popular memory. To contextually examine the 2003 MCQP in the city centre it is these four higher profile years that are of the most interest.

The formative years of the MCQP from 1994 to 1998 helped to establish the event as a fixture on the end of year social calendar, reinforcing the MCQP brand and developing a loyal support base that steadily increased to potentially outgrow the River Club facilities

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

which prompted the MCQP to seek a new venue. In these formative years MCQP organisers were able to realise that there was a growing market and support for the event, as Cape Town and South African society at large became more liberal, open minded or used to hearing of and seeing the MCQP in the media in the latter half of the year that it might be possible for an expansion of the event.

The Nico Malan state theatre, later renamed the Artscape in 2001, built during the height of apartheid and almost immediately caught up in controversy because of its racist admission policies²⁰⁷ at the base of the imposing civic centre building synonymous with the bulk of apartheid bureaucracy in the city centre was the venue for the sixth MCQP in 1999. On the promise of City funding and at the suggestion of the Cape Town Tourism manager, Sheryl Ozinsky who was also involved with the Artscape, the MCQP moved to the city centre for *Heavenly Bodies* in 1999. The MCQP expected a direct cash sponsorship from the City for the production of the event but did not receive it.

Nevertheless *Heavenly Bodies* became a highlight for the MCQP for its symbolic subversion and reclamation of Cape Towns' modernist apartheid conservative bastion to arts and culture through its eccentricity, camp style, lavish costumes and décor.²⁰⁸ Décor was limited to key installations and selective lighting to draw attention to the design and architectural features of the venue while promoting an event at odds with the state's artistic and cultural conservatism. The event built on the hype of the coming millennium and Y2K paranoia with a futuristic interplanetary space theme that beckoned to the future

²⁰⁷ Cape Town's Nico theatre to be renamed. 2000. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

²⁰⁸ Coleman, Bianca. 1999. Time to camp it up with heavenly bodies. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

of the Artscape, the city and the MCQP. During this transitory period the Artscape was officially referred to using both names.

If memory serves Vorster correctly, *Heavenly Bodies* at the Artscape was the first MCQP to receive noticeable international media attention and consequent positive “touristy” media attention for Cape Town.²⁰⁹ *Heavenly Bodies* was an appropriately dramatic departure with the past of the Artscape that helped to bring the curtain down on the venue’s historical state patronage of an exclusionary arts and cultural programme; in the process introducing the MCQP to the city centre and raising its profile.

The MCQP was unable to secure the Artscape as a venue for the following year.

Reluctant to leave the city centre the event moved to the aging but nonetheless visible Good Hope Centre, Cape Town’s earlier large exhibition, trade show and conference facility opened in 1977. The MCQP in 2000 at the Good Hope Centre, playfully themed *Toybox*, provides an uninspiring case of precedent for the later event at the CTICC as the somewhat muted reaction to the event, in relation to the plaudits of the year before, might suggest however the event did attract more partygoers than the previous year on strength of its praises and the end to the spate of bombings that plagued the city in the run up to *Heavenly Bodies*.²¹⁰

The architecture of the Good Hope Centre offered little in the way of inspiration unlike the Artscape. Faced with the dilemma of heightened popularity and expectations after

²⁰⁹ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²¹⁰ Dowson, Jeremy. 2000. Wreaking mayhem in the playpen. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

Heavenly Bodies Vorster notes that for the first time the venue negatively overpowered the MCQP at *Toybox* (see figures 6 and 7). He refers to the Good Hope Centre as “not a good example to work with”, “daunting” and “impossible to decorate” noting the acoustics problems in contrast to the opportunity and beauty of the Artscape.²¹¹

In 2001 the MCQP left the city centre with no obvious choice of venue and returned to the River Club for the staging of *Farm Fresh*. What might have been considered a return to their roots or a consolidation of the original ideals of the event was handicapped in part by the renovations to the venue, which eliminated the characteristic interconnected smaller space intimacy of the MCQP’s formative years from 1994 to 1998 which helped to account for its success. As a result much of *Farm Fresh* was held outside, nevertheless international media coverage of *Toybox* helped to ensure a large turnout of partygoers who enjoyed the live music and DJ’s in 20 party areas including the traditional arrival stage and dark room decorated according to a farm yard theme.²¹²

In contrast to the virtual anonymity of the venue in 2000 the 2002 MCQP at the Castle of Good Hope in the city centre of Cape Town was held in the country’s oldest building and national monument, intimately linked to colonial and apartheid rule. Building on a more recent trend of critical engagement and contestation with venue the 9th MCQP, themed *The Wedding* (see figure 8), was staged at the castle on 14 December 2002 as the highlight of a broader queer festival programme²¹³ that stretched from the Atlantic

²¹¹ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

²¹² Maughan, Karyn. 2001. *Farmyard fantasy takes flight*. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

²¹³ MCQP Festival Programme. 2002. Published by the Mother City Queer Project.

Seaboard to the Southern Suburbs of the city.²¹⁴ *The Wedding* was a contentious and high profile return to the city centre for the MCQP. Any consideration that the staging of such an event at the Castle was inappropriate due to its historical associations was, like the case of the Artscape in 1999, exactly what appealed to the MCQP along with the recognisable architecture. Consequently *The Wedding* adopted a minimal décor approach that featured the Castle, its architecture and history.²¹⁵

By the time the MCQP moved to the CTICC in 2003, its fifth venue in ten years since 1994, the event was recognisable as an annual, artistic, costumed and thematic celebration of queer culture in Cape Town. The key elements of the MCQP that have made the event recognisable and memorable: its costumes, themes, décor, participation in a group, celebratory atmosphere and later its venues in the city centre are all linked to the first MCQP. The *Locker Room* was influenced by the experiences and interests of its originators who built on the unexpected success of the event in subsequent years to develop a MCQP formula that helped to sustain the event over ten years. This formula, coupled with the original intentions of the MCQP and their development, and its associated key elements helped to inform and shape the MCQP as a carnivalesque and transgressive celebration of queer culture that came to the CTICC in 2003.

²¹⁴ Something queer going on at Cape's castle. 2002. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

²¹⁵ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

5. Conceptualising the MCQP: Its intimate queer essentials of uniqueness

“One of the more festive manifestations of the new South Africa can be seen in the advent of the annual Mother City Queer Party in Cape Town. The party, a wild affair involving a fusion of music, costumes, creativity, and flesh, revolves around the theme of transgressing boundaries of identity and the straitjackets of past decorum. The first MCQP hosted a gigantic Nelson Mandela cardboard figure in boxing gloves. The explicit message was that now Mandela is free, so must we liberate our creativity, our libidos and even our minds.”²¹⁶

The MCQP traces its roots to the inspiration of its originators who sought out a similarly engaging avenue for artistic collaboration informed by their interests, personal experiences and social environment. Vorster and Putter’s initiation of the MCQP Art Party concept was intentioned to draw as many people as possible to a single night collaborative arts event, the core elements of which have remained as idealised guidelines to the MCQP’s production. The MCQP was formulated around the originators’ response to their identification of a need to openly discuss and celebrate, the constitutional right to sexual difference. What then became the key interconnected elements to the MCQP: the incorporation of a theme, the camp and kitsch style of its execution, the purposefully celebratory atmosphere, the collaborative creativity of costumed partygoer groups and the décor, and the selection of an informed “queer” attitude to sexual difference, generated interest and participation in the event. These elements were incorporated because of and informed by the intention of the originators and therein the MCQP itself.

²¹⁶ Crawhall, Nigel. 2005. Balancing freedom and fear: gay men, sex and HIV in the post-apartheid era. in Van Zyl, Mikki and Steyn, Melissa. Eds. *Performing queer: shaping sexualities 1994 – 2004 – volume one*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

For a large scale event the MCQP is an intimate party. From its inception the MCQP attracted over a thousand partygoers²¹⁷ but this belies the absence of any kind of initial large scale mobilisation to attract people to the event. Vorster describes the intimacy as follows:

“it was a very domestic party not a huge big alienating thing. There was one dance floor you would go next door and there would be another and it was more like a repeat of lots of domestic parties rather than a massive alienating sort of rave”²¹⁸

The MCQP preceded the popular but alienating large scale of rave culture, instead continuing to prefer the intimacy afforded by a repetitive house party design. According to Vorster the MCQP was initially marketed to and community interest generated from those closest to the organisers.

“We saw it more like you mobilise around an individual who is going to bring their own group, originally when Andrew and I started all our friends came and they brought their friends in a team and it would grow”²¹⁹

Partygoers to the MCQP have always been expected to have a ticket, wear a costume, be a part of or join a group and identify with the event’s queer celebration of sexual difference. The intimacy of the MCQP, which provided a safely liberating space for men and women, has not however been secured at the expense of a socially exclusive admission policy. Vorster explains:

²¹⁷ Jolly, Lucinda. 1994. Mother city queer project. in *ADA* issue 13.60-65

²¹⁸ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²¹⁹ Ibid.

“we wanted to have a non ageist policy, non sexist, non racist and all that but also non ageist. Many other big parties around the world, gay parties, are focussed only on youth or young people in their twenties and we wanted our 80 year old friends there as well and we found just having house music would’ve alienated them but if you have a jazz floor we’d make a comfortable space for them with music that they’d like”²²⁰

The intimacy of the MCQP was reinforced from the beginning by the expectation that partygoer groups would creatively “complete” the event with their costumes (see figures 9 and 10).²²¹ This immediately generated and maintained a sense of involvement and participation beyond simple attendance. Although not all partygoers immediately “caught onto” the costumed group concept, by the second event the success of the idea had taken hold and all partygoers joined or formed a team and wore matching costumes.²²² This admissions policy has continued but has not discouraged the occasional partygoer from arriving on their own. This is well illustrated by Vorster’s anecdote of a lone partygoer attending *Heavenly Bodies* in 1999, who dressed as a policeman joined a group of real policeman working at the event in their car, claiming “ooh I’ve found my team!”²²³ While no discrimination is made on the basis of age, sexual orientation or race, in order to attend the MCQP a certain amount of interest and effort towards participation and involvement is expected of the partygoer.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

²²² Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²²³ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

- **A timely and distinctive celebration**

The first MCQP in 1994 was a timely celebration of the unexpected constitutional recognition of the right to sexual orientation difference. The MCQP consciously chose not to imitate similar international events but rather capitalised on the national post election excitement and “Madiba euphoria” to celebrate this “achievement” and “fundamental change” at a time when “other cities were still marching for their rights”. The celebration of the MCQP is multi-faceted and includes music, dancing, the congregation of a diverse group of partygoers, sex, costumes and décor.²²⁴

Vorster points out that the *Locker Room* built on the notion of celebrated difference not only for its age, race and sexually inclusive appeal but also to purposefully set the MCQP apart from other gay pride and large party events:

“Some of the lesbians still wanted to march, there must be a militant march, and we were like no actually lets celebrate this and if they take away our rights we will switch it back to marching. That was a bit of a difficult thing, there were many organisations that were trying to do gay pride marches and similar things, always lets do it like Sydney and lets do it like Joburg, we were consciously lets not. Lets look at what the successes of those events are and lets custom make something that is uniquely Cape Townian and intentionally different to all the other queer festivals.”²²⁵

The intention of “bringing hetero and homosexuals together in a celebratory, unifying way, proving that differences of sexual orientation are simply part of any city’s valuable

²²⁴ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²²⁵ Ibid.

cultural richness”²²⁶ carefully chose celebration over protest as an inclusive medium for expression that sought a conclusion to an era of covert and defiant desire.²²⁷

Looking back on ten years of the MCQP its celebratory value is interpreted in a different way by 2003 Décor Manager Ralph Borland, a regular partygoer and worker at the party:

“what I value about the party thinking back to the beginnings of it especially, is the friendliness of it, that it’s a space where people interact on a very friendly level and it’s sexual but it’s not aggressive”²²⁸

Admittedly more celebratory than political, the MCQP received its first demonstrators in 2002 and like the few prior complaints these had much to do with the choice of the Castle venue than only the event itself.²²⁹ The MCQP’s record of positive press and no reported incidents of violence, antisocial behaviour or wilful damage to property is in part thanks to its friendly and celebratory atmosphere. The celebratory aspect of the MCQP was augmented by a focus on more than sexuality through the incorporation of art, costumes and a collaborative theme that appealed to partygoers as participants in a celebratory performance that then helped to set the MCQP apart from other gay pride or queer events.

²²⁶ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1995. *The locker room project revisited / the secret garden project revealed*.

²²⁷ Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. 1994. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

²²⁸ Ralph Borland interview 26 May 2004

²²⁹ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

- **Thematically unified**

Just as there were ten MCQPs between 1994 and 2003, so too did each of the ten parties have a different theme in order to keep the event fresh and to distinguish one from the next. The MCQP theme each year informs the partygoers' costumes (see figures 11 to 14), the décor and to a lesser extent how the event is presented to the media and public.

Vorster describes the selection of theme as follows:

“We always looked for new themes that were quite universal, that were quite easy. You need to have a theme where when you say the theme you can think of an instant outfit, but if you think a bit longer there is a lot more”²³⁰

The new theme each year contributes to the annual freshness of the MCQP by ensuring that décor and costumes are not repetitive, hence the MCQP's encouraged use of recycled, cheap and everyday materials in the creative costume and décor process. The theme also has to be accessible and allow even the laziest of partygoers to quickly think of costume ideas, and to allow broad interpretation for décor.

Originally the broadly influential theme was accompanied by a camp style of presentation and creativity. The theme, interpreted in this camp style would be the play on words in naming the various dance floors and musical styles, and the installations worked around the theme using the cheap, recycled and everyday materials made to “look beautiful in that camp queer style”. This camp style sought to create inexpensive installations that did not promote the politics or agenda of the event but were rather exaggerated, textured and

²³⁰ Ibid.

playful.²³¹ For example the *Locker Room* featured the “Leaping Latex Lesbians” in the “Lovely Longjump Lounge” and “Gorgeous Goalkeepers” in the “Ra-Ra Rugga-Bugga Bar”²³², and ten years later a poster advertising *Kitsch Kitchen* encouraged people to bring their “full-flavoured finger-licking fruity friends” to join “fab fridge-cake faggots” and “marvellous moffie muffins”.²³³ The style was intended to be consistent but the theme would change each year.²³⁴

Apart from retaining an element of freshness and novelty to the event, the theme also originally served a far more important unifying role between the various artistic décor collaborators. Vorster refers to the theme in this instance as “something coherent to hold it all together” which helped to prevent the MCQP from being like “other big collaborative art show with all different separate pieces”. This was especially important for the first five years of the MCQP, held at the River Club, when the intent of the décor was to overshadow the venue. As a result there was more décor and more artists involved.²³⁵ The move of the MCQP to venues, of a higher profile and with striking architecture such as the Artscape Theatre and Castle of Good Hope, in the city centre prompted a change to the role and influence of the theme for each year. In these instances minimal décor was used to offset and allow the venue to garner attention. Vorster illustrates this later connection between venue and theme with particular reference to the

²³¹ Sontag, Susan. 1966. Notes on “Camp”. in Sontag, Susan. *Against interpretation: and other essays*. London. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 275-292.

²³² MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

²³³ MCQP poster advertising *Kitsch Kitchen*. 2003

²³⁴ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²³⁵ Ibid.

MCQP at the Castle of Good Hope as “a fantastic opportunity to showcase the architecture and it worked with a wedding theme”.²³⁶

Ralph Borland who as Décor Manager for *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003 (see figure 15), and had previously been regularly involved in the event, acted as chief collaborator with Vorster demonstrates a similar attitude to the theme which, for practical and creative reasons, allows greater venue visibility. He believes that the MCQP does not “feel very precious about the theme” and refers to it as “more of an influence” and a “catalyst for ideas”. In reference to *Kitsch Kitchen* he says “it’s not important really whether people feel the kitcheness of it I don’t think. It’s more like everybody groups around this idea and sees what they can do around it”.²³⁷

However for the MCQP partygoer and their role in the event the theme is essential, as it provides the inspirational guide to their costume design. In turn, through the costume, according to Vorster, “the queer aspect of the party then ties in nicely with the theme” as it allows gay people who are not out to come to the event.²³⁸

- **Collaborative creativity, costumes and décor**

The collaborative creativity of the MCQP and its roots as an Art Party are most evident in the partygoers’ costumes and the events’ décor. The organisers of the first MCQP,

²³⁶ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

looking back on the *Locker Room* in 1994, give the following reasons for the incorporation of costumes:

“Costumes give people the chance to be someone *else* for a night. Costumes are a form of disguise, allowing us to take chances we wouldn’t normally take if we were recognizable. Costumes can be sexy. They give an excuse to smile at, touch, and talk to strangers. Like moving sculpture, costumes are a form of art. Lastly, costume and disguise are a part of some gay men’s histories – virtually a tradition. Although only a small percentage of gay men wear drag, it gives one the chance to literally be a queen for a day. We wanted everybody to know just how wonderful that felt!”²³⁹

The costume element is an integral part of the MCQP that offers the partygoer the possibility to masquerade and an excuse or reason to engage with other partygoers. The MCQP costume is a mobile and adaptable medium of intentional communication for the partygoer through which their queerness, sexual orientation, subcultural group membership may be communicated.²⁴⁰ This has particular importance for partygoers who are not openly gay or who are interested in exploring their own sexual orientation without fear of recrimination, as Vorster explains:

“The costume party thing meant that, and by not making it only a gay party, making it queer saying you could be gay or straight, it meant that gay people who didn’t want to be out could get in on that ballot”²⁴¹

Vorster continues to explain that costumes also provide a connection to the transgressive and experimental queer aspect of the MCQP, and secures the participation of the

²³⁹ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1995. *The locker room project revisited / the secret garden project revealed*.

