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The representation of kwaito in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies

Johannesburg, February 2012

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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Sandisiwe Vilakazi

15th day of February 2012

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Ndiyabulela Bazali, Makhulu, bantwana basekhaya, bazala, ooHlanga namaPhephethe, nezihlobo. Uthando lwenu luyomeleza kwaye luyakhuthaza. Mangalisa Aphole, uyathandwa ndim.

In memory and in honour.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This research report analyses the representation of kwaito music between 1994 and 2001 in the *Sunday Times*, South Africa's largest weekly newspaper. The research period encompasses a defining era in South Africa's socio-economic and political history; it was the early period of South Africa's democracy. South Africa's first democratic elections which resulted in Nelson Mandela becoming the country's first black president took place in 1994. The nineties were a period of rapid social transformation, marking the end of apartheid and the beginning of the new South Africa. It was a time of transformation that required change from various sectors of the society and the media was one of these.

Before 1994, there were different presses for the different races; there was a mainstream English press, Afrikaans press and black press. Fourie (2008:245) says that 'the typical white South African's perception of a black South African [was] based mainly on typifications and very little on direct experience'. She says that the news provided many white South Africans' with their only experience of black people bar 'the gardener and cleaner types' (ibid). The black youth were either invisible or portrayed as subjects, servants or threats to the status quo. If they were not fulfilling their subservient roles, they were attempting to 'cause trouble' as experienced during the Soweto school uprisings of June 1976. Before 1994, the average white South African had very little chances in real life to 'correct' the stereotypes constructed and disseminated by the apartheid era media.

The *Sunday Times* is one of South Africa's leading Sunday broadsheet newspapers. During apartheid it primarily targeted the white population, promoting their attitudes and interests; the portrayal of the black youth therein was biased and at times simply non-existent (see Dreyer 2006). The socio-political changes effected in policy from 1994 meant that the *Sunday Times* had to transform its practices to reflect the new socio-political landscape; their gaze could no longer be restricted to one race as was previously the case. A previously white orientated newspaper

like the *Sunday Times* had to transform and represent black subjects differently. The *Sunday Times* would have had to represent a black government and aspects of black popular culture, including kwaito music.

Kwaito was markedly township, black, and used by its proponents to celebrate their newly achieved political freedom and also to comment on their socio-economic struggles (see Kaganof 2003). According to Peterson (2003), South African kwaito started off as an experiment with sound; it was recorded in small makeshift studios, put on tape (cassettes) and distributed informally through street and boot sales by young black males. It grew to be a popular form of music amongst the newly emancipated black youth. When kwaito started, around 1993, record companies, television and radio stations alike showed no interest in it; it was only available on the streets or 'underground.' This situation encouraged the then youngsters Arthur Mafokate, Mdu Masilela and Oscar Mdlongwa to devise their own means of recording and distributing their music; this led to the formation of successful independent recording companies like 999 Music and Kalawa Jazzmee (Peterson 2003).

Kwaito grew to be an important social development for and by the black youth; what started out as home-grown, non-commercial and independent sound became a genuine youth genre, movement and culture, complete with a distinctive lingo, discourse and style. It was identified with the black youth of South Africa (see Steingo 2007). The lyrics of early popular kwaito songs included social commentary from the perspective of the youth (see chapter 2:13). Kwaito was popular; it provided a platform for the newly emancipated black youth to perform, to speak, to be seen and heard. At the height of its popularity in the nineties, kwaito was the biggest and most significant phenomenon to hit and emerge from South Africa's post-apartheid black youth. Peterson (2003:201) argued that kwaito reflected 'a wide range of subject matter that spans the inane and ridiculous to the witty and sublime, the misogynist and morally bankrupt to the socially and gender conscious, radical and Afrocentric.' Steingo (2007) declared kwaito to be

‘the most important music genre and cultural innovation to emerge in post-apartheid South Africa.’

This research paper is concerned with the *Sunday Times’* representation of this phenomenon.

The representation of culture is meaningful because as Kellner (1995:7) has argued, ‘The media are a profound and often misperceived source of cultural pedagogy.’ What we learn and understand about our surroundings is partly facilitated by the media we consume. The media, according to Thompson (1996:11) are ‘concerned with the production, storage and circulation of materials which are meaningful for the individuals who produce and receive them.’ Hall (1995:19) argued that the media, of which the *Sunday Times* is an example, play a role in the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies. They construct ‘… images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is (Hall 1995:19).’ The same point is made by Thompson (1997: 30), who argued that the media form ‘a tissue of shared experience and collective memory’ and provide audiences with ‘information, ideas and images concerning events which take place beyond their immediate social surroundings.’ This research is concerned with how the *Sunday Times* covered and thus circulated in the South African public arena, the facets of black culture and black youth identity represented in and by kwaito.

Aim

This paper aims to investigate how, against a socio-economic context of rapid and radical social transformation, the *Sunday Times*, a traditionally white orientated newspaper, mediated, portrayed and interpreted what was predominantly a young, black township phenomenon. This will be achieved through a content analysis of the coverage of kwaito in the *Sunday Times* from 1994 to 2001. It does this in order to understand how the media accommodates cultural and musical movements that represent minority or alternate ideological stances. Essentially this is an examination of the media's attempts at representing those sectors of society that appear to threaten the status quo either through their appearance, backgrounds, utterances or beliefs.

Rationale

This thesis will help readers understand the ways in which the South African media represents musical, social and cultural issues in a context of rapid social transformation where group and national identities were being renegotiated and re-imagined. It also validates Hebdige's theory of how the mainstream media commodifies and ideologically neuters youth subcultures.

Kwaito as a culture and genre conveyed the black youth of South Africa's status as the underclass, the newly emancipated but still constrained by apartheid's legacy of separation, inequality, poor education, poverty and violence (see Peterson 2003).

The coverage by the media is significant due to its role in a democracy as far as the construction of a new South African national identity. The media had a role and social imperative to transform South Africa and expand its coverage from a narrow ethnic gaze to a broader perspective of the country at large. The media coverage of a subculture like kwaito is implicated in matters of identity formation, social dialogue and transformation which are important in the context of a stratified South African society.

Research questions

Main Question

- How was kwaito, a musical and cultural genre associated with black township youth, portrayed in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001, which was a period of transformation for South African society?

Sub Questions

- What discernable themes emerged in the content of the articles related to kwaito?
- Do we see any patterns in the representation of blackness and/or youth in the coverage of kwaito musicians by the *Sunday Times* newspaper?
- Are there any significant silences in the coverage, for example, in relation to the content of the kwaito songs and how the black youth constructed their identities?
- In what ways did the coverage of kwaito change in the period from 1994 to 2001?

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This research draws on a range of theoretical areas and literature in order to contextualise the research: writings on kwaito and comparisons to hip hop; ideology and notions of media representation; subculture theory; culture as commodity and cultural consecration.

2.1 Kwaito

Kwaito is seen by some scholars as an authentic, uniquely South African post-apartheid musical and cultural phenomenon. Steingo (2005) writes that kwaito was 'a collection of fragmented ideas and ideologies of young black South Africans after apartheid'. Peterson (2003:198) states that kwaito's emergence is 'undoubtedly the most singular innovation in popular culture in South Africa in the 1990s', it presents 'a rich case study of the directions that popular culture in South Africa may take' and it is an 'eloquent testimony to the agency of young blacks to create their own narratives in response to the harsh urban landscapes in which they find themselves (Peterson 2003:198). Kwaito drew inspiration from the township and inner city landscapes. The artists used the music as a vehicle to convey their perception of their lives; they used it to lament and celebrate the changes taking place in South Africa and in their personal lives (see Mhlambi 2004).

The kwaito artists generally defined the music as township music. In Kaganof (2003) Arthur, termed the king of kwaito by the media, said: "Kwaito is South African ghetto or township dance music." Mandoza, the singer of 'Nkalankatha' said: "Kwaito, it's a language that we use, a music that we use to express our ghetto lifestyle. It's the way we talk in the ghetto." The first kwaito child star Mzambiya says, "Kwaito is a township thing, it's talking about a lot of things that are happening around you. In fact you're talking about your environment." Nhlanhla Mafu of Mafikizolo was of the opinion that "kwaito is very South African, it's something that represents the youth of South Africa basically and especially from the townships." Lindelani Mkhize of

Sony Music South Africa stated that "kwaito music is a voice for the South African youth; it is a loud microphone that the youth of South Africa uses to spread their message to the country and to the outside world as well" (all quoted in Kaganof 2003).

Kwaito was about black youth having fun, but it was also about them expressing their views and reactions to their surroundings. Despite the rapid and drastic political changes, apartheid left a legacy of inequality and widespread poverty among the black population, which had a profound impact on the black youth of South Africa (Cohen 2008; Zegeye 2008). South African black youth, having long, to the point of ungovernability, developed structures of resistance and self-reliance against apartheid, overnight had to adapt to a society that had not yet shown how it would 'address most of their major needs of employment, alleviation of poverty, illiteracy and the visible exercise of control over their own destinies' (Gardiner 2000:67-68). After the advent of democracy and the attainment of freedom for black South Africans, there remained several crucial socio-economic issues faced by black township youth. They are summed up by Zegeye (2008:36-40) as: HIV/AIDS, violence, the breakdown of parental authority, poverty and unemployment and the continual need to devise survival strategies. A key point raised by Zegeye (2008:48) is that due to some of the socio-economic challenges they faced, South African black youth did not always succeed in constructing their identities in affirmative terms. Some were implicated in crimes such as hijacking, murder and abuse of drugs. This view is supported by Steingo (2005:354), who says, 'Rather than condemning the kwaito generation, it might be more appropriate to understand kwaito culture as a symptom (or a casualty) of the disease of apartheid.'

