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Representations of blackness in post-1994 black-centred films: an analysis of Conversations on a Sunday afternoon (2005), When we were black (2007) and State violence (2011)

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ABSTRACT

This report interrogates the representation of blackness in post-1994 black-centred films in South Africa. With a particular focus on Khalo Matabane's films, I analyse *Conversations on a Sunday Afternoon* (2005), *When We Were Black* (2007) and *State of Violence* (2011) across a spectrum of themes. I also interrogate and introduce several critical concepts such as 'blackness', 'the image of blackness', 'black identity', 'masculinity', 'femininity', 'the Gaze' and 'Otherness'. These concepts are interlinked in ways that bring about an understanding of the concept of black-centred films, which is central to the research report. Amidst the different interpretations of black-centred films, the vantage point from which the concept is used is interested in black-centred films as films that are made by a black filmmaker, whose content addresses issues of blackness and is targeted at a black audience. However, these three factors need not always resonate in a single film in order for it to be considered and analysed as a black-centred film. The lens through which Matabane holds the camera questions his representation of the black image and whether it is from an insider or outsider's perspective. The view from which Matabane holds the camera is important in establishing whether he has purported to represent historically stereotypical images of blackness, or whether his endeavours in filmmaking are occupied by the relentless pursuit to present new images of blackness.