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Narrative Place-Making: The Narrative-Spatial Relationship in Films Made About Johannesburg by Anita Szentesi

Abstract

This study aimed to explore the narrative-spatial relationship between the construction of *mise-en-scene* and narrative in film form and the architectural considerations of place-making, to offer conceptual insights into how the idea of the human-place connection could be explored in the reading of selected film texts about Johannesburg. Through exploration, the study probed the discursive elusiveness of Johannesburg as place. An exploration was conducted into the notion that, like most cities in the world, Johannesburg cannot be rendered in a singular conceptual register, but allows for multiplicities of readings. An investigation was undertaken regarding how the design of the *mise-en-scene* in the selected filmic case studies functioned with the narrative structures, in an attempt to offer a coherent reading of a place that spawns multiple and at times diverged identities. The research was conducted through the critical analysis of selected film works that contained a strong sense of context, spatiality, locality and embodiment of characters within places inside the world of the story.

A short poetic reflexive documentary film was made to accompany this research, titled *Axis Johannesburg*, which explored the formation of an artist's identity in Johannesburg as achieved through his embodied practice of place-making. The construction of this short film, both formally and conceptually, offered an entry point into how to approach the multiplicity of readings and writing the tale of Johannesburg.