In a series of in-depth interviews, Kaganof (2003) got various kwaito artists and producers to express their understanding of the significance of kwaito. According to DJ Fresh, formerly of South African youth radio station Yfm, says, "kwaito has helped youth express themselves in South Africa the way hip hop helped black youth express themselves in America in the late seventies, early eighties. … I think unfortunately kwaito, just in terms of lyrical content, has

been more about the good time as opposed to social commentary." Writer and cultural activist Themba ka Maathe's observation is worth quoting at length. He said, "A lot of kwaito music is more about the self than about social issues. The artist, his environment, that is, the club where he hangs out, it's about the girls that he wants to hang around with. The subject matter of kwaito is still too limited. They really need to explore deeper issues, bigger political questions of the day…. but we are living in a society that is celebrity crazy. The various industries thrive and feed on the celebrities. The drugs industry, the fashion industry, you know if you are a celebrity BMW will come to you and they will just give you a car, and this is how the consumer culture sustains itself. It sells itself through the images of the lifestyles of the celebrities that black people look up to." In contrast to that, former Yfm DJ Rude boy said, "Kwaito is a platform that serves to drive thoughts, ideas, gives kids from the township a voice in which to speak on what their concerns are, social ills happening around them, the fact that they can't find jobs out there, HIV and AIDS awareness as well." Kaganof (2003) said, "To strike a necessary critical note, kwaito seems as a movement, extremely obsessed with money, whether it be in the lyrics or the look of the video clips, a clear obsession with consumerism."

The critical reception of kwaito outside of the mainstream media was at times ambivalent. Some critics and authors identified it as an important socio-political phenomenon, yet they also recognised the cultural superficiality of kwaito as a musical product. Mhlambi's research (2004) characterised kwaito as having both a good and a bad side. The perceived negative aspects of kwaito are: from a musical point of view, the sound is criticised for being synthetic; kwaito artists use pre-recorded back up tracks instead of live bands; the lyrical content is minimal; it does not nurture artists resulting in one hit wonders (Mhlambi 2004:123). Also, kwaito parties and bashes are associated with disorder, violence and vulgarity and a general lack of safety. Finally, kwaito (the industry, the lyrics and the portrayals) is accused of being prejudicial and condescending towards women, portraying them as subservient sexual beings only there to support or complement the male figure (McCloy 2004; Stephens, 2000 in Mhlambi 2004:123).

On the other hand, Mhlambi (2004) found that kwaito enabled black youth to express and celebrate their newfound emancipation, identity and empowerment. It gave birth to a positive new conception of blackness and youth. Kwaito provided jobs for many artists, engineers, producers, choreographers giving previously disadvantaged black individuals a sense of dignity and financial gain. It also inspired and supported local fashion labels, amongst them Loxion Kulcha and Zola7. These labels were influenced by the pantsula and afro-chic images made popular by kwaito artists and the same artists promoted the brands through wearing them in their performances, videos and public appearances (Mhlambi 2004; Swartz 2003).

Due to the rise in sales and popularity, kwaito generated a substantial amount of income, catapulting its young stars into unprecedented levels of fame and fortune (see Stephens 2000). By the late nineties and certainly by 2000, kwaito culture was mainstreamed to the extent of being used to promote prominent brands like Levis jeans and Benson & Hedges cigarettes. Prominent brands rode the kwaito wave, endorsing artists, financing tours and hosting special events showcasing a variety of popular kwaito acts. Peterson (2003:199) noted that mainstream social and business projects targeting young people (cites AIDS awareness campaigns, soft drinks, fashion, accessories etc) all found it necessary to align their brands with kwaito. The success changed the complexion of kwaito; on the one hand it represented the townships struggle, yet, on the other hand, it flaunted affluence. Whilst speaking out against the social ills faced by the general black population, kwaito started projecting notions of consumerism and materialism, perhaps echoing the aspirations of black economic empowerment (see Stephens 2000).

2.1.1 Social Messages in kwaito lyrics

There is consensus by many writers (Steingo 2005, Mhlambi 2004, Peterson 2003, McCloy 2004, Stephens 2000) that Boom Shaka's *It's about time* and *Makwere* as well as Arthur's *Daai Ding, Kaffir* and *Amagents Ayaphanda* were the first major kwaito hits. These are the songs that headlined the genre; they were typically characterised by thumping beats and played at parties,

but their lyrical content was not limited to the party scene but commented on social issues (see Mhlambi 2004).

One of the early kwaito hits and a socially relevant song was Boom Shaka's *Makwere* (1993). By the mid-nineties, there was an inflow of asylum and job seekers into South Africa from other African countries. There was the perception amongst locals that they were in the country to steal or sell drugs. These xenophobic sentiments would flare into violence in 2008 (see Valy 2008). This song begins and ends with an impassioned speech spoken in a foreign African accent, as if by a 'kwere-kwere', a derogatory term used by some South Africans when referring to African foreign nationals. The speech goes as follows:

Zimbabwe, Zaire, Zambia, Mozambique [where they come from]
Bangibiza kwere kwere (they call me kwere kwere)
Angithi ngiyasebenza [kahle] (don't I work well/honestly?)
Angibulali muntu (I do not kill anybody)
Angidayisi kavhivhi (I do not sell drugs or weapons)
I'm a gentleman

In *'Daai Ding'* (1995), Arthur Mafokate addresses similar issues to Boom Shaka's *Makwere.* In this song, Arthur condemns intolerance, violence, inter-tribal attacks and derogatory name-calling by South Africans. He says:

Venda kill a Xhosa man,
Xhosa kill Sotho man
Sotho kill a Zulu man
Zulu kill a mlungu man…
Tsonga kill a Venda man
Bathi mina ngiyi kwerekwere (They call me a kwere kwere)
Bathi mina ngiyikula maan (They call me a coolie)
Bathi mina ngiyi kaffir maan (They call me a kaffir)
Kodwa si amajanada sonke (Yet we are all blacks)

Yehlisani umoya (Calm down)

Masixolelane, masikhulimisane (Let's forgive and talk to each other)

Daai ding is nie reg man (This thing is not right)

In 1995, despite President Nelson Mandela's attempts at forging a rainbow nation out of South Africa's multi-racial society, racial tensions were still rife. The new constitution, which would later be hailed as being one of the most liberal in the world (see Kgosimore 2000), had not yet been adopted. Incidents of racism were still being reported in the media. In the song *'Kaffir'* (1995), Arthur Mafokate addresses the racism in South Africa. In the song, Arthur is heard speaking to his white baas (boss) saying:

Nee bass don't call me a kaffir (Boss don't call me a kaffir)

Awuboni ukuthi ngiyaphanda maan… (Can't you see that I'm hustling)

Angiveli kwa Satan (I do not come from hell)

Le wena never o rate ha keka o betsa kere obobejaan (You also wouldn't like me calling you a baboon)

…haai baas ngeke ngiyiwashe lemoto baas. (No, I won't wash this car boss)

The high level of crime in South Africa was a big issue in the mid-nineties. Yet, in the song *Amagents Ayaphanda'* (1993), Arthur Mafokate found it necessary to ask his listeners to give amagents (the gents) a break as they are trying to make a living. By amagents he is referring to hustlers in Soweto trying to make a living by any means necessary. In the song Arthur attempts to defend the 'gents' against judgment from the community (and possibly law enforcers). The chorus of the song repeatedly says:

Amagents ayaphanda (The gents are hustling)

Just leave them,

They are trying to make a living

The lyrics cited above show that the early kwaito hits were concerned with the social issues of the day. The lyrics revealed the observations, anxieties and struggle of the urban black youth free themselves from the bonds of violence, racism and intolerance.

2.1.3 Comparisons to hip hop

Many authors compared kwaito to hip hop (see Swartz 2003, Mhlambi 2004). Like kwaito, hip hop was created and made popular by the black youth (in America). As the kwaito youth in South Africa benefitted from their elders' struggle against apartheid, the hip hop youth came after the civil rights movement generation. They too faced major challenges in the ghettos and inner city even though the generation before them had taken significant social strides towards the creation of a more just society for the black population (See also Campbell 1993, Hill 1999, Rose 2003, Ward 2004).

2.2 Subcultures

According to Brake (1985:8) subcultures are 'meaning systems, modes of expression or lifestyle by groups in subordinate structural positions in response to dominant meaning systems' and they 'exist where there is some form of organized and recognized constellation of values, behaviour and actions which is responded to as differing from the prevailing set of norms.' Subcultures are about signs and styles being used to mark a difference, break or resistance to a bigger group, system or culture (See Hebdige 1979).

