CHAPTER 4
CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE TOWNSHIP SPACE AND BLACK MASCULINITY IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN CINEMA

In the previous two chapters I contextualized the cinematic representation of the ‘township space’ and the articulation of black masculinity within this space. This chapter provides a close reading of my two central case studies, Wooden Camera (2003) and Tsotsi (2005), by appropriating the theoretical framework set up in the first three chapters. In the first section of this chapter – The Cinematic Township – I analyse the cinematic representation of the ‘township space’ in the two films by interrogating specifically the following: a) The location of the township and the importance of the opening sequences b) The Hybridity of the ‘Cinematic Township’ c) The significance of ‘The Township Aesthetic’ and Estelle’s room in Wooden Camera and Miriam’s fashion sense in Tsotsi and d) The appropriation of a ‘Third Space’ by the characters of the two films as a means of negotiating their identities in the post-apartheid landscape. The second section of this chapter called Township Masculinity analyses the representations of black identity –especially black masculinity – within the township space.

THE CINEMATIC TOWNSHIP

Wooden Camera (2003) and Tsotsi (2005)

a) The Location of the Township and the Importance of the Opening Sequences

The opening sequences of Wooden Camera and Tsotsi set up the narratives of the two stories by locating the ‘township space’ as a marginal space, located on the peripheries of the cities. In Wooden Camera the opening sequence introduces the two main protagonists of the film – Sipho and Madiba. As these two young boys are
playing alongside train tracks, a murdered man is thrown off the moving train. Sipho searches the body of the man and finds a gun and a camera in his suitcase. He takes possession of the gun and gives the camera to Madiba. This opening sequence sets the tone for the movie as the gun becomes a marker of Sipho’s masculinity throughout the film, whereas the camera defines Madiba’s masculinity.

In *Tsotsi* the film opens with a shot of the interior of a ‘shack’, with a group of young men playing ‘dice’ and gambling. As the scene progresses the audience learns that these young men are actually gangsters who are going to town ‘to do a job’. The leader of the gang is identified as the young Tsotsi, whom the film revolves around. The Johannesburg township that *Tsotsi* is located in is also constructed on the periphery of city Johannesburg. In the next scene Tsotsi and his gang members are in Parkcity Station searching for a prospective victim to rob. They identify an old black man in a suit, buying a scarf from an Indian saleswoman. They follow him onto the train, surround him as he stands in the moving train and in the process of robbing him, one of the gang members kills him. The train stops and all passengers swiftly leave. The scene ends with the murdered man lying on the floor of the train.

In the two films the ‘township space’ is located at the peripheries of two major South African cities – Johannesburg and Cape Town. The ‘township space’ is immediately set up as a marginal space located on the fringes of society and one that maintains the stigma of Afrikaner Nationalist ideologies. In the opening sequences of these two films reference to the train tracks and trains are important as train tracks and open ‘velds’ were often visible boundaries between the urban (city) spaces and the township space during apartheid. For the black person movement between the ‘township space’ and the urban spaces was restricted for the purposes of employment. However there has always been close relations between the urban and the township spaces. This is more evident in post-apartheid South Africa because of the strong cultural and traditional roots that the ‘township space’ has come to occupy in the memory of black South Africans.
The ‘township space’ was gazed upon not only as a space of ‘otherness’ but also as a space of marginality. The visible train tracks became a threshold space and crossing the tracks were forbidden for the white person. The demarcation of the ‘township space’ as an alternate space of modernity and its juxtaposition with the more legitimate spaces (like the urban spaces) is the result of employing modern technologies of discipline and power. Discipline and power was employed to create and control individuals so that they did not threaten the hegemony of Afrikaner Nationalism. However in post-apartheid South Africa the ‘township space’ has now been opened to the gaze of the other (white person) with ‘township tours’ that claim to repackage the South African landscape in an attempt to recuperate and sanctify this space in the South African and global memory. Contemporary South African society is characterised by the democratisation of space and the easier and freer movement of the black subject between the city and the township (and other spaces) is significant of the shift in the political register that was once based on strict surveillance and control of this space. In post-apartheid South Africa democracy is defined by the accessibility of space, and through the dismantling of boundaries that once marginalised and exploited people of colour. This has resulted in the redefinition of space through the manner in which it is used on a daily basis by those who were once restricted by apartheid ideologies. As is evident in my analysis of Wooden Camera and Tsotsi cinematic representations of the ‘township space’ are often reduced to landscapes of poverty and criminality that perpetuates myths of ‘otherness’.

In both films the township is perceived through the eyes of black male characters. In Wooden Camera Sipho is set up as the criminal, deviant young man. He takes possession of the gun that he finds on a dead mans body and very soon, he is overcome by the power wielded by the weapon. Madiba immediately becomes fascinated with the camera (that he places in a wooden box) and very soon he masters the technique of capturing the moving image. For Madiba the camera is a way of re-imagining the ‘township space’. But for Sipho the gun gives him the power and respect he needs in order to become part of the gang culture in the city of
Cape Town. In *Tsotsi* the opening sequence introduces the audience to Tsotsi and his two other close friends. Together they form a small but ‘efficient’ gang, with an identity of their own. Tsotsi is represented as a troubled, yet powerful and respected young man. The flashbacks of his childhood reveal the motivation for his violent and criminal nature and the reasons why he had resorted to crime as a way of life. On a train to city Johannesburg Tsotsi and his gang kill an elderly black man for his money. These two opening sequences not only positions the ‘township space’ on the periphery of the cities and as a marginal space, but also set up black masculinity as deviant, aggressive and authenticated through a violent black township culture represented by township gangs. These scenes also suggest that the marginality, poverty and underclass of the ‘township space’ foster violent, criminal and deviant black men. This is significant as the ‘Cinematic Township’ re-iterates stereotypes that have become associated with black identity, while simultaneously trying to reframe black identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

*b) Hybridity of the ‘Cinematic Township’*

Hybridity is a term used to refer to the mixing, fusion and assimilation of ideas and concepts. Hybridity also results in the formation of a ‘third space’, a space that is the result of the fusion and assimilation that occurs during hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Loomba, 1998). A ‘third space’ or the hybrid object usually has distinct characteristics, yet at the same time displays traces and features of that which it has been assimilated from. In this report I have suggested that the ‘township space’ be read as a hybrid space as opposed to a ‘fixed’ or anchored space. The cinematic representation of the ‘township space’ appears to have become homogenized in its visual aesthetic – the codes and conventions that identifies the ‘Cinematic Township’ – yet the cinematic representation of the ‘township space’ is one of hybridity, strongly exhibiting the rural and urban influences on this space. The political register of the ‘township space’ was that it was developed as a ‘port’ into the city and was therefore never allowed to be fully modern. At the same time the township was never fully rural. Cinematically the ‘township space’ has become a
third space that positions black identity between modernity and pre-modernity, suggesting that the black subject is not capable of negotiating modernity. This report has analyses the manner in which the hybridity of the ‘township space’ is not only a result of its peripheral position in relation to the cities, but also a result of its strong ties to the rural areas. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, this hybridity has extended to the strong relationship of ‘township spaces’ with urban areas:

One of the themes that has recently emerged in thinking about post-colonial city in Africa is that the traditional opposition of urban and rural is not only useless, but also destructive (Bremner, 2004: 23).

