

# **Representing the 'Black' Male Gangster:**

**A Comparative Analysis of genre, stereotype and context in two the South African Films – *Mapantsula* (1988), *Jerusalema* (2008), and the research film “*KZN Ruins*” (2011).**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the representations of the 'black' South African male in the gangster genre and to explore the representation of the 'black' male gangster role in the following case studies: *Mapantsula* (1988); *Jerusalema* (2008); and *"KZN Ruins"* (2011). In a South African context, the genre is embedded in social reform and "re-generation", "dynamic anti-heroes" or rebels pitted against the establishment, and transferred identity dependent on "gritty urban locales", where the 'black' male characters escape social confines. A comparative analysis between two South African films: *Mapantsula* (1988); *Jerusalema* (2008); together with my research film *"KZN Ruins"* (2011) evaluates the representation of the 'black' male gangster in terms of the genre, the stereotypical nature of the representation, and the context from which these cinematic representations derive their foci. This research studies the representations evident in stereotyping the 'black' male gangster and examines how the terms 'black' gangster is contextualized within the medium of film. Through genre, stereotyping, and South African film history I intend to prove that there has been a shift in the representation of the 'black' male gangster within *Mapantsula* (1988); *Jerusalema* (2008); and my research film *"KZN Ruins"* (2011).

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work, save insofar as indicated in the acknowledgements and references. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters of Arts in Film and Television, in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Lütge', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lance R. Lütge

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## INTRODUCTION

Has the representation of the 'black' male gangster shifted over the past twenty five years and if so how is this change evident in the following case studies: *Mapantsula* (1988); *Jerusalema* (2008) and “*KZN Ruins*” (2011)?

This research sets out to examine a shift in the representation of the ‘black’ male gangster from *Mapantsula* (1988) to *Jerusalema* (2008) to “*KZN Ruins*” (2011). This report examines this shift in relation to the genre, history and stereotypes found in South African gangster films. This report argues that the shift in the representation of the ‘black’ male gangster is evident in a multitude of respects. It occurs from physical to intellectual, from township to inner city to suburb, from uneducated to educated and through inter-racial relationships. These representational shifts emerge from the ‘black’ male gangster being portrayed as intellectual, suburb dwelling, educated men who are not bound by the colour of a person’s skin. This was opposed to the the ‘black’ male gangster who used to be portrayed as physical, township based, uneducated and segregated due to the colour of their skin. This research report intends to prove these shift in the representation of the ‘black’ male gangster.

The scope of this research does not allow for an in depth discussion of political movements but in terms of examining the gangster genre with relation to its stereotypes and context, it is invaluable to note the consequent shift in South Africa from apartheid to democracy. Revisiting race in the shifting political context of each film allows this report to explore, analysis, and determine a shift in the representation of the ‘black’ male gangster.

Kenneth Chan in “*The Construction of Black Male Identity in Black Action Films of the Nineties*” attributes “capitalism and the drug trade, racial self-hatred, and the geopolitics of ghetto space” as influences constructing cinematic black male identity (Chan, 1998, p.35). Chan cites Guerrero:

[T]he Blaxploitation boom emerged from a period of militant political activism fuelled by the rising identity consciousness and social expectations ... , the black movie boom of the 90s has materialized out of a climate of long-mutated black frustration and anger over worsening political and economic conditions that African Americans continue to endure in the nations decaying urban centres (Chan, 1998:35).

The Blaxploitation booms in America inspired the 'black' community to confront, challenge, own and empower their own identities. Frustrations culminated in 'black' films addressing "black" concerns. In South Africa during the struggle for democracy the 'black' community sought to empower their own identity and free the notion of 'blackness'.

In the films in question *Mapantsula* (1988), *Jerusalema* (2008) and "*KZN Ruins*" (2011), the context or period in which the films are shot is most definitely referenced. This referencing happens through locations or sets, costumes and props, the socio-political contexts, the exploration of the economics of an emerging market, as well as the influence of the director/producer's position. The perspective attempts to steer opinions, formulate arguments, and negotiate reception. Oliver Schmitz' *Mapantsula* (set in Soweto 1988) consists of a storyline centred on the character Panic. Panic is a small time gangster who inescapably becomes wedged in the increasing anti-apartheid struggle. Panic has to choose between his own individual gain and a united stand against the racial policies and the government currently in power. The character is passive rather than active, played deftly by Thomas Mogotlane.

Along with Panic most of the characters are caught between surviving an oppressive system and finding tactics to resist and revolutionize that system e.g. Pat (Panic's Girlfriend), Panic's landlady and Duma (the Unionist). The story is told through the eyes of Panic while he is in prison through flashback technique. These flashbacks reveal Panic's story and situation in episodic non-linear bites.

The film follows Panic's life as a petty gangster and shows how he has adopted a variety of identities in order to secure survival. Through Panic we come to see how each character makes individual sacrifices in favour of the mass anti-apartheid movement. Despite each character's difference the story portrays how they struggle forward together. The film illuminates the contradictions raging within Soweto, not only through Panic but through characters like Pat, who just wants a decent job. As denoted by what is mentioned above the representational positioning is grounded in the director/producer's political objectives. *Mapantsula* (1988) was shot as a political protest under the guise of a mere crime movie suitable for the overbearing eyes of the white censors, appealing as a festival art film geared for overseas consumers (Nathan

as cited in 1991: 39-40). Therefore it is significant to note that both leads Thomas Mogotlane and Marcel van Heerden create this film together.