In many instances, emerging subcultures were met by an ambivalent wave of hysteria from the mainstream press (Hebdige 1979). Hebdige (1979) found ambivalence in that the coverage fluctuated between dread and fascination, outrage and amusement; the subcultures were celebrated, ridiculed and/or reviled. The ambivalence could be attributed to the fact that subcultures represented a challenge to hegemony, marked a disturbance of the peace, expressed 'forbidden' contents in forbidden forms and were a metaphor for the potential anarchy out there (Hebdige 1979:94-97). However, the media, in most instances, accommodated and contained the subcultures through converting them into mass-produced objects or through neutering them ideologically (ibid). In converting a subculture into a mass product, it is serviced, exploited, codified, made comprehensible, rendered public property, commodified and ultimately frozen.

To neuter ideologically, a subculture is trivialised, naturalised, domesticated or transformed into meaningless exotica and pure spectacle (Hebdige 1979). This can be done through shallow or incomplete coverage and it can also be done by through highlighting some aspect of the subculture/s at the expense of others; focusing on celebrity is an example of this. The accommodation or containment of a subculture is thus achieved through representational practices.

In the early nineties, kwaito music was very much a subculture as the mainstream media and record shops had yet to discover, embrace or support kwaito; it was at the time confined to townships and inner city clubs (see Peterson 2003). Kwaito was also a subculture in how it separated the youth from the older generations. The older black South African population had lived their youth during apartheid, whilst the post-apartheid youth did so in the "new" South Africa, as it was popularly referred to. They lived in the same country but navigated vastly different socio-political terrains. Kwaito marked the difference between the two; the elders had no interest and saw no value in it (see Peterson 2003).

Research has shown that when landscape shifts occur, the youth tend to turn towards subcultures 'to project a different cultural response or solution to the problems posed for them by their material and social class position and experience' (Clarke et al 1976:15). At the turn of democracy, the South African youth sought to do this through kwaito. Even though they were responding to the same social reality as their parents, the kwaito crowd expressed themselves through new forms of music, dress, activities, leisure pursuits and lifestyle. As a form of 'resistance through ritual' (the title of Hall's book on subcultures), kwaito distinguished itself through sound, language and style. The kwaito sound combined elements of house, hip-hop and reggae. The lyrics were peppered with tsotsi taal. Stylistically the males borrowed from the pantsula and the USA rappers dress codes; kwaito males were easily identified by their Converse All-Star canvas takkies, bright coloured shirts, floppy hats known as sporties, flashy jewellery. The females (for example Lebo Mathosa and Thembi Seete of the group Boom Shaka) were also

clad in conspicuous jewellery and were overtly sexy; on the hand, some kwaito female artists went for the tomboy look and preferred to dress exactly like their male counterparts. Through using style as a signifying practice, kwaito enabled the South African black youth to command the public's attention.

2.3 Modes of representation

Some researchers have argued that identity formation is linked to media representations. According to Hall (1997:5), that which we call culture is built up and sustained through representations which give us an idea of what it means to belong to certain nationalities, social groups or subcultures. Through representations, we see which groups, according to the media, belong and which ones do not. Newspapers are sites of meaning and this meaning is 'consistently being produced and exchanged' (Hall 1997:5) and it is created through choices of representation.

Theories of representation are useful to look at because representations, with their ideological underpinnings, can be accurate snapshots of a society's socio-political workings; a society's (or certain groups within it) instabilities and ideological struggles can be mirrored by the distortions, over-representation and under-representations present in media representations (Watkins, n.d).
Said (1979:272) argues that representations are embedded in the language, culture, institutions and political ambience of the representer. He also argues that representations are 'implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the "truth", which is itself a representation' (Said 1979:272).

Media representations are useful as they provide 'the basis on which groups and classes construct an image of the lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes' and also provide, 'the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces can be coherently grasped' (Hall in Hebdige 1977:85). Media representations therefore present a rich archaeological cultural field 'where we discover

and play with the identification of ourselves, where we are imagined, where we are represented, not only to the audiences out there who do not get the message, but to ourselves for the first time' (Hall 1996: 474). According to Gross (1995:62), representation also relates to power. He asserts that 'non-representation maintains the powerless status of groups that do not possess significant material or political power bases… [and] the holders of real power do not require or seek mediated visibility [but] those who are at the bottom of the various power hierarchies will be kept in their place in part through their relative invisibility.'

Far from representing the whole scene or context, representations contain an 'almost infinitely small percentage of the totality' (McQueen 1998:140). We can certainly expect a fair amount of framing whereby the topic is approached, understood and represented in a manner acceptable to both the producer and the receiver. Hall (1996) found that media production frames information according, but not limited to, professional ideologies, institutional knowledge, definitions and assumptions about the audience. When it comes to representation, 'it is not only what is said that has a significance, but also the way it is said and what is not said but could be said' (Heck, 1980:124). Hall (1997:251) talks of a 'grammar of representation' that will always reveal itself in works of representation.

One mode of representation is the portrayal of certain groups of people as the opposite of another more preferable group. Hall (1996:470) found that black popular culture tends to be represented as the opposite of white culture and those differences mapped out in opposite values, such as: high versus low, resistance versus incorporation, experiential versus formal; opposition versus homogenization etc.

Another mode of representation is the repetitive representation of people in set limited roles and this is known as stereotyping. This is illustrated in the work of Bogle (in Hall 1996:251) who found that early American movies present five discernible black stereotypes: coons, toms, tragic mulatto, mammies and bad bucks. Some of the 'types' have since faded away, but the 'bad buck'

stereotype of violent, over sexed, no good, lustful, full of black rage youth continues to be used when representing black youth in popular culture. The rapper stereotype is a variation of the bad buck and is often seen in American movies depicting the ghetto life. Black masculinity as a whole has been stereotyped to represent hyper masculinity, sexuality and physical prowess (see Mercer & Julien in Nixon 1997). 'Black people are seen too often as a social problem. Images of black criminals, drug takers, rioters, gangs, dysfunctional families and troublemakers have been far more common than any positive or neutral representations (McQueen 1998:141).

Stereotyping is sometimes used to maintain the hegemony that subcultures attempt to challenge. Hall (1996:259) cites Dyer, who found that stereotyping, when used by ruling groups, can be used as a means to 'fashion the whole of society according to their own world view, value system, sensibility and ideology' in the process also make it appear 'natural and inevitable'. Ruling groups own or have considerable influence over the means of distribution and reach which ordinary people do not possess. Gross (1995:62) argues that 'those who are at the bottom of the various power hierarchies will be kept in their places in part through their relative invisibility' in the mass media. When they are represented, 'the manner of that representation will itself reflect the biases and interests of those elites who define the public agenda. And he says that these elites are mostly white, middle-aged, male, middle and upper class and heterosexual "at least in public" (ibid). Gross (1995:62) also states 'the mass media are likely to be especially powerful in cultivating images of groups and phenomena about which there is little first-hand opportunity for learning; particularly when such images are not contradicted by other established beliefs and ideologies" (Gross 1995:63). This was particularly true in the South African apartheid context. Due to the fact that during apartheid, most South African media institutions colluded with the system to demonise, ignore or silence black people, there was no all-encompassing national identity readily available for circulation in the new South Africa (McEachern 2002). The South African media had to construct a national identity through 'the constant balancing of conceptions of selves and collectivities of sameness and difference, much of which can be traced back to apartheid society' (McEachern 2002:XVII).

2.4 Cultural capital

Bourdieu (1991) said that utterances [and musical works] receive their value only in their relation to a market, characterised by a particular law of price formation (Bourdieu 1991:67). Through the process of symbolic valorisation, symbolic forms, like kwaito music, are ascribed symbolic value. The symbolic value is that which music has by virtue of the ways in which, and the extent to which, it is esteemed by the press. Economic valorisation is the process through which symbolic forms are ascribed economic value, a value for which they can be exchanged in a market. Through economic valorisation, symbolic forms are constituted as commodities: they become objects which can be bought and sold in a market for a price. The commodification of symbolic forms can be used to attract readers, advertisers and subscribers. Viewed this way, newspapers can be seen as sites of symbolic capital (Campbell 2004:208). Representations viewed in this light are also commodities traded in a market as argued by Thompson (1996:27) who wrote that 'the mass media [are] characterised by the commodification and public circulation of symbolic forms.'

For example, in a study of how the South African press represented the Afrikaans band, Fokopolisiekar, Kahn (2009) found that, because they ascribed more value to the band, the Afrikaans press gave it more coverage than the English press. The higher the perceived symbolic value, the more coverage is gained. The process of commodification and cognisance of market value are therefore at play in the media's representation of cultural and musical products. This shows that the media will jump on the bandwagon of a product's popularity and mainstream it in order to attract audiences and advertisers.

2.5 Cultural consecrators

Kahn (2009) investigated 'how complex statements about important contemporary issues, which are formulated in cultural products like music, feed into public debate through the media' (2009:11). She found that different types of writers contributed to different kinds of coverage;

the articles on Fokofpolisiekar were written by different categories of writers, namely reporters, columnists and guest columnists. Through constantly writing about the band, the regular writers were responsible for validating its newsworthiness. The columnists and guest columnists took it a step further and wrote pieces that examined the socio-political issues raised by the band. These writers positioned the band onto the main stage and gave their ideas prominence (Kahn 2009:50).

Drawing on Bourdieu, Kahn argues that these writers are "cultural consecrators" and the opinion of the consecrators - in this case, prominent Afrikaans cultural figureheads and musicians -, framed and steered subsequent discussions of the band. Their viewpoints, especially in the Afrikaans papers, became accepted positions and were used as reference points by the regular reporters and readers. The point is that cultural commentators who act as cultural consecrators tend to steer the understandings in certain directions. In another study, Lewis (2003) found that when the *New York Times* hired a writer who specialised in hip hop, there was a significant increase in positive and neutral stories about hip hop (Lewis 2003:69).