²⁴⁰ Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture: the meaning of style*. London: Methuen.

²⁴¹ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

partygoers in the event. For many partygoers, wearing a costume would be their first experience of dressing in a risqué or provocative way.

“[At the MCQP] everybody is a participant by coming in costume, you are the actors and the audience at the same time and you are watching someone and they are watching you and it collectively makes up this whole theatrical production.”²⁴²

The décor of the MCQP provides the sets to this costumed theatrical production, likened to the Mardi Gras, that early on transformed the venue into a dreamlike space however the “very art based” beginnings of the event and the décor began to diminish in significance.²⁴³ The MCQP décor was in its first ten years driven by both practical and creative concerns. Originally meant to hide and transform the River Club venue, the décor purposefully became more integrated into and responsive to venue architecture in the larger scale venues of the city centre with mixed results as months long set up periods and large set up crew numbers gave way to smaller budgets, expensive venue hire rates and fewer helpers. This was not an immediate problem however as the intended stylistic and aesthetic method of the MCQP has always been boldly resourceful and glamorously cheap as Vorster recalls:

“we also realised that we didn’t want to have that sort of spend a fortune on décor that you’ve got hang, unhang and then store, so the whole idea was that whatever you made had to be trashed, it really was throw away, so that whole ‘moffie maak mooi’²⁴⁴ out of beautiful throw away things, that whole recycling aesthetic.”²⁴⁵

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ralph Borland interview 26 May 2004

²⁴⁴ Although the translation loses some of its meaning, this Afrikaans phrase roughly translates as “queer makes beautiful”.

²⁴⁵ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

The distinction between participation and observation at the MCQP is blurred by encouraging creative collaboration in costumes as moving sculptures in a theatrical production complimented by the setting of the décor.

- **The queer choice of the MCQP**

The selection and incorporation of the term queer by the MCQP was not only to appeal to the gay community but informed all aspects of the event and many of its key elements.

Vorster explains that the event was consequently not only marketed to the gay community because of its original arts focus:

[The MCQP has] “focussed more on the arts community assuming that the art crowd are non-judgemental when it comes to sexual orientation, whether you are gay or not in the art world you know a lot of people who are and it doesn’t really matter”²⁴⁶

The MCQP not only applied the playful, experimental and convention questioning connotations of queer to sexual orientation but also to its creative process that emphasised resourcefulness and recycling in executing the stylistically camp brief of each event.²⁴⁷ The appeal of the MCQP’s chosen definition of queer was its inclusiveness and its invitation to flirt with and subvert traditional definitions of sexual orientation.²⁴⁸

The original organisers explain:

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Jolly, Lucinda. 1994. Mother city queer project. in *ADA* issue 13. 60-65

²⁴⁸ Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds.1995. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge.

“For us the term Queer describes people who are relaxed about the fact that we all have different sexual preferences. We *also* use the word Queer to describe people who live creatively and critically, and who take chances, pushing at conventions. Although many Queer people are homosexual, not all homosexuals are Queer. Nor are all heterosexuals un-Queer.”²⁴⁹

In the opinion of its original organisers the MCQP’s positive and inclusive definition of queer had timely significance for the open celebration of sexual difference.

“For the first time it’s possible to express and enjoy our differences without apology or fear. Our new freedom is underwritten by the most open and tolerant (interim!) constitution in the world.”²⁵⁰

This timely queer celebration of the constitutionally recognised right to sexual difference choice sought to celebrate the successes, of what Vorster considered, an exclusive and divided era of advocacy and protest.

“we found that the separatist 80’s politics of gay and lesbian activist politics was: you were either gay or not, you had to be gay or lesbian in the end and I found there were many people, there were far more grey areas or pink areas, or tones of pink or grey. That people weren’t necessarily gay or comfortable with being completely gay, or they were bisexual, or had had different sexual encounters...

So the word queer was meant to be more inclusive, it included gays and lesbians who were quite happy to be called queer it was also straight people who were a little more offbeat and all those sort of definitions of queer, oddball, we kept looking in a dictionary.”²⁵¹

In addition to rejecting the rigidity of existing sexual orientation definitions, Vorster describes paging through a dictionary with Putter in preparation of the first MCQP and

²⁴⁹ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1995. *The locker room project revisited / the secret garden project revealed.*

²⁵⁰ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

²⁵¹ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

purposefully selecting positive connotations of “queer”.²⁵² Despite both being openly gay men, for them there was clearly a need for an inclusive definition that would appeal to the arts, architecture and gay communities that constituted their friends and peers, declaring: “Queerness is not a cut-and-dried definition of one’s sexual orientation. Queerness is an attitude.”²⁵³

The MCQP’s pervasive incorporation of queer lent the event broad appeal and inclusivity which, when combined with necessary costumed participation and dance,²⁵⁴ augmented its communal celebration of sexual orientation difference by recognising the central and variable role of the body. The queer performance of the MCQP challenged conventional and normalised definitions of sexuality and sexual orientation²⁵⁵ and became a spatialised strategy for social and cultural change²⁵⁶ that temporarily destabilised the hegemonically heterosexual spaces of its venues.²⁵⁷

The emphasis placed on the body by the MCQP, through its costumes and varied expressions of sexual orientation and identity, is augmented by the event’s carnivalesque qualities and the pleasure partygoers take from them: costumes that accentuate the body, naked or near naked partygoers, cross dressing, the incorporation of fetish items. Here,

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

²⁵⁴ Buckland, Fiona. 2002. *Impossible dance: club culture and queer world-making*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

²⁵⁵ Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

²⁵⁶ Davis, Tim. 1995. The diversity of queer politics and the redefinition of sexual identity and community in urban spaces. in Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge.

²⁵⁷ Valentine, Gill. 1996. (Re)negotiating the “heterosexual street”: lesbian productions of space. in Duncan, Nancy. Ed. 1996. *BodySpace: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. New York: Routledge. 146-155.

normalised conceptions of sexual orientation definition are destabilised through practice and dress that evoke carnivalesque revelling in the “grotesque body”.²⁵⁸

- **The success of the MCQP Fabulosity Formula**

The Fabulosity Formula is the term that Vorster uses to describe the preparation and production procedure for the MCQP. This process of production became established as a blueprint for the MCQP’s success and consistency through its methodological refinement after the unexpected success of the *Locker Room* in 1994 and subsequent early events at the River Club. Through Vorster’s continued presence, creative direction and attention to detail the MCQP was able to repeat this process on five occasions with variable success and continuity after leaving the River Club venue in 1998.

The deceptively simple sounding Fabulosity Formula consists of making all partygoers feel good at the MCQP through careful planning and sensory stimulation. Likened to a recipe by Vorster its ingredients include music, safety, light, sound, theme, costumes and visual effects. Attention to all the senses is important but for the fabulosity formula the visual senses have to be over stimulated. Pre-event hype, when combined with the theme and insistence on costumes, prompts investment and participation from partygoers. The sense of celebration and excitement is immediate on entering the MCQP with the traditional arrivals stage, considered the most important area and a MCQP “trademark right from the beginning”, that immediately gives a “sense of grandness” upon entering the event. This stage on which partygoers’ costumes are presented to the crowd is a

²⁵⁸ Stallybrass, Peter and White, Allon. 1986. *The politics and poetics of transgression*. London: Methuen.

relieving culmination of pre-MCQP investment and excitement and featured the same DJ every year until 2003.²⁵⁹ Despite the large scale of the MCQP, Vorster as host is ever present to add the personal touch and always seen to be having a good time rather than openly managing the event.²⁶⁰

The fabulosity formula has enabled the MCQP to operate as a mobile and temporary event, by design and circumstance, and still retain a level of continuity. With the *Locker Room* the MCQP established a preferred camp style, a “kitsch over the top aesthetic” or glamorous and eye catching décor manufactured from recycled or cheap materials that Vorster colourfully refers to as the “moffie maak mooi”²⁶¹ process. This style, dependant on creativity rather than money or manpower, integrates well with typically limited décor budgets and set up times as well as the event’s arts focus. The changing theme each year incorporated as a risqué and tongue in cheek play on words referring to different elements of the party works with the consistent style as the inspiration for installations and costumes. The style and theme of the MCQP are supported by Vorster’s emphasis on the party’s spatial planning incorporating the movement of people and placement of décor, music and services at the party. Vorster further emphasises the need and success of personal attention, awareness of and responsiveness to partygoer needs at the MCQP both in planning and marketing the event.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

²⁶⁰ Von Geusau, Robyn. 2003. Ms know-it-all. in *Shape*, December 2003. 116

²⁶¹ Although the translation loses some of its meaning, this Afrikaans phrase roughly translates as “queer makes beautiful”.

²⁶² Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

Practical consistency has performed a key, if less obvious, role in the fabulosity formula of which Vorster's continued presence as principal party planner has been invaluable. Planning and preparation of the MCQP is responsive to the anticipated and recognised needs of partygoers as well as to the venue, which acts as a source of both inspiration and opportunity. The promotion and marketing of the event is targeted and suited to specific groups of potential partygoers. Posters and flyers are distributed through the city by teams of Glitz Blitzers, promotional helpers dressed in costume according to the theme who create street level hype for the event. Colourful promotion at the start of what is the festive season in Cape Town usually guarantees the MCQP free media coverage in the weeks preceding the event. The layout of the event employs simple and practical principles to ensure a pleasurable party experience for a multitude of partygoers: intimate spaces, ease of access to bars and food, ample facilities, shelter from the elements, comfortable areas for relaxation, musical variety, and bright colours. The scale and skill of the fabulosity formula's application impresses in venues that traditionally would not lend themselves to being inviting party spaces and therefore may offer an assortment of problems for MCQP production: ornate exaggerated size costumes and small entrances, uneven and slippery surfaces for dance floors, stairs and uneven floors for partygoers unaccustomed to wearing high heels and unwieldy costumes, voluminous hard surface spaces and sound quality have all challenged the MCQP in its move to the city centre.

Consistent adherence to the original MCQP principles and core elements has contributed to its continued popularity. Non-ageist, non-sexist and non-racist policies, an inclusive and inviting definition of queer, celebration of sexual difference as opposed to advocacy

or activism, collaborative creativity expressed through décor and costumes, anonymity and sexual orientation flexibility through performance and costumes have all welcomed a mixture of partygoers into a variety of intimate and social spaces where they feel comfortable to explore, express or experiment with their identity.

- **The formulaic decline of the MCQP**

Just as the recognised formulation of the best of the MCQP is an acknowledgment of the event's transferable appeal and success, so too is this formula cause for concern. Looking back on the first ten years of the MCQP Vorster recognised that the party was "starting to be repetitive" and that the formula would lead to its demise. There was a need to "reinvent" the MCQP at this tenth anniversary "juncture" characterised by the difficulty in balancing the "upmarket" versus "sleazy" preferences of MCQP partygoers, or what Vorster refers to as "that difficult balance of not killing the goose that lays the golden egg".²⁶³

The two periods of self stated success for the MCQP are intertwined with the event's formulaic decline. Vorster, a keen follower of technological development, reminisces on the lost standard and style of costumes of the early MCQP parties, in particular the success of *Twinkly Sea* in 1996.

"you don't actually have time to sit with scissors and sequins and sit with your friends making costumes. That's definitely changed, the technology has advanced

²⁶³ Ibid.

so much it just changed the way people's creativity works and more creative people sit now with a keyboard than with a pair of scissors and crayon"²⁶⁴

The technology assisted decline in the handmade costume process reverberated into other areas of the MCQP, notably the reach of the party beyond a single evening and the pre-event investment of partygoers in the MCQP. According to Vorster partygoers no longer gathered prior to the MCQP to make costumes, rather investing less time and energy in favour of money into the process. As the handmade "moffie maak mooi" style and standard of costumes declined in the later years of the MCQP, so too did the décor as the event moved into a series of larger scale and architecturally imposing venues in the city centre. Whilst the minimal décor strategies of *Heavenly Bodies* at the Artscape and *The Wedding* at the Castle of Good Hope are favourably remembered by the MCQP, similar décor strategies at the Good Hope Centre and CTICC are not. Plagued by size related décor problems, high venue rental expenses, limited setup time and no historical contention to capitalise on, these latter events were a harsh realisation for the MCQP that the event could not be reinvented through the venue alone.²⁶⁵

- **From subcultural marginalisation to commercial respectability**

The early success and popularity of the MCQP is characterised by its non-normative and marginal interests in and practices of a queer celebration of sexual difference expressed through its costumed dress, dance, thematically informed language and media in publicly accessible venues that helped to formulate a temporary queer social identity for its

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

partygoers.²⁶⁶ The camp style and kitsch aesthetic that became synonymous with the spectacularly subcultural MCQP, in conjunction with costume and décor during its initial time at the River Club and later, intentionally communicated these interests and practices that informed the event's mobility and adaptability. The favourable yet consistently blasé and curious attitude of the media attention towards the MCQP which followed, helped to exoticise the event and led to its transformation away from its subcultural beginnings.²⁶⁷

The MCQP struggled to maintain a distinction between commercial exploitation and creative originality as its contribution to "Cape Town's status as Africa's gay tourism capital" was recognised. As the gay tourism niche market in Cape Town increased the MCQP became recognised as a "most important event" in special events tourism. In a less than successful year by its own admission, *Toybox* in 2000, the MCQP "generated more than R50 million from a single event" to raise its tourism industry profile and expectations.²⁶⁸ As the MCQP became increasingly formulaic in its production it developed into an event that played an important role in the establishment of Cape Town and South Africa as a recognised gay tourism destination, demonstrated by its favourable international advertisement and its expected notable contribution to a diversifying local tourism market.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Gelder, Ken. 2005. Introduction: the field of subcultural studies. in *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge.

²⁶⁷ Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture: the meaning of style*. London: Methuen.

²⁶⁸ Visser, Gustav. 2002. Gay tourism in South Africa: issues from the Cape Town experience. *Urban Forum* 13, 1. 89

²⁶⁹ Visser, Gustav. 2003. Gay men, tourism and urban space: reflections on Africa's 'gay capital'. in *Tourism Geographies*, 5 (2), 2003. 173-177.

The reputation of the event as an incident free party devoid of violence and vandalism has, in Vorster's opinion, helped the MCQP secure public and conservative venues in the city centre.²⁷⁰ Its continued popularity after three such occasions coupled with the MCQP's prominent position in the gay tourism industry, and therein accessibility to the valued and potentially profitable gay consumer might well have appealed to the newly opened CTICC in 2003. The equivalent value of domestic media coverage for *Kitsch Kitchen* which attracted almost 7000 partygoers, between September and December 2003, was estimated to be R800 000.²⁷¹

According to Borland the CTICC treated the MCQP and Vorster with a fair amount of respect because of the MCQP's "position in the city" and their interest in the "pink Rand", rather than an interest in gay or queer politics suggesting that the MCQP was an opportunity to promote the CTICC to this market. He further remarks that their reluctance to invest in the MCQP, despite an awareness of their fine reputation, resulted in the CTICC's amazement as to "how many people came and what kind of people came and what the vibe was".²⁷² Despite the MCQP's increasing formalisation and commercialisation upon its move to the city centre, the event was still able to defy its complete mainstream incorporation and commodification thanks in part to its emphasis on the creative use of recycled and cheap materials.²⁷³ The MCQP was consequently able

²⁷⁰ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

²⁷¹ A 'Pink' Rand...penetrating the gay market. 2004. www.bizcommunity.com accessed 10 May 2006

²⁷² Ralph Borland interview 26 May 2004

²⁷³ Stratton, Jon. 1997. On the importance of subcultural origins. in Gelder, Ken and Thornton, Sarah. Eds. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge. 183-188.

to, in the corporate and conventional setting of the CTICC, creatively use the space in a way that countered its dominant discourse and daily use or commodification.²⁷⁴

- **The racial politics of the MCQP**

Despite the MCQP's core policies of non-ageism, non-sexism and non-racism the event in practice is a predominantly white affair and effectively remains an exclusive event. Attendance at an MCQP party requires a level of interest in the event and its sexual politics to which a measure of commitment is required through purchasing a ticket, forming a team of partygoers, creating a costume and arriving at the venue.