The feature film *Jerusalema* (2008) manifests itself around its main protagonist Lucky Kunene, who starts his life off as a young 'black' delinquent living in a rural township. In this film the flashbacks reflect past episodes prompted by memory recall and reflect on Lucky's youth. The flashbacks are not progressive but random because of the association. In the episodic timeline constructed by Panic the connection is revealed in the action in episodic bytes. In *Jerusalema* (2008)

*Jerusalema's* (2008) lead character Lucky comes from a good home with a caring mother. He gets involved with an older gentleman who shows him the ropes and introduces him to crime. This is where Lucky develops a taste for money. After a store robbery goes wrong Lucky and his best friend Zakes (Ronnie Nyakale) decide to move to Johannesburg where Lucky can go to university. Several years later we see Lucky driving a taxi. Lucky has dropped out of university and is living in a block of flats inhabited by prostitution and drug dealers. After he is hijacked he decides to take control of the situation and begin his empire by convincing the residents to pay all their rent to him and in turn he assumes responsibility for cleaning up the drugs, the prostitution and keeping up the maintenance of the building. It is at this moment where Lucky becomes the 'robin hood' of Hillbrow. Unlike Panic, Lucky is positioned as an educated hoodlum. Panic's dialogue is laced with Afrikaans, Lucky's is fluent English. The movement and educated social status connote the shift from township to inner city. Lucky steals buildings from the rich and gives back to the poor community cheap and safe accommodation. Lucky makes educated moral decisions even though he takes on a vigilante presence. He instantly becomes popular with the people as he keeps his promise and cleans up the buildings. However this poses a problem with the drug dealers and pimps. Lucky is precariously balanced between worlds. Eventually everything comes to an end when Lucky's 'father' type figure sells him out to a Nigerian drug dealer. The Nigerian tries to kill Lucky in a drive by shooting but kills Zakes instead. This pushes Lucky over the edge so he gathers his men and slaughters the Nigerian and his gang.

The case study fiction film "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) attempts to debunk the South African 'black' hoodlum myth. The work is centred on an inter-racial relationship between

two lifetime friends that have grown up as 'brothers'. Both are gangsters. The film follows their personal struggles to negotiate the journey of their relationship. A relationship informed by a society derived from discrimination and hatred to one positioned on acceptance and realization. The representational shift is constructed and fuelled by brotherly love.

*“KZN Ruins”* (2011) positions the dilemma within racial constrictions, the individual is juxtaposed against a haunting past contextualized by racial prejudice, fear and hatred. In the flashback scenes the two children sleeping in the streets and being dragged from one another’s company encourage the plot against racism. The twist lies in the audiences’ discovery that Brody and Nhlanhla's (childhood friends) have been in cahoots from the commencement of the film. Mr Dlamini’s attempts to break their youthful bond, has merely strengthened their affiliation.

The treatment of *“KZN Ruins”* (2011) is directly invested with the notion of racial signifiers or connotations of difference. Even the selected culturally affiliated names and colour coded costumes create racial signifiers. Brody is English and Nhlanhla is from an isi-Zulu linguistic background. In South Africa English is perceived as a colonizing language as opposed to isi-Zulu, an indigenous African language. In the costumes black gangs are dressed in white suits and white gangs in black suits as a form of juxtaposition. The central characters transcend these colour-coded gang uniforms by wearing grey and brown pinstripes. The gang-alignment is driven by the manipulation of power. This power is based in cocaine ownership and distribution.

## REPRESENTING 'BLACK' GANGSTERISM

For the purpose of this research report I have segmented my theoretical framework and literature into four main fields of investigation: 1. The Historical Background of South African film; 2. Gangster Genre; 3. Stereotypes and 4. Analysing the films. Through these niche areas this research report attempts to analyse the South African gangster genre and intends to establish what defines the male 'gangster' stereotype.

### *SOUTH AFRICAN FILM: AN HISTORIAL INTERROGATION*

In order to interrogate the 'black' gangster it is necessary to understand the history that informs the South African film industry. This section touches briefly on the history of the South African film industry in regard to the gangster genre as well as contextualizing the genre within past racial premises.

The mainstream film industry in South Africa is one of the oldest in the world but unfortunately it does not rank among the finest. Films have been made in South Africa since 1910 (Botha, 1992:9).

The South African film industry has an intriguing background. Martin Both states that South African film industry has been around since the early nineteen hundreds. This would place South Africa with one of the earliest film industries worldwide. While South African cinema is one of the oldest in the world it unfortunately does not on an international level do very well.

The South African film industry manifests itself from a history informed by different social influences. These influences derive from a diverse cultural background. The film *De Voortrekkers* was one of South Africa's first films ever made. It was seen as national film constructed of the events of 1916 between the Afikaaners, British and Zulu's. Jacqueline Maingard reinforces what Botha states when she mentions that *De Voortrekkers* was the first film in South Africa to use cinema as a technique to represent a nation.

The first appropriation of the cinema as an instrument for representing nation in South Africa must surely be the making of *De Voortrekkers* in 1916 (Maingard, 2007: ch 1).

What Maingard mentions here is that the South African film history dates back over a hundred years. From the beginning of South African film there has been a struggle in the representation of South Africa as a nation. *De Voortrekkers* was the first film to represent South Africa as nation and it was one of the first to use cinema as a technique to represent a nation. This film was told mainly from the afrikaaners point of view and had very little to do with the representation of 'blackness'.

'Black' South Africans have only recently commenced addressing 'black' experiences freely. The treatment of agency is visible when reflecting on 'blackness' within the first feature film that dealt with actual 'black' experiences. The film titled '*African Jim*' was sometimes known as '*Jim comes to Joburg*' and was directed by Donald Swart in 1949.

Made by an ex expatriate white director, Donald Swanson, the film plots the problem faced by a naïve ruralite in the city, and features the unique shots of legendary Jazz Maniacs before they were forced out of business in the late '50s by a combination of violence in the township halls and the discriminatory actions of the white musicians' union, which resented black competition (Tomaselli, 1989:56-57).

'*African Jim*' is a film centred on a 'black' community. The visuals depict poor living conditions, township violence and the discriminatory actions of the 'white' community. '*African Jim*' is considered the first film produced in South Africa to fit the gangster genre profile. This film tells the story of a law abiding rural 'black' man who through his move to the big city of Johannesburg becomes embroiled in a life of crime. '*African Jim*' led the way for films like *Mapantsula* (1988), *Hijack stories* (2000), *Tsotsi* (2005) and *Jerusalema's* (2008). These types of films were used to try to steer the viewer away from a life of crime and towards the life of a hard working employee earning an honest living, no matter how disproportionate and exploitative the pay. "The moral of these films is that "hard work ensures success" (Tomaselli, 1989:73).

South Africa's past and in turn the history of its film industry has been predicated by past governmental laws restricting race. These laws restricted film makers in varying degrees in the industry in terms of 'blackness', representations of 'blackness' and multi-cultural relationships. Therefore the South African film industry has a racial antiquity that shadows it.

The South African case is analogous, though further complicated by a domestic colonial system where cinema is a reflection of the balance of power (Tomaselli, 1979:3).

This unavoidably meant that films produced, imported, or exported were either pro-apartheid, not on the topic of race at all, or not in conflict with Nationalist racial policy or else they were banned<sup>1</sup>.