Lindsey Bremner (2004) evokes hybridity of the ‘township space’ as reflected through the strong presence of the rural in the urban. The township is characterised by presence theof farm animals and farm stalls, modern electric appliances and other markers of materiality and are signifiers of the access to capital within this space. This suggests that space within post-apartheid South Africa has become democratised and resists any strict boundary and definition. Major South African cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town represent post-colonial (or post-apartheid) cities. In this report I have suggested that ‘township spaces’, although developed on the fringes of major South African cities, are urban spaces and represent the core of post-colonial cities in Africa. This space has exhibited a resiliency, recycle-ability and more importantly, represents the fusion of ‘social and cultural worlds’ that are important characteristic of post-colonial spaces.

The democratised movement of the black subject between the urban and the ‘township space’ also evokes hybridity as there is constant fusion and mixing (interchange) of ideas and concepts. Although there has always been movement between the city, township and rural areas and a constant exchange between these spaces, this is more apparent and legitimate in post-apartheid South Africa. People have always drawn from the rich cultures offered by the South African urban, township and rural spaces. In post-apartheid South African society hybridity and
fusion of spaces are more prominent and the advantages are more apparent. I have suggested that the cinematic representations of the ‘township space’ are evolving into a television and cinematic aesthetic in South Africa. This is discussed later in this chapter in the section titled ‘Township Aesthetic’. More importantly in post-apartheid South Africa the township space is strongly related to an authentic black identity and culture.

The cinematic representation of the ‘township space’ in Wooden Camera and Tsotsi strongly suggest that this space be read as a hybrid space, although it is cinematically fixed in its codes and conventions. It should be stressed that the ‘fixity’ of the township space as one of danger, violence, decay, death and disease was an attempt by Afrikaner Nationalism and later white South Africans to construct a discourse of ‘Otherness’ about this space. People who occupy the township space experience the fluidity of this space. This dichotomy is important as the township is a space of ‘otherness’ from an ‘outsiders’ gaze, but is perceived and experienced differently for ‘insiders’. In both films the ‘township space’ is represented in the homogenous, characterized by shack or shanty dwellings. The experiences of the township have been reduced to that of the temporary ‘informal settlement’. Cinematically the township space is one reduced to decay and death, informality and temporality. These stereotypes have become common tropes of representing black identity. In both films the houses are built of tin and brick. Cinematic representations of the township are characterised by haphazard architecture and the lack of any formal urban planning. The project of the filmmaker in constructing the cinematic township appears to be one that has fetishised the representation of this space as the shack or shanty dwellings.

In Wooden Camera the first time the audience sees the ‘township space’ is during the title sequence when there is a cut to a bird’s eye view of this space. The camera pans across the landscape of the South African township emphasising the homogenisation of this space and reducing the different experiences of the township to that of the shanty town or shack settlement. The informality of the township
Khayelisha is emphasised through the temporality of the houses and its marginal position in relation to the rich, previously ‘whites only’ suburbs of Cape Town. In *Tsotsi* the first time the audience is introduced to the township is through the interior of an informal dwelling. The house where Tsotsi and his friends play ‘dice’ is constructed of tin, corrugated metal and wood. The experiences of the ‘township space’ are also foregrounded through the scene when Boston questions Tsotsi in the shebeen. The shebeen has become a common marker and iconic cinematic representation of the ‘township space’. However the shebeen is often represented and characterised through the multiple people who find comfort in the cheap liquor available in the shebeen. The shebeen is also characterized by its strong association with township music (usually Kwaito). Shebeens are often represented as sites of illicit and illegal activities. More dangerously the shebeen is employed to foreground the otherness of black identity. The black person is often represented as drunk, sexually lecherous, lazy, dangerous and deviant within this space.

The visual representation of the ‘township space’ as the shack or shanty settlement is important as filmmakers appear to emphasize the marginality of this space. The ‘township space’ was developed as a marginal space because of an apartheid mandate. However in post-apartheid South Africa the marginality of this space has been transformed through the strong ties that the township has with the political struggle for democracy and an authentic black identity. The contemporary discourse of the ‘township space’ is one that emphasises the strong and close relationships people have developed with township life and culture. The township is no longer only viewed as a space of poverty, criminality and exclusion. It has become ‘home’ to millions of black South Africans. Although after apartheid many black South Africans moved out of townships and into more affluent ‘northern’ suburbs, many blacks still maintain strong ties with township culture and return as a means of reconnecting with ones roots and *authentic* black culture. Although the political register and climate in South Africa has changed with the new democratic dispensation, filmmakers’ emphasise the marginality, poverty and exclusion of the
‘township space’ at the expense of reiterating ‘place-myths’ of this space that threaten new representations of the township in post-apartheid society.

Although the two films have constructed a representation of the ‘township space’ as one of marginality, poverty and exclusion, the films also evoke the township as a space where people build their lives and are able to re-imagine themselves (Robins, 1998). The cinematic representations of the township in Wooden Camera and Tsotsi emphasise the strong ties that this space has with modern urban life. The ‘Cinematic Township’ also suggests that this space is able to not only negotiate but also change definitions of city spaces in post-colonial (post-apartheid) societies.

In Wooden Camera the characters are portrayed through their strong relationship with the space of the township. In the beginning of the film Sipho waters a plant next to his informal dwelling. Madiba and Louise have a strong relationship with their home and when Sipho wanders off into the streets of Cape Town they constantly ask him when he will return home (to the township). The white music teacher is very much a part of the rich township culture. He teaches Estelle how to play jazz and other high European music like Baqt. The music that influenced the culture of the townships in the early days has been revived, also become part of a rich urban culture. This cultural exchange and influence suggests that urban areas do not only influence township areas, but that people return to the township, or access the township to experience rich township culture. With the increasing commodification of the ‘township space’ and its culture the township is becoming a rich source of information and inspiration for all types of artists.