The apartheid era gay and lesbian experience was socially and racially diverse, finding expression across all races and social classes in South Africa. This is particularly so for the Cape where an established drag scene in the coloured community was documented in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷⁵ However very little of this is evident at the MCQP which far more resembles the exclusive gay social spaces of Cape Town, and the stratified gay community, that have resulted from the white, male, middle class bias of apartheid.²⁷⁶

This stratified and exclusive element to the MCQP is at first a surprising concern given the policies of the MCQP and Vorster's informed and socially aware nature. The social

²⁷⁴ Borden, Iain. 2005. Performing the city. in Gelder, Ken. Ed. *The subcultures reader*. London: Routledge. 256-268.

²⁷⁵ Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. 1994. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

²⁷⁶ Visser, Gustav. 2003. Gay men, tourism and urban space: reflections on Africa's 'gay capital'. in *Tourism Geographies*, 5 (2), 2003. 168-189

agenda of the MCQP celebrates both democracy and freedom of sexual orientation, however it does not claim to represent all of the gay community in Cape Town. The MCQP further purposefully chose celebration of achievement through an inclusive definition of queer, rather than to continue with the sexual and social advocacy and activism of apartheid. It is conceivable that given the socio-economic polarisation of Cape Town²⁷⁷, and the challenges it faces towards integration²⁷⁸, that many potential coloured and black partygoers may not find the MCQP either welcoming or accessible and that this will remain the case unless directly resolved.

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²⁷⁷ Pieterse, Edgar. 2002. From divided to integrated city? in *Urban Forum* January-March 2002, Vol. 13 Issue 1. 3-37

²⁷⁸ Pieterse, Edgar. 2005. Long-distance non-racism does not work. in *Cape Times*, 16 March 2005. 11.

6. The spaces of the MCQP: Temporarily queer but permanently postapartheid

- **A brief postapartheid background to the MCQP**

The history of the MCQP prior to the staging of *Kitsch Kitchen* at the CTICC in December 2003 provides an informative guide to the movement of the MCQP to, from and through the city centre of Cape Town and also offers a new lens through which to read its social and cultural landscape. During this period, from 1994 to the end of 2003, South Africa experienced its first 10 years of democratic rule and a consequent political liberalisation. The country benefited from the early 1990s repeal of discriminatory laws, a revoking of the state of emergency and the unbanning of anti-apartheid social and political organisations. The social and cultural conservatism of apartheid rule was replaced by a Government of National Unity in 1994 which set upon dismantling the social relations of apartheid and forging a new democratic, equitable, non-racist and non-sexist society.²⁷⁹

The freedoms accompanying the first ten years of democratic rule in South Africa brought with them the benefits of a democratic political framework, of which the Constitution and Bill of Rights are key components. Reconciliation and nation building were expressed through national symbols and sporting events, and through the public accountability and transparency of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission revelations. Equity and social justice were advanced and the imbalance of basic needs provision began to be corrected through a programme of social development and economic

²⁷⁹ About SA: history. South African Government Information www.info.gov.za accessed 10 May 2006

transformation established in part through Black economic empowerment and affirmative action. Additionally there remains a recognition that the socio-economic and political transformation is incomplete and still faces social development challenges relating to basic human needs satisfaction.²⁸⁰

Against this background the MCQP began in 1994 to celebrate freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation enshrined first in the Interim Constitution and later in the democratic cornerstone chapter of the South African Constitution adopted in 1996, The Bill of Rights.²⁸¹ The importance of the constitution to the country is its reflection in content of the concerns and aspirations of all South Africans expressed in the interest of a better future²⁸² from which the protection of sexual orientation choice stems. This provided a catalyst for the creation of the MCQP and legitimacy as a celebratory event rather than an act of protest. Similarly the nation building expectations attached to South African participation and successes in the international sporting arena of the mid 1990s provided a widely supported thematic springboard from which the first MCQP could launch and capitalise on.

²⁸⁰ Maloka, Eddy. The fruits of freedom. in Turning points in history book 6: negotiation, transition and freedom. *South African History Online* www.sahistory.org accessed 10 May 2006

²⁸¹ Chapter 2 – Bill of Rights. in The Constitution of South Africa. South African Government Information www.info.gov.za accessed 10 May 2006

²⁸² Ebrahim, Hassen. The South African constitution: birth certificate of a nation. in Turning points in history book 6: negotiation, transition and freedom. *South African History Online* www.sahistory.org accessed 10 May 2006

- **The postapartheid city as a contested space**

The urban context in which the MCQP celebrated, democratic freedoms and rights associated with sexual orientation, remained unsurprisingly comparable to that of the contested apartheid city. In retrospect it was considered unlikely that the apartheid city would experience liberating social change through the 1994 democratic transformation as it was inevitable that new forms of power would emerge and urban problems characteristic of apartheid would remain after its end.²⁸³ This was in part due to the consideration that city planning was essential to the exercise and maintenance of apartheid power relations, in the apartheid city, where the spaces of the built environment mediated and facilitated these power relations.²⁸⁴

The origins, nature and challenge of the problems that faced South African cities in their urban transition, and their function as part of the apartheid social system, began in the 1970s and climaxed in the 1990s.²⁸⁵ The accelerated urbanisation of South African cities in the latter stages of apartheid was expected to allow divisions and differences of class and race to continue to negatively influence urban life.²⁸⁶ The continued dominance of apartheid history in South African cities was anticipated to be accompanied by potential inner city decline and increased middle class suburbanisation, unemployment, housing

²⁸³ Robinson, Jennifer. 1992. Power, space and the city: historical reflections on apartheid and post-apartheid urban orders. in Smith, David M. Ed. *The apartheid city and beyond: urbanization and social change in South Africa*. London: Routledge

²⁸⁴ Robinson, Jennifer. 1996. *The power of apartheid: state, power and space in South African cities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

²⁸⁵ Swilling, Mark. Humphries, Richard and Shubane, Khela. Eds. 1991. *Apartheid city in transition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²⁸⁶ Smith, David M. Ed. 1992. *The apartheid city and beyond: urbanization and social change in South Africa*. London: Routledge.

shortages and crime characterised by the coexistence of white affluence with black poverty.²⁸⁷

The continued influence of modernist architecture, on planning discourses post apartheid, is expressed through concerns over efficiency, spatial form, development, function and a city's economic contribution. The relevance of the social and political context is illustrated by continued modernist influence working for compact, integrated, accessible postapartheid cities.²⁸⁸ The ability of a modernist planning discourse to ameliorate, the continued urban challenges and problems of the postapartheid city, is questionable in light of criticism directed at its homogenising impulses and the ahistorical exoticising potential of its multiculturalist alternative.²⁸⁹ Consequently there is a need for greater contextual awareness and understanding in both research and planning.²⁹⁰

How to respond to the great social and spatial divisions of postapartheid cities, typified by Cape Town's fragmented, segregated, inefficient and inequitable structure and city form is contested. Policy consensus faces variable levels of commitment, diversity and lack of consensus of approaches which implies continuity with the past rather than transformation.²⁹¹ Urban integration, including enhanced social integration across class

²⁸⁷ Morris, Alan. 1998. Continuity or rupture: the city, post-apartheid. in *Social Research*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Winter 1998). 759-775. 773

²⁸⁸ Robinson, Jennifer. 1996. *The power of apartheid: state, power and space in South African cities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

²⁸⁹ Robins, Steven. 1998. Spicing up the multicultural (post-)apartheid city. in *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* No. 25, pre-millennium issue 1998/1999.

²⁹⁰ Watson, Vanessa. 2003. Urban research, planning and action – their relationship in the context of metropolitan Cape Town. in Haferburg, C and Ossenbrügge, J. Eds. *Ambiguous restructurings of post apartheid Cape Town: The spatial form of socio-political change*. Hamburg: Lit. 63.

²⁹¹ Turok, Ivan. 2000. *Persistent polarisation post-apartheid? Progress towards urban integration in Cape Town*. Discussion Paper No. 1. Urban Change and Policy Research Group, University of Glasgow.

and cultural boundaries is urgently needed for the city.²⁹² Cape Town has become increasingly fortified and is characterised by privatised suburban middle class security concerns, shopping centres and gated communities juxtaposed by wealth, race and class against urban ghettos of increasing poverty and daily violence. These postapartheid socio-spatial inequalities, and their increasingly postmodern responses, are expected to continue to be reproduced despite desegregating planning initiatives to the contrary.²⁹³

The confrontation of marginalised communities and city management in the city centre of Cape Town raises questions of public space access, effective civic action and articulations of citizenship, such that new or unusual means are sought as a result of this disempowerment.²⁹⁴ Conceptions of Cape Town as a European and modernist city continue to negatively affect efforts to improve the contested space of the inner city requiring a redefinition and reinterpretation of prevailing modernist conceptions.²⁹⁵

Robinson proposes that to look beyond the spaces, and reject the normalised conceptions, of the apartheid city requires imagination. In everyday life new spaces are encountered, in the production of meaning of space and their transformation, through the body, the

²⁹² Pieterse, Edgar. 2005. Long-distance non-racism does not work. in *Cape Times*, 16 March 2005. 11.

²⁹³ Robins, Steven. 2002. At the limits of spatial governmentality: a message from the tip of Africa. in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 23, No 4. 665-689

²⁹⁴ Klopper, Sandra. 2003. Global tourism, marginalised communities and the development of Cape Town's City Bowl area. in Chidester, David. Dexter, Phillip and James, Wilmot. Eds. *What holds us together: social cohesion in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. 229-235

²⁹⁵ Nahnsen, Antje. 2003. Discourses and procedures of desire and fear in the re-making of Cape Town's central city: The need for a spatial politics of reconciliation. in Haferburg, C and Ossenbrügge, J. Eds. *Ambiguous restructurings of post apartheid Cape Town: The spatial form of socio-political change*. Hamburg: Lit. 144

unconscious and the imagination.²⁹⁶ Similarly Simone suggests that the fragmented and problematic nature of postapartheid cities may also present opportunities rather than simply challenges.²⁹⁷ The MCQP began and established itself in the context of a spatially contested postapartheid city, characterised by many of the same problems and challenges that faced the it prior to 1994. With the move of the MCQP to the city centre the contested nature of the city and event's venues began to inform the party as the MCQP's queer agenda became increasingly spatially articulated. Just as Robinson argues that the linkage of space and power is well illustrated by strategies that involve territoriality in space, the MCQP's achieved mainstream approval and recognition through the temporary queer territorializing of contested spaces in the city centre.²⁹⁸

- **A queer experience of Cape Town**

The gay, or inclusively queer²⁹⁹, experience of the transition to democracy in South Africa is worth singling out for its direct relevance to Cape Town and the MCQP. Prior to 1994 the State repressed and regulated sexuality in South Africa by means of a puritanical and heterosexist policy. Specific hostility was directed to those sexually orientated outside of the white Christian Nationalist apartheid ideology of sexual and moral purity. This provided for a climate of apathy towards and normalisation of sexual

²⁹⁶ Robinson, Jennifer. 1998. (Im)mobilizing space – dreaming of change. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. *Blank_: architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

²⁹⁷ Simone, Abdoumalik. 2004. The right to the city. in *The Wiser Review*, No. 1, 2004. in *Mail & Guardian*, July 2-8, 2004. 11

²⁹⁸ Robinson, Jennifer. 1996. *The power of apartheid: state, power and space in South African cities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. 18-29

²⁹⁹ Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. 1995. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge.

discrimination.³⁰⁰ The situation under apartheid was such that gays, lesbians and any person who could be possibly identified as such through action or association could potentially be subject to sanctioned homophobia, discrimination, repression, persecution and arrest or would have to employ a level of denial or censure as a matter of personal safety or avoidance. The law or public disapproval were not evenly meted out as apartheid's racial and gender biasing ensured a range of experiences for blacks and whites, men and women that continued post apartheid.³⁰¹ The emergence of a black gay subculture in the 1980s signalled a shift from the white apolitical and accommodating politics characteristic of gay life from the late 1960s to a more assertive alignment of gay rights with human rights and a closer identification with the anti-apartheid liberation movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s.³⁰² As with elsewhere in South Africa the impact of HIV infection and the AIDS crisis became increasingly apparent in Cape Town from the early 1980s. Unlike Western Europe and North America the gay community was not yet well established and unable to mobilise against it, rather they were only from the early 1990s beginning to discover issues of communal integration and division.³⁰³

The city centre of Cape Town is the location for many of the city's gay commercial venues, which as public venues are visible and known to residents regardless of their

³⁰⁰ Retief, Glen. 1994. Keeping Sodom out of the laager: state repression of homosexuality in apartheid South Africa. in Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

³⁰¹ Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. 1994. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

³⁰² Gevisser, Mark. 1994. A different fight for freedom: a history of South African lesbian and gay organisation from the 1950s to 1990s. in Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

³⁰³ Pegge, John V. 1994. Living with loss in the best way we know how: AIDS and gay men in Cape Town. in Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

sexual orientation. The presence of these venues is not a recent phenomenon as gay friendly venues have been located here since the end of the nineteenth century. Their prominence can be accounted for as they became sites of gay pilgrimage during the 1940s and 1950s. These venues were welcoming of interracial mixing in the apartheid designated white residents only city centre. In contrast to popular impression, gay Cape Town is not locked into any particular physical location nor can it be meaningfully discussed as such, however close associations with particular areas do exist.³⁰⁴

By virtue of their privileged race and class position under apartheid white middle class gay men were able to claim and assert their identity through leisure and tourism consumption. As a consequence the leisure space economy that developed in most of the main metropolitan areas and which subsequently developed as “gay spaces” after 1994 have not generated new opportunities for all gay South Africans but continue to reflect the older apparatus of hierarchy and exclusion. Despite the variable representation and re-imagining of Cape Town as a gay tourism destination the impact of gay tourism has done little to develop a gay leisure space that does not continue to exclude the city’s broader gay community.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless Cape Town has been the primary beneficiary of considerable tourism growth in South Africa after 1994, constituting immense importance to the national economy, of which a significant portion of the niche tourism benefit is gay tourism. This confirms the city as the South African and the continent’s gay tourism capital. Subsequent international media exposure has strengthened its status and

³⁰⁴ Leap, William. 2005. Finding the centre: claiming gay space in Cape Town. in Van Zyl, Mikki and Steyn, Melissa. Eds. *Performing queer: shaping sexualities 1994 – 2004 – volume one*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

³⁰⁵ Visser, Gustav. 2003. Gay men, tourism and urban space: reflections on Africa’s ‘gay capital’. in *Tourism Geographies*, 5 (2), 2003. 168–189

has contributed to the establishment of gay-friendly tourism infrastructure, a growth in tolerance and the emergence of recognised gay leisure spaces in the city centre and on its periphery. The De Waterkant village developed from the mid 1990s offering a range of services and leisure opportunities is best known. Of the additional developments and special events organised to serve the increasing numbers of gay visitors, the temporary leisure space of the MCQP is regarded as most important.³⁰⁶

The development of Cape Town as a gay tourism destination has not been without controversy. The unsettling of sexual identities and norms in a shift away from the repressive apartheid era has resulted in public outcry and media outrage manifesting themselves in moral panics over matters of sexuality.³⁰⁷ Despite Cape Town Tourism's public recognition of gay tourism's economic value and contribution³⁰⁸, plans to promote the city as the "gay capital of the world" drew objection and criticism from religious groups claiming a misuse of public money, disapproval of marketing material as "vile" and "pornographic", concerns over a possible HIV infection increase and pandering to the needs and interests of the gay community.³⁰⁹ The controversy escalated as the resignation of Cape Town Tourism's manager and MCQP supporter, Sheryl Ozinsky who was accused of promoting her own personal lesbian agenda, was demanded in 2001 and the religious protesters took to the streets on the edge of the De Waterkant gay village in

³⁰⁶ Visser, Gustav. 2002. Gay tourism in South Africa: issues from the Cape Town experience. *Urban Forum* 13, 1. 85-94

³⁰⁷ Reid, Graham and Walker, Liz. 2004. Sex then and now: exploring South Africa's sexual histories. in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 50, May 2004. 77-83

³⁰⁸ Joseph, Natasha. 2001. Gay fest to put Cape Town R50m in the pink. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³⁰⁹ Williams, Murray. 2001. Religious outrage over pink tourism. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

demonstration.³¹⁰ Although the religious protests were not taken too seriously and gay people “responded with humour and tolerance to the furore”³¹¹, Ozinsky’s resolute determination to continue promoting Cape Town as a gay friendly destination despite homophobic objections was vindicated by the support of her organisation and its board.³¹² Although the gay consumer remains generally overlooked in South Africa the positive financial impact of gay tourism is evident specifically in Cape Town, where it predates the growth in the city’s international profile, wherein the MCQP’s contribution is recognised for its fame, longevity and success.³¹³

- **The spatially articulated politics of the MCQP in the city centre**

The MCQP began with the intention of bringing sexually and socially diverse people together through celebration by inviting them to adopt a transgressive, inclusive, questioning and creative queer attitude.³¹⁴ To facilitate this they provided a party venue as a space of interaction, a theme to inspire and unify the creative process, and insisted on costumes as a means to secure participation but also to manipulate identity and act as a catalyst for engagement. According to the organisers the original intentions of the MCQP were to revitalise and make relevant a marginalised art community in Cape Town through rigorously curated collaboration that was resourceful and ecologically aware, and to support the developing trend towards openness with respect to sexual difference. This

³¹⁰ Williams, Murray. 2001. Cape Town is not always a gay-friendly city. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³¹¹ Thiel, Gustav. 2001. Queer response to stink over pink tourism. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³¹² Joseph, Raymond. 2001. Ozinsky firm on Cape ‘gay friendly’ identity. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³¹³ A ‘Pink’ Rand...penetrating the gay market. 2004. www.bizcommunity.com accessed 10 May 2006

³¹⁴ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1994. *What is the locker room project?*

included bringing people together in a celebration of age, stylistic and sexual difference, and of the newly constitutional right to sexual difference. Thereby they sought to promote and improve Cape Town by looking inwards for cultural inspiration. By “turning politics into pleasure” these intentions were practically translated as the *Locker Room Project* in 1994³¹⁵ and the subsequent annual underground events at the River Club until 1998. Thereafter the queer agenda of the MCQP became more spatially articulated in the mainstream with the relocation of the MCQP to the city centre, and its staging at the Artscape Theatre, Good Hope Centre, Castle of Good Hope and the CTICC.