Martin Botha suggests that since the coming of democracy, South African film makers have been given the freedom to express themselves more liberally without the prior restrictions that were inflicted upon them: "Post apartheid cinema is characterized by the emergence of new voices and a diversification of themes". (Botha, 2007: 34). Post-apartheid South African cinema is on the rise and has established itself at an international level due to the talent of its emerging new voices. This Botha ascribes to a reactionary adjustment to dramatic socio-political changes (Botha, 2007: 37). Ironically class and race as a direct derivative of the apartheid system remains locked into notions of racial identity. Martin Botha reinforces this contention by his proclamations that post-apartheid cinema deals with South Africa's discriminatory past as well as establishing how South Africa is dealing with the repercussions of its past in today's society.

### ***GANGSTER GENRE***

An interrogation of the 'black' male gangster requires an examination of the gangster genre itself. In this section of this research report I argue that certain codes and conventions establish a genre as well as describe what defines the gangster genre itself.

In Neale's *'Teaching Through Genre' in Screen Education* states:

The master image for genre criticism is the triangle composed of artist/film/audience. Genres may be defined as patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films, and which supervise both their construction by the film maker, and their reading by an audience (Neale, cites Ryall, 1980: 7).

Ryall mentions what makes a film conform to a genre is determined by many different aspects. Genre consists of many different codes and conventions that inform audience expectations. These codes and conventions run across visual imagery, plot, character, setting, modes of narrative development and music (Cook, 1985:58). A

genre therefore has a readymade audience for which the constructed artefact is made. It is created by the artist for audience consumption and therefore aligned with the requirements of the genre. While each genre has different codes and conventions that define it as a specific entity, it is these codes and conventions that allow films to be categorised. Pam Cook concurs with Ryall when she advocates that genre through these codes and conventions are the industry's way of regulating what the audience expects from each genre.

The South African gangster genre repeats the juxtaposition of white and black by creating in the 'black' central protagonist an empowered individual pitted against brutal [*Mapantsula* (1988)], corrupt [*Jerusalema* (2008)], or reprehensible [*"KZN Ruins"* (2011)] establishments or systems. The artist, the structure and the viewer align their expectations based on the following criteria. A common patterning informs the locale of the characters, their clichéd but clearly identifiable traits, their lingo, their clothing choices, their fast lifestyles, as well as influencing their perspectives and ethics with a need to glamorize choices.

The style concentrates on action packed scenes where men adored by the opposite sex appear in stylish suits, never cry, and make flash decisions without too much doubt because their survival depends on a quick mind and an impulsive temper. The form has a nostalgic nature where men of etiquette are individual rebels escaping the extraordinarily harsh socio-cultural backgrounds in which their identities have essentially been constructed. These men are faced with clearly defined moral dilemmas, die like a dog or rise above the environmental or socio-political conditioning by using your wits. These are the anti-hero's the system rejected. The anti-hero functions in the margins of society and challenges the status. They are mentally and physically agile, cunning in the extreme with a jauntiness that keeps them likable, even admirable, since they rise despite the odds. The structure is always similar: clear protagonist/antagonist polar opposites, with leading macho characters set in a male domain where men are qualified as men's men as well as ladies men. There is an adventure thriller element engaging tensions, anticipation, suspense, and surprise. The fast paced movement of the plot is structured by discovering convoluted plots, multiple complications, dramatic climaxes and firm ethics.

The South African gangster genre differs from its American counterpart. This shift is not evident in the two-tone, flotsam shoes, fedora hats or sharp three piece suits, nor in the weaponry engaged, the knives, the guns, but in the context within which the individual anti-hero defines himself. Further the criminal, positioned outside the law, appeals to viewers as connoting a romantic nostalgia similar to that of the Hollywood Western where gun slinging sharp shooters took the law into their own hands in order to survive in lawless wild territories, creating order from chaos, and insert a form of justice in the absence of an effective judicial system. With the South African political pressure invoked in blatantly inequitable laws the gangster gains super-hero status as he instils his own form of dysfunctional justice in the absence of fairness. He pays for his violence finally in order that the viewer witnesses the reassurance of returning to the existing status quo. This allows the genre to be perceived as politically less threatening.

Marx citing Warshow asserts that the gangster's whole life revolves around this "effort to assert" individuality, separate himself from the group frequently translating into his death in a hail of bullets (Marx, 2010: 262). Marx further cites Don Mattera's affirmation that individualism is a gangster signature achieved through aggression and the imposition of the gangster's will, a resolve imprinted with the gangster ethic:

We loved corrupt and crooked law men like the one Dana Andrews played in *Where the Sidewalk Ends* We hated the straight ones and we chewed gum like Richard Widmark's 'Styles' character in *Street With No Name*. Our gangs were named after some of the killers in the movies (Marx, 2010: 262).

Mattera's comments signal the gangster's position as anti-establishment rebel, ruthless individual, with aspirations beyond the normal mortal, conjuring both escapism and idealism. Marx contends that the Gangster genre offers a modern tragedy, where a

man of the city, with the city's language and knowledge, with its queer and dishonest skills and its terrible daring, carrying his life in his hands like a placard, like a club, an image that captures the ruthless self-assertion with which the gangster must "make his life and impose it on others." Drawing attention to himself, to his individualism, becoming a success, are acts of aggression and outlawry that must, finally, be punished by the crowd who hate such success - the gangster, ... must be forced back into anonymity (Marx, 2010: 262).

This trickster figure is evident and ensures the genre's popularity and in part explains the 'black' gangster stereotype's popularity with 'black' audiences and hence the majority of South Africans.

### ***STEREOTYPES***

In order to unpack the 'black' male gangster further and establish a shift in the representation, it is imperative to locate how the 'black' male gangster stereotype has evolved. Throughout this section this report will define what constitutes a stereotype, how a stereotype is understood and conveyed and more specifically how the 'black' male gangster is stereotyped.

Richard Dyer distinguishes stereotypical characters and character types. Dyer elaborates on his understanding that a viewer easily identifies with characters by using familiar traits and patterns that people can relate to and identify from the 'real' world.

The type is any character constructed through the use of a few immediately recognizable and defining traits, which do not change or 'develop' through the course of the narrative and which point to general, recurrent features of the human world (whether these features are conceptualized as universal and eternal, the 'archetype', or historically and culturally specific, 'social types' and 'stereotypes' (Dyer, 1993:13).

