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A critical analysis of media discourse on black elite conspicuous consumption: The case of Kenny Kunene

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A critical analysis of media discourse on black elite conspicuous consumption:

The case of Kenny Kunene.

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

This study analyses the representations of the 'new' black elite's conspicuous consumption using Kenny Kunene as an exemplary case study. It examines how the media represents the black elite; whether it condemns or celebrates their consumption. Using the qualitative methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis, the research unpacks the themes relating to the representations of Kenny Kunene's conspicuous consumption patterns. The findings reveal that media representations present conflicted views on Kunene's tastes. His consumption is represented as empowering on the one hand and alienating on the other.

This research demonstrates how Kunene's consumption patterns have fundamentally informed contested reflections, meanings and questions about life in post-apartheid South Africa. Questions of whether the accretion of wealth and display of conspicuous consumption is symbolic of the "arrival" of blacks after an era of deprivation and oppression. Whether the black elite's conspicuous consumption patterns are representative of a morally perverted society or indicative of irresponsible and selfish disregard of the poor. The dissertation contributes to a body of literature on the black elite. It demonstrates how consumption of the black elite and in particular Kunene is fraught with ambivalence and is more complex than what the media discourse has illustrated.

Through Kunene, the research shows how the black elite face a tall order between two polarities of being successful and being moral. In so doing, it contributes to an understanding of the 'new' class of the black elite and what the meanings attached to their consumption by the media are. It also contributes to an understanding that black elites' consumption should not be reduced to simplistic binaries of empowerment or disempowerment. Rather it should be understood as involving both aspects of empowerment and disempowerment and not either-or.

Key Words: Black elite, Kenny Kunene, conspicuous consumption, South Africa

Declaration

I **Kgalalelo Lebogang Morwe** (Student number: 0712735p) am a student registered for MA by dissertation for the year **2013**, hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

> They are the black princes and princesses of the new South Africa. They wear Armani to the office, drive late-model Mercedes or BMW sedans and buy vacation villas in Tuscany. The children of Johannesburg's new business elite attend once-segregated private schools in neighbourhoods that look like Beverly Hills…And the nation's world famous country clubs, where whites once learned enough Zulu to tell a caddy, 'Move your shadow' still thrive. The new black elite loves golf (Tom Masland, *Newsweek International*, 24 Jan. 2005).

What is described above is an embellished fairy tale by Masland (2005), detailing the significant change in the lifestyles of black people in post-apartheid South Africa. The citation highlights the transition of South Africa from apartheid to democracy as having redefined the way of life for previously disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, it emphasises how black South Africans who were denied many opportunities and experiences are exposed to a new way of life. In post-apartheid South Africa, black people are no longer classified as wealth deprived and politically excluded. Instead, they have a voice when it comes to what they want and like, something which was absent during apartheid. Various policies have contributed to placing black people on par with their white counterparts. Some of these economic reforms have evidently enabled blacks to enjoy services once reserved for whites only. One of these economic reforms includes the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy.

BEE is a policy founded upon principles of economic emancipation of black people and geared towards developing and empowering black individuals. It is also believed to be responsible for catapulting the emergence of the new black elite. According to Alexander (2006: 97), "the BEE aspect of redress is, at least in practice, very much about the upper and middle classes". The most significant and noteworthy effects of this policy can be noticed in "the creation and strengthening of a black capitalist class" and what has been conceptualised as the "deracialization of the economy" (Matthews 2010:173). This new found economic empowerment has been symbolised by the flamboyant lifestyles, unapologetic and extravagant expenditure and display of luxurious commodities and activities by the individuals concerned.

The then Deputy-Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, famously encouraged the economically empowered individuals not to shy away from being "filthy rich", "even though she may have had quite different considerations uppermost in her mind, undoubtedly evinced an attitude of… crass materialism, implying the neglect of the poor majority in the drive to self-enrichment by an elite" (Adam, Slabbert and Moodley 1997:201). Suffice to say, the policy has come to be reductively known and understood as one which has resulted in the success of a black person and consequently the engagement of the black elite in this culture of materialism. The significant changes noted in the political, social and economic landscape can immediately drive one to the conclusion that the post-apartheid media has also adopted a diversified view in its representation of various groups, and in particular the black elite. Certainly, the media has been saturated with images of conspicuous consumption of the black elite. Black conspicuous consumption, a phenomenon that was not prolifically present in the apartheid era, has begun to feature prominently in the public sphere. Indeed, conspicuous consumption as a culture that was previously predominantly practised by the white leisure class has transfigured into a culture used to define the way of life of the new black elite.

The media is filled with images of the black elite flaunting their lavish lifestyles. The images of opulent consumption are visible in our everyday lives, whether it is through a wedding extravaganza spread across print media, expensive getaways, a showbiz of plush houses and posh places to dine in shows like *Top Billing;* we are also exposed to the lives of celebrities in television programmes such as *Top Shayela.* This sort of life is portrayed to ordinary South Africans as something to aspire to and as a symbol of one's success. Unapologetic with their wealth and unrestrained displays of conspicuous consumption, the black elite have become and still continue to make news. The likes of Khulubuse Zuma, Kenny Kunene, Khanyi Mbau, and Julius Malema amongst others have unashamedly graced the media limelight for their extravagant lifestyles.