- **From Nico to Artscape**

The movement of the MCQP to the city centre of Cape Town, on the promise of City funding, was a move away from its “underground” status to mainstream recognition as the high profile and historically contested conservative space of the Artscape theatre (see figures 16 and 17) was secured as the 1999 venue for the *Heavenly Bodies* party. The move to the Artscape marked a change to how the MCQP approached and used its venue space, of how it referred to this process and a matured awareness of its effective spatial politics.

“The Nico Theatre complex and the arts board appointed to run it were mired in controversy from their inception. Named after a former Administrator of the Cape, the theatre quickly became the city’s most visible symbol of cultural apartheid, banning blacks from both stage and audience...the restrictions were

³¹⁵ MCQP promotional pamphlet. 1995. *The locker room project revisited / the secret garden project revealed*.

gradually lifted, but by then the state-run theatre's reputation was such that many continued to boycott it"³¹⁶

The name change of the Nico Malan to Artscape signified a change to community driven and sensitive direction of the theatre, replacing the bureaucratic cultural control of apartheid, transforming it into a playhouse for the people.³¹⁷ However changes to name and function were neither rapid nor uncontested as the issue occupied the news from as early as 1997³¹⁸ until over a year after *Heavenly Bodies* in December 1999.³¹⁹

Despite objections to the use of the theatre because of its complicity with the cultural apparatus of apartheid, the MCQP entered the debate concerning the future of the theatre through its staging of the event there. This they viewed as a "conquering" act which "reclaimed" that space with their "mix of gay subculture".³²⁰ The MCQP were excited about converting the "beautiful", "fascist style" "monolithic" Artscape into a party venue. By using strategically placed minimalist décor that highlighted and incorporated the architecture they gave the impression that the entire building was decorated. At the time of *Heavenly Bodies* the Artscape was in the process of changing its name but were reluctant to do so while Nico Malan's widow was still alive. This was considered absurd by the MCQP who refused to use both names as prescribed by the theatre, instead only referring to it as the "Artscape" in their promotion of the event. The hosting of the MCQP at the Artscape was seemingly sanctioned and supported by Cape Town Tourism and the

³¹⁶ Artscape needs a renamed Nico. 1999. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³¹⁷ Gainsborough-Waring, Tweet. 1999. Culture makes way for community as Nico is transformed into a playhouse for the people. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³¹⁸ Wilson, Derek. 1997. Nico to be more user friendly to community. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³¹⁹ Ben, Sergio. 2000. Nico gets set to do a Kamma chameleon. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³²⁰ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

City, as role players in the management and future of the theatre³²¹, the latter of which also supplied logistical support to the growing demands of the event due to its move to the city centre.³²²

- **Toybox**

The venue for the next MCQP, *Toybox* in 2000, was characterised by a central voluminous space and disjointed and distant peripheral spaces at the four corners of the building that formed the various party areas. While the Good Hope Centre (see figure 18), like the Artscape, was built during apartheid its multifunctional use of the all purpose spaces and unadorned cavernous central space by a variety of social, sporting, business and cultural occasions blurred its perceived complicity with apartheid interests such that a surprising absence of negative press concerning the building appears to exist. Like the CTICC the venue had been constantly rebranded according to event and apart from the noticeable curved structure of the roof very little of the architecture, as with its history, offered anything to the MCQP to work with in what was a bland and functional space despite an appealing layout and the famed international pedigree of the centre's Italian principal architect Pier Luigi Nervi. Buildings with the large uninterrupted spaces necessary for large gatherings are characteristic of Nervi's work, as is a multi-functionality of design philosophy.³²³ The MCQP, inexperienced in staging itself in such large and bare surrounds struggled to overcome problems of scale in decorating the venue and retaining the event's characteristic intimacy. Vorster is forthright about the general

³²¹ Coleman, Bianca. 1999. Time to camp it up with heavenly bodies. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

³²² Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

³²³ Positano, Giuseppe. 1977. Good hope centre. in *Architect and Builder*, December 1977. 2-9

disappointment and specific décor and acoustic failure of *Toybox*, and the inappropriateness of the Good Hope Centre as a venue for the MCQP particularly with respect to the historical and architectural appeal of the Artscape the year before.³²⁴

○ **A queer marriage at the Castle**

After a low key return to the River Club in 2001, the Castle of Good Hope was secured as the venue for *The Wedding* in 2002. Like the Artscape, the MCQP considered the castle “a beautiful architectural space” and a building with a “sense of meaning” that “represented apartheid to so many”. The MCQP consciously set about “conquering” this meaning with a similarly minimalist approach to décor, as in 1999 and 2000, that incorporated and showcased the venue’s architectural features and therein its history.³²⁵

The Castle was then the symbolic foundation point of European colonial occupation and civilisation in and of South Africa. Its air of mystique and unfamiliarity for many was cultivated from the restrictive access and conservative management associated with the South African Defence Force from the Second World War onwards.³²⁶ In 1952 the Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival commemorated the three hundredth anniversary of Jan Van Riebeeck’s arrival at the Cape. The festival was a promotion of white racial unity and a display of white settler domination and supremacy embodied in the form of

³²⁴ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Mrubata, Mbulelo. 2001. *The production of history at the castle of good hope in the 20th century*. University of the Western Cape masters thesis.

Jan Van Riebeeck.³²⁷ The festival's implicit themes of racism, exclusion and dominance claimed an institutional resting place in the Castle of Good Hope where for almost half a century the Castle, as South Africa's oldest European and colonial building, acted as monument to hegemonic apartheid rule founded on the manufactured memory of Jan Van Riebeeck as popularised symbol and iconic figure of national history.³²⁸

Since its proclamation as a national monument and the conclusion of lengthy publicly funded restoration work the Castle had become increasingly aware of its exclusionary image and consequently limited accessibility; originating from the colonial period and extending to the end of apartheid such that in the early 1990s the need to extend the histories on display and develop a broader affinity for the castle was identified.³²⁹ South Africa's decade of democracy beginning in 1994 brought new opportunities and challenges to the castle as artistic, social and cultural productions reflecting and engaging with South Africa's democratic transition were staged there. In the process the Castle attempted to redress its association with the National Party's hegemonic rule, and integrate new narratives with its selective and exclusionary European and military histories. This included a recognition of the history of Islam at the Cape³³⁰, an examination of the legacy of apartheid ideology through its spatial practice³³¹, and an

³²⁷ Witz, Leslie. 2003. *Apartheid's festival: contesting South Africa's national pasts*. Cape Town: David Philip.

³²⁸ Rassool, Ciraj and Witz, Leslie. 1993. The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck tercentenary festival: constructing and contesting public national history in South Africa. In *Journal of African History*. Vol 34: No 3. 451

³²⁹ Gilbert, Cindy. 1994. *The castle of good hope: an examination of controversies and conflicting perceptions – a case study in public history*. University of Cape Town honours thesis.

³³⁰ Ward, Kerry Ruth. 1995. 300 years: the making of Cape Muslim culture exhibition, Cape Town, April 1994: liberating the castle?. In *Social Dynamics*. Vol 21, no. 1. 96-100

³³¹ Morphet, Tony. 1995. Review: setting apart. An installation by Hilton Judin in the castle, Cape Town. In *Social Dynamics* 21:1. 141-148

artistic engagement with issues emanating from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.³³²

Initially the MCQP were hesitant to try and gain permission to use the Castle, thinking that “growing up in the old South Africa those buildings never belonged to us” but Vorster believed that “after having occupied the Artscape and gone through that and going to the castle, this building actually belongs to me and all the MCQP partygoers” and by staging the event at the castle and linking it directly to the politics of the MCQP that the “building had this meaning that had changed”.³³³ Vorster speaks of the importance of hosting the event at the castle for its legacy of apartheid, military and cultural conservatism, as it was similarly held at the Artscape, as an act of reclamation.³³⁴ Despite military objection after the event, which prevented the MCQP returning in 2003, “the Castle had become the MCQP's venue of choice after last year's hugely successful event, attended by 7 000 people in fancy dress, its biggest attendance yet.”³³⁵

For the MCQP the Castle represented the last resistant space of apartheid conservatism in a city recognised as a “gay-friendly destination”³³⁶ to receive a queer intervention. Although press around *The Wedding* offered largely positive commentary, a religious group denounced the theme as a mockery of the religious institution of marriage and

³³² Neke, Gael. 1999. [Re]forming the past: South African art bound to apartheid. [online]. Available: <http://www.tcresearch.org.za/papers99/neke.pdf> [2004, June 1] 7

³³³ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Schoonakker, Bonny. 2003. Condom gripe puts gay party venue in doubt. *Sunday Times*. October, 5.

³³⁶ Smetherham, Jo-Anne. 2001. Cape's Queer Project partygoers spent R50m. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004

considered the event a debauched desecration of a national monument.³³⁷ On the eve of the event a small group of religious protesters politely voiced their objection at the gates of the castle. Their impact was diluted as their similar dress confused them with arriving groups of partygoers, and their place of protest at the main entrance was decided by the MCQP who hoped to capitalise on the media exposure it generated.³³⁸ The MCQP sought to subvert and diffuse the contentious emotions of exclusion and conservatism associated with the castle by overcoming its defensiveness through *The Wedding*³³⁹, not without precedent, by building on its popular memory and physical features. As with the Artscape in 1999 the space of the venue was intentionally prominent above décor and combined with its social and cultural legacies to promote the event.

- **The spatial politics of the MCQP consolidated**

Vorster attributes part of the success of the MCQP in securing high profile venues in the city centre, such as the Artscape, Good Hope Centre, Castle of Good Hope and the CTICC, to the good reputation established in the event's early years at the River Club. As a consequence of this he feels that the MCQP has played a role in the broader democratic and liberalisation process in the city, best illustrated in his opinion by *The Wedding* at the castle.³⁴⁰ To use Lefebvre's explanation, at these events the lived space of the MCQP, paradoxically also a conceived but temporary space, occupied the conceived space of the venues. In so doing the meaning of the spaces was changed and appropriated,

³³⁷ McGill, Jeanine. 2002. "The Wedding" was more like an orgy. *African Christian Action* media release. www.christianaction.org.za accessed 1 July 2004

³³⁸ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

³³⁹ Steenkamp, Willem. Queer brigade overcomes the Castle's defences. in *The Star* 16 December 2002. 3

³⁴⁰ Andre Vorster interview 25 May 2004

temporarily, by the partygoers' imagination as new users of those spaces. In turn, this occupation reflected on the monumental attributes of these spaces as collective mirrors to a more liberal and equitable society thanks, in part due to, in Vorster's opinion, the work of the MCQP.³⁴¹ *Heavenly Bodies* and *The Wedding* were well received by the media, both attracting approximately 6000 partygoers each³⁴², a significant increase from the less than 2000 partygoers in 1994.³⁴³ Both are memorable events for the MCQP, in particular *The Wedding* which "to a lot of people that was the highlight out of all of them because of that sense of meaning of the building."³⁴⁴

The relocation of the MCQP to the city centre subverted the trend of carnivalesque activity marginalisation and reinvented the party from a peripheral space of carnivalesque pleasure to a central, albeit temporary, space.³⁴⁵ The MCQP's incorporation of architecture and history at the Artscape, Castle and to a lesser degree at the Good Hope Centre into the events' queer politics created a carnivalesque space of people's raised awareness of their influence in combination with a realisation that the established authority and truth of these venues' pasts was relative.³⁴⁶ The MCQP, with *Heavenly Bodies* and *The Wedding*, spatially applied its transgressive, questioning and experimental definition of queer to incorporate the venue into the celebration. By highlighting the architecture and buildings of the Artscape and Castle of Good Hope the MCQP also highlighted their conservative and oppressive apartheid histories, which were

³⁴¹ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The production of space*. Cambridge: Blackwell. 220-224.

³⁴² Bamford, Helen. 1999. Queer creatures party all night long. www.iol.co.za accessed 1 July 2004; Steenkamp, Willem. Queer brigade overcomes the Castle's defences. in *The Star* 16 December 2002. 3

³⁴³ Jolly, Lucinda. 1994. Mother city queer project. in *ADA* issue 13. 60

³⁴⁴ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

³⁴⁵ Stallybrass, Peter and White, Allon. 1986. *The politics and poetics of transgression*. London: Methuen. 178-182

³⁴⁶ Bakhtin, Michael. 1968. *Rabelais and his world*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 10

then incorporated into the event and its democratic celebration of sexual and social difference. In so doing the MCQP sought to reclaim those spaces aesthetically through décor, functionally through celebration, and historically by associating them with self-identifying queer partygoers and the event itself. Thereby the MCQP sought to restore collective meaning of these spaces, as well as redirect and reshape the broadcast of these monumental buildings' exclusionary and tainted meaning.³⁴⁷

Vorster refers to the MCQP as “a gathering of like minded people” that claims to have avoided being political for its unwillingness to advocate or campaign on issues such as HIV/AIDS, rather using the event and the media it generates “to send out positive information about Cape Town”.³⁴⁸ The MCQP's stated queer political agenda of its origin did not become spatially articulated until the event was ready to shed its subcultural mantle and was staged at the Artscape Theatre in 1999. Prior to this the spaces of the party were designed and decorated to suit the thematic and social needs of each party with limited concern for the venue beyond its practical prospects. Mainstream approval, increased popularity, heightened visibility and a growing awareness of its influence and stature all contributed to the MCQP's recognition of its spatial politics prior to *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003.

The MCQP events staged in the city centre are of particular interest and immediate relevance to *Kitsch Kitchen* as they provide precedent of the event's popularity and acceptance, inclusiveness and accessibility, resilience to protest and opposition,

³⁴⁷ Bunn, David. 1998. White sepulchres: on the reluctance of monuments. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. *Blank_ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

³⁴⁸ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

mainstream recognition, established media presence and ability to attract media coverage, contribution to city tourism, and connection to the profitable gay consumer market. In addition the MCQP had a history of event success, was familiar with using large venues, and was experienced in positively integrating high profile venues with the event. In this light it is then not surprising that a newly built convention centre, such as the CTICC, anticipated to make a noteworthy economic contribution to the city³⁴⁹ would look to host the MCQP not only for its popularity or connections with gay consumers but also for its ability and intention of drawing venues into a temporary public domain of shared meaningful exchange.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Cape Town convention centre will earn R11bn. in *Cape Times*, 18 February 2001. 3

³⁵⁰ Hajer, Maarten and Reijndorp, Arnold. 2001. *In search of new public domain*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.