Words ascribe meaning. Meanings are affected by associations. A certain person or group of people is therefore defined by establishing common patterns. These traits ascribe a certain power to a particular fixed identity. This identity once conjured, shared and accepted confirms the stereotypical referencing. This in turn creates a fixed identity for that person or group of people. Homi Bhabha concurs with Dyer :

The stereotype is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known and something that must be anxiously repeated (Bhabha, 1994: 94-95).

The repetitions should be worthy. It is understood that an audience identifies with stereotypes as a form of recognisable knowledge as if that stereotype was

already there and already recognised. It must be anxiously repeated to ensure its validity.

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', as if these concepts of these social groups were spontaneously arrived at by all members of society independently and in isolation. The stereotype is taken to express a general agreement about a social group, as if that agreement arose before, and independently of, the stereotype. Yet for the most part it is from stereotypes that we get our ideas about social groups (Dyer, 1993:14).

Dyer demonstrates here that stereotypes rely heavily on common social associations for acceptance, recognition or defamation and mean little if there is no ideological connection. The representation does not exist in a vacuum but belongs within an ideological framework filled with agendas and motives that require careful attention or deconstruction. Williams advocates "specificity of medium, specificity of historical context, and specificity of representational practices" (Williams as cited in Torres, 1998: 12). Williams states that attention to detail prevents racist representation and disallows the misuse of 'blackness' contextualized within dubious ideological frameworks.

The interrogation of the "black" male necessitates an interrogation of the "white" male, as "blackness" 'defines' "whiteness" and "whiteness" 'defines' "blackness". Richard Dyer concurs when he states that "While these two representations of colour define and interrogate one another it is how they are stereotypically represented on screen that gives the public eye an insight into these stereotypes" (Dyer, 1993:14). What Dyer accentuates here is that while 'black' defines and examines 'white' and 'white' defines and examines 'black', in film they can only be defined as represented on screen. Dyer's contention relates to Homi Bhabha who states the following: Homi Bhabha continues to affirm that through the oblige of ambivalence the colonial stereotype gains its prevalence:

it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency : ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalisation; produces the effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of

what can be empirically proved or logically constructed (Bhabha, 1994: 95).

Just like Dyer accentuates that 'blackness' defines 'whiteness' and vice versa, Bhabha suggest that 'black' stereotype gives the 'white' stereotype its currency and the 'white' stereotype gives the 'black' stereotype is currency. Through ambivalence they give and take from one another. Stereotypes are initiated by members of society and profess some sort of consensus whether negative or positive, discriminating or legitimizing, closed or open-minded. When we relate this statement to our case studies yet another shift in relation to the stereotypical representation of the 'black' male gangster emerges. Glorified in *Mapantsula* (1988) as pitted against a system, stealing from a white privileged elite the 'black' male gangster is seen as clawing his way up from the bottom of the pack, seeking upliftment and respect through intimidation and exploitation as he's forced to use the same tactics as the operational system. In *Jerusalema* (2008) our gangster hero is again a rebel with a cause, a self made man choosing solidarity with those victims in the ruthless hands of slumlords, taking from the rich, a protector of the poor. In "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) the role of the gangster remains defined by its criminal profit margins.

## ANALYSIS OF FILMS

In order to determine a shift in the representation of the 'black' male gangster it is imperative to analysis *Mapantsula* (1988), *Jerusalema* (2008), and "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) in relation to how the 'black' male gangster was represented in each film. Through the representation of the 'black' male gangster in each film this research report intends to prove a shift in the representation of the 'black' male gangster.

Thomas Mogotlane (Panic), actor-screenwriter *Mapantsula* (1988), in an interview conducted by Jeremy Nathan comments on the lack of black filmmaker role models and notes: "The film was made with the political structure in the background. Panic is living in such a politicized society, in South Africa that you simply cannot separate crime and politics.... The situation created by apartheid has made this so" (Nathan as cited in ..... 1991: 22-28).

*Mapantsula* (1988), *Jerusalema* (2008), and "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) all provide examples of criminals commenting on society. The criminals are positioned outside accepted social 'norms'. In these South African films the protagonists are rebels rather than merely by products of the society. Therefore they provide an alternative perspective. In the gangster genre:

Our ambiguous attitude to criminals, figures both of menace and glamour, has formed the basic gangster film character, the urban wolf. He is a product of his harsh environment, violent, laconic and tough, but his involvement in crime seems a matter of chance rather than choice. An urban wolf can equally well be killer or detective, warden or prisoner. The ethics are similar, and all speak the same discursive language (Baxter, 1970: 7).

Both *Jerusalema* (2008) and the fiction film "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) reflect "the urban wolf" by positioning our characters among what Fenwick refers to as the "intellectual tsotsi" (2010: 617). The protagonist Lucky in *Jerusalema* (2008) appears educated, calculating, and business oriented. The character driven plot revolves around Lucky a University 'drop-out'. Lucky manipulates tenants in order to generate income from rundown blocks of flats. This income enables Lucky to purchase these buildings and establish a cost effective portfolio of rent controlled property. Lucky is seen as a man of action, a man of few words who does not make idle threats but speaks with astute

economy. His directness is discernable in his laconic response when asked his vocation by Leah's parents: "I'm a gangster" (*Jerusalema*, 2008). In "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) Nhlanhla plots to usurp power by pitting two gangs (Mr Dlamini's gang and Mr Du Preez gang) against each other. Mr Du Preez gang (consisting of only white males) and Mr Dlamini's gang (composed of only black males) are driven by power, money and racial allegiance. Nhlanhla relies on the racially preclusive enclaves of the two separatist gangs as a catalyst of inevitable destruction. He manipulates the gangs by mapping out a plan centred on racial intolerance and gang mentality. He uses their tribal animosity and gang allegiances to maximize the dissention and distrust in turn creating an opportunity for the gangs to destroy one another. To achieve this he relies on their mutual animosity and enclave mentality. This animosity and racial enclaving comments on a history of racial aggression, dispute and segregation. Nhlanhla aims to control the drug industry justifying his antics by feelings of entitlement and his impatience to fill dead men's shoes.