2.6 Summary

The literature on kwaito shows the relevance of kwaito in the South African socio-cultural context, and defines it as a phenomenon of black township youth in the post-apartheid period. I have highlighted that it is a youth subculture. I have presented Hebdige's argument that the media tends to either convert the little cultures into mass products or it ideologically neuters them through trivial and shallow representation. I have presented the case of hip hop as an example of a black youth subculture that was subjected to the processes argued by Hebdige. I also discussed some of the ways that representation can be employed to suit some and exclude other ideological ways of seeing. I have looked at common stereotypes used in the representation of blackness. I have also discussed that the apartheid's unravelling created sociological demands on the South African media to transform and mediate a new national identity; the rapid political developments of the early nineties coincided with the beginning of kwaito thus making it the first black youth trend to confront the previously white-orientated *Sunday Times.*

I have presented Bourdieu's case that representation is also influenced by the products' symbolic and trade value in the market; the value may be intrinsic or it may be constructed and endorsed by the media. I have used the research of Kahn and Lewis to show that sometimes the best way for subcultures to enter into the public domain is through commentators who assume the role of consecrators; they steer the understanding of subcultures and, to some extent rescue them from being totally commodified and neutered in the media coverage.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Content Analysis as a method

This research examines the ways in which kwaito was portrayed in the *Sunday Times* from 1994 to 2001, a period of seven years. To answer this question, I employed qualitative content analysis as a method as it is useful for collating and gauging the manifest content of large amounts of media output over a given time period. It can be used to study themes, trends, stereotypes, patterns and shifts over time. Content analysis allows for 'the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns' (Hsieh and Shannon 2005:1278). Content analysis works through the gathering and analysing of texts which can be music lyrics, books, speeches, newspapers etc. (see Neuman 1994). It is also sometimes referred to as textual coding because the researcher uses objective and systematic counting and recording procedures to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic content in a text (Neuman 261). Its limitation is that it provides no way of asking what the relationship is between the content of the texts analysed and the social structures which produce them (Taylor and Willis 1999: 44-46). However, it is still the ideal method for assessing the representation of social groups in the media, as it enables researchers to collate a body of solid data and it can reveal 'the construction of versions of 'reality' through various representations.

3.2 The selection of the time period

I selected the period from 1994, as it marked the beginning of the so-called new South Africa, with the first democratic elections held in April. The period under study ends in 2001 in order to keep the study feasible. 2001 seemed an appropriate end point as a preliminary survey of the data – articles on kwaito sourced through a keyword search - revealed that 2001 marked a steep decline in coverage after a steady rise in coverage from 1994.

3.3 The selection of the publication

The *Sunday Times* was chosen for the research because it is South Africa's biggest-selling weekly newspaper, and one of its most established. In 1994 it had sales of 2 402 000, by 2011 this figure had risen to 3 279 000. In 1994 it had a 41.3% white and a 35% black readership. In 2001 this balance had shifted from 26.1% white to 54.8% black. The *Sunday Times* is touted as 'a part of Sunday for South Africans... a tradition – an experience South Africans have grown to love and trust... the paper South Africans know they can trust (AVUSA 2011). However, historically, the main newspaper was part of a white lifestyle tradition, and by the 1990s, needed to transform to adapt to the new inclusive democracy. This makes it an interesting case for the study.

The *Sunday Times* is divided into different sections, each with its own focus and target audience. Although the analysis of the different sections will not be critical in this paper, it is important to explain them briefly. They are:

- Main body of the paper: this section consists of two parts. The first part contains news of general interest for all readers. The second part is called Insight and is aimed at the thinkers and academics; the sports section is also contained here.

- Business Times: this section comes in three parts: the first part is aimed at the general business community; the second part, Money, contains financial advice and third part, Careers, is aimed at employment seekers.

- Lifestyle: this is a supplement aimed at the top end of the leisure market.

- Magazine: the magazine covers popular culture and entertainment news for *Sunday Times'* younger readers.

- The Gauteng *City Metro* was an insert in the *Sunday Times* established in the mid-

nineties. According to Moodie (2011) it was a rebranded version of the "African" *Extra* that was designed for the townships in Gauteng. The rebranded *City Metro* still targeted a black audience, but it had to bridge the gap between the blacks in the townships and those who were moving into the suburbs due to transformation in the country's socio-political and economic landscape (Moodie 2011).

3.4 Data Collection

For this research, I collected all pieces which contained the keyword kwaito in the *Sunday Times* from 1994 to 2001. To gather the data I visited the archives of the *Sunday Times.* I was granted access to the computers where past issues are retrievable on an electronic archive called Active Paper. I conducted a keyword search by typing in the word 'kwaito', searching for all articles from the first Sunday in January 1994 to the last Sunday in December 2001. I used kwaito as a keyword in order to bring out any and all articles in the *Sunday Times* which contain the word kwaito in the headline or the body. The advantage of this is that gave me the entire set of writings about kwaito. This allowed me to base my findings on everything that had been written, rather than on selected articles, which may reflect individual writers' views rather than patterns of reporting.

3.5 Coding

The data collection yielded 684 articles which had to be coded and sorted into categories. Coding is the process of organizing large quantities of text into fewer content categories (Weber cited in Hsieh and Shannon 2005). They are coded in order to make the study precise, objective, quantitative and repeatable (see Neuman 1994:263). A coding system helped to sift the unsuitable articles and systematically code the useful articles as news, review, feature or opinion articles. The system was determined by the following:

- News articles are event based and they attempt to answer, in relation to the event, the questions what, where, who, how and why?

- Feature articles are not necessarily event bound. They tend to be about a band, artist, phenomenon or genre. Features articles tend to be interview-based and there is evidence of prior research on the topic or artist/s.

- Reviews give the writers' considered point of view on a particular project, album or show.

- Commentary pieces are purely the opinions of the writer/s on a particular subject. Like the news articles, opinion or commentary pieces can be inspired by current events; however, there is no attempt to be objective. They are the personal opinions or observations of the writer/s.

The section where the article was located also determined how it was coded. All full-length articles in the magazine were considered features. The exception was film critic Barry Ronge's weekly column; any content therein was considered commentary. Any articles appearing on the front pages of the *City Metro* as well as in the main paper's first section were considered news articles.

3.6 Analysis

When analysing the data, I looked at the manifest content. The manifest refers to that which was visible and on the surface. Therefore particular words, phrases or signs could be described as manifest content (see Neuman 1994:264). I drew the themes and categories from the content and these will be discussed in the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 The number of articles

Before beginning the content analysis I had to establish how many articles there were and how many would be analysed. The *Sunday Times* issues are stored in AVUSA's electronic archive. I typed in the keyword 'kwaito' for all articles from January 1994 to December 2001 and the search yielded 684 results broken down as follows:

	1994/5	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**
Results	0	18	76	131	205	215	39

Table 1: Number of results from the original keyword search

Not all of the 684 that came up were relevant and useful towards gauging how the *Sunday Times* represented kwaito during the stipulated period. I eliminated those articles that were duplicates, TV Guide mentions, listings or mere passing references to kwaito. The duplication of articles occurred when the same article appeared in more than one regional version of the *City Metro*.

Of the 684 hits from the original key word search, 526 (77%) were eliminated. The eliminated articles are broken down as follows:

	Soccer	**Listings**	**TV Guide mentions**	**Passing references**	**Duplicates**	Total
Number	61	42	43	239	141	526

Table 2: Eliminated categories in numbers

The remaining articles fell into the categories of news articles, reviews, feature articles and commentary/ opinion pieces. Their numbers are broken down as follows:

	News	**Reviews**	**Features**	**Commentary**	Total
Numbers	84	2	57	15	158
Percentage	53%	1%	36%	10%	

Table 3: Categories and numbers

4.1.1 Analysis of the Article Numbers

As seen in Table 1 above, there was zero coverage or mention of kwaito in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 1995. The very first mention of kwaito in the *Sunday Times* was a brief listing (17 March 1996) and it was the first of 18 mentions that year. From 18 articles in 1996, there were 76 in 1997 and 131 in 1998. The representation of kwaito really took off in 1999 with 205 mentions and 215 in 2000. The figure dropped to 39 in 2001.From its humble beginnings in the early nineties, kwaito grew to become a lucrative genre in the South African music industry.

Kwaito's rise corresponded with an increased black readership for the *Sunday Times*. In 1994 the *Sunday Times* had a 41.3% white readership and by 2001 the percentage had dropped to 26.1%. The black readership figures, on the other hand, grew from 35% in 1994 to 54.8% in 2001 (AMPS figures).

4.2 Placement of the articles

In conducting the content analysis, it became obvious that the majority of kwaito-related articles were not in the main body of the paper, but in the *City Metro*, a supplement. For example, of the 57 feature articles analysed in *Sunday Times* between January 1994 to December 2011, 6 were in the Magazine, 6 in the Main Body and the rest (45) were in the *City Metro*. There were similar ratios in the placement of the news features and commentary pieces.