The hybridity of the ‘Cinematic Township’ is reflected through the strong urban and rural presence within this space. Both films reflect the strong presence of the rural and the urban within the ‘township space’. In Wooden Camera and Tsotsi there is the constant presence of farm animals (chickens, cows, goats), reminders and markers of rurality, suggesting a strong affiliation with the rural environment. These traces of ruralness in the township space not only confirm the hybridity of the township space but also reinforces that spaces have always resisted strict
demarcation, even when space was used as a political tool to separate the South African population. Presence of cars, modern appliances and fashionable clothing within the ‘township space’ reflects both the hybridity of this space and also references materiality and access to capital. These references to materiality suggest a stark contradiction between the original project of the township and the manner in which this space has transformed – and taken on a life of its own - especially in post-apartheid South Africa. The township was developed as a temporary ‘port’ into South African cities by an Afrikaner Nationalist government. This space soon became a marginal space that was occupied mostly by South Africa’s black population. As I have argued in this report, the township was developed as a threshold space that was neither urban nor rural. Through Afrikaner Nationalist politics stereotypes and ‘place-myths’ of marginality were perpetuated that were about ‘othering’ black identity and culture. ‘Traces of modernity’ and references to capital become prominent features within the ‘Cinematic Township’ advocating the manner in which the township has developed and transformed through the years. Although stereotypes of the township that perpetuated its marginal position were mobilised through its construction as pre-modern, the township and its inhabitants have defied this project of ‘fixity’ and have redefined its status as a space of marginality. More importantly ‘traces of modernity’ within this space highlights the tension between possessions and materiality and space. Certain spaces are usually associated with certain material possessions and those traces of modernity within the township space reflects the townships ability to resist any strict definition and also attests to the contradictory and hybrid nature of this space. The township has evolved into multiple sites of identities “moving into many directions all at once” (Bremner, 2004: 155).

The urbanity of the township space is also reflected through the daily and lived activities of the township inhabitants. In one scene in Tsotsi the camera lingers on chickens eating and clawing the earth next to a convertible black car. The hybridity of the ‘township space’ is also represented not only through its organically constructed dwellings, but also through the activities of its inhabitants. In both films
the women of the township are represented as street vendors (which is now a common characteristic of urbanity in post-apartheid South Africa) selling fruit, vegetables, and cooking food items on the streets. The cinematic township of Khayelitsha in *Wooden Camera* and Soweto in *Tsotsi* reflects the rich urban culture that resonates through many South African townships. The spirit of the township is reflected through dance, music, food and recognition of traditional values within this space.

Cinematic representation’s of the ‘township space’ reflects the imbrication of not only city and township but also the strong presence of the rural within the township. Ultimately the township is represented as a ‘melting pot’, a pot that defies a clear and distinct definition but rather one that reflects the ever increasingly blurring of boundaries between the ‘township and rural’ and ‘township and urban’ spaces. The township is reflected as an in-between space, a space that has the potential to negotiate an ever changing identity within the post-apartheid landscape. A space that is able to reclaim modernity and redefine itself as a modern invention reflected through its hybrid nature. The hybridity of the ‘township space’ is significant because it reflects the porosity of spaces – within the space of the township has seeped the rich urban and rural cultures that have defined black culture for decades. Although Afrikaner Nationalist ideologies were based on the surveillance and strict demarcation of spaces according to skin colour, it should be noted that even during the dark years of apartheid there was a close connection between different spaces. The recuperation of the ‘township space’ within the memory of South Africans reflects the redefinition of this space in contemporary South Africa. Today this space has evolved from a contested space to one that has swiftly become fetishised.

In *Wooden Camera* Sipho is homeless and has been adopted by Madiba. The two boys are inseparable and are as close as brothers. Sipho is the older of the two and Madiba looks to him for guidance and support. Sipho is represented as ‘street wise’ and able to negotiate the harshness of township life. However Sipho also associates himself with the street children of Cape Town and is affiliated to a gang. While
Khyalitsha represents the ‘underside’ of Cape Town’s modernity, Sipho and the other street children represent the ‘under-belly’ of the streets of Cape Town. Sipho and the other street children (whom we can assume have left the township to pursue a better life in the city) have become enmeshed in lives of drugs (they sniff glue), alcohol, prostitution and violent crimes. Cape Town like any other major South African city, signifies modernity and a country’s ability to negotiate the global landscape, but like any major city of the world the modernity of this place is characterised through an underworld where boys become men overnight in an attempt to survive the harshness of life. Throughout the film the marginality of the ‘township space’ appears to suggest that this is the reason for criminality, violence and deviancy of these young boys – especially Sipho. Madiba’s father is represented as an alcoholic whose dreams of becoming an actor in Cape Town were never realised. Madiba’s father is a role model to the boys, yet his lifestyle (one of alcohol and shebeen’s) suggests that this is the fate for all those who live in the township. In Tsotsi the marginality of the ‘township space’ is also apparent. Tsotsi ran away from home at a young age and his gang members are a group of young adult black men most of whom are largely illiterate. The articulation of a deviant black masculinity within this space emphasises the marginality of this space and the position of the township as peripheral to the cultural milieu of the urban centres. However I suggest that these representations of the township space re-iterate stereotypes of ‘otherness’ that have been associated with this space since the days of apartheid. These representations reiterate the strong links that spaces have with cultural identities and that ‘place-circumstances’ (violence, poverty, deviancy) are a direct result of the type of spaces people occupy.

c) The ‘Township Aesthetic’ and significance of Estelle’s room in Wooden Camera and Miriam’s fashion sense in Tsotsi

In both Wooden Camera and Tsotsi there are important scenes that suggest the assimilation of a ‘Township Aesthetic’ in these films. In chapter two I have identified that a ‘Township Aesthetic’ refers to any artwork that was inspired by the
‘township space’. The ‘township aesthetic’ can be identified as far back in the Township Art of the 1950’ and 1960’s. In chapter two I have suggested that contemporary South African filmmakers are also drawing inspiration strongly from the ‘township space’ in the construction of cinematic images. I have referred to such an aesthetisisation as the ‘Township Aesthetic’. I have also suggested that although there may be a difference in the time period (with a different set of political and social implications) and the form of artistic expression there are stark similarities recognisable in both Township Art and cinema that uses the ‘township space’ as a central location. Although a ‘Township aesthetic’ is apparent in Wooden Camera and Tsotsi as an aesthetic choice, the filmmakers definitely draw on two instances in fashion design and interior decoration that have been inspired by the hybridity and aesthetics of South African townships.