In *Mapantsula* (1988), Panic is in constant trouble with the police against a backdrop of protest. His character is juxtaposed against liberation fighters also falling foul of the law. Eventually the politics of the times touches him personally and he turns from anti-hero to tragic hero recognizing the injustice of the apartheid scale of brutality. In *Jerusalema* (2008) Lucky is seen as a rebel with a cause, a man of action, slick, suave, a man of few words who has real business savvy. This is the proverbial self-made man. Lucky does not make idle threats but speaks with astute economy. His dialogue is direct, endorsing a quiet determination, nobility of purpose, and a brave and powerful honesty, all suggesting he never promises what he cannot deliver.

Our three protagonists each assert their quintessential masculinity with their own individual voice. Lucky's (*Jerusalema*) directness is discernable in his laconic response when asked his vocation by Leah's parents. Conversely Nhlanhla ("*KZN Ruins*") uses complex metaphors to inscribe racial innuendo and conjure associations pregnant with dominance tactics. Nhlanhla: "I've set up the board and the white pawn is ready and waiting" (Lutge, 2011:6). The innuendos associated with a game of chess posit class through the naming of chess pieces from Kings to Pawns. This asserts hegemonic practices by assigning limitations in the movement patterns allowed the chess pieces. The division of pieces establishes two archenemies. Furthermore this

juxtaposition attributes racial power mongering in acknowledging the strategic game played by black versus white. In *Mapantsula* (1988) communication occurs via the flamboyant mix of languages evident in the boastful tsotsitaal of the character, Panic: “Nie ek my laaitie. Ek is ‘n tiger” (58). Furthermore the positioning of alpha ‘male’ as ‘tiger’ inscribes ‘male’ as aligned with the king of the jungle idea.

The gangster character remains focused on a slick, stylish, brand conscious image defined by outward affiliations, including: ‘The Americans’, ‘The Egyptians’ or ‘The Russians’, all expressing strength in their communal identity and unafraid of challenging authority (Nathan as cited in 1991:38). Panic conveys this image in his dress and two-tone flotsam shoes, Lucky in his BMW, Nhlanhla, in driving his coupé. All wear leather jackets or suits and fedora’s or pinstripe suits. Our central protagonists manifest as sharply dressed anti-heroes positioned against systems that are racially entrenched: Panic set against a legally entrenched apartheid system; Lucky is pitted against an historically biased capitalist system; Nhlanhla favours brotherhood rather than ethnic gangland affiliations entrenched in historical racial affiliations.

This research report argues that the notion of the ‘black’ male gangster is therefore reconstructed in *Mapantsula* (1988) and *Jerusalema* (2008) within a changing historical context informed by white police counterparts: Stander and Detective Swart respectively. *Mapantsula* (1988), perceived by the censors as inciting “audiences to act violently”, was originally banned by the Directorate of Publications in 1988 as unsuitable for “black South African audiences” (Nathan as cited in 1991: 39). Later this was appealed.

The degree of political contextual change is palpable in *Jerusalema* (2008) in the latent reflection of police authority. Police authority appears legally ineffectual when the black policemen experience a moral dilemma: identifying themselves by social status and aligning themselves with Detective Swart a ‘white’ colleague or affiliating themselves by race with the ‘black’ Lucky. Their dilemma is even more acute in identifying with Lucky’s racially constructed polar attitudes. Lucky represents a lawless renegade one with whom a policeman would not identify. He removes a police file to prevent the police from carrying out their duty; takes the law into his own hands by punishing drug lords personally and may generally be perceived as

resorting to vigilante tactics. Yet instead of the police brutality of *Mapantsula* (1988) these policemen of *Jerusalema* (2008) identify with the ‘black’ underprivileged experience. These policemen empathize with the motives of the chief protagonist, and feel confusion when faced with choosing between allegiance to Detective Swart. Detective Swart who harkens back to a system of brutality or Lucky’s bravado in challenging the system configured by antiquated property laws and ‘Red Ant’ units, (removal units activated by the law to ensure owners property rights in evicting squatters.)

*Mapantsula* (1988) polar attitudes further derive from contrasting the attitudes of the black policemen. Those working for the apartheid regime with Stander emulate his racial prejudices and juxtapose Panic’s later heroic stand. Conversely, the policemen under Detective Swart no longer feel obliged to blindly follow to avoid their own victimization, identifying with authority rather than brutality. The catalyst of the dichotomy invoked in this latter choice is Lucky who exits police quarters having accused Detective Swart of assault. In “*KZN Ruins*” (2011) Jannies’ first dialogue is racial discrimination with the acknowledgement of “looking for a white face” (Lutge, 2011:1 ). The script is packed with racial awareness. Dlamini in scene fifty six says of Brody: “He’s not your brother my boy! Remember that!” (Lutge, 2011:8 ) Nhlanhla in scene twenty six says: “You’re white. I’m black. They won’t deal with me. That’s why I have you!” (Lutge, 2011:3). The suggested tokenism implied in the selection of the white boy as the ‘white face’ ironically forms part of a scam set up by Brody and Nhlanhla. This con relies on racial mistrust. Jannie acknowledges Du Preez’ prejudice and racial distrust implying he will not trust anyone that is not white. Dlamini is shown to resent the inter-racial relationship of the boys perceiving brotherhood as racially bound and allegiances as racially embedded. He shows a distrust of the white business partners by insisting on accompanying the transfer of cash for narcotics. Knowing the prejudices involved and the distrust this prejudice conjures, Nhlanhla and Brody plan to outwit both Du Preez and Dlamini by using this distrust to trigger the ‘Mexican stand-off’. Brody arrives at a carefully calculated point in time to fire the shot that kills Dlamini.

In “*KZN Ruins*” (2011) Nhlanhla manipulates Mr Dlamini and Mr du Preez by acknowledging racially driven mistrust. Mr Dlamini trusts Nhlanhla assuming the

separation from his childhood white friend Brody has instilled cultural allegiance, racial prejudice and a permanent basis for ethnic mistrust. Nhlanhla has worked for Mr Dlamini in the past and earned his trust by hiding his continued friendship with Brody. Mr Du Preez trusts Brody on the basis of a smooth transfer in the previous deal. Du Preez assumes Brody is in control of the money and that Nhlanhla is merely one of his black henchmen. This confirms his natural affinity for power in Du Preez' eyes and makes him worthy of trust. In both cases their racially entrenched trust is misplaced. Mr Dlamini trusts Nhlanhla but Brody and Nhlanhla are plotting against him. Mr Du Preez trusts the 'white face' is in control however Mr Dlamini is the 'boss' with the money, and Du Preez is being set up by Nhlanhla and Brody. Through this play on racial prejudice Mr Dlamini and Mr Du Preez represent an old order pitted against each other. The film ultimately posits the notion that eradicating racial prejudice is only possible by removing the racists, prefacing a brave new racially tolerant world where brotherhood is more reflective of cultural diversity than racial difference. "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) demonstrates this new racially colour-blind world by eliminating all the racist characters and leaving behind the only two characters who are driven by a universal humanism – the brotherhood of Brody and Nhlanhla. This is a metaphor that all racism should be eliminated. Contextually the film reflects a changing environment with a new democracy inviting a new political dispensation.