7. The MCQP at the CTICC in December 2003: *Kitsch Kitchen*

Kitsch Kitchen at the Cape Town International Convention Centre was the tenth annual MCQP party and the fourth to be held in the city centre of Cape Town. On the eve of 13 December 2003 the MCQP swung into the city's newest flagship development on a pink glitter ball to temporarily replace convention and delegates with celebration and queer partygoers. This, more so than the CTICC's other brief departures from its business image and extension of its welcome beyond the conference rooms and exhibition halls to the foyers and passages for a night of queer celebration, introduced the centre to a new set of functional possibilities and potential users, as well as raising questions of its civic contribution beyond the business of convention.

This chapter will briefly contextualise the physical and historical development of the CTICC. In doing so the expectations and intentions of the Centre will be discussed, as will the spaces of the CTICC. This will be used as a point of reference to a detailed discussion of the preparation and execution of the MCQP. *Kitsch Kitchen* will then be analysed and evaluated in the context of the CTICC and with the application of relevant theory.

- **The foreshore, the central city, the CTICC and surrounds** (see figures 19 and 20)

The CTICC is a new and important building for the city of Cape Town. Barely half a year old when the MCQP was hosted there in December of 2003, the CTICC had been eagerly anticipated for its projected economic, tourism and development contributions to the city, province and country.³⁵¹ Despite being a relatively recent construction the CTICC's development had been well documented as it was set to become the latest addition, following Durban and Sandton, to South Africa's claim for a significant portion of the international convention industry.³⁵² The CTICC began regularly occupying news headlines from early 2001 in anticipation of its construction and economic contribution.³⁵³

The reclamation of the Foreshore, where the CTICC now sits, in the early 1940s precipitated the cutting off of the city's centre from its shoreline and sea by the elevated highway and the characteristic imposing scale of the apartheid modernist building project.³⁵⁴ In 1952 the area hosted the Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival, this politically charged event marked the absorption of the city into the apartheid state³⁵⁵ later amplified by the impersonal and totalitarian scale of modernist building and elevated

³⁵¹ Hood, Tom. 2001. New convention centre will bring world to Cape. *www.sundaytimes.co.za* accessed 21 June 2004

³⁵² Putting Africa on convention map. *www.sundaytimes.co.za* accessed 21 June 2004

³⁵³ Thiel, Gustav. 2001. Multimillion convention centre gets underway. in *Cape Times*, 10 April 2001. 3; Cresswell, Ryan. 2001. Cape Town gets R6bn development boost. in *Cape Argus*, 19 February 2001. 1

³⁵⁴ Chipkin, Clive. 1998. The great apartheid building boom: the transformation of Johannesburg in the 1960s. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. 1998. *Blank_: architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

³⁵⁵ Witz, Leslie. 2003. *Apartheid's festival: contesting South Africa's national pasts*. Cape Town: David Philip.

highway development from the 1950s to the 1970s. The Foreshore has since its early days been associated with the interests of State and Capital through their tenancy of the area. Historian Nigel Worden retrospectively points out that the “Physical ugliness and the destruction of the city’s maritime character were thus easily associated with evils of the apartheid decades.”³⁵⁶

The Foreshore by virtue of its recent reclamation under a controlling government was fortunate to avoid the historical contestation associated with the area of the nearby popular harbour and dockland redevelopment of the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. Worden’s description of the Waterfront’s selective, particular and exclusionary construction of identity, incorporation of nostalgia and practice of heritage in its development and promotion³⁵⁷ has not affected the CTICC. Unlike the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront the CTICC is not a historical redevelopment, makes no claims for nostalgia or heritage and does not present itself as a public space; however this does not exclude it from questions of purpose and function.

The CTICC features as a key attraction for investment due to its popularity, location and quality of facilities in promotional material of the Cape Town Partnership, the public private partnership facilitating management solutions in the interest of central city revitalisation:

³⁵⁶ Worden, Nigel. 1996. Contested heritage at the Cape Town waterfront. in *International Journal of Heritage Studies* Vol. 2 (1 & 2). 64

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

“Located in Cape Town’s Foreshore in the Central City, the CTICC provides flexibility without compromise and the most modern amenities and technology as mandatory ingredients.”³⁵⁸

Among other aims, the partnership seeks to encourage the city as a leading centre for commercial, tourism and leisure activities of which the City Improvement District (CID) is a key component.³⁵⁹ The CID, which surrounds the CTICC, was established with the belief that it was the best model by which the public and private sectors could improve the urban environment of the central city. The CID is responsive to business and tourism concerns, prioritising security and cleansing, but also points out its initiative to assist with the rehabilitation of the homeless.³⁶⁰ Such an acknowledgement nevertheless obscures less favourable trends associated with CIDs, such as the exclusion of marginalised socioeconomic and subcultural groups to the detriment of cosmopolitanism and diversity that normalises middle class values³⁶¹, or the modification of social behaviour as a result of increased CCTV surveillance.³⁶² This is illustrated for Cape Town by the negative influence of globalisation and tourism on marginalised communities in the city centre³⁶³, and the need for a new conception of public urban space, supported by city management practice that reinterprets the city as a representative socio-cultural construct.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁸ *Cape Town’s central city: an investment opportunity*. Cape Town Partnership promotional brochure.

³⁵⁹ *Cape Town Partnership*. Cape Town Partnership promotional pamphlet.

³⁶⁰ *Making Cape Town’s Central City Work*. Cape Town Central City Improvement District promotional pamphlet.

³⁶¹ Graham, Stephen and Marvin, Simon. 2001. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. London: Routledge. 232-233 & 261-263

³⁶² Norris, Clive and Armstrong, Gary. 1999. *The maximum surveillance society: the rise of CCTV*. Oxford: Berg.

³⁶³ Klopper, Sandra. 2003. Global tourism, marginalised communities and the development of Cape Town’s City Bowl area. in Chidester, David, Dexter, Phillip and James, Wilmot. Eds. *What holds us together: social cohesion in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

³⁶⁴ Nahnsen, Antje. 2003. Discourses and procedures of desire and fear in the re-making of Cape Town’s central city: The need for a spatial politics of reconciliation. in Haferburg, C and Ossenbrügge, J. Eds. *Ambiguous restructurings of post apartheid Cape Town: The spatial form of socio-political change*. Hamburg: Lit.

The CTICC is within easy walking distance of numerous hotels, including the onsite Arabella Sheraton, as well as being in close proximity to other attractions and resources: the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront to the North West; the shopping and business centres of St George's Mall, Adderley Street and Long Street to the South; the Cape Town train station also in the South. In addition the CTICC is located adjacent to the busy national highway / Coen Steytler Avenue / Buitengracht intersection linking the central city to the Waterfront, Atlantic seaboard, Southern and Northern suburbs and has an entrance on the Heerengracht traffic circle, the head of one of the city's historic modernist era boulevards linked to the parliamentary and museum precinct. The central city of Cape Town is not large, most of it covered by the CID, and the CTICC seemingly well positioned to benefit from and further propel the improvements to public transport infrastructure³⁶⁵, crime reduction³⁶⁶, residential property³⁶⁷ and a vibrant city centre³⁶⁸ as expected for the 2003.³⁶⁹

- **The development of the Convention Centre**

The CTICC, partially financed by SunWest as condition of its successful application for the Cape Metro casino license³⁷⁰, came to Cape Town with expectations of its

³⁶⁵ Powell, Anél. Cape Town inner city set for major facelift. *Cape Times*, 5 October 2005. 5

³⁶⁶ Smetherham, Jo-Anne. CID makes its mark on city as crime vanishes. in *Cape Times*, 29 October 2004. 3

³⁶⁷ Morrison, Matt. Cape CBD property boom overflows. in *Cape Times*, 1 June 2005. 3

³⁶⁸ Smith, Ashley. Plans to keep Cape Town's heart beating 24/7. in *Cape Argus*, 25 August 2005. 1

³⁶⁹ Smith, Ashley. Watershed year for Cape Town partnership. in *Cape Times*, 20 October 2002. 3

³⁷⁰ Loxton, Lynda. 1999. SunWest to fast track R1,5bn Cape Casino. in *Cape Times Business Report 1999-12-06*. www.iol.co.za accessed 4 April 2006

contribution to the local and national economies, stimulation of the tourism industry, heightened international status of the city and urban regeneration of the foreshore.³⁷¹

In 1994 the casino industry in South Africa was estimated to worth approximately R3.2 billion per year, contributing roughly 1% to the GDP; and was considered an important source for the job creation. Despite this gambling was not considered a major tourist attraction. For casinos to flourish they needed to be linked to another industry in order to offer a complimentary and varied tourism experience. At the time the world conference market was estimated to be worth approximately 21.1 million delegate days growing at 10% per annum of which South Africa could possibly capture 10% of this market. The possibility of mass job creation provided for a situation where casinos would be able to provide for the necessary subsidisation of international standard conference facilities. This would provide for an effective bid for a portion of the world conference market on the back of South Africa's existing and developing tourism industry.³⁷²

At the time of its opening the projected economic contribution of the CTICC was an expected contribution of R1.2 billion to the national GDP over two years of construction and a cumulative contribution to the GDP in the first ten years of operation of R25 billion; generating 4000 direct and 14000 indirect jobs increasing to over 47000 jobs by 2012. The predicted contribution however of the CTICC to its immediate environment in the city, in economic or other terms, was less sure: transforming the site and location from a "dirty, dusty and unsafe environment to a place that is clean, friendly and

³⁷¹ Weaver, Tony. Cape Town favoured as international venue. in *The Star*, 10 September 2002. 3

³⁷² Seymour, James. 1994. *An introduction to the potential of establishing medium size conference facilities in conjunction with casinos*. SATOUR. 2-9

attractive”.³⁷³ Convention centre developments are seldom autonomously functioning or independently successful, rather depending and relying on existent infrastructure and attractions to sustain themselves. The CTICC situated itself between Cape Town’s established tourism draw cards of Table Mountain and the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, to be joined to the waterfront by the proposed aquatic green belt of the Roggebaai Canal.

Prior to its commencement the two kilometre canal development was “expected to transform lower Cape Town”, link the Heerengracht and the Cape Town foreshore with the Waterfront, and “greatly improve contact between the sea and city”. International examples of the ability of canals and canal developments to lead to the “transformation and upgrading” of areas, “promote a wide range of ancillary development”, “revitalise a district” and interact with existing infrastructure were referred to in expectation of the Roggebaai Canal’s success.³⁷⁴ The canal and most of the ancillary development on its banks, including the CTICC, were expected to be completed in time for the opening of the convention centre in 2003. This development was considered the initial phase of a broader plan to link public spaces in the city for pedestrians, including Convention Square between the CTICC and the Arabella Sheraton hotel, that would “create a vibrant, healthy and desirable city for all its citizens”. The belief that “the area could

³⁷³ Standish, Barry. 2002. *Cape Town International Convention Centre: The projected economic contribution*. DPRU Working Paper No 02/70, August 2002. Cape Town: Development Policy Research Unit University of Cape Town. 1

³⁷⁴ Bosch, Sarah-Jane. 2000. Canal expected to transform lower Cape Town. www.iol.co.za. accessed 1 July 2004

become a new entertainment hub for the city” was considered supportive of the Cape Town Partnership’s plans to “revitalise” the city centre.³⁷⁵

In the development and construction process the spatially transformative and economic stimulus appeal of the Roggebaai Canal, developed by CTICC financiers SunWest, matched and was closely linked to the Convention Centre:

“Because of the Roggebaai Canal, the convention centre will link the Waterfront to the city in a direct and meaningful way. It will overcome the unsightly and dangerous routes that pedestrians are currently forced to use....the convention centre will transform a dirty, dusty, unsightly and generally unattractive foreshore into a clean and safe tourist attraction. This will not be due solely to the convention centre.”³⁷⁶

In a city of dislocated public spaces the possibility of linking these spaces, improving their accessibility, re-establishing the city’s historical link to the sea by subverting the impersonal apartheid building of the foreshore with an accessible, lively and mixed land use green belt was vastly appealing not least of all for the CTICC. The close association in the media of the CTICC with the Roggebaai Canal area development was mutually beneficial. The convention centre continued to be primarily referred to in economic and financial discourses of development and contribution³⁷⁷ but with the Roggebaai Canal area development became intimately associated with a public space and mixed use plans for the foreshore that extended beyond the site of the CTICC. Unfortunately plans to

³⁷⁵ Steenkamp, Willem. 2001. Grand plan for Cape Town canal link. *Cape Argus*. 21 September 2001. 3

³⁷⁶ Standish, Barry. 2002. *Cape Town International Convention Centre: The projected economic contribution*. DPRU Working Paper No 02/70, August 2002. Cape Town: Development Policy Research Unit University of Cape Town. 4-5

³⁷⁷ Cape Town convention centre will earn R11bn. in *Cape Times*. 18 February 2001. 3; Smith, Ashley. Convention centre to bring R25bn into SA. in *Cape Times*. 4 July 2001. 3; Makinana, Andisiwe. Cash rolls into Cape Town conference centre. in *Cape Argus*, 15 April 2003. 10

effect the transformation of the Roggebaai Canal area and the revitalisation of the foreshore have been slow to come to fruition, and the canal although for the most part completed in time for the CTICC opening remains generally underutilised.

The canal delay aside, the CTICC received Thabo Mbeki's presidential approval³⁷⁸ on its highly profiled opening fêting corporate and political elites³⁷⁹, while its instrumental position in boosting tourism and convention tourism business was quickly noted.³⁸⁰ The CTICC has heralded its own economic success, claiming to have exceeded conservative expectations by contributing two and half times more to the national economy than originally expected with an anticipated increase in this contribution predicted.³⁸¹

- **The competing discourses of the CTICC**

At the time of its development and construction, and in anticipation of its opening, the CTICC was situated in a predominantly economic discourse that focussed on and promoted its expected economic contribution. Articles with headlines such as "Cape Town convention centre will earn R11bn", "Convention centre to bring R25bn into SA" and "Cash rolls into Cape Town conference centre"³⁸² suggest a much anticipated and needed development. A view seemingly shared and justified by the CTICC's economic success as claimed by its Managing Director:

³⁷⁸ Cape centre gets Mbeki's stamp of approval. 29 June 2003. www.iol.co.za accessed 15 June 2004

³⁷⁹ Peters, Melanie. 2003. Sheer energy rocks convention centre. in *Saturday Argus*, 27 June 2003. 2

³⁸⁰ Thiel, Gustav. 2003. Cape Town set for top 10 conference spot. in *Cape Times*, 26 September 2003. 1

³⁸¹ CTICC boosts local and national economy. Latest news 6 October 2004. CTICC website

<http://www.cticc.co.za> accessed 11 October 2004

³⁸² Cape Town convention centre will earn R11bn. in *Cape Times*. 18 February 2001. 3; Smith, Ashley.

Convention centre to bring R25bn into SA. in *Cape Times*. 4 July 2001. 3; Makinana, Andisiwe. Cash rolls into Cape Town conference centre. in *Cape Argus*. 15 April 2003. 10

“The centre’s first year has been nothing short of extraordinary. Our operational and financial results are proof that Cape Town has indeed been missing a world-class convention facility to put our city on the world business tourism map.”³⁸³

However as Lefebvre suggests, flaunted economic success is possibly incomplete and inconclusive:

“Things and products that are measured, that is to say reduced to the common measure of money, do not speak the truth about themselves. On the contrary, it is in their nature as things and products to conceal that truth.”³⁸⁴

The legitimating economic discourse of the CTICC is supported by the Centre’s multiple mention in the investment promotion of the city centre by the Cape Town Partnership. This publication also makes references to the Roggebaai Canal development as part of the CTICC economic discourse as well as a linkage between the multi-purpose Waterfront and the Convention Centre.³⁸⁵ Apart from the Roggebaai Canal’s linking function it also received the socially transformative³⁸⁶ and revitalising of the city³⁸⁷ attention that the CTICC did not.

“The key to unleashing the full potential of the convention centre and the V&A Waterfront is the Roggebaai Canal...that will provide tranquillity and become a green lung along the foreshore. It will help ease the wind, dampen down the dust, soften the highways and help muffle the noise of overhead traffic. Yet at the same

³⁸³ Unconventional success for CTICC in first year. Latest news 6 October 2004. www.cticc.co.za accessed 11 October 2004

³⁸⁴ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The production of space*. Cambridge: Blackwell. 80

³⁸⁵ *Cape Town’s central city: an investment opportunity*. Cape Town Partnership promotional brochure.