As an aesthetic choice filmmakers have constructed the ‘Cinematic Township’ alongside artists like Andrew Motjuoadi, Eli Kobeli and David Mogano who became famous for their depictions of life within township spaces from the early 1950’s onwards. The ‘township space’ was often reflected through strong, bright and earthy colours, distortion of characters and dwellings, representing the squalor, death and decay of this space and the township as a ghetto or underbelly of modernity. Most Township artists of the 1950’s avoided ‘pictoral naturalism’ for an ‘expressive distortion’ as a vehicle for conveying the feelings of loss, displacement and dislocation in the townships (Verstraete, 1989:157). It appears as though South African filmmakers have assimilated a similar style in their aesthetic choices in constructing the ‘Cinematic Township’. In Wooden Camera and Tsotsi the cinematic representation of the township is defined through harsh potent colours, a distortion of structures and characters and these representations appear to emphasise the squalor, death, decay and criminality associated with this space. Cinematically the township appears to be constructed on the verge of modernity, not capable of fully inhabiting modernity. Characters are represented as incapable of negotiating modernity and the displacement and dislocation of characters in these films appear to emphasise their feelings of loss and displacement within the urban space. The
township becomes a ‘safe space’ for the black person and the illicit and illegal activities associated with this space emphasises the marginality of black identity. The recent commodification of the township aesthetic is most evident in ‘Shack Chic’\textsuperscript{1}, an interior design book that promotes the township aesthetic as a lifestyle choice for people abroad and in up-market décor shops in Cape Town and Johannesburg. These artists claim to draw their inspiration from the ‘inventiveness’ of the shack dweller. The interior of shacks are interesting spaces as they suggest the re-cycleability of the township. Not only do shack dwellers use extra packaging from South African products like Luck Star, Bull Brand, Lion Matches and Sunlight Liquid to decorate their dwelling, they also draw from the organic recyclables of townships to decorate their lives (Fraser, 2002). This transforms shack dwellings or informal settlements into spaces of contradiction. These settlements emphasise the hybridity of this space through its emphasis of the ‘rural-meets-urban aesthetic’ choice.

In \textit{Wooden Camera} Estelle is the rich, white, teenage girl who befriends Madiba and Sipho. She is represented as a liberal white girl who wishes to see all South Africans as equal. Estelle is somewhat of a radical rebel who defies her father’s wishes that she must not associate with the ‘black kids’. In one scene her father goes into her room and is shocked by what he sees. Her room is painted in bright, earthy colours. Her walls are decorated with posters and car number plates. She has a beaded curtain leading to her bathroom. There are neon lights on her walls and other metal and wooden objects placed haphazardly in her room. She also has books of Malcolm X on her table. These are all signs of Africanness or a desire for an African consciousness which Estelle has assimilated into an interior decoration style by employing the signs of black identity. Ultimately these signs become stereotypes of black identity that are easily available to people who want to lay claim to (South) Africanness. These signs signify a certain South African aesthetic that has become a home decoration lifestyle choice. Estelle’s room signifies the

manner in which a South African authentic black identity has become stereotyped as belonging to the space of the township. The irony is that to fulfill her desire for an (South) African consciousness Estelle appropriates a ‘township lifestyle’ in the comforts of her Constantia home.

In *Tsotsi* the hybridity, re-cycleability and contradiction of the ‘township space’ is evoked through Miriam’s house. Miriam is a modern African woman who claims a modernity through her fashion design. She represents the Sun Goddess and Stoned Cherry design fashion labels in South Africa that have assimilated European and African designs to produce a fusion or hybrid design. As I have suggested in chapter one, the filmmaker appears to emphasise and claim a South Africanness based on the assimilation and fusion of tastes. The first time Tsotsi barges into Miriam’s home he notices the wind chimes that she has made - one from rusted metal and the other from broken glass pieces. This scene is important as it conveys to the viewer the emotional framework of this woman (she make the rusted wind chime when she was sad and the one with colourful, broken pieces of glass when she was happy), and emphasises the inventiveness of the shack dweller. When Miriam tells Tsotsi that the price of her colourful wind chime is fifty Rand he laughs and asks her fifty Rand for broken glass? She replies by asking him if all he sees is broken glass. This suggests the inventiveness of the ‘township space’ and also the possibilities for re-imagining this space by utilising what is available in this space according to the needs of its inhabitants. Miriam is a young entrepreneur who sews and mends clothes and sells chimes made from the organic (and inorganic) material that are common signifiers of the township space. *Tsotsi* emphasises hybridity and the imaginative potential of the township space by celebrating the recreation of an African aesthetic (and the African imaginary) in the West.

In *Wooden Camera* Sipho gives Madiba the camera that he finds on the murdered man’s body. With this camera Madiba continuously shoots footage of the township space according to how he sees it. Madiba captures the essence of the township and re-imagines this space as one with endless possibilities. He experiments with the
technology of the camera and in the process he captures footage of the township from an ‘insiders’ perspective. In this way it becomes more than just a space of poverty and exclusion. Through Madiba’s gaze the township becomes a space through which its inhabitants are able to re-imagine and reconstruct their lives and by re-defining the township in post-apartheid South Africa.

The ‘township aesthetic’ is one of hybridity and fusion, drawing from the inspirations from both the colonised and the coloniser (the oppressed and the oppressor). As I have suggested this aesthetic choice is an attempt by filmmakers to recuperate and re-create the ‘township space’ as representative of South Africanness. This is achieved by drawing on the iconography of the South African landscape. Both filmmakers assimilate South African and Western aesthetics to create a fusion style in an attempt to represents post-apartheid South African society. The township is a liminal space and hold “the seeds of cultural creativity that generates new models, symbols, and paradigms” (Spariosu quoted in Trewick, 2003: 5). Trewick (2003) also evokes John Lye who mentions that:

> The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilisation of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic as well as oppressive (quoted in Trewick, 2003: 5-6).

**d) The appropriation of a ‘Third Space’ by Sipho in Wooden Camera and Tsotsi in Tsotsi**

In Wooden Camera and Tsotsi the filmmakers employ a ‘Third Space’ that becomes symbolic for Sipho and Tsotsi respectively and is also important for the implications of constructing a new ‘black’ masculinity. For Sipho this space is his informal dwelling away from the township. Sipho has constructed his homestead on the banks of a river. It is to this place that Estelle and Madiba retreat to at the end of the film. For Tsotsi this ‘third space’ is outside of the township where the drainage
pipes are located. This is the place Tsotsi had gone to when he left home. He brings his stolen baby to this place to show him where he grew up and where his home was. These ‘third spaces’ are located geographically away from the ‘township spaces’. These ‘third spaces’ are symbolic and important as they offer the protagonists psychological freedom outside of the township space. The ‘third space’ is important as this is a ‘new’ space, one that allows for the emergence of a new black masculinity. This space allows for the opportunity to find a new identity and to access new conceptions of masculinity. For Sipho and Tsotsi this ‘third space’ provides a relief from the ‘fixity’ of the township in the psyche of South Africans.