In *Jerusalema* (2008) the relationship between Lucky and Leah with the alliteration implied in the names each beginning with the letter 'L', appears to signal a pre-destined suitable bond. The inter-racial nature of the relationship implies Leah's dependence on Lucky even though she comes from a position of affluence and he comes from the townships. The degree of change in the representation of inter-racial relationships rests in Lucky's ability to change his life and take on the alpha male characteristics of the 'self-made man'. During apartheid scenes of inter-racial relationships were screened to ensure there were no scenes with inter-racial coupling: "The entertainment act ... called for the censorship of "scenes of intermingling of Europeans and non- Europeans" (Tomaselli, 1989:14).

The filmic context locks *Mapantsula* (1988) into apartheid assumptions, of a South Africa in an era of white 'supremacy' resulting in discrimination against any person of colour. This, in turn, meant that the making of the film was subject to strict laws on

race. The cell is filled with only black South Africans, albeit that few are actual criminals. Guards in these prisons too are black. The white policeman Stander is perceived as both in charge, the only officer with an office of his own, of knowing the route or direction better as he walks ahead of his black cohorts rather than alongside them through the corridors signifying authority or rank. The 'black' township scenes feature black sub-economic housing, shacks, squatter shanty town dwellings, and one room outhouses without proper ablution facilities or electricity and 'buffel' trucks harbouring the uniformed enemy: police and military. The white targets for pick pocketing are placed in areas signifying one racial group as predominate: depressed black shopping areas where a white businessman in a suit looks out of place; main city streets and shopping malls reinforce the affluence of 'white' areas. The suburban existence of Pat's (Thembi Mtshali's) white employer is juxtaposed against Ma Mobise's single room dwelling sans servants and additional amenities that include luscious gardens, security gates, garaging, outside perimeter intercoms, swimming pool, or garage.

In *Jerusalema* (2008) the white body is split between two people. First Swart representing the debunked hegemonic agency of the apartheid era, with an obscured agenda and a transparent mission that smacks of petty personal vendetta rather than political grand design. Second, Lucky's temporary 'white' partnership with Leah that proves unsustainable once the social veneer cracks. The dysfunctional social addictions of Zakes juxtaposed against Leah's brother signal reduced moral values in the white suburbs. In "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) the white body relies on black agency for survival, is in fact defined by black agency. Nhlanhla orchestrates the action and functions as catalyst. Brody pulls the fateful trigger at Nhlanhla's behest. The world is Nhlanhla's and Brody inhabits this world, shares power, acts as cohort as politically inept benefactor rather than as colonizer, possessor, owner.

This report argues that there is a clear repositioning of the 'black' male gangster in regard to agency from *Mapantsula* (1988) to *Jerusalema* (2008) and thence to *KZN Ruins* (2011). In the film *Mapantsula* (1988) (trendy duck-like waddle with protruding buttocks hip-hop styled movement) the relationship between 'black' and 'white' is authoritarian based and politically orientated. This is apparent through the relationship between the 'white' authority posited in the interrogating officer and the

'black' gangster (Panic). This inter-racial relationship between policeman (Stander played by Marcel van Heerden) and prisoner (Panic played by Thomas Mogotlane) signifies coercion, brutality, the propaganda rhetoric contained in the term 'terrorist' and the role of the 'impimpi' or informer in the fight for liberation. In the film the viewer is initially led to believe that Panic is arrested for being a petty criminal for which we are told he has a long track record, then for appearing in the wrong place at the wrong time in search of a sibling. Finally we witness the transition from objective observer to personal protector when Ma Modise (played by international singing star Dolly Rathebe) falls. The journey is from gangsterism to what the apartheid state considers a political 'dissident', from unemployed to a political awakening as an activist for freedom in a conflict between oppressors and oppressed.

In *Mapantsula* (1988) Stander only offers coffee amidst veiled threats of bodily harm initially in exchange for information while Panic attempts to use the system by betraying his political brothers in the hope of his own freedom. The relationship shifts the balance of power when Panic refuses to cooperate, thus terminating the relationship. Johannes Themba Mzolo aka Panic's final "No" asserts his determination to refuse Stander further information. Ironically the negative answer is a resoundingly affirmative response in terms of the liberation struggle: No to 'whites' means yes to 'blacks', no to police intimidation means yes to asserting individual rights, no to cooperation with the system means revolutionary action.

In *Jerusalema* (2008) Lucky a "Karl Marx, Al Capone and Dale Carnegie mix" offers his love and affection to the 'white' women with no conditions. Conversely Leah offers her love to the 'black' gangster only as long as he maintains the social veneer of a high powered businessman. The relationship is terminated when the 'white' female discovers that Lucky's criminal activity is discovered. Additionally Lucky no longer serves to function as Leah's brother's protector. The film here centres more on class than on racial constructs.

The inter-racial relationship in the film "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) rests on a different approach to the representational norm of the 'black' male gangster. The film constructs an inter-racial relationship based on "brotherhood" and trust rather than sexual nuance. Society has shifted alignment from race to class. This relationship between the two men embraces a friendship not based on exploitation or attraction but

on ‘universal humanism’ and common life experiences. In “*KZN Ruins*” (2011) the brotherly bond transcends ethnic and racial affiliations and this is epitomized in the journey or character arch of the young boys. The boys in the flashbacks are presented to us without family ties or homes. This explains their later devotion to each other. Their age during the flashback allows the audience to understand what drives these two protagonists. This willingness to excuse adolescent behaviour allows our youthful pair the benefit of the doubt. The bond created is familiar and associates itself with the concept of sibling candour. Their gangster code is one of survival and their isolation ensures their interdependence, an independence condoned by the viewer due to their circumstances. Culture, language, and gender discrimination is transcended for the audience in the application of a common understanding.