4.2.1 Analysis of the Placement of the articles

A small percentage of the articles were in the magazine, a pull-out insert, which targeted a mixed but younger audience. This makes sense as kwaito was a youth phenomenon. An even smaller percentage of the articles were in the main body of the paper which targeted general readers.

The placement of the articles suggests that the *Sunday Times* editorial team decided that kwaito was a phenomenon only of interest to the black readership. Almost all the coverage was limited to the *City Metro,* which targeted a largely black audience. The views of the young black artists

on xenophobia, sexism, 'ukuphanda' (hustling) or racism (as contained in the song lyrics) went by underreported. White *Sunday Times* readers who did not read the *City Metro* were exposed to very little and narrow coverage of kwaito. If all any reader knew of kwaito was what was contained in the main body, then we can assume they were uninformed about the broad nature, culture and message of kwaito music.

4.3 News Articles

There were 84 news articles relating to kwaito in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001.

In each story, I looked for the main actors and focus; in other words, I looked for who was making news and for what reason. I drew my categories of the different themes from the data and these were the results:

- **65% Industry**: news about the music industry news- new album releases, artist collaborations, album sales, award nominations and award results.
- **7% Criminal**: news articles about criminal cases involving kwaito artists. They vary from rape accusations to shootings and stabbings. Unlike the conflict stories which were relatively minor, the criminal stories involved police departments and the courts of law.
- **6% Conflict**: news articles about conflict between kwaito artists or other parties; this includes physical assault or violent threats.
- **5% Deaths**: news articles on the death/s of kwaito artists
- **5% Car crashes**: news articles on car crashes involving kwaito artists.
- **5% Fashion**: news articles about kwaito artists receiving fashion awards or sponsorship from fashion labels.
- **3.5%Relationships and sex**: news articles about the sex lives, romantic hook ups or break ups of kwaito stars.
- **3.5% Political**: news articles detailing the use of kwaito music or artists in political events including election campaigns and voting

The table below shows the themes, as well as how many news articles there were per year from 1994 to 2001.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Industry news	0	2	10	12	26	5
Conflict	1	2	1	1	0	0
Criminal	0	0	1	2	3	0
Deaths	0	0	1	0	3	0
Car crashes	0	0	0	0	3	1
Fashion	0	0	0	0	4	0
Romance	0	0	0	1	2	0
Political	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	**1**	**4**	**13**	**19**	**41**	**6**
Percentage	**1%**	**5%**	**15%**	**23%**	**49%**	**7%**

Table 4: News article categories and numbers

In 1994 and 1995, there were no news stories mentioning kwaito at all. In 1996, the first news story was carried and it was a story of conflict between Arthur and an emerging artist over stolen ideas. In this story, 'Bitter row over new album' (Mofokeng 1996), it is alleged that Arthur made threats against an emerging artist causing him to fear for his life and go into hiding. In 1997 and 1998, the stories follow the same pattern; a few stories of conflict, and industry related news. We see the same kind of content in the news articles of 1997 and 1998. There was, however, an increase in the number of articles related to industry news.

The 1999 news articles marked the first year that articles mentioning kwaito were linked to the political sphere. This is because 1999 was a presidential election year, the second after the historical 1994 elections. Between the 1994 and 1999 kwaito grew from an underground sound to a popular and lucrative genre. Its perceived influence on the black youth also grew, hence the political parties employed kwaito to campaign in South Africa's townships.

An article entitled ‘Cheer? and yawning on the election trail’ in May 1999 (Munusamy 1999) reads: “Gone are the days of kissing babies, patting dogs and toyi-toying; the 1999 election campaign has been about kwaito, battle buses, the Thabo jive, suburban blitzes and putting the nation in T-shirts.” The same article reports that the opposition party NNP employed a “kwaito cavalcade through Durban’s townships” as part of their election campaign. Another news article, ‘Stepping into Madiba’s dancing shoes’ (Munusamy 1999), reports that Thabo Mbeki, after his inauguration as the country’s president, told the crowd gathered at the union buildings that he would “dance kwaito” with them.

The year 2000 proved to be a year of massive coverage for kwaito; 49% of the news stories were reported in this year alone. In 2000, there was a wide variety of news articles on kwaito; there were news articles on industry news, criminal acts, deaths, car crashes, fashion endorsements and romance.

The number of news stories dropped substantially from 41 in 2000 to just 6 in 2001. The 5 stories in 2001 covered industry-related news and the sixth was a report of a kwaito involved in a car accident.

4.3.1 Analysis of the News Articles

As the research shows, the very first news story involving kwaito was about threats, crime and subsequent police involvement. As Table 4 above shows, there was every year, until 2000, at least one news story of conflict and kwaito in the *Sunday Times*. From 1996 until 2000 kwaito stories were framed under what Lewis (2003) described as a crime discourse. Akin to the coverage of hip hop, the negative news stories on kwaito artists did not neglect to mention past indiscretions (Lewis 2003). Although not all kwaito artists were involved in criminal behaviour, the association of kwaito with crime tainted them all, as I will show in the section on the commentary pieces below (chapter 4.10).

The South African presidential elections were held in June 1999 and in the run-up to them, there were articles in the *Sunday Times* mentioning kwaito alongside prominent political figure heads like Thabo Mbeki. The articles report the use of kwaito music in election campaigns by the ruling party, the ANC, as well as by the then opposition party, the New National Party (NNP). It is clear that the politicians viewed kwaito as a vehicle through which to attract the young, black voters. It is most telling to that even the white opposition, the NNP, employed kwaito. They realised that kwaito was an effective way of reaching out to and attracting the attention of the black youth. The ANC won the election and the newly elected President, Thabo Mbeki, said he would dance kwaito for the young attendants of his inauguration; he was attempting to speak to them in a language they understood. Interestingly, the news articles about kwaito and politics were in the main body of the paper. The same main section where there was a scarcity of content on kwaito. As discussed under the article placement section, a reader who did not read the *City Metro* would have a very limited view of kwaito and would therefore fail to understand why the 1999 election '…was about kwaito…' as stated in the news article (Munusamy 1999).

The most kwaito news articles were in the year 2000 when there was an explosion of kwaito news article and mentions. Of the total news articles in the time period, 49% were published in 2000. From the previous years' coverage patterns, in 2000 there was a variation, in addition to the conflict stories and industry news, kwaito was written about as a genre, a lifestyle as well as a ticket to fame and fortune. In 2000 kwaito stars received intensified coverage for their music, their behaviour as well as their associations with well-known fashion labels like Guess and FUBU. In 2000, after being played at the Sydney Olympics, kwaito received its first coverage in the *Sunday Times'* main body sports section.

The span of the news coverage in 2000 reveals a kwaito that had captured the attention of the media, the general public, as well as the corporate entities. By 2000, in the pages of the *Sunday Times*, kwaito morphed from a mere township sound to a popular and lucrative South African

phenomenon. Its increased popularity added to its news value. The coverage in the news articles shows that the black youth, as represented by kwaito, had made the transition from being represented as previously disadvantaged, up and coming, to being portrayed as celebrities and examples of the emerging black middle and upper class.

Despite its failure to explore the significance of the use of kwaito music in a presidential election, the *Sunday Times* did acknowledge and record kwaito's transition from the underground, subcultural space to the mainstream. Through the coverage of industry news, which constituted 65% of the news articles, artists like Boom Shaka, Arthur, BOP were given exposure as players in South Africa's creative industry. In this sense, the *Sunday Times* played a part towards making some kwaito artists household names. This was an important contribution towards the expansion of possible representations of the black youth. If public collective memory still held on to the images of the youth Soweto uprisings of the 1970s and 1980s, the *Sunday Times* showed alternative and artistic possibilities for black youth; they were represented as singers, dancers, trend setters and award winners.

However, the negative behaviour of kwaito stars was also used to capture the public's attention. About 6% of the kwaito news coverage in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001 was about conflict; 7% was about criminal activity by and amongst the kwaito community. The coverage provided accounts of assaults, violent threats, rape charges, car crashes, stabbings, shootings and intoxication involving kwaito artists. It is not possible to dispute the newsworthiness of these negative stories. As with the industry news, the stories involved prominent people. These stories detracted from the positive pictures painted by the industry news stories. The negative stories helped to build up kwaito's "bad boy" image, which was then discussed by commentators like Andrew Donaldson and Fred Khumalo in the commentary pieces below. It is expected with their rise in prominence and newsworthiness that the activities and movements of the kwaito artists would be under scrutiny and reported to readers.

4.4 Feature Articles

The table below shows the distribution of the 57 feature articles in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001.

1994/5	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
0	5	11	5	10	21	5

Table 5: Feature articles

Although some were focused on a particular issue, many of the feature articles which contained the word kwaito were about individual artists and bands. The articles were generally full of praise for the artist or band's recent achievements. None of the artists in the features was selected for negative reasons. All of them were chosen for their achievements at the time.

The table below indicates which kwaito artists had feature articles dedicated to them over the years.