The ‘township space’ arouses ‘place-images’ of poverty, the underclass and decay in the minds of South Africans. These ‘place-images’ and ‘place-myths’ are a direct result of stereotypes perpetuated during apartheid. This attests to the resiliency of stereotypes to ‘fix’ identities and concretise identities for long periods of time. As I have analysed and argued in this report, these images are emphasised in contemporary South African cinema. However the ‘fixity’ of the ‘township space’ has become one of strangulation for its social actors and many people seek refuge away from it. Sipho refuses to associate himself only with the township and tells Madiba and Louise that he ‘lives all over, everywhere’. Sipho built his house away from the township (represented by his shack dwelling on the banks of a river) and when life becomes too difficult for Estelle and Madiba after Sipho is shot dead, they retreat to Sipho’s home. Towards the end of the film Estelle’s ‘white world’ abruptly unravels when she discovers that her father is actually a ‘coloured’ and not a white South African. She discovers this when she confronts him about his unacceptance of her black friends from the township. She threatens to leave home and in this moment of turmoil her mother reveals her father’s true identity to her. It is ironic that the hybridity of his physiological composition has been hidden from the audience and his daughter for so long. The importance of the ‘hypervisibility’ of skin colour within the South African (body) politic is made apparent in the film. Estelle’s father has a coloured mother but because of his white skin he has been able to pass as white for so long, hiding his true identity from his daughter and
friends. In order for Estelle and her family to fulfill the ‘place-images’ associated with whiteness her father performs a white identity that fulfills the stereotypes and expectations associated with whiteness. However when his true identity is revealed the white world that he has constructed and maintained for his family for so long unravels when his daughter runs off with a black teenage boy. Before they run-off into the sunset Estelle and Madiba visit Sipho’s home within the ‘third space’. Their encounter with the ‘third space’ is significant as this space becomes a way of escaping the realities of their situations. The ‘third space’ allows them to recuperate and deal with the psychological angst that they have encountered through the discovery of Estelle’s true identity and dealing with their friend’s death. For Estelle this space allows her to contemplate her new identity and position herself within the South African landscape as a coloured girl. Her hybridity of identities has implications for the manner in which she sees herself and would want other people to see her in South Africa. However, the ending of the film provides a somewhat simplistic and utopian view of life for the two youngsters as they ride off into the sunset.

Although Tsotsi has a home in the township he still occasionally visits the drainage pipes located away from the township as a means of escaping township life and the activities that he engages in. The pipes are occupied by young girls and boys, whom it is implied will become the next generation of gangsters to inhabit the township. In one scene in the film Tsotsi takes his kidnapped baby to the concrete pipes (his ‘third space’) to show him his home when he was younger. This scene also sharply juxtaposes the baby’s home with Tsotsi’s. The baby has middle class parents who live in the suburbs and these ‘place-images’ suggest that this child will probably not encounter the same challenges that Tsotsi has encountered during his childhood. This suggests that place-circumstances of a community determine the type of individual that arises from that community. Very simply the suggestion is that violence or the deviancy of black masculinity is determined by the place circumstances of the ‘township space’. However the implications of a ‘third space’ are important because if these inhabitants encounter a space that allows them
psychological freedom from the confines, fixity and marginality of their circumstances, there is potential for the construction of new identity – in this case masculinity.

For Tsotsi the ‘third space’ allows him to escape the death associated with the township space, and the freedom to engage with his traumatic past and to learn how to heal his pain. Tsotsi has numerous flashbacks of his dying mother and the events that caused him to leave his home. These ‘third spaces’ evokes the importance of space and the deep fusion of space with ones sense of identity and the manner in which one perceives the world. However the films suggest that if black men encounter the third space there is potential for the construction of a new masculinity. This is reflected more explicitly in Tsotsi who succumbs to a universal humanism at the end of the film and takes the baby back to his parents in the affluent suburbs. Although Sipho in Wooden Camera dies while attempting to rob a ‘cash-in-transit’ van, he had been represented as a ‘Robin Hood’ character throughout the film. He stole from the rich to give to the poor. This suggests that there is a universal goodness in him, hidden somewhere behind his overwhelming need to belong to a structure of support. Within the ‘Cinematic Township’ these structures are represented as gang structures that perpetuate the myth of the violent black man. Both characters (Sipho and Tsotsi) find their support system within township gang cultures that become defining aspects of their masculinities.

The ‘Cinematic Township’ has been constructed as one that carries with it the social stigma of a black space. Through representing the ‘township space’ as a marginal space characterised by poverty, homelessness, unemployment and deviancy the film reiterates the notion that the division of spaces is the result of clearly constructed ‘perceptions and prejudices’ (Shields, 1991:46) that determine the types of lives people live. Perceptions of places overdetermine the behaviourism that is associated with people who inhabit these spaces. People, their actions and perceptions about their lives are determined from the spaces or places that they come from and vica versa. The connotations and metaphors of the cinematic township suggests that
within the shifting political register of a post-apartheid South Africa the marginality of the township is reiterated in its contemporary cinematic representations. This is evident in the manner in which identities of places become concretised through years of perceiving a place in a particular way.

The South African township space and its current fetishisation in contemporary South African cinema emphasises that spaces and places are historically constructed as appropriate or inappropriate, legitimate or illegitimate (Shield, 1991) according to race and class. In South Africa, the township has been stereotyped and perceived as a space of ‘otherness’ that housed dangerous, lecherous and criminal black South African men. Afrikaner Nationalist Ideologies were based on strictly controlling black identity by placing them within the clearly demarcated boundaries of the township. The township space became a space of exclusion and was characterised through its inappropriate position in relation to the cities. The township was developed as a marginal space and through this discourse of marginality, ‘place-images’ and ‘place-myths’ developed that reiterated the otherness of this space.

According to the French philosopher Lefebvre, space is materially produced as ‘human space’ through the lived experiences, practices and behaviourisms of people who occupy that space (Shields, 1991). For many decades the ‘otherness’ of the ‘township space’ was emphasised through constructing this space as a contested space occupied by dangerous black subjects. The township space became associated by underdevelopment, informal shack dwellings, dirtiness, death, decay, violence, criminality and danger. Over time these stereotypes have informed and determined the overall identity of the township in South Africa. These ‘place-images’ came about through labeling, stereotyping and reducing the experiences and inhabitants of this place to only one type. Years of perpetuating myths about this place has resulted in the ‘freezing’ of the South African township’s identity and cinemas current fascination with this space as a space described above. The identity of the South African township has been concretised and sedimented in the South African imaginary as a space of exclusion, poverty and decay. However the ‘township
space’ is undoubtedly a ‘human space’ characterised by its changing definition and fetishisation in post-apartheid South Africa by South African filmmakers and those who inhabit it. The ‘project of the Cinematic Township’ appears to be one of redefining the township at the expense of reiterating the ‘otherness’ that this space was subjected to during apartheid.