Nhlanhla and Brody’s relationship transcends the margins of colour, in that even though Nhlanhla was dragged from Brody as a boy, he remains uninfluenced by Mr. Dlamini’s racist diatribe while Brody plays to Mr. du Preez’s racist expectations in true con-man style. This in turn reflects that Nhlanhla and Brody’s allegiances are not governed by race but by their common experience in the final moments of the film. The work establishes clear racist agendas in the older characters and this discrimination is contrasted with the easy knowing dialogue shared by Nhlanhla and Brody and implied in Nhlanhla’s address to Brody: “Heita, my man” (Lütge, 2010: 5). The bond between these two characters remains strong and indeterminate. It survives the gun slinging and vying for gangland power without being terminated, even rising above the aggression signified in the former generational preoccupation with racial difference, seen through the depictions of the gangsters Mr Dlamini (played by Thomas Mpoeleng) and Mr Du Preez (played by Hylton Lütge). These characters remain entrenched in the old representational stereotype.

## KZN RUINS” (2011)

### CONCEPT

As part of the investigation my fiction film "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) aims to examine racial anxieties. These anxieties are contained in racial discrimination governed by past experiences (Dlamini's admonishment to Nhlanhla and Du Preez's Xenophobic reaction to Nigerian business dealings). The film portrays disempowered and disenfranchised 'white' identity and fears derived from past distrust evidenced in the generational stances adopted. Furthermore the film establishes the enclave identities of gang affiliations by race and the perceptions that racial sameness establishes commonalities.

"*KZN Ruins*" (2011) conceptualizes two worlds: the affluent, stimulating, world of diverse metaphors and social veneer, mentally constructed in the calculated attempts to reposition power and the world of brutal physicality where power is to be had by force. In terms of the conceptualization of characters, the film "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) slightly shifts some of the stereotypical representations of the 'black' male gangster perceived in *Mapantsula* (1988) and *Jerusalema* (2008) by positioning our gangsters as scam artists who are active catalysts right from the start.

Gone are the poor, small time, township, oppressed 'black' male gangsters and the rich, well dressed, authoritarian 'white' males. These representations are shown in the Nhlanhla's flashy sports car and Brody's beaten trolley. The stereotypes as well as the anxieties of former expectations have been deconstructed from a race informed class system in an attempt to construct, an opposing depiction of 'white' and 'black' male gangster types today. This was achieved by placing the 'black' male gangster in a position of wealth and power while locating the 'white' male as a 'side-kick'. Along with this the film portrays depiction of 'white' and 'black' as homeless. Race becomes an indeterminate factor in assigning wealth, employment or authority. The new generation is seen as seeking and expecting to be empowered. The youth are unafraid to take what they desire or challenge the old cadres. They no longer respect old money or old authority. The names no longer carry literal references in "*KZN Ruins*" (2011). The youth are in pin stripes, Brody brown and Nhlanhla grey contrasting the older gangsters who are still racially divided by the colour of their black and white

suits. Additionally suggesting they wear their colours on their sleeves. The film seeks to create a cinematic meta-language full of metaphoric references.

The locations crisscross the landscape from cocaine factories, to lavish suburbs, from business offices to apartments, from warehouses to busy city streets. This is footage that attempts to indicate through the subtext that the new regime no longer foregrounds by race but lobbies for identity by gang affiliations. These sequences traverse an arc from gangs delineated by race or culture to the 'rainbow' diversity of the new order figured in Nhlanhla and Brody's past experience and mutual trust.

The new way forward signifies a diversity of perspectives that includes the effects of historical clamping where experience, memory and upbringing stamp the residue of racial distrust into those whose background contexts predate the passage to Independence.

### ***DIRECTORS VISION***

The narrative of my fiction film manifests itself around two main characters and how their lives inter-mingle, react and reflect on one another. The main character Nhlanhla is a 25 year old 'black' male gangster whose extreme wealth derives from his criminal background. Nhlanhla hails from a background of poverty and oppression. The flashbacks suggest an abandoned child exploited by Mr. Dlamini.

The supporting character Brody purports to be a 25 year old "homeless" 'white' male. Although Brody's homelessness is a part of the scam it additionally brings associated meanings. Positioned without ownership, Brody represents disenfranchised white fears. These fears are subconsciously linked to the notion of ownership, employment, and displaced identity. Furthermore it arouses questions around constructed African-ness, and alludes to the poverty implied in this 'white' dislocation or anxiety over the transference of power. Brody's 'whiteness' no longer privileges him nor protected him from impending poverty.

The inter-racial relationship created between these two characters is contextualized in constant flux. The location shifts through intermittent flashbacks, where lighting and special effect techniques assist the forward action. The intimacy of close-up cutaways is juxtaposed against the flashing succession of frames. These shots are focused on a

small, intimate contained cast of gangsters rather than embracing the diverse crowd scenes of *Mapantsula* (1988) or the expansive casting of *Jerusalema* (2008) with red ants, police platoons and over-crowded buildings.

This results in the duality of the characters showing them divided by trestle tables, long distance phone calls, and motor vehicle choices (sedan versus sports coupé). By comparison the intimacy of the Brody/ Nhlanhla relationship is emphasized in the miniscule attention given to their attire. The commonalities are evident in the union between Nhlanhla and Brody. This occurs in shots inscribing the intricacies of their socks. The intimacy is captured further in their bodies sleeping outdoors in a tight enclosed space. This signals togetherness.

Sequences of the two grouped around the motor vehicles show both on the same side of the car when begging as children, then communicating across the open space of the pulled back hard top coupé. The pair is both behind the trestle table in the Du Preez sting set up. In fact the only time there is an interjection in the space, it is in the form of the 'white' motorist distributing bread, Mr. Dlamini pulling the boys apart, or the Mr. Dlamini in the final shoot out. Therefore it is significant that at the end they remove the only remaining obstacle between them: Mr. Dlamini. This cinematic sub-text or meta-language signals the stability of their relationship and gives credence to the firmness of the bond of brotherly love. The film deliberately creates a deception by placing the 'black' male (Nhlanhla) in a gangster role where he uses a 'white' homeless male (Brody) as a front man for a drug deal. This is a deliberate scam directed at the audience. Through the narrative the relationship between these two characters unfolds from a series of childhood flashbacks and the subterfuge of metaphorically witty dialogue. Along with this repositioned representation characters are positioned as a wealthy 'black' gangster purporting to use a homeless 'white' male as a front man. "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) uses racial signifiers to reposition the relationship as one where allegiances are based on age rather than colour..