1994/5	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	Mashamplani	Arthur	TKZee	Mdu	Cheezlin	Mzambiya
	New Age	New School	BOP	Lekgoa	Mdu	Msawawa
	Vibe Squad	Makhendlas	G4G	TKZee	Mandoza	Kabelo
	Boom Shaka	O'da'Meesta		BongoMaffin	Mzambiya	
		Umjita		Ishmael	Lebo	
		Joe Nina			Ashaan	
		Chiskop			Andile	
		Sbu			Nestum	

Table 6: Artists in feature articles

An analysis of the features on the artists revealed that like the news articles, the feature articles had a discernible pattern of content. When I broke down the feature articles into what they were about I discovered that all the feature articles on the artists contained several of the following

categories of content: indications of success, artist history, album sales, signs of acceptance into the mainstream, lyrics, future plans, past scandals, conflict and hype. The articles read as if they were written from the same template as that writers followed identical themes and structure:

Indications of success: These are signs identified by the journalist that the featured artist has hit the big time. There was a focus on how the artist could afford material possessions that were previously out of reach. These included expensive clothing, houses and cellphones. Other indicators of success were fans, increased attention from the opposite sex and the signing of autographs. Mofokeng (2001) wrote, "… other recent purchases by Mzambiya include a top-notch cellphone and sophisticated toy guns…" Coetzer (1999:12) wrote that "[TKZee] motor through Gauteng's streets in a clutch of vehicles befitting stars." About Boom Shaka Mahabane (1996:20) wrote that they have "set up home in the whitey northern burbs. They drive BMW's and carry obligatory cellphones."

Image: These were descriptions of the artists' appearance mainly in terms of clothing and the brands worn. The women tended to be described in terms of their sex appeal and the men according to their rugged masculinity. Describing Mzambiya, Mofokeng (2001) wrote, that "…his taste in shoes makes him the envy of adults: Dickies, Converse All Stars and Carvella are just some of the imported footwear he prefers." Van Riet (1997) described the image of Chiskop as "very street, with hip jackets and baggy trousers" as did Mahabane (1996:20) in his Boom Shaka feature, "The women wear skimpy leather costumes and long-flowing braids". In some articles, brand names like Levis, Diesel, Kangol were mentioned. It became apparent that, when described positively, kwaito was associated with a cool and sexy image. The image focused on was the external physical appearance and not physical health or mental state.

History: This explored the birthplace of the artist, where they grew up and how they made it into the industry. Most of their origins (with the exception of the members of TKZee) were described in passing as humble and impoverished; they come from township homes where the odds of

hitting the 'big time' were slim. The focus on poverty was in order to celebrate the success of the artist, not in order to draw attention to the social and economic ills faced by township youth. The attainment of fame and fortune was therefore framed as a great achievement.

Sales: Presentation of album sales and whether they were categorised as gold, platinum or double platinum etc. The numbers were not compared to any others and so they were all framed as achievements whether they be 35 000 or 90 000. The numbers were used to support the idea that the artists had succeeded. Mathibela (1998) wrote that the TKZee had "sold 90 000 copies within a month of release- that's nearly double platinum." Mofokeng (2001) also crunched numbers in his feature article on Kabelo stating that the artist sold "50 000 copies within a few weeks of the release."

Evidence of co-option into the mainstream: These were the signs that the artist or band has made it into the mainstream music industry. The writers mentioned instances where the artists performed at large venues, topped commercial radio station charts etc.

Lyrics: Excerpts from the lyrics were translated for the benefit of the readers of the *Sunday Times*. A typical example is by van Riet (December 1996) who wrote, "The song Yingane Ka Bani is about a young pregnant girl who doesn't know who the father is." His description is a literal translation of the song title. There was no discussion of the social commentary the artists were attempting to make through their songs.

Future: The artists were given an opportunity to predict what they would be doing in the coming months or years. In most of the articles the artists predictably spoke of touring or returning to the recording studio.

4.4.1 Analysis of the Feature Articles

Feature articles made up 36% of the relevant articles under analysis. Feature articles explored issues or artists with the aim of giving the reader more insight. Very few of the feature articles focused on the concerns raised by kwaito songs, most focused on profiling artists and bands. Over the years, various writers picked different artists based on who had just released gone solo or topped the charts.

The artist features contained information on the artist/s rise to success, any past scandals, their album sales, their plans and any indications that they had been accepted by the mainstream structures- media and award ceremonies. This somewhat formulaic writing style of the feature articles did not fully explore kwaito culture at a level which would have given the uninformed reader insight into kwaito, for example, the significance and meaning of the cultural and lifestyle signifiers like the clothing, the slang and the dances. Even those areas like the indications of success and acceptance into the mainstream were not subjected to scrutiny that would reveal how they fitted in with the impoverished backgrounds which many of the artists came from. Their humble beginnings along with their histories were mentioned briefly not allowing the artists to reflect on the change in their socio-economic positions. They were also not given the platform to comment on the issues affecting and influencing them as the black youth in the new South Africa. Although this is not a requirement for music feature articles when the music speaks on these issues, it does become relevant to engage the artists on them. Instead the feature articles were celebrity and hype-orientated articles. This is indicative of the general state of the coverage of arts in South Africa (see Media Monitoring Project & Open Research 2006).

An analysis of the topics and subjects shows a correlation between the news and feature articles. For example, when kwaito star Makhendlas shot a fan and then turned the gun on himself, the *Sunday Times* followed up with a feature exploring the link and similarities between the violence in kwaito and the violence in American hip hop. In this article, Khumalo (November 1998) asserted that hip hop and kwaito are rooted in poverty stricken black urban areas. He explained

that the black youth that dwell in these conditions feel compelled to express themselves through graphic lyrics, hard beats and aspire to attain and flaunt any material gains. In their environments, unemployment is rife and most of them have had limited tertiary education opportunities. Wealth is made through music, sport or criminal activities. This wealth is displayed in the form of cars, jewellery, branded clothing, expensive alcohol etc. Khumalo cautioned local kwaito artists against emulating the destructive behaviour displayed by their American counterparts. Khumalo compared the deaths of Tupac and Notorious Big in America to that of Makhendlas in South Africa. Khumalo's writings do seem to engage and to open up discussions between a white audience and black youth phenomenon but he moralizes in the end, which closes down the discussion.

The feature articles presented opportunities to explore kwaito's views, issues and opinions in depth because, unlike news articles, they were not limited to answering the "when, why, who, where and what" questions. As previously stated, the *Sunday Times* had a substantial white middle-class readership and kwaito was a black phenomenon. The coverage of kwaito by the paper could have thus facilitated some understanding of the township youth by white readers who were previously denied the opportunity, as well as serving their growing black readership with some discussion of cultural issues relevant to them.

In terms of writers, they did not display exceptional specialised knowledge, background or passion for the subject of kwaito. In her research, Kahn (2009) found that some of the articles on Fokofpolisiekar were written by Afrikaans cultural icons. We do not see this taking place in the case of kwaito. No kwaito artist was given the opportunity to author any one of the feature articles on kwaito. The result, as seen in the articles by Khumalo, Oppelt and David, are pieces that attempt but do not quite capture the essence of kwaito. None of the writers of the kwaito feature articles displayed any special knowledge, expertise or passion. This also shows in the similarity of the articles, which read as though they were written from a set template.

The *Sunday Times* therefore did not break new ground in the representation of kwaito in its

feature stories. It was represented, which was significant in making it visible as a social and cultural phenomenon. However, the coverage lacked the depth and insight required to give readers a more complex and comprehensive understanding of kwaito's origins, meaning and cultural significance. We also do not see much evidence of the process of cultural consecration and validation described by Kahn (2009), in which established cultural commentators or experts frame the readers (and newspaper's) understanding and attitudes to a new musical trend.

There was a strong focus on kwaito's similarities and parallels to American hip hop, but not much emphasis on the social conditions that gave rise to the genres. The emphasis was not on the issues and backgrounds which inspired the lyrics, which were reported as dumb, or the behaviour, which was reported as violent and overly sexual. This oversight was an opportunity missed to explore a crucial element of what the black youth were trying to express in a rapidly transforming South Africa. Kwaito was reported from an outsider's perspective, which led to coverage which was condescending, patronising or dismissive. It was predominantly portrayed as a craze and a phenomenon that had taken the black youth of South Africa by storm. The feature articles highlighted the fame and material achievements brought about by kwaito thus illustrating Hebdige's (1979) argument that subcultures are contained and accommodated by the media through trivialisation.

4.5 Reviews

There were surprisingly hardly any articles in the form of music reviews. From 1994 until 2001 there were only 2 CD reviews, one in 1996 and the other in 1999. This figure translates into 1% of the coverage of kwaito between 1994 and 2001.

This is very low considering that kwaito was first and foremost a music genre. One would have expected to see a strong focus on the music; instead 53% of the coverage on kwaito was news relating to the artists. These figures suggest that the appeal from a press point of view was not

the sound, but the newsworthiness of the new celebrities. This makes it appear as though kwaito was about transforming the newspaper (giving it some township credibility), rather than engaging with the complexity of a socially significant genre.

That only 1% of the coverage was dedicated to music reviews lends credence to a report (Media Monitoring Project & Open Research 2006) which states that 'the media are not giving serious attention to the arts. What passes for arts coverage… shows a facile emphasis on the entertainment value of the arts, or a preference for cut-and-paste Hollywood gossip, rather than a proper engagement with what is being produced by South Africa's artists and with what art has to say about who we are." Kwaito as art and expression was not taken seriously.

4.6 Commentary Pieces

There were relatively few (14) commentary pieces on kwaito in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001. They constituted a small percentage (10%) of the total number of articles analysed.