**TOWNSHIP MASCULINITY**

Contemporary South African films like *Wooden Camera* and *Tsotsi* attempt to re-invent black masculinity but instead reiterate historic and political stereotypes that reinforces the ‘otherness’ of black masculinity. Both films portray adolescent black men as their central protagonists who are represented as criminal, unemployed, gang members, violent and drunks. The films very overtly locate a specific type of black masculinity within the space of the township. I refer to this type of masculinity as ‘Township Masculinity’. I suggest that this is a very specific type of black masculinity because the filmmakers appear to reinforce stereotypes of ‘otherness’ that have become associated with black masculinity. Such stereotypes are violence, criminality, deviancy, decay and perverse sexuality. The films do not interrogate these stereotypes or consider the diverse range of black masculinities within the South African landscape. To a large extent black masculinity has been degraded to a masculinity defined through violence and criminality.

In *Wooden Camera* and *Tsotsi* the main male protagonists are Sipho, Madiba and Tsotsi respectively. Sipho and Tsotsi are very similar characters, whose actions mirror each other’s, but who meet very different fates towards the end of each narrative. Madiba’s masculinity is in stark contrast to Sipho’s and Tsotsi’s. Madiba represents the re-imaginative potential of the ‘township space’ and a re-invention of black masculinity within this space. In this section I analyse the hegemonic position that whiteness assumes in the films. I analyse the masculinity of the music teacher
in and the absence of a visible white masculinity in *Wooden Camera* and *Tsotsi* respectively. Yet I argue that *Tsotsi* is permeated by the gaze of white filmmaker.

In both films the ‘township space’ or what I have called the ‘Cinematic Township’ is developed on the fringes of society and reflects the historical marginalisation of black identity. The ‘township space’ does not only reflect hybridity because of its intermediate location between the urban (city) space and the rural space, but the ‘Cinematic Township’ also reflects the construction of black culture as ‘low culture’, the culture of the marginalized (Shields, 1991). The two films locate the township space – a ‘black’ space – as marginal and on the fringes of society. They also locate black identity (especially black masculinity) as marginal, and very overtly constructs black masculinity through a colonising lens that reiterates stereotypes of dangerous, deviant black men. Linked to the performance of South Africanness through the aesthetics of the ‘township space’ there appears to be a crisis in the representation of black identity. To a large extent the ‘Cinematic Township’ is constructed as a masculine space and is usually seen through the eyes and experiences of Sipho, Madiba and Tsotsi. The two films emphasise the extent to which a particular performance of black masculinity is realised through the type of space occupied by these men. Located on the margins of society these actors perform a ‘marginal’ identity that reinforces stereotypes that are associated with the space of the township. Actors who inhabit the ‘Cinematic Township’ share a dichotomous relationship with the township space. (Social) Actors perform the behaviours and mannerisms that are expected of people who inhabit such spaces. These performances not only concretise the identity of the space as being one of danger, violence, crime and death but also ‘fixes’ the identities of the actor (or social actors) as such. Such ‘place-images’ and ‘place-myths’ of the ‘township space’ reiterate notions that violence, marginality and deviancy are generated by place circumstances of the community.

In *Wooden Camera* and *Tsotsi* the black male protagonists, Sipho and Tsotsi respectively, are stigmatised and stereotyped as dangerous, violent, criminal and
deviant black men. In both films these characters are homeless boys. Sipho was found on the streets by Madiba, no further information is given about his background or any motivation for why he has turned out the way he has. Tsotsi on the other hand ran away form home at a young age and swiftly became part of the township gangs. Tsotsi is constructed as a young black male who is struggling to control the demons from his past. The film uses the flashback technique to reveal Tsotsi’s young life to the audience. His mother died of HIV/AIDS and his father is represented as a violent alcoholic. Tsotsi ran away from home because he was terrified of his father. In this way, the film tries to give us a glimpse into Tsotsi’s life and possible motivations for why he has turned to a life of crime.

In both films Sipho and Tsotsi belong to violent gang cultures that are highly misogynistic to women and oppressive to those who do not belong to their structures. In both films gang cultures offer spaces to belongingness for these black men. In Wooden Camera Sipho joins an urban gang in Cape Town that makes their living through robbing rich white folk in the parks, and prostitution. In Tsotsi, Tsotsi resorts to hijacking and robbing the new middle class black families who have moved away from the townships into the surrounding suburbs. The film very clearly references the relatively new urban phenomenon of high walled, fenced off houses that prove to be ineffective to the predations of robbers and hijackers. Tsotsi’s gang is made up of a close group of friends who have been together since childhood. Added to the gang is Boston, a teacher who never took his final exam and has resorted to alcohol as a means of ‘forgetting’. In both films gangs become spaces for survival and protection. Gangs are also very strongly related to a sense of place and space. In these films the gangs are articulated through the space of the township. Gang members are usually constructed as marginal members of society – the uneducated, illiterate, the abandoned. Though most significantly, the films suggest that the space of the township is responsible for producing this type of black masculinity.
In *Wooden Camera* Sipho is represented as a troubled young black man from the township. He is constructed as having a criminal nature. He steals money from parking meters, robs people and hijacks cars, sniffs glue and kills a fellow gang member when Madiba’a camera is stolen. Sipho also intimidates his friends with his gun and in the end he is killed when he tries to hijack a ‘cash-in-transit’ van with an unloaded gun. In *Tsotsi*, Tsotsi is represented as criminal and inherently violent. His gang robs people at the train terminal and in the opening sequence they murder an old black man. Tsotsi hijacks a car from a middle class black woman and the process, kidnaps her baby who is in the back seat of the car. Later in the film Tsotsi goes back to the woman’s house with his gang members to rob the house. In the process Tsotsi murders a fellow gang member saving the baby’s father from being killed. Tsotsi meets a better ending than Sipho. At the end of the film Tsotsi returns the baby to his parents and is arrested very repentedly. While *Wooden Camera* annihilates the criminal black male reinstating the balance in the narrative, *Tsotsi* resorts to a universal humanism with Tsotsi sorting out the demons that have ravaged his life, falling in love with Miriam and seeking absolution for kidnapping the baby.