### ***EXECUTION***

The stereotypical projections in *Mapantsula* (1988) and *Jerusalema* (2008) position their 'black' male characters as underprivileged and these characters rest on hot headed aggression and physical brutality as a means to identify and relate the macho

image of the self-made man within particular political contexts. "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) finds negotiations, allusions to chess, manipulation and conniving in order to express the brutality of the plot, thereby evolving the work around intellectual planning and calculated, constructed executions.

The entire film begins with an older 'white' male explaining through racial innuendoes constructed identities, xenophobic preconceptions and racial alignments in a conversation over a drug deal. This places the audience in a world of 'black' and 'white' and reinforces the representations constructed during the apartheid era. The film then cuts to the streets of Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal where a montage begins. This montage focuses on a contrast between money and poverty, comfort and discomfort, safety and danger, 'black' and 'white'. The montage begins with a wealthy man waking up in a warm comfortable bed, the camera hides the racial identity of the man. The sequence cuts to a homeless man waking up on the side of the street, the camera also hides the racial identity of the homeless man as he gathers all his possessions. The opening scenario is intercut between the wealthy man driving an expensive car, and feet pushing a trolley, leaving the audience to decide the racial identity of these two characters. The camera finally reveals the identities of the two characters when the two scenarios converge and the characters meet for the first time. It is at this point when the identities are revealed that the audience is being requested to reflect upon conditioned South African expectations as the 'black' male belongs in the wealthy scenario and the white male inhabits the homeless streets scenario.

The next sequence introduces the 'white' homeless male begging on the side of the road. The rich 'black' gangster pulls up to the traffic lights and Brody the homeless 'white' male approaches Nhlanhla asking for spare change as a prelude to their conversing. Nhlanhla publicly acknowledges at this point that he could use a white face to entice overseas investors, so Nhlanhla offers Jannie a 'hand up'. The film follows the relationship of these two characters motivating their similarities through flashbacks to their childhood. The film hopes to transcend the boundaries of race by positioning similar anxieties within the 'black' and 'white' identity. The film follows the personal struggles of the boys to negotiate the journey of their relationship informed by a society still preoccupied with discrimination and hatred as it travels to a position based on acceptance and realization.

## CONCLUSION

This research report set out to determine whether there had been a shift in the representation of the 'black' male gangster from *Mapantsula* (1988) to *Jerusalema* (2008) to “*KZN Ruins*” (2011). South Africa has been through some radical socio-cultural changes. This has empowered the ‘black’ community to rise above racial discrimination and create their own personal exaggerated and characteristically vaudeville codes, conventions and formations of blackness.

As the case study fiction film “*KZN Ruins*” (2011) was a creative process it is imperative to note that from first conceptualisation through to the final product of the film there would have been some adaption’s made.

This report argues from an academic stand point that through the investigations of the historical background of South African film, the gangster genre and stereotypes there is a definite shift in the representation of the ‘black’ male gangster. The representation of the ‘black’ male gangster has shifted from the afrikaaner nationalism of *De Voortrekkers* (1916) to the first actual ‘black’ experience film ‘*African Jim*’ (1949). From *Mapantsula* (1988) which depicted poor living conditions, township violence and the discriminatory actions of the ‘white’ community, to *Jerusalema*’s (2008) Wealthy, suburb living, sexual inter-racial relationship, new aged robin hood to “*KZN Ruins*” (2011) Wealthy, inter-racial relationships, big time, suburb dwelling, highly educated 'black' male gangsters.

While the shift in the representation and authenticity of the ‘black’ male gangster has been gradual from *African Jim* (1949) to *KZN Ruins* (2011), it is evident that there is a shift. Conversely since Independence, South Africa has seen a rise in new film makers pushing new boundaries. “Post apartheid cinema is characterized by the emergence of new voices and a diversification of themes”. (Botha, 2007: 34).

The stereotypical representation of the 'black' male gangster’s shifting domain is progressive as we see crime scaled through our 'black' male gangster’s move from the township to the inner city and from the inner city to the suburbs.

The inter-racial relationships in *Jerusalema* (2008), and “*KZN Ruins*” (2011) acknowledge a shift not only in the representation of the 'black' male gangster (Lucky

Kunene's journey from 'smash and grab' petty crimes to heists, armed robbery and hijack, to pirated buildings where tenants withhold landlords' rental and Lucky acquires a new edition to his property mogul's portfolio), but in signifying a change in socio-economic and formerly entrenched legal boundaries.. The inter-racial relationship in these film centres on a 'white' female from the suburbs and a 'black' male gangster from the townships who fall in 'love' *Jerusalema* (2008) and a wealthy 'black' male gangster and a poor 'white' male gangster who have a brotherly bond "*KZN Ruins*" (2011). Lucky's maintaining his social 'respectability', the relationship founded on sexual attraction, connotes a relationship still firmly entrenched in cultural differences, bound up in the economics inscribed in South African race relations. While the inter-racial relationship between Nhlanhla and Brody transcends the boundaries of race not being bound by sexual nuances, but by a shared past and brotherly bond.

The shift in the representation of the 'black' male gangster is evident on many levels. First it occurs through the movement from physical aggression to an intellectually constructed 'black' gangster figure posited in metaphor. Second, the character is perceived as changing location from township to inner city to suburb. Third, the high school drop-out to the tertiary drop-out to a Higher Education graduate demonstrates a shifting educational paradigm. Forth, there is a shift in the historical context from romanticised tragic anti-hero to Robin Hood escapist idealism to the calculated lawless pursuit of power. Fifth, transformation occurs in the movement from Tsotsitaal and a regenerative process, to the jargon contained in business economics and a Marxist approach to the subtle metaphors of the final work with its capitalist free market system. Therefore my research report and film propose the exploration into the stereotypical representational 'black' male gangster in *Mapantsula* (1988), *Jerusalema* (2008), and "*KZN Ruins*" (2011) in order to track the shift in racial and socio-political contextualizing. This deconstruction of 'black' male gangster representation argues for and confirms the shift paradigm by portraying alternative representations of the 'black' male gangster.

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