³⁸⁶ Bosch, Sarah-Jane. 2000. Canal expected to transform lower Cape Town. www.iol.co.za. accessed 1 July 2004

³⁸⁷ Steenkamp, Willem. 2001. Grand plan for Cape Town canal link. in *Cape Argus*, 21 September 2001. 3

time it will also provide quiet and vibrant nightlight in a safe indoor-outdoor environment.”³⁸⁸

Within the economic discourse of the CTICC the Roggebaai Canal offered an enhanced urban experience beyond that of financial gain. Not only did it also link the Waterfront with the CTICC but also the Centre’s contribution to city life with its pedigreed architectural conception.

- **The CTICC conceived by architects** (see figures 21 to 23)

The design of the stone, steel, aluminium, glass and timber CTICC was led by “architectural doyen Revel Fox” and architectural “luminaries Anya Van der Merwe Miszewski and Professor Lucien Le Grange.”³⁸⁹ The Centre’s design “brief sought to catalyse urban regeneration while presenting a new feature in the spatial and symbolic iconography of Cape Town”³⁹⁰ and “was to create a world-class facility that would be self-sustaining and active, placing this bold upstart of a city firmly in the global arena. This would consolidate the Mother City’s emerging status as a premier destination on international tourist and convention planners.”³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ Standish, Barry. 2002. *Cape Town International Convention Centre: The projected economic contribution*. DPRU Working Paper No 02/70, August 2002. Cape Town: Development Policy Research Unit University of Cape Town. 4-5

³⁸⁹ Makeka, Mokena. 2003. Cape Town International Convention Centre – Preview. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. May/June 2003. 38-42. 39

³⁹⁰ Ibid. 39

³⁹¹ Ibid. 39

The CTICC “is intended to perform as an integrated piece of urban fabric”³⁹² and was considered as “a large building in this area could act as both a catalyst and a link between the city and its surrounding seaside environment. The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront had long planned to link with the city and the Roggebaai Canal was the means by which it would link the convention centre site with the waterfront.”³⁹³ The centre “had a great deal of potential to transform the city and re-establish the long lost links with the ocean.”³⁹⁴

The CTICC is purposefully standardised, understated, anonymous and intentionally bland to create a building as a backdrop so it can be continuously rebranded by its hosted exhibitions and events.³⁹⁵ Despite the fact that management interests of the CTICC “will perhaps shape the performance of the scheme’s public realm in a more precise manner” than its architectural intention, the centre is considered to have many desirable characteristics and is purported “to be a tangible investment in the user/public’s good”.³⁹⁶ Limited critical engagement with the centre and its functioning, implied by the lack of critical work relating to the CTICC from the spatial disciplines, suggests a broadly uncontested acceptance of its role, approval of its form and satisfaction with its contribution to the city. The architectural discourse concerning the CTICC favours a discussion of form and intention but raises few questions relating, not only to form and intention but also, to accessibility, elitism and functionality.

³⁹² Silke, Robert. 2003. Phenomenal transparency. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. July/August 2003. 58

³⁹³ Cape Town International Convention Centre. in *Architect and Builder*, July/August 2003. Vol. 54 Issue 4. 71

³⁹⁴ Ibid. 71

³⁹⁵ Silke, Robert. 2003. Phenomenal transparency. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. July/August 2003. 58

³⁹⁶ Makeka, Mokena. 2003. Cape Town International Convention Centre – Preview. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. May/June 2003. 38-42. 40

- **Conventional construction**

The construction of the CTICC began in April 2001 and the centre officially opened for business on 1 July 2003.³⁹⁷ This followed an economic impact assessment that claimed that the CTICC would positively impact on the provincial and national economy, and validate its contention as a long awaited and much needed addition to the tourism infrastructure of the Western Cape. This would allegedly drive regional economic growth, contribute to Gross Domestic Product and create thousands of direct and indirect jobs over ten years, which would benefit many associated small businesses suggesting that the centre and Cape Town would be an ideal home for all international and local conferences, conventions and exhibitions.³⁹⁸

The CTICC is operated and owned by The Cape Town International Convention Centre Company (Convenco) of which the City of Cape Town is the majority shareholder of the centre and controls the majority of voting rights of Convenco.³⁹⁹ Convenco was established in 1999 by the Western Cape Provincial Government, the City of Cape Town and Business Cape to develop the centre on the 6.1 hectare site. Convenco was funded by the City of Cape Town and the Provincial Government of the Western Cape. The CTICC cost R582-million to build with funding provided by The City of Cape Town; The Provincial Government of Western Cape; SunWest International; Convenco internally

³⁹⁷ Construction history. <http://www.cticc.co.za> accessed 10 December 2004

³⁹⁸ CTICC background. <http://www.cticc.co.za> accessed 10 December 2004

³⁹⁹ Sharing in 3 years of CTICC's success. in *Cityworks* Vol. 2 No. 2 March 2006. 6

generated R16-million. The design of the centre was conducted by a consortium of architects, known as Foreshore Architects, led by known Cape Town architects.⁴⁰⁰

- **Site and layout of the CTICC**

The facilities of the CTICC include the expected trade show spaces, exhibition halls, meeting rooms, ancillary spaces, atria and auditoria of various capacity and configuration. Exhibition halls are located along the highway boundary; meeting rooms, restaurant, and points of arrival extend along Coen Steytler Avenue on three levels accessed from the gallery running the length of the centre acting as a cohesive spine; administration, main entrance foyer, reception and minor concessions face onto Convention Square, the extension of lower Long Street, as does the onsite hotel entrance; the large auditorium is past the hotel on the highway/Buitengracht and Coen Steytler Avenue intersection; the ballroom bridges over lower Long Street and the entrance to Convention Square; parking for over 1000 vehicles is underground of the centre and in the adjacent parking garage.

The glass, aluminium and steel front façade of the centre faces Table Mountain to the South overlooking Coen Steytler, Heerengracht and Long Street. Access to the CTICC is most easily possible, by foot or vehicle, at the imposing intersection of lower Long Street and busy Coen Steytler Avenue into Convention Square, a second pedestrian entrance is accessible from the Heerengracht circle. While most meeting spaces are situated in the front of the centre to make use of the mountain views and natural light afforded by the

⁴⁰⁰ General history. <http://www.cticc.co.za/profile.jsp> accessed 10 December 2004

glass façade, the four exhibition halls are to the back of the CTICC serviced by a marshalling yard and delivery area in the rear of the building backing onto the highway.

The Heerengracht edge of the CTICC is intended to act as a gateway to the city, the Coen Steytler edge as a place of arrival, the highway edge at the rear of the centre as a functional service area and the extension of lower Long Street, the guarded and unwelcoming Convention Square, as the “important public space where everything comes together. All the different nodes of transport – ferries, buses, taxis, public transport, and pedestrian routes – converge on this important urban node.”⁴⁰¹ The size of the CTICC site has been noted as a large drawback in terms of large events staging yet possibilities for extension under the highway or across Heerengracht have been identified⁴⁰², however the placing of the site is considered correct and well done as it puts a “pivotal new civic facility in the part of the city centre that needs it the most.”⁴⁰³ The character of the CTICC site was an “urbanely hostile environment of poorly spatially articulated Foreshore and yet it offered proximity to the Waterfront and the city centre, and clear access to public transport and the national highway routes.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ Cape Town International Convention Centre. in *Architect and Builder*, July/August 2003. Vol. 54 Issue 4. 71-72

⁴⁰² Ibid. 72

⁴⁰³ Silke, Robert. 2003. Phenomenal transparency. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. July/August 2003. 58

⁴⁰⁴ Makeka, Mokena. 2003. Cape Town International Convention Centre – Preview. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. May/June 2003. 38-42. 39

- **Preparing the *Kitsch Kitchen***⁴⁰⁵ (see figures 24 to 33)

To prepare for *Kitsch Kitchen* the CTICC was hired for three days from Thursday 11th December to Saturday 13th December during which time 40 people including production and décor crew and volunteers were involved. Doors opened for partygoers at 8pm on the Saturday and closed at 6am the following morning when the last DJ's stopped playing. According to Event Research International who investigated the economic, social and environmental impacts of the 2003 event over 5 months including over 100 interviews on the night of the party and over 200 post event online survey participants, the 2003 MCQP at the CTICC took a year to plan and prepare.

Marketing and theme exploration of the event began in January, the media campaign was strategised in July, and the theme launched on television in August which coincided with wider media promotion and occupation of new offices in Bree Street in central Cape Town. In September a venue crisis surfaced as the Castle of Good Hope, the popular venue for 2002, submitted a late objection to staging the event during which time the marketing of the event continued without a venue. The CTICC was named as the new venue for the MCQP in November presenting new venue logistics, décor and safety issues. Décor production began offsite in late November and early December. As in previous years most of the décor was constructed from household consumables and recycled material, as environmental awareness and friendliness was encouraged for décor installations and costumes.

⁴⁰⁵ This section is informed by personal observations and the ERI evaluation report: Mother City Queer Projects: 2003 Costume Party – 'Kitsch Kitchen'. Event Research International evaluation report. February 2004. 2-5.

In the course of the year long preparation and hosting of *Kitsch Kitchen* 33 people were involved and paid by the MCQP before, during and after the event. This included Andre Vorster as the only year long full time employee, a part time staff member for the year, and another person who worked half the year fulltime. Ten Glitz Blitzers worked part time for 3 months to promote the event by handing out flyers and posters. As a result of the late venue change from the Castle to the CTICC, the Décor Manager for *Kitsch Kitchen*, Ralph Borland, only began working a few short months before the event. The Décor Manager worked closely with roughly 20 production and décor crew as well a group of 20 volunteers.

At the time of *Kitsch Kitchen* the MCQP was the only party that had been invited to use the CTICC, who also expressed interest in hosting the MCQP in the future but preferably on Christmas Eve or New Years Eve. The pre event interviews and post event survey results suggest that the Christmas Eve option would not be popular but New Years Eve a viable one; however a small percentage of respondents would have preferred an alternative venue to the CTICC.

Despite the fact that the MCQP does usually not pay for electronic or print advertising, the value of its national electronic and print media coverage over six weeks prior to the event was estimated to be just under eight hundred thousand Rand, by a media monitoring agency engaged by the MCQP. The total media coverage, including internet and international media coverage, was estimated to be valued in excess of R1 million.

Popularity and enthusiasm accounted for at least 4 post parties being semiofficially organised. In agreement with the MCQP Club Sliver, on the edge of the De Waterkant gay village, marketed the official *Kitsch Kitchen* after-party.

The MCQP was again unable to secure City funding in 2003, attributed largely to Council's continuous internal restructuring and bureaucracy and received less sponsorship than in 2002. Cash sponsorship totalled R194 000 and an estimated R94 000 of in-kind sponsorship for the CTICC's benefit. Sponsorship, apart from Standard bank, was primarily in the form of cash and in-kind from beverage and tobacco companies. Preliminary financial results as of February 2004 for the 2003 event indicated that the MCQP did not generate a profit but managed to break even. Additional income generated from bar sales which in previous years was retained by the MCQP, went to the CTICC in 2003. The production of a MCQP promotional publication was cancelled in 2003 due to lack of funds.

- **Partying in *Kitsch Kitchen*** (see figures 34 to 41)

On the night of *Kitsch Kitchen* existing CTICC spaces were converted into interconnected MCQP party areas using only the ground floor distinctively renamed and differentiated by music and décor. Most of partygoers arrived between 22h00 and midnight and at times the entrance queue was approximately 200 metres in length. As a form of social commitment of the MCQP marketing material for *Kitsch Kitchen* encouraged partygoers to bring tins of food to the party as a form of charitable donation.

While evident in 2002, no demonstrators were identified at *Kitsch Kitchen* and no incidents of crime or violence were recorded during the party.

The initial décor meetings in November and early December 2003 presented the décor volunteers and décor manager with the particular challenges of a relatively late interpretation of the *Kitsch Kitchen* theme. This included accommodating the venue restrictions of the CTICC, its concern for the wellbeing of the centre and the effects of the décor and costumes. As with previous events in similarly large spaces, preference was for fewer but larger installations. There was limited opportunity to hang installations, in part for concerns of fireproofing, from the very high roofs of the exhibition halls while concessions needed to be made in order to protect vulnerable flooring from heavy dancing feet. The MCQP could not afford to hire the Convention Centre for more than a couple of days in advance to setup the décor, thus much of the décor was constructed offsite. The hard even surfaces, although a concern for acoustics, of the CTICC did present an opportunity for using film projection as a medium for installation and décor. The CTICC was however unwilling to completely darken the lighting in certain spaces which dimmed the effect of this option at the party.⁴⁰⁶ The CTICC's concern that completely darkened spaces would encourage sex at the event meant that the Dark Room, as in years past a private and discrete space for men to have sex managed by the Triangle Project, was not possible. This control was similarly experienced in the intimate spaces of the toilets, which were closely managed as single and not unisex spaces, under the watchful eye of CTICC staff. In hindsight the CTICC's control and management of

⁴⁰⁶ Dancing queens get set to boogie. in *Cape Times* 12 December 2003. 1

Kitsch Kitchen was not compatible with the MCQP's queer ethos or its carnivalesque atmosphere where the CTICC enforced its own code of permissiveness.

MCQP partygoers entered the centre from the planned rear of the building via the marshalling yard and service entrance to exhibition hall 2 renamed the Kitchen Door for the night. The queue of partygoers extended into exhibition 3, the Backyard, where food concession stands and other services were located as opposed to outside behind exhibition halls 1A and 2 due to threatening rain. The Kitchen Door acted as entrance hall and arrival point for partygoers who entered the party from behind a giant pink screen curtain, onto which their costumes were backlit to create a shadow puppet effect, onto a raised walkway and presented their group costumes to the waiting and watching audience. Giant chandeliers made from Styrofoam cups and pink hula hoops hung from the ceiling.

Adjacent to the Kitchen Door in exhibition halls 1A and 1B accessed through hanging curtains made of disposable plates were the Hotplate House and the Herb Garden dance floors respectively. Hotplate House, as the name suggests, was filled with house music and a large fried eggs in a frying pan cushion installation seating area. In the Herb Garden a selection of 80s and electronic music played while partygoers were able to construct messages from oversized fridge magnet poetry on the ground projected onto the wall.

Kitchen Door, Hotplate House and the Herb Garden were linked to the regular front area of the CTICC by the gallery, renamed the Broom Closet for the MCQP but without any characteristic music choice. Although many toilets were located here, the Broom Closet acted as a meeting and linking area for the party as it does the CTICC. A large toast and heating element décor installation spiralled its way up a staircase while artwork drawings produced by students from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and various design schools exploring the theme in consultation with the MCQP from July were also on display. The West end of the Broom Closet, towards Convention Square, was converted into a Standard Bank seating area that maximised the sponsor's branding around the access to the only ATM on the premises.

The Classical Pop Pantry, linked to the Marimba Restaurant and used as cabaret venue for the MCQP, played classical and jazz music provided a more sedate area for the MCQP as a relief from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the event. The Kwela Cook Out and Dishwasher Disco areas played African and disco music in the existing interconnected conservatory and seating areas, to the front of the CTICC parallel to Coen Steytler Avenue, where partygoers mingled and danced among the indoor trees. A cinema space was provided for on the far wall of the west end of the Dishwasher Disco.

8 Bar facilities were set up for the event and managed by the CTICC, who also took the profits, using a token system as opposed to cash. In addition to the CTICC toilets 20 more portable toilets were hired however this was the first MCQP not to have unisex toilets at the party. The Triangle Project having previously worked with the MCQP had a stand at

the party promoting men's safe sexual health where they distributed condoms and informational material. In collaboration with the CTICC and the City of Cape Town the MCQP provided safety and security, first aid and cleansing / waste management services for the party.

- ***Kitsch Kitchen* partygoer profile**

According to pre-event interviews and the post-event survey of partygoers approximately 38% of partygoers attended the MCQP for the first time. Of the returning partygoers most had attended more than 2 events in the past. Just over 75% of partygoers came from Cape Town, of the other partygoers 13% came from South Africa and of the remaining 12% the majority were from the United Kingdom and other European countries.

Approximately two thirds of partygoers were men, one third women and a small percentage identified themselves as "other". Two thirds of the partygoers were under 34 years old, over 90% were white and 6% coloured with less than one percent self identified as black while 3% selected "other". This suggests that despite its growth in popularity and its media profile the MCQP remains a predominantly local, male, young and white event that suggests a similarity with the profile of Cape Town's exclusive gay leisure spaces identified by Gustav Visser.⁴⁰⁷ This further raises questions of the representivity of other gay social groups at the MCQP. Groups such as black gays and lesbians, and particularly local coloured "moffies", are established groups and

⁴⁰⁷ Visser, Gustav. 2003. Gay men, tourism and urban space: reflections on Africa's 'gay capital'. in *Tourism Geographies*, 5 (2), 2003. 168–189

communities in South Africa and the Cape⁴⁰⁸ but are hardly represented among MCQP partygoers.