In *Wooden Camera* Madiba provides a contrasting version of masculinity to Sipho’s. Sipho is represented as violent and criminal while Madiba is portrayed as gentle, innocent and innovative. Madiba is strongly attached to Sipho and refuses to abandon him even though his behaviour has become increasingly violent and his actions criminal. Madiba’s character in *Wooden Camera* conveys the sense that there is hope for township youth. Although he lives with the stigma and marginality of being from a township Madiba represents the innovation and transformative potential of the ‘township space’. Through the lens of his camera Madiba is able to re-imagine the ‘township space’ as a space bursting with creative potential and is able to capture the daily lives and experiences of the township. When Madiba gazes upon the township space and captures amateur images of it, his

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2 When Madiba travels to the city of Cape Town, he could easily be mistaken as a street-child or instantly recognized as being from the township.
images reflect his connectedness and intimacy with the township. Madiba positions himself as an ‘insider’ and captures images from an ‘insiders’ point of view. As Madiba navigates through the streets and alleyways of the township, his close and intimate connection with this space is conveyed through his amateur footage. Madiba captures the township music festival and a township fire on his camera. The scene when he captures the township fire on camera is significant as it conveys the close knitted sense of community of township dwellers. The togetherness of the people is emphasised through the conditions they live in. Cinematically the poverty and underdevelopment of the township provides a social adhesive for township dwellers. For Madiba the township is his home and this is reflected cinematically through the manner in which he navigates the space of the township. Madiba uses the camera as a means of understanding the township from a social and political point of view that he is able to navigate. In one scene he captures images of his father who aspired to become an actor but because of the political climate and circumstances his dreams were shattered. Madiba’s footage reflects the inner heart of the township. His images emphasise that although social and place-circumstances can tear communities apart (through violence, poverty and criminality) these circumstances can also bring communities together. His images refrain from essentialising blackness as he represents all aspects of township life through his own gaze (an ‘insider’s’ gaze) and refrains from focusing on negative features of the township. His footage definitely resists the tendency to ‘fix’ the township space in perpetual otherness. Instead it reflects the hybridity of life in the township. By adopting an insider’s point of view Madiba is able to capture images that hold the potential to create a new film language in post-apartheid South Africa. In chapter five I argue that filmmakers can create a new film language through shifting their ‘point-of-view’.

In one scene Estelle watches Madiba’s footage of his father urinating on himself while drunk. Estelle laughs at the man on video. For Estelle this scene reaffirms the marginality and otherness of township dwellers, and in the process her gaze ‘fixes’ the identities of township dwellers and reaffirms their otherness. When Madiba
looks at her reaction to his footage he immediately stops the tape, takes it away from her and runs away. Estelle’s and Madiba’s reaction to the inhabitants of the township space are different as one gazes at the township from the inside and the other experiences the township from the outside. The position that one assumes when gazing upon a space like the township largely determines one’s reaction to the space. Because of Estelle’s position (as an ‘outsider’) she is constructed as incapable of engaging with and not able to understand the social conditions and impetus for why people do the things they do within the township space. However Madiba is able to contextualise the actions of township dwellers and this is reflected in his ability to capture footage that resists the tendency to essentialise black identity. When Estelle looks at Madiba and the world he inhabits (the township space), she sees a stereotype of black identity that is infused with notions of ‘otherness’. The ‘place-images’ she sees of Madiba’s life conform to the ‘place-myths’ that are popularly associated with the ‘township space’. Through her gaze the ‘township space’ is one of marginality that corresponds to her pre-conceived knowledge of this space. According to Dyer (1993: 14) “the effectiveness of stereotypes resides in the way they invoke a consensus”. Stereotypes proclaim, “This is what everyone – you, me and us – thinks members of such and such a social group are like”. It is also important to note that Madiba looks at Estelle in a stereotyped manner. She is the rich, white, young girl from Constantia who has a ‘black’ nanny. The ‘place-image’ constructed of Estelle is also a stereotype. Her ‘place-image’ conforms to the ‘place-myths’ associated with whiteness. It is important to note that cinematically just as ‘blackness’ is constructed and essentialised in the manner outlined in this report, so to is ‘whiteness’ also constructed and essentialised. I explore this notion in the paragraphs that follow.

In Wooden Camera black masculinity is sharply contrasted against a prominent white masculinity in the film. Black masculinities are represented through the characters of Sipho, Madiba and Madiba’s father. Sipho represents the hyper-masculine black male. The film constructs Sipho’s version of masculinity through the physicality of his body. He is represented as intimidating and violent. Violence
is usually perpetuated through the actions of the body and Sipho’s actions are mostly violent. There are three prominent scenes in the film that draw attention to his violent actions. The first scene is when he attacks an older white man in the park, stealing his money and distributing it to his friends. The second scene in the film is when Sipho hijacks a man at night in an alleyway. He is also represented as having no remorse for his actions. In third scene, just before Sipho is killed, he shoots and kills another young black street kid. As is discussed in greater detail in an earlier section of this chapter Madiba represents the transformative nature of the township space and the ability of this space to construct a new version of (black) masculinity. Madiba’s father represents the emasculated black man. He is represented as unemployed and a drunk. He is also represented as a victim of his circumstances, but more importantly he is represented as having no agency of his own.

Although I have mentioned that ‘place-circumstances’ can be responsible for the generation of violence within inhabitants the film explicitly provides contrasting views of masculinity between Sipho, Madiba and Madiba’s father. More importantly the film contrasts these versions of black masculinity with white masculinity represented by the music teacher. The masculine version of the white music teacher is set up as the normative invisible signifier against which black masculinity is contrasted. In this film whiteness is the norm against which blackness is compared. Whiteness is positioned as an uncontested category at the apex of our cultural systems. I would like to suggest that the invisibility of whiteness needs to be deconstructed and should to be an interrogation of constructions of whiteness as an uncontested category.