1994/5	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
0	1	4	5	1	3	0

Table 7: Commentary pieces in numbers

The commentary pieces are personal and subjective interpretations or opinions of different writers on topics related to kwaito. It is through commentary pieces that readers get nuanced views on topical issues. Commentary pieces are usually allocated to senior, experienced or knowledgeable writers; writers with the ability to competently articulate their opinions in an interesting manner. The writers' are usually able to spark debates or gauge debate public opinion on an issue and write in response to that. Commentary pieces are not fabrications, but they are not limited to the presentation of facts the way news articles are. They also do not always demand the level of research and accuracy required of feature articles; they can simply be opinion pieces written by authors who, in the eyes of the publication or editors, have earned the write to share their opinions.

The first commentary piece on kwaito was written by Phillip Kakaza (March 1996). In it he bemoaned the departure from politicized music made popular by the likes of Ray Phiri, Hugh Masekela and Mzwakhe Mbuli. He criticized kwaito's obsession with flashy clothing and sex. He described kwaito as crude, sexist, 'higgledy-piggledy music that turns women into sex objects'. In the commentary piece, Arthur is held up as the epitome of kwaito artists.

Fred Khumalo (March 1997) discussed the rivalry between two local recording labels Kalawa and 999. He compared kwaito content to American hip hop and said they both commented on socio-political issues and wove lines about crime into their lyrics. Like Kakaza, Khumalo used Arthur as an example, he wrote, 'Arthur has been accused of condoning car hijackings ... and glorifying violence against women, but he has defended his music saying it documents an important era in our history' (Khumalo 2000).

Phillip Morobi (March 1997) emphasized kwaito's musical demerit and commented that kwaito songs sounded alike and lacked depth. He wrote, "Once you've listened to one of them you've listened to them all...kwaito... is like a piece of bubblegum that one chews for a bit and then throws away after it has lost its sweetness".

Thomas Kwenaite (April 1997) defined kwaito as rebel, township and street music. He wrote as one who understood that there was potentially more to kwaito than its sound and reputation. He cited 'so-called music purists', who dismissed kwaito without acknowledging or questioning its large youth following. Kwenaite saw the role that kwaito played in the expression of South African urban black youth. He wrote that kwaito's lyrics were in township slang and thus captured life as seen 'through the eyes of street wise kids [and] society's outcasts…' He did not elaborate on his reference to the black youth as 'society's outcasts' and he did not use examples from kwaito to support his views.

The next commentary piece and the last for 1997, was attributed to Khumalo (November 1997)

but provided a platform for famous South African actor and playright Sello Maake ka Ncube's views. Ka Ncube had written and directed a play called Koze Kuse Bash, based on kwaito and the black youth. Ka Ncube said, "…it infects our youth with a sense of recklessness, kids are wasting their lives away by listening to kwaito, which encourages them to drink, use drugs and indulge in sex orgies." According to ka-Ncube, kwaito was about "glorifying the glamour of street life, the fantasies of fame, quick bucks, designer clothes and fast cars." He also said, "if kwaito singers were to rid their music of the violent invective and replace it with wholesome, inspiring, nation-building lyrics, we could be on our way to saving the lost generation from its suicidal ways." This piece had nothing positive to say about kwaito to the readers.

In 1998, there was a different tone and approach in the commentary pieces on kwaito. By 1998, kwaito was very popular and its artists were very successful due, in part, to the establishment of Yfm in 1997; it catapulted kwaito to higher heights as kwaito was the new station's staple and signature sound (Yfm.co.za). In his commentary piece, South African novelist and academic Zakes Mda (March 1998) attempted to redefine kwaito; he termed it home-grown music "capable of capturing the imagination of the youth worldwide as the hip hop and reggae movements did". This was the first time that kwaito was written about in a manner acknowledging its complex and multifaceted nature. Although Mda acknowledged kwaito's potential global and obvious local influence, he was not without reservations. He wrote, "…these little fellows should learn that they will never be Americans no matter how hard they try…" and that kwaito needed to be revamped and repackaged, lose the programmed beats, dumb lyrics and sleaze associated it. Ironically, it would no longer be kwaito then. Mda was constructing an idealised form of youth music, which is not how kwaito had constructed itself. Like Khumalo, he ended up moralizing the issues.

Phylicia Oppelt's (April 1998) commentary piece concentrated on kwaito's commercial success and referred to it as the biggest thing to hit South African music. The piece discussed the growth of kwaito, its phenomenal sales figures, its industry disputes and the exploitation therein. Oppelt

makes a reference to its notoriety but concludes that ‘kwaito has given South Africa’s black youth a sense of achievement’.

Khumalo (August 1998) defined kwaito as ‘angry, in-your-face music rooted in urban angst’ He said it expressed violence, drugs and sex ‘through pared-down, repetitive lyrics’. Later in the same year, Khumalo (November 1998) drew the parallels between kwaito and American hip-hop, which he described as “pop music’s atomic bomb, the big bang of party rhymes, gangster boasts, political science, come-ons and the urge to ride in the world’s biggest, flashiest Mercedes Benz.” According to Khumalo, kwaito artists had adopted the Americans’ ways and this was madness. This kind of thinking displays the lack of understanding of cultural appropriation which is what occurs when culture borrows artefacts, symbols, genres or rituals from another (Rogers 2006).

In the first commentary piece on kwaito to feature in the main body of the *Sunday Times*, Andrew Donaldson (November 1998) described kwaito as a genre with a young, “dumb” and violent reputation that traded on its notoriety. Donaldson writes from an outsider’s perspective and does not attempt to pretend to get it. He wrote that “mainstream South Africa remains very much in the dark when it comes to this township dance culture.” Like Oppelt, Donaldson explored kwaito’s commercial aspects and concluded that kwaito was big business. Like the commentators before him, Donaldson wrote about the similarities to American hip hop, the rivalry between the independent labels and held up Arthur as the embodiment of kwaito artists.

After 1998, there were no more commentary pieces attempting to define or locate kwaito within the socio-economic or cultural sphere. This suggests that writers had run out of new insight. The only piece that made reference to kwaito in 1999 was in the main body of the *Sunday Times* written by Benison Makele (February 1999). He wrote about “South Africa’s cultural imperialism [which] couldn’t be wished away” in Botswana. According to the article, Bafana Bafana, Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates and Generations had a huge following in Botswana. He

defined kwaito as ‘the in thing amongst Batswana youth’.

In his weekly magazine column, Ronge, a film critic (January 2000), made reference to the early nineties promotion of Arthur’s Kaffir album, he wrote: “I drove through the Newtown cultural precinct and saw the word [kaffir] everywhere. I was offended in a way that none of the African people who bought the album seemed to be. …it was cultural appropriation, where the offending word was taken over by the people it was meant to wound and brandished as a sort of liberation banner.” Ronge’s comment points to an aspect of kwaito, that it allowed subordinate groups to seize previously negative representations and invest them with new meanings but does not explore it further. Ronge, however, did not explore or take the point further.

Bullard’s (September 2000) piece made a reference to kwaito saying, “now that all things Eurocentric have been officially declared undesirable in South Africa, those of us looking for something more intellectually stimulating than kwaito and hip-hop (whatever they may be) are forced to travel to Europe to satisfy our pale, unfashionable cravings.” This comment is dismissive and sets up kwaito in opposition to European culture and as intellectually lightweight.

Jubasi’s (December 2000) commentary responded to remarks made by the then President Thabo Mbeki that the youth should not be beholden to the distraction of kwaito. Jubasi said that he considered it ironic for Mbeki to speak against kwaito whereas during the 1999 election campaign, politicians woke up to the power of kwaito music, signed up artists to perform at their rallies and urged them [kwaito artists] to plead with the youth to vote. The piece explored the notion that in some political circles, kwaito was held up as the opposite of progress. Jubasi cited a youth leader of the Pan Africanist Youth Congress who said that ‘organising kwaito bashes and street parties on June 16, [was] going to distract young people from the real issues.’ It was ironical for the politicians to criticise kwaito after using its popularity to attract votes during the presidential elections.

4.6.1 Analysis of the commentary pieces

Very few of the commentary pieces approached or discussed kwaito as a worthwhile, exciting or significant phenomenon. There is a lack of complexity and depth in the commentary.

Kakaza (March 1996) dismissed it "as higgledy-piggedly music". Khumalo (March 1997) explored kwaito's violent reputation and how it embraced American hip-hop culture with its anger and madness. Morobi (March 1997) dismissed it as "bubblegum". Ka Ncube (November 1997) expressed shock at its wild, sexual, violent and materialistic lyrics and image. Kwenaite (April 1997) described it as rebel township music. Mda (March 1998) compared it to global youth movements like hip hop. Donaldson (November 1998) defines it as a township culture unknown by the mainstream. Ronge (January 2000) wondered why kwaito embraced the derogatory word kaffir. Bullard (September 2000) referred to it as 'whatever it is', thus positioning himself as an outsider. Jubasi (December 2000) said that the politicians associated it with chaos and no progress.

None of the commentators assumed the role of cultural consecrators. They described kwaito as an out there phenomenon by them, them defined by generational gaps or by race. Kwenaite, Khumalo, Mda and Ncube referred to the kwaito artists as youngsters thus emphasising the generational gap between. Although these commentators spoke with some degree of authority on what kwaito was about, their comments were to an extent judgemental; over and above the comparisons to American hip hop, to them kwaito was generally rebellious, loud, flashy and had a violent reputation.