Of the non-Cape Townian partygoers more than 65% came specifically for the event, just over two thirds of whom stayed for a week or longer in Cape Town and half of which planned to travel elsewhere in South Africa. Over half of the non-Cape Townian partygoers stayed in paid accommodation. Activity choices and further attractions for non-Cape Townian partygoers beyond the MCQP were quite evenly split, as 17% opted for the “Wine, dine and party” and “Sun/sand/sea” options respectively, while 13% selected “shopping” and 12% “Visit family and friends”. The remainder divided their choices between popular tourism attractions, spending time in the De Waterkant gay village in Green Point and cultural activities. This correlates with the MCQP’s status as a recognised tourism attraction for Cape Town and the contribution it makes to the tourism and hospitality industries.

Almost 90% of partygoers were employed and more than half earned more than R10 000 per month while more than half spent less than R200 on their costumes. The majority of partygoers were dressed in a costume that clearly interpreted the *Kitsch Kitchen* theme and over 90% of partygoers arrived in a group, of which approximately half were pairs. As always the creativity of partygoer’s costumes was impressive however a noticeable trend at *Kitsch Kitchen* seemed to be an increased use of brand manipulation in costumes (see images 38 to 41), certainly aided by the range of kitchen associated products

⁴⁰⁸ Gevisser, Mark and Cameron, Edwin. Eds. 1994. *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

available for inspiration. It was estimated that almost R8 million was spent on accommodation by international and South African tourists attending the MCQP, of whom a quarter spent more than R400 on food and drinks per day and over a third spent more than R400 on shopping and gifts per day during their stay.⁴⁰⁹ The MCQP is an expensive event to attend, at R161 for a ticket and money spent on a costume, because of this and despite the MCQP's non-racial, non-ageist and non-sexist ideals the event does not attract a representative South African demographic of partygoer. Rather, the MCQP is an overwhelmingly white and affluent event, to the point of exclusivity. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that the amount of money spent on costumes is mostly low and suggests that some of MCQP's preference for handmade, cheap and camp costumes remains relevant despite the trend in brand manipulation.

In addition to validating the pre-event popular international⁴¹⁰ and local anticipation⁴¹¹, post *Kitsch Kitchen* press reported favourably on the variety and creativity of costumes and the risqué partygoers who wore next to nothing at the CTICC that at times felt slightly unsuitable as a venue.⁴¹² Others however considered the venue a pleasant combination of spaciousness and intimacy complimented by the décor but agreed on the MCQP's premier event status enjoyable experience of the event at the CTICC.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ Mother City Queer Projects: 2003 Costume Party – 'Kitsch Kitchen'. Event Research International evaluation report. February 2004. 5-7

⁴¹⁰ Smetherham, Jo-Anne. Brits flocking to attend Kitsch Kitchen camp. in *Cape Times*, 3 December 2003.1

⁴¹¹ Queer food in Cape Town's kitsch kitchen. in *Cape Argus*, 11 December 2003. 11

⁴¹² Weaver, Tony. Partying with Osama Bin Liner and naked chefs. in *Cape Times*, 15 December 2003. 9

⁴¹³ Steenkamp, Willem. Cooking up a feast in Mother City's kitchen. in *Cape Times*, 15 December 2003. 9

- **A conventional MCQP?**

Kitsch Kitchen brought two different conceptions of spatial design, intent and use into the singular space of the CTICC, and through their meeting created a unique and interdependent temporary space constituted of the architecturally conceived CTICC and the lived space of the MCQP informed by its design.

The CTICC has received both praise and criticism for its design while the decision to build it has been widely regarded from early on, in primarily economic terms, as necessary, overdue and successful.⁴¹⁴ The CTICC “works extremely well on an urban scale at street level” and is considered to have successfully transformed the highway characteristics of the main access along Coen Steytler Avenue into an urban street thanks to its praised positioning within easy access of the city centre.⁴¹⁵ A “city within a city” concept motivated the shaping of the CTICC “by offering internal public spaces that were sheltered, accessible to the broader public” and “that maximised amenity to the city.”⁴¹⁶ Despite this increased amenity the centre has still received criticism, stemming in part from its purposeful standardisation and anonymity, directed towards the industrial looking back elevation facing the highway of the exhibition halls as a “missed opportunity” and consequently further criticised as having fallen short of realising its

⁴¹⁴ Makinana, Andisiwe. 2003. Cash rolls into Cape Town conference centre. in *Cape Argus*, 15 April 2003. 10

⁴¹⁵ Silke, Robert. 2003. Phenomenal transparency. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. July/August 2003. 58

⁴¹⁶ Makeka, Mokena. 2003. Cape Town International Convention Centre – Preview. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. May/June 2003. 38-42. 40

“potential architectural and sculptural significance on a city scale.”⁴¹⁷ Criticism of a perceived lack of enhanced civic presence of the Heerengracht end and access point of the CTICC and the secondary hotel/office development has noted a concern for a limited understanding of that “reconnection with the sea and strengthening of the power of the Adderly Street axis is in the best interests of the urban performance of the city , perhaps a more direct relationship with Cape Town’s primary street (in terms of established meaning and memory) would have been more ideal.”⁴¹⁸

Opinion of the CTICC as a building and city resource, apart from an economic perspective, is not well articulated nor has it been placed in the context of existing debates relating to public space decline. The Centre is not a traditional public space as it lacks fundamental spatial rights by virtue of its privatised management⁴¹⁹ however the stratified image of public life that it reflects is recognisable and familiar to South Africans.⁴²⁰ The versatility of the CTICC suggests that its potential as a resource for the city would be best realised in the context of public space transformation⁴²¹, rather than decline, however this would make the Centre’s success dependant on management rather than economic success. The transformation of public space, as opposed to simplistic warnings of its decline, is a more contemporary and applicable example to the CTICC.⁴²²

⁴¹⁷ Silke, Robert. 2003. Phenomenal transparency. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. July/August 2003. 56-59. 58-59

⁴¹⁸ Makeka, Mokena. 2003. Cape Town International Convention Centre – Preview. in *Architecture South Africa: journal of the South African Institute of Architects*. May/June 2003. 38-42. 41

⁴¹⁹ Carr, Stephen et al. Eds. 1992. *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴²⁰ Brill, Michael. 1989. Transformation, nostalgia and illusion in public life and public space. in Altman, I. and Zube, E. Eds. 1989. *Public places and spaces*. New York: Plenum Press.

⁴²¹ Lees, Loretta. 1997. Ageographia, heterotopia, and Vancouver’s new public library in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. Vol. 15, No. 1-3, 1997

⁴²² Hajer, Maarten and Reijndorp, Arnold. 2001. *In search of new public domain*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.

This is particularly so in the context of the need to overcome the inherited legacies of the postapartheid built environment and realise the possibilities that they offer.⁴²³

Consequently it is unsettling that praise and criticism of the CTICC in light of its expectations are not taken seriously enough, particularly when it is influenced in its design by a “city within a city” concept, and its access and activities are closely managed and controlled under CCTV surveillance all disturbingly reminiscent of Davis’s dystopian “Fortress LA” warning.⁴²⁴

The MCQP’s evaluation of the venue and *Kitsch Kitchen* is decidedly unenthusiastic. Vorster was initially excited about celebrating the MCQP’s tenth year at the CTICC, considering it a coup that they were able to secure the venue, and the Centre was happy to oblige and negotiate a reduced rental for the party. The late refusal of the Castle as venue presented only a month to re-plan *Kitsch Kitchen* for the CTICC as organisers became concerned with decorating cavernous and anonymous exhibition halls with high ceilings, the limited variety of spaces, a lack of an appropriate outdoor area, the limited history of the building to work with, and an absence of an obvious main entrance or hearth to the venue. Vorster also recognised the enthusiasm of the CTICC for the event and the opportunities it presented as a largely unvisited new building to use the canal, project décor onto the huge wall spaces, and the suitability of the Centre’s modern look to a kitchen theme.⁴²⁵ Ralph Borland describes this attitude of the MCQP towards the venue as feeling like “we’ve got to do it here lets take advantage of what it does offer”, however

⁴²³ Robinson, Jennifer. 1998. (Im)mobilizing space – dreaming of change. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. *Blank_ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

⁴²⁴ Davis, Mike. 1990. *City of Quartz: excavating the future in Los Angeles*. New York: Vintage.

⁴²⁵ Andre Vorster interview 19 July 2004

this belies his initial negative impressions of the CTICC as “not a very inviting space in terms of creating a public space where different people can interact in its normal state”.

In considering his décor responsibilities, Borland likens the exhibition halls to warehouses and he refers to the façade as “very closed and hard” wherein he also questions its purpose “under the guise of inclusivity”.⁴²⁶

In retrospect, the wariness with which the MCQP approached the party at the CTICC was well founded. Vorster acknowledges a sense of boredom at the party, the general acoustic problems and the failure of the projection décor, except for the Styrofoam chandeliers, which he attributes to the Centre’s reluctance to completely dim the lighting for fears that it would encourage sex at the party. Comments on the choice of venue after the party, described the CTICC as “cold”, “too big”, “impersonal”, and “clinical”. The halls used as dance floors were reported to not provide good acoustics. These perceptions indicate that the venue detracted from the party’s atmosphere.⁴²⁷ In his opinion: “the worst thing happened is that people arrived and then spread out, so they were spread over far too much space and it just thinned out the party too quickly and was a pity”. Vorster further identifies the party’s lack of “sleaze” which he explains as the “sexy spaces, slightly dark spaces, discovering something, a bit of lawn, and go walk outside get fresh air and discover something else, it didn’t have any of that, it was too over secure, once you were in you were in and you couldn’t slip away”. Perhaps the most influential aspect of the venue on the party was its size, described by Vorster as “ostentatious and corporate and

⁴²⁶ Ralph Borland interview 26 May 2004

⁴²⁷ Mother City Queer Projects: 2003 Costume Party – ‘Kitsch Kitchen’. Event Research International evaluation report. February 2004. 7

hard” which negated the MCQP’s characteristic homely intimacy.⁴²⁸ Vorster suggests that in contrast to previous successful years when the MCQP’s planning and action was more influential than that of the venue, either through décor or a spatial reclamation of history, the CTICC dominated *Kitsch Kitchen* to the Centre’s benefit.

“it brought a different type of person, a more straight crowd, more a slightly older crowd, people who had heard about MCQP but weren’t quite, didn’t want to go, they saw it as more of an underground thing but suddenly when it was at the Convention Centre, it was like event they could go...

it gave it mainstream approval, which didn’t work for us it worked more for the Convention Centre, that they were a new building in town that actually catered to everybody whether it’s a queer party or a trade show.”⁴²⁹

Unfortunately for the CTICC comparisons by Vorster, of venue and party, with the successes of *The Wedding* the previous year further fuelled the unfavourable impression of *Kitsch Kitchen*.

“it’s a space which is not as rich as the castle...the Convention Centre has got quite a strong flavour but it’s not old enough to be something that you can take in and sample and sell”⁴³⁰

“The convention centre has no meaning, so there was nothing to celebrate, there was no conquering and the castle had a lot of that.”⁴³¹

The recent opening and absence of legacy of the CTICC meant that, unlike the Castle or the Artscape prior, there was no historical meaning to incorporate or manipulate for the

⁴²⁸ Andre Vorster interview 19 July 2004

⁴²⁹ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

⁴³⁰ Ralph Borland interview 26 May 2004

⁴³¹ Andre Vorster interview 26 May 2004

MCQP. Consequently there was either no need or no opportunity for a memorable or celebratory reclamation of the space as Borland suggests:

“we didn’t transform the venue in the sense of making it into another place, it stayed the Convention Centre...we infiltrated that space and that in itself did something interesting to it, the fact that you wouldn’t normally have naked people dancing around the trees in the courtyard was almost like there was a, it was transformative in that way but only temporarily transformative we came in there and we kind of colonised, took it over during the party and we occupied that space but we didn’t leave any lasting impression on that space”⁴³²

The MCQP’s disappointment with *Kitsch Kitchen*, and therein the appropriateness of the venue, is evident in Borland’s criticism of the design of the CTICC as:

“a very bland kind of architecture and one which was hard with glass and marble and not informal, not cross-cultural, not inclusive. I mean I thought if you had that much money and you wanted to create a space that was for the public and to make where people mix there are so many more exciting ways you can do that than what they did.”⁴³³

Regardless of the perceived shortcomings of the CTICC, the MCQP manipulated the spatial design of the Centre to work for *Kitsch Kitchen*. Vorster initially thought it important to use the main entrance of the CTICC as the main entrance to the party, however decided that there was no main entrance to suit MCQP needs.

“in the end we realised that it made sense to enter from the back, a bit of debate came out as to why this moffie party should enter though the back of the building and not through the front but we realised from a design point of view it was going to make more sense”⁴³⁴

⁴³² Ralph Borland interview 26 May 2004

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Andre Vorster interview 19 July 2004

Vorster's impression of the CTICC, informed by the disappointment of *Kitsch Kitchen*, is not encouraging. While thankful for the opportunity to stage the MCQP there at short notice, he refers to the event as an "experiment" and is of the opinion that because the "MCQP is an established brand and well known" it benefited the Centre more than the MCQP. Vorster attributes the lack of success of *Kitsch Kitchen* to the Centre's inappropriate architectural and spatial features, and to a lesser degree the management's limited understanding of the MCQP despite their best efforts. For Vorster this was a lesson that it is not in the interest of the MCQP to be in a space like the CTICC, and to continue there would lead to a loss of half the original partygoers.⁴³⁵

The struggle and difficulty for the MCQP to successfully intervene, by imaginative and creative means, in the architecturally conceived space of the CTICC to produce a lived space of meaningful social interaction is both interesting and concerning in the light of the Centre's intention, albeit it limitedly expressed, to function as anything else but an economically driven convention centre. This is concern partially alleviated if one recognises that the social and cultural functionality of the CTICC depended heavily on the success of the Roggebaai Canal development. The MCQP, by its own admission, did little to change perception of the CTICC as the lived space of the party could only be managed temporarily against the constrictions and limited possibilities of the CTICC spatial conception.⁴³⁶ For the short time of *Kitsch Kitchen*, the CTICC became a temporary public domain of meaningful social engagement⁴³⁷, but not a public space by

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The production of space*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

⁴³⁷ Hajer, Maarten and Reijndorp, Arnold. 2001. *In search of new public domain*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.

retaining its heterotopic qualities of qualified entry and belonging.⁴³⁸ After *Kitsch Kitchen* the CTICC remained an architectural and urban measure of Cape Town, and South Africa's, ability to host and attract international events and corporations, and to support their accompanying lifestyles. Regardless of praise for its design, the MCQP experience suggests that the Centre's criticism for its exclusiveness, artificiality and isolation from the surrounding city is well founded.⁴³⁹

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⁴³⁸ Foucault, Michel. 1986. Of other spaces. *Diacritics*. Vol. 16, No.1, 22-27

⁴³⁹ Bremner, Lindsay. 2004. Re-imagining architecture for democracy. in *Thisday*, Monday September 13, 2004.

8. Conclusion

“MCQP may be a few steps ahead of the herd in its transgressions and playfulness, but it is nonetheless indicative that the new South Africa has opened up new spaces for sexual identity, freedom and self-expression.”⁴⁴⁰

The MCQP of 1994 to 2003, most recently illustrated by *Kitsch Kitchen* at the CTICC, has been a temporary, transgressive, carnivalesque and transformative event. The parties’ queer celebration of the right to sexual difference, characterised by their particular spatiality, operated in the contested socio-spatial context of postapartheid Cape Town. This is demonstrated by the contextual history of the MCQP in the city of Cape Town as a prior example to *Kitsch Kitchen*, and the close reading of this event at the CTICC in 2003 which it informs. The MCQP is a unique product of both South Africa’s democratic transition and the postapartheid city. It is a temporary spatial feature that through its imaginative manipulation and integration of venue and history, informed by its liberal and transgressive queer politics, has presented a variety of city spaces with transformative or alternative possibilities for their use within the postapartheid built environment.