In Wooden Camera the white music teacher is represented as the purveyor of culture. He teaches music to children from the rich Cape Town suburbs and the township space. The music teacher is also interested in Madiba’s amateur filmmaking and tries to become his mentor. He looks at the footage Madiba has

captured of Sipho hijacking the white man in the alleyway and tries to warn Madiba about his friend’s violent behaviour, telling him that he should not join him, because of the danger of becoming like him. In the film the white music teacher very explicitly becomes a moral teacher as well. The film constructs ‘whiteness’ as the normative, the invisible signifier of the characteristics of an acceptable version of masculinity within society. The versions of black masculinity offered in this film suggest that they are deviant and ultimately self-destructive (Sipho is killed at the end of this film). The portrayal of whiteness as the purveyor of culture and as the site of morality is problematic as the filmmaker assumes a Eurocentric position that reiterates the notion of ‘whiteness’ as being a civilising and saving agent to the African people. The image of the white music teacher as the purveyor of culture and civilisation resonates strongly with the “image of the white doctor in a dark Africa” (Vaughan, 1991: 1). The film resonates with stereotypes of “black and white, good and evil, light and dark” (Vaughan, 1991: 2). This is important as stereotypes function not only to ‘fix’ the identity of the other, but also to “perpetuate a sense of difference between ‘self’ and ‘Other’” (Vaughan, 1991). Vaughan (1991) evokes Gilman who suggests that the use of stereotypes that perpetuate a ‘sense of difference’ is about the need to maintain the illusion of control over the world and the self. She says:

The need for control, and the constant treat of loss of that control, necessitates the projection of difference onto some ‘Other’, and all images of the ‘Other’, he [Gilman] argues, derives from the ‘same deep structure’. Central to this ‘deep structure’ is an anxiety over sexuality, and the relationship which develops between sexuality and, pathology and ‘difference’ in the form of skin colour… [...] the Other is “impaired”, “sick”, “diseased”. Similarly, physiognomy or skin colour that is perceived as different is immediately associated with “pathology” and “sexuality” (Vaughan, 1991:2).
Wooden Camera resonates with stereotypes of black identity – especially black masculinity - that reiterate anxiety over black sexuality and the “relationship that develops between sexuality, pathology and ‘difference’”. The versions of masculinity offered by Sipho (and the other street children) and Madiba’s father reiterate notions of masculinities that are deviant and pathological. Sipho is violent and aggressive and in one scene in the film, the street children with whom he associate, are represented as male prostitutes, exploited by rich white men (their richness signified by the type of cars they drive). Madiba’s father is largely emasculated in this film and portrayed as a drunk and unemployed. This film explicitly constructs white masculinity as the only normative version of masculinity that perpetuates a sense of difference and maintains an illusion of control between the self (the white man) and the ‘Other’ (township dwellers). This is important as the representation of the ‘other’ reaffirms ‘whiteness’ as the normative, invisible signifier against which ‘blackness’ is constructed and represented. The terrain of masculinities represented in suggest that even if there are the possibilities of reconstructing black masculinity this can only be achieved in relation to an invisible white masculinity.

In Tsotsi, as compared to Wooden Camera, there is an absence of a visible white masculine identity (except for the white police man who speaks an African vernacular language perfectly). However I would like to suggest that the film is permeated with an invisible white masculinity through the gaze the camera constantly assumes. Mogogodi says that ‘the camera’s gaze implies a politicised vantage point from which the body is inscribed with ideas’ (2001:247). The camera’s gaze does not only inscribe the body with ideas but is also responsible for inscribing spaces of blackness and whiteness with characteristics that mark them as ‘white’ or ‘black’ spaces. This becomes evident in the manner in which the cameras of the two filmmakers (Ntshaveni Wa Luruli and Gavin Hood) negotiate the space of the township differently. As mentioned above Madiba appears to have a close, intimate connection with the township. The township is mostly represented through his gaze and the camera negotiates this space with a comfortability that reflects a
connection with township daily life and culture. In contrast to this, in Tsotsi the township is always either viewed from above (bird’s eye view) or from the main street that passes through the township. The film is hardly ever shot from Tsotsi’s point of view and the filmmaker refuses to engage his characters with the intimacy of township life reflected through the manner in which they negotiate the space of the township. Tsotsi is almost always represented indoors. His character is contained within his informal dwelling. When he is represented outdoors it is either to hijack or rob a house or when he follows Miriam into her house, coercing her to feed his stolen baby. These outdoor scenes deny the character any close relation to the space of the township. Although Tsotsi is closely related to the marginal place of the township he is not represented as having an intimate relationship with this space. In Wooden Camera Ntshaveni Wa Luruli constantly shifts his gaze in the film from an ‘outsiders position’ to an ‘insiders position’ reflected through the intimate connection his characters have with the ‘township space’ in certain scenes. In contrast to this, the gaze the camera assumes in Tsotsi is that of an ‘outsiders’ position, one that does not connect intimately with the space. This suggests that the gaze is one of a white male (the filmmaker’s) that reinscribes an otherness and marginality of the ‘township space’. The implications of the filmmakers ‘gaze’ in relation to the construction of images in post-apartheid South African filmmaking are further developed in chapter five.

The films offer harsh contrasts between ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness’ portrayed through the mise-en-scene of the films. In Wooden Camera and Tsotsi, black and white spaces are clearly indicated through the construction of fixed boundaries that demarcate white spaces from black spaces. In both films the ‘township space’ is a black space visually constructed as chaotic, haphazard, dark, underdeveloped and positioned between the urban and the rural. The city spaces, visually constructed as white spaces, are ordered, clean, developed, light, grid-like and positioned as totally urban. When characters transgress these boundaries they are represented as ‘out of place’ and this serves to reiterate stereotypes of either ‘blackness’ or ‘whiteness’. When Estelle in Wooden Camera crosses the boundary into the ‘township space’
she is immediately represented as an ‘other’ within that space, she does not fit within the ‘place-image’ of the township space and the filmmaker makes this explicit through her costume and the manner in which she speaks. When Madiba enters the city space he is also represented as being ‘out of place’. This representation of Madiba is constructed in a manner that suggests that he does not belong within the ‘place-image’ of Estelle’s world. Madiba is constructed as being uncomfortable within the high walls, big houses, rigid streets and orderliness of the city. Both films suggest that they are:

Structured around a rigid binarism, with white standing for modernity, reason, order, stability and black standing for backwardness, irrationality, chaos and violence (Dyer, 1993: 146).

This binarism between blackness and whiteness reinforce the notion that stereotyping of ‘place-images’ results in the marginalisation and prejudices of not only places or spaces, but also of its inhabitants.

Cinematic representation of the ‘township space’ and its articulation of black masculinity opens up a complex network of questions related to the “marginality, the stereotypical quality and the fetishised nature of images of blacks” (Hall, 1996(c): 164) and the fetishisation of the ‘township space’ - historically developed as a black space. One question that I believe needs further interrogation is: Who has the right to represent whom in post-apartheid contemporary South African filmmaking? This speaks to issues of ‘Racialising Africanness’ and the perspective (an insider’s or an outsider’s) a filmmaker assumes when he casts the lens of his camera? This is extensively explored in Chapter five where I analyse in greater detail the implications of representation and construction of images by interrogating specifically the position filmmakers assume when gazing upon the South African landscape in post-apartheid society.