In 1998 and 1999 kwaito was covered in a more positive light and its commercial growth, influence and popularity were explored. The commentators did not mention it, but kwaito was influential all across media in this period. Kwaito featured prominently on the radio via youth radio station Yfm; it featured prominently largely in Ymag, the Yfm magazine established in 1998; it was the soundtrack of the SABC's ground breaking educational drama Yizo Yizo which first aired in 1999 (see Barnett 2004). During this period, it made commercial sense to keep

covering kwaito.

In 2000 there were 2 strands of commentary, one dismissive and the other political. Jubasi explored how kwaito was used and then vilified in political circles. Bullard and Ronge's commentary pieces revealed an ideology which believed kwaito was just a young, black, nonsensical, attention-seeking phenomenon- if even that. It was an ideology that was reluctant to acknowledge the broader meaning of kwaito. It may have also been an ideology reflective of the concerns of middle class South Africans.

4.7 Passing References

1994/5	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
0	1	22	47	60	96	13

Table 8: Passing References

About 40% of the overall total mentions of kwaito in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001 were passing references, in other words, kwaito was mentioned in an article in relation to something else, but was not the main focus. Initially, I put these articles aside. However, it became clear that the pattern of passing references could also show ways in which kwaito was characterised, what it was associated with, and how widespread and well-known it was at any point in the time period. There were 239 of passing references during the seven year period. In 1996 and 1997 most of the passing references to kwaito were linked to industry news. Kwaito would be mentioned as the more popular genre during interviews with jazz or pop artists for example. Prominent soccer players, business people were counting kwaito as part of their favourite music. When interviewed on their strategic plans and programming, station managers for both radio and television made it a point to mention that kwaito featured in their plans. It was also mentioned as when describing the night scene in most clubs and taverns.

From the steady increase of the mentions from 1994 to 2001, one gets the sense that kwaito did

indeed take the country by storm. The sounds of kwaito were played from townships to rural areas to inner city hotspots. The sense that kwaito was the quintessential sound of young black, if not general, South Africa came through in the mentions and coverage. There are mentions of Bono, the international superstar, dancing to the sounds of kwaito in Tandoor; there are mentions of a visiting French DJ playing kwaito; kwaito being played as entertainment at the national soccer team's match. One of the biggest songs kwaito released in 1998 was 'Shibobo', a collaboration of kwaito group TKZee with soccer star Benny McCarthy; the song and artists were mentioned aplenty in 1998 because the FIFA Soccer World Cup took place that year and there was an abundance of soccer related coverage. From 1998 there was also a marked increase in kwaito musicians in the society pages, their fashion choices, love lives were mentioned frequently.

4.7.1 Analysis of the Passing References

What the numerous passing references indicate is that the kwaito became somewhat ubiquitous as a term, phrase and description. It was used by writers across the board; the light to the heavy weights, the young to the old, black to white and everyone in between. Writers who mentioned kwaito in their stories, articles or columns in the *Sunday Times* between 1994 and 2001 include Gwen Gill, Lesley Mofokeng, David Bullard, Fred Khumalo, Andrew Donaldson, Zakes Mda, Barry Ronge and Phylicia Oppelt. This bears testimony to the fact that kwaito managed to penetrate the mainstream press as represented by the *Sunday Times*. The writers may not have agreed on its significance and relevance, but they all, at different stages, acknowledged its presence.

4.8 Silences in the coverage

Wasserman (2003), states that when analysing media coverage it is important to look at and

question the absence and exclusion of certain issues. The news articles reported incidents involving kwaito artists yet the dialogue did not take place successfully in the commentary and feature articles. Considering that some of the writers accused the artists of promoting or endorsing criminal activity, one would have expected for there to have been a conversation around this. The lyrics of some of the popular kwaito songs made it clear that the artists were, at some level, exposed to crime or criminal activities. Not only that, but Arthur, in his song 'Amagents ayaphanda' explicitly said of 'amagents' who were involved in stealing – 'just leave them they are trying to make a living'. Yet Arthur was not asked to comment on this or explain his controversial lyrics. The same applies for Arthur's controversial, socially relevant and popular song Kaffir; the idea and intention behind such a song insufficiently explored in the *Sunday Times* coverage.

There is also a silence around the issue of sex, especially from the female point of view. The writers who said that kwaito objectified women and did not pursue this when interviewing the artists. There was also no questioning of the guys about responsible sexual behaviour in light of the HIV epidemic which South Africa was in the grips of during the rise of kwaito. A LoveLife report, *Impending Catastrophe Revisited* (2001), states that between 1994 and 2001 there was an 'exponential growth' of HIV infections in South Africa, a great number of these amongst the youth.

From a business point of view, kwaito created countless job opportunities and several young black executives. In a country like South Africa where unemployment, especially amongst the black youth, is rife it is a considerable achievement. The transformation of the media in South Africa, and as such the issues under the spotlight, has been framed along race and gender lines neglecting the issue of class (Wasserman 2003). Arthur and Oscar amongst others established some of the first successful black youth led enterprises yet this was underreported on.

4.9 Summary of findings

The subject of kwaito was mainly reported in the black section that was the City Metro. This would have ensured a racially profiled audience, the *Sunday Times'* emerging black readership which the paper wanted to attract for advertisers and sales.

The research also shows that early coverage focused on the music and the behaviour of the kwaito artists. From the late nineties, it was discussed as a commercial success. A look at the passing references also indicates that the later references were related to commercial ventures like sponsorships, mainstream recognition. Kwaito therefore went from being represented as a black urban youth craze to an influential and lucrative industry. This is discernible from the feature, commentary and news articles on kwaito whose mass production peaked in 2000.

There were insufficient articles where the aim was clearly to endorse, claim or promote kwaito. It was essentially not supported by potential consecrators like actor Sello Maake ka Ncube or author, Zakes Mda. Instead, the commentary articles suggest that kwaito divided the generations. The older writers did not identify with kwaito's lyrics, style, lingo and dances. They appeared to have taken a moral stance against kwaito due to its perceived crudeness, unruliness etc. at the time there were competing images of black youth, the LoveLife campaign, for example, created a wholesome, clean and aspirant image of the black South African youth.

The coverage was also to an extent ideologically driven. Kwaito threatened the status quo through how it presented itself as a form of music as well as a style. It broke the rules and created new ones. It was represented as a disturbance of the peace and a distraction. It may be because of this, that the socially relevant kwaito ideas, lyrics and concerns were not heard or engaged with. Kwaito was under reported as a form of social commentary and was instead predominantly represented as entertainment and new

The news and feature articles in their representation of industry news were extensive, informative and consistent. Beyond the area of which artist was releasing what project on which date, the analysis of the feature articles revealed coverage that was shallow, predictable,

repetitive, and lacking in critical engagement. The news articles carried the stereotypical theme of aggressive black males prone to criminal acts such as physical assault.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

I began this research with a view towards finding out how newspapers, with specific attention to the *Sunday Times* represented kwaito within the given period. As we have observed herein, we saw an instance of the media appearing to transform, become inclusive and extend the gaze of its readers to cultures beyond their immediate surroundings. The *Sunday Times* appeared to subscribe to and embrace the notion of transformation and the 'rainbow nation.'

The black writers of the commentary articles distanced themselves from kwaito. Kwaito was a moral disgrace to them. In the commentary pieces, kwaito had the opportunity to be written about differently but this opportunity was not seized. They displayed no particularly special knowledge, passion, pride or identification with and for kwaito. They assumed a moralistic stance; one which also fell in line with the values of the *Sunday times*. Their articles did nothing to potentially threaten to dilute, compromise, confront or question the overall 'bad boy' image of kwaito. It is significant that there was no representation of a segment that professed to understand, like and believe in kwaito- not even a single letter in the letters page. There was simple incorporation, containment and mainstreaming of a kwaito through representational practises.

The increased mainstreaming of kwaito over the years from 1994 to 2001 shows that it was used for its ability to attract a black readership; the inclusion of kwaito was a commercial decision compounded with a social imperative to appear to be opening up to the previously marginalised black population (in its different manifestations). The feature and review articles reveal no exceptional research or due consideration. The writing contains stereotypes, unuanced and unsophisticated representations. As a result the coverage does not seem driven or inspired by a genuine need to grant the kwaito crowd a platform to express or represent themselves. Kwaito got swallowed up by the ideological production machine that is the media.

This research shows that representations in the media are never objective and neutral. They are informed and influenced by ideology and this is often evident in the representations themselves. This research has also shown that subcultures are indeed (as Hebdige has argued) incorporated into the mainstream media sphere through processes of commercialisation or trivialization. The research also demonstrates that cultural consecration is important for subcultures to gain recognition in the mainstream media; it provides the means for their sub, alternate or minority views to be read with more accuracy. The consecrators frame or open up the ways in which the subculture can be read. It is therefore difficult for subcultures to be understood, gain acceptance or legitimacy in the mainstream media without cultural consecration.

In closing, kwaito was not given the exposure as the social phenomenon that it was, not in the feature, not in the reviews and not in the various commentary pieces. The paper exposed some but left out critical insights into what kwaito was about and how it resonated with its audiences. Considering everything in this thesis, my conclusion is that the *Sunday Times*, whether intentionally or not, failed kwaito music.

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