⁴⁴⁰ Crawhall, Nigel. 2005. Balancing freedom and fear: gay men, sex and HIV in the post-apartheid era. in Van Zyl, Mikki and Steyn, Melissa. Eds. *Performing queer: shaping sexualities 1994 – 2004 – volume one*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

- **The space of the MCQP informed by history, context, principles and elements**

The MCQP, as illustrated by its history in Cape Town from 1994 to 2003, was an intentionally temporary event at the River Club and later proved to be successfully transferable to other venues. The party's peripheral suburban subcultural beginnings were informed by personal experience and immediately contextualised to the event's time and place. The first MCQP built on post election excitement and goodwill to simultaneously exploit an opportunity for creative intervention in Cape Town's art scene while celebrating new freedoms of sexual orientation. This event benefited from an informed selective marketing strategy and an associated spatial design, that was responsive to user needs and preferences, based on the original venue's layout. This became the MCQP's characteristic interconnected and intimate spatial design. The unexpected success and increasing popularity of the first five MCQP parties, while benefiting from their continuing spatial appeal, are attributable to the original intentions and principles that continued to inform the event until 2003 and the continuity of its core elements. These also account for the MCQP's transferability from its low key suburban beginnings to the higher profile and mainstream venues of the city centre.

The original intentions and principles of the MCQP are linked to and inform its key elements. Principles of non-ageism, non-sexism and non-racism underpinned the MCQP's intentionally unique and contextual celebration of the right to sexual orientation

difference. This found spatial articulation in the intimacy of the party that encouraged partygoers to socialise and engage with each other by providing a safe and inviting space.

The interconnected elements of the MCQP contributed to its recognisability and continuity despite the novelty generated by an annually changing theme. Rather than only differentiating the event from year to year, the MCQP theme offered collaborative thematic unity to the creative processes of décor and costume design. Closely linked to theme and the creative arts emphasis of the MCQP is its, intentionally constant, camp style. The style of the MCQP, a rich and glamorous aesthetic made out of cheap and recycled materials, contributed to the events' temporary nature and consistent creative reinvention as décor and costumes were made and thrown away year by year. The MCQP's originally strong creative and artistic emphasis remained relevant through the creative collaboration, under the theme, on décor and costumes. While décor was initially intended to disguise and later highlight the venue, costumes determined principled partygoer participation and offered anonymity or a modified identity. In this way partygoers, heartened by team attendance and the events' intimacy, were able to explore and engage with their own or other's sexual orientation without fear of discrimination further supported by the MCQP's queer label. The MCQP's purposeful and informed selection of a transgressive and experimental queer attitude, that appealed because of its inclusivity, to sexual orientation and creativity in conjunction with the costumes and intimacy of the event created a safe and sociable space. The intentions, principles and elements of the MCQP are not mutually exclusive but rather theatrically combine in a transgressive queer performance in celebration of sexual orientation.

The longevity of the MCQP is attributable to its gradually formulaic successes, based on the procedural adherence to its production guidelines as determined by its intentions, principles and key elements under the direction of Andre Vorster. The MCQP's first five subcultural years at the River Club helped to establish this formula, and its popularity, which enabled a successful transfer of the event to higher profile venues in the city centre. The movement of the MCQP to the city centre, with mixed results, marked the events' mainstream recognition and an acknowledgement of its own potential formulaic decline. Mainstream recognition of the MCQP coincided with a growing awareness of the events' spatial articulation and influence of its transgressive queer political agenda. The success and attention garnered by the MCQP parties held in the contested postapartheid spaces of the Artscape Theatre and Castle of Good Hope are the clearest examples of the MCQP's queer manipulation of a space and its history. In these instances spatial legacies of racism, conservatism and exclusion were incorporated and subverted in the MCQP's carnivalesque performance and celebration of sexual difference that temporarily rearranged and reinterpreted spatial conditions of use, entry, formality, expectation and meaning of the venue.

- **Postapartheid, queer and MCQP spaces**

The first ten years of democracy and the postapartheid city, Cape Town and its queer urban experience, the party venues and party spaces are connected as the spaces of the

MCQP. These are the social and historical spaces that inspired, shaped and determined the development of the MCQP and its movement across and through the city.

While the MCQP initially celebrated sexual difference and sought to intervene towards a creative revival of Cape Town's art scene, its urban context remained comparable and consistent with that of apartheid. The social liberalisation of South Africa's first decade of democracy and the emergence of the postapartheid city as a contested urban space presented the MCQP with contextual inspiration and opportunity for celebration and later spatial contestation. The endurance of an apartheid built environment informed by modernist architecture, and the socio-spatial inequalities that it helped to create and maintain, and the ineffectiveness of planning responses resulted in the elusiveness of postapartheid social and cultural integration. Instead postapartheid Cape Town remained characteristically similar to the apartheid city it once was, where White affluence continued to coexist with Black poverty, while city centre and suburban spatial interventions in security and business raised concerns of privatised spatial management and public access. The queer experience of postapartheid Cape Town, like that of the city, has retained many apartheid characteristics and remains contested. While gay friendly venues have existed in the city since the nineteenth century, the development of gay leisure spaces continues to reflect the hierarchy and exclusion of apartheid. Cape Town has benefited from gay tourism growth, within which the MCQP's contribution is acknowledged, however the development of its gay tourism status has not been without controversy and its spaces remain contested. Within this contested spatial arrangement the MCQP sought out new spaces for critical engagement, rejected normalised

conceptions of social spaces and imaginatively transformed existing spaces as its queer agenda became increasingly spatially expressed.

The MCQP's raised awareness and spatial articulation of its socio-political influence began with an inclusive celebration of sexual difference that benefited from an interconnected intimate spatial party layout that complimented the parties' core elements of costume, theme and style. This developed into the preferred spatial design of the MCQP that was incorporated into its queer liberation of contested and conservative venues in the city centre. In such a way the MCQP's transgressive, inclusive and critical queer attitude was applied through the spatial reinterpretation of the venue, and incorporation of history and architecture into the event to subvert and reclaim those spaces temporarily for partygoers. The Artscape Theatre and Castle of Good Hope provide the clearest examples of the MCQP's awareness of its socio-spatial political influence, made possible by its mainstream recognition and relocation to the city centre. Here the MCQP presented existing contested spaces of the apartheid era with the possibility of their inclusive and alternative use, through their creative and imaginative temporary reinvention as postapartheid spaces of celebration.

- **The Convention Centre's *Kitsch Kitchen***

The CTICC, venue for *Kitsch Kitchen* in 2003, was built in the Foreshore area of Cape Town's city centre which despite the area's recent reclamation from the sea became associated with the apartheid state. Prior to and after its development the Convention

Centre was expected to significantly contribute to the national and local economies, and with the associated Roggebaai Canal development, the regeneration of the Foreshore and improved quality of life in the inner city. Emphasis on the magnitude of the economic contribution of the CTICC that has justified its development has outweighed its socio-spatial contribution to the city, handicapped by the unrealised transformative potential of the incomplete Roggebaai Canal development. Nevertheless the Convention Centre envisioned by architects sought to balance the economic expectation with its transformative and urban regeneration potential. Despite limited critical engagement with anything other than the commercial performance of the CTICC and its questionable accessibility, the Centre is conveniently situated and efficiently laid out.

Despite delays in confirming the venue for 2003, the limited preparation time this resulted in and the prohibitive costs of hiring the Convention Centre *Kitsch Kitchen* creatively reinterpreted the layout and reimagined the function of the CTICC for the MCQP. Partygoers entered the Centre from the back of the building, exhibition halls and meeting areas were renamed as dance floors, décor and music helped to separate and identify various party areas from each other and their regular CTICC role. In light of the relatively sparse décor and large spaces of the Centre, costumed MCQP partygoers became the most visible and effective transforming agent at *Kitsch Kitchen* in conjunction with music and lighting. While costumed and scantily clad men and women dancing and socialising in the halls and passageways of the CTICC was a temporary transformation of the Centre from its regular commercial function, the profile of partygoer attending the MCQP was narrow. Partygoers at *Kitsch Kitchen* were mostly

young men from Cape Town, employed and earning a good salary, and overwhelmingly white. As was expected most of the tourists who attended came specifically for the event and their tourism spend was significant contribution to the local tourism economy.

Vorster's opinion, and therein the MCQP's opinion, of the CTICC and of the Centre as a venue for the MCQP is unenthusiastic despite his early excitement and the positive press that the CTICC initially received. The relative disappointment of *Kitsch Kitchen* is attributable to the inappropriateness of the size and scale of the Centre and its modernist design and detailing coupled with its intentional blandness towards multifunctionality. This resulted in a negation of intimacy, a thinning out of the party, the general ineffectiveness and failure of décor and accompanying acoustic problems. Partygoers negatively experienced the blandness of the venue as controlling and unwelcoming, and the overly secure feeling of the venue negated the carnivalesque element of the MCQP.

The mainstream approval that the MCQP gained through its staging at the CTICC came, in Vorster's opinion, at the expense of the attendance of older and more conservative people who would not have normally attended. This was partly because the Centre had no socially or politically contentious history for the MCQP to respond to and the consequent transformative and transgressive appeal, as with the Artscape and Castle, was missing. This led to unfavourable comparisons of *Kitsch Kitchen* with *Heavenly Bodies* and *The Wedding*. Ultimately Vorster considered the MCQP better for the CTICC than vice versa, as suggested by the consensus of disappointment surrounding *Kitsch Kitchen*.

- **The theoretically informed and forward thinking appeal of the MCQP**

This spatially informed interdisciplinary study of the MCQP shows the event's theoretically applicable and informed nature, which accounts for its interdisciplinary appeal, and suggests a reason for its longevity. For the purposes of this project the theoretical works of Lefebvre and Foucault, and their localised interpretations, have been most usefully applicable to engage with the social spaces of the MCQP and contested spaces of the postapartheid city respectively.

Lefebvre's analysis and discussion of the production of social space, such as the MCQP, favours interdisciplinary study that acknowledges history and contextual relations but that this is not a requirement for enjoyment of a complex space. Thus the MCQP has been approached as a product of the postapartheid city as well as the experiences and intentions of its originators. These factors have continued to influence and shape the MCQP as a social space yet as the event's popularity and commercial recognition suggest, awareness of these factors is not necessary to attend or enjoy the MCQP. In highlighting the inscription of history on a space, Lefebvre also notes the role of the body in a social space as a means of sensory engagement and constituting element. Similarly the MCQP from 1999 became aware of and responded to the history of its venues, its position in the city and the effective role of its costumed partygoers in spaces occupied by the MCQP.⁴⁴¹ In the design of the party Vorster, thanks in part to the early influence of co-originator Andrew Putter, demonstrates an understanding of Lefebvre's work. As a trained architect he engages in forms of practice in a knowing way, demonstrating a

⁴⁴¹ Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The production of space*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

theoretical savvy, that makes the MCQP a conscious intervention in built and social environment. To a lesser extent Foucault's concept of Other Spaces as insightful alternative spaces to the everyday has been applicable to the MCQP. The MCQP is not a public space but rather a varying and politically charged space of conditional entry that beckons to the carnivalesque as an alternative to existing and fixed social spaces.⁴⁴²

Works of Lefebvre and Foucault have also been especially insightful and applicable to the MCQP when locally interpreted by a South African author, notably Jennifer Robinson. Robinson's Foucauldian discussion of the apartheid and postapartheid city highlights the contesting power relationships that characterise the spatial strategy of apartheid and its endurance. The MCQP, a product of the postapartheid city, began as a liberated celebration of sexual difference characterised by its socio-spatial elements. Later these elements developed to become a socio-spatial articulation of its transgressive queer celebration in and in response to the contested social spaces of the postapartheid city.⁴⁴³ In later work Robinson suggests a Lefebvrian response through cultural and creative means, to undermining the enduring apartheid spatiality and transforming the postapartheid city, that requires an imaginative approach to overcome fixed and rational conceptions of these spaces. The MCQP is a mobile, cultural and creative event that

⁴⁴² Foucault, Michel. 1986. Of other spaces. *Diacritics*. Vol. 16, No.1, 22-27

⁴⁴³ Foucault, Michel. 1993. Space, power and knowledge. in Doring, Simon. Ed. *The cultural studies reader*. London: Routledge. Robinson, Jennifer. 1992. Power, space and the city: historical reflections on apartheid and post-apartheid urban orders. in Smith, David M. Ed. *The apartheid city and beyond: urbanization and social change in South Africa*. London: Routledge. Robinson, Jennifer. 1996. *The power of apartheid: state, power and space in South African cities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

imaginatively uses spaces to transform and expose the potential dynamism of postapartheid city spaces.⁴⁴⁴

Beyond the production of social space and contested nature of postapartheid city spaces, the MCQP of 1994 to 2003 displays further theoretical intuition and applicability with respect to the space created for and by the party, and the urban context in which it occurs. From a spatial perspective the MCQP shows a transgressive intuition with regards to the contextual urban trends of traditional public space decline and its alternatives.

The MCQP's use of a queer attitude because of its transgressive nature and inclusive appeal ensured that the party was both a creative and broadly appealing event, that allowed artists and partygoers alike to flirt with and subvert traditional definitions.⁴⁴⁵ This is all the more noteworthy when considered in conjunction with the MCQP's recognition of the centrality of the body in constituting⁴⁴⁶ and performing⁴⁴⁷ identity by the inclusion of costumes as an experimental medium for queerness. As a collective and spatial queer phenomenon, the celebratory MCQP was a transgressive political performance and claim to identity that was able to temporarily transform spaces normalised as straight or conservative.⁴⁴⁸ The MCQP was also a social act of community

⁴⁴⁴ Robinson, Jennifer. 1998. (Im)mobilizing space – dreaming of change. in Judin, Hilton and Vladislavic, Ivan. Eds. *Blank _ : architecture, apartheid and after*. Rotterdam: NAI.

⁴⁴⁵ Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. 1995. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge.

⁴⁴⁶ Synnott, Anthony. 1993. *The body social: symbolism, self and society*. London: Routledge.

⁴⁴⁷ Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

⁴⁴⁸ Davis, Tim. The diversity of queer politics and the redefinition of sexual identity and community in urban spaces. in Bell, David and Valentine, Gill. Eds. *Mapping desire: geographies of sexuality*. London: Routledge. Valentine, Gill. 1996. (Re)negotiating the “heterosexual street”: lesbian productions of space. in Duncan, Nancy. Ed. 1996. *Bodyspace: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. New York: Routledge.

performance, emanating from the body, that claimed a space for and constituted the queer community.⁴⁴⁹ Although sharing some of the characteristics of a traditional public space, a MCQP party is not one.⁴⁵⁰ The MCQP's emphasis on the interaction of people within a space lends itself to a progressive definition of public space that prioritises meaningful engagement over a fixed spatial context, even if the engagement is temporary.⁴⁵¹ The MCQP, as such a temporary public domain, disrupts the dualism of public space decline and increased privatisation of public spaces by suggestively demonstrating that elements of both may exist simultaneously.⁴⁵²

- **The MCQP beyond 2003**

The MCQP did not end in 2003 and Vorster, again with the creative assistance of Borland, produced the eleventh event in 2004 in the Founder's Gardens adjacent to the Artscape Theatre. *Jungle Fever* responded to the venue associated criticism of *Kitsch Kitchen* as industrial and sterile through staging the event predominantly outdoors. Unfortunately the outdoor venue provided little shelter and resulted in a windswept and dusty event.⁴⁵³ The MCQP again experienced venue uncertainty which admittedly resulted in the use of an unfavourable venue. Vorster's response was to state that he hoped that future MCQP parties would take place on the streets of Cape Town.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁹ Buckland, Fiona. 2002. *Impossible dance: club culture and queer world-making*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

⁴⁵⁰ Carr, Stephen et al. Eds. 1992. *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁵¹ Hajer, Maarten and Reijndorp, Arnold. 2001. *In search of new public domain*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.

⁴⁵² Lees, Loretta. 1997. Ageographia, heterotopia, and Vancouver's new public library in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. Vol. 15, No. 1-3, 1997

⁴⁵³ Weaver, Tony. 2004. MCQP revellers dance the night away. in *Cape Times*, 20 December 2004. 1

⁴⁵⁴ Breytenbach, Karen. 2004. MCQP to take the party to the streets. in *Cape Times*, 22 December 2004. 3

This proved not to be the case as Vorster sold the MCQP, following *Jungle Fever* in 2004, to a consortium that included influential and long time MCQP supporters Peter Hayes and Sheryl Ozinsky. The circus themed 2005 MCQP left the city centre for the peripheral and suburban Ratanga Junction Theme Park, adjacent to the contentious postmodern exclusive themed development of Century City.⁴⁵⁵ Despite efforts to retain the event's artistic and queer elements, its positive reception and venue success this heralded the end of an era for the MCQP. Vorster's central involvement had ended, the event had left the city centre and the possible realisation of the MCQP's commercial success had surpassed concerns of its mainstream recognition.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ Marks, Rafael and Bezzoli, Marco. 2001. Palaces of desire: Century City, Cape Town and the ambiguities of development. in *Urban Forum* January – March 2001, Vol. 12, Issue 1

⁴⁵⁶ Raymond, Leanne. Queer is a state of mind at annual MCQP bash. in *Cape Times*, 16 December 2004. 4

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