Burton and Hawthorne in *Times Magazine online* (1988) refer to this type of newly affluent class as playing a pivotal role in "spearheading a peaceful but dramatic revolution in which blacks, who outnumber whites nearly 5 to 1 in South Africa, are starting to flex their economic muscle as earners and consumers." A situation dominated by "black businesses, large and small, sprouting like mushrooms." However, these burgeoning signs of change, where blacks are accumulating wealth and wielding more influence are differently received.

In 2006 President Thabo Mbeki also shared his views on the emerging class of affluent black elite:

> It is perfectly obvious that many in our society, having absorbed the value system of the capitalist market, have come to the conclusion that for them, personal success and fulfilment meant personal enrichment at all costs, and the most theatrical and striking public display of wealth (Mbeki 2006).

The above quotes highlight the various ways in which consumption patterns of the black elite have been perceived, treated and condemned. The media, print and broadcast alike are dominated by varying images and discourses of the emerging class of the black elite. The way in which the media has embraced the lifestyles of rich blacks is particularly interesting to this research. Reality television programmes, print media, content communities and social networking sites have provided a platform for the display of conspicuous consumption.

Lifestyles of the rich and powerful and their consumption patterns have long been documented on television. Television continues to produce transfigured roles of viewers as consumers. This is done through many shows such as *MTV Cribs*, *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, *My Super Sweet Sixteen* and many others. These television shows expose viewers to wealth and affluence that were previously absent in their lives. The television shows present the consumption culture of celebrities and the wealthy as the highest standard to compete with. According to Kent (2011: 9-10), "Television and movies spread images of the lifestyles of the upper classes. They also diffuse lessons about consumption as a value."

Social networking sites have also come to mean more than connecting with loved ones and making new friends. Indeed, they have become platforms for materialistic pursuits and the flaunting of wealth. A key example to illustrate this point is Nonhle Thema, a South African celebrity, who went on *Twitter* to brag about the amount of money she earns and how she spends it. More so, through their status updates, *Twitter* and *Facebook* users are arguably constantly facilitating the flow of messages regarding consumption, by making their "friends" aware of their consumption patterns or leisure activities.

1.1. Background to the study

Born and bred into a poor family, and to an unemployed mother, Kunene's life fits the "rags to riches" narrative. Like any young man growing up, he had dreams and aspirations to succeed. His aspirations are described materialistically by Cecilia Dugger of *The New York*

Times (February 2011), as "craving for luxury...and dreaming of Porsches". Kunene however opted for a short cut to making his dreams come true, and chose a route that is less travelled. As reported by Dugger (*The New York Times*, Feb 2011), to sustain himself with the little teacher salary he earned, and "To earn extra money he opened a small saloon, eaves-dropped on gangsters and joined them, hijacking cars, robbing businesses and dreaming up ways to trick people out of their money".

Kunene is quoted in the paper saying, "My heart was not into armed robberies,"..."My heart was more into fraud because I'm a thinker." He was later convicted and jailed for six years for his contribution in running a pyramid scheme and robbing thousands unsuspecting victims of their hard earned cash. He then went into business with a friend and fellow former jail mate, Gayton McKenzie, convicted for robbing banks. Like many other former convicts McKenzie and Kunene gave motivational talks about their lives as convicts, the former however wrote and published a book that captured his life as a criminal. From their earnings, derived from selling the book and money made from motivational speeches to corporates and schools, the two invested in a fish distribution business and later "started working as consultants to diamond and gold mining companies helping manage testy relations with restive local communities and navigate the shoals of government regulation in a country governed by a black majority" (*The New York Times*, Feb 2011).

Kunene and his lifestyle have informed persistent questions about life in post-apartheid South Africa, questions of whether the accretion and display of conspicuous consumption is a symbol of the arrival of blacks after an era of deprivation and oppression, or the verification of a morally perverted society. The chosen instrumental case study for this research thus helps highlight key themes and patterns on the conspicuous consumption of the black elite which can be viewed, proved or refuted by other case studies. Moreover, what stands out about Kunene as a subject of this research is not so much on how he spends his money but on how the controversy of his 40th birthday party has informed dialogue in the media across various platforms of gender, race, and class.

While this research acknowledges that there are other prominent black elites in South Africa, such as Patrice Motsepe, Tokyo Sexwale, Cyril Ramaphosa to name but a few, the mentioned individuals do not unapologetically flaunt or showcase their wealth quite as much as Kunene does. Moreover, Kunene serves as an ideal instrumental case for this research because none of the previously mentioned elites have been marred by controversy as he has been, let alone

been covered in the media for their flamboyant and materialistic lifestyles. In the view of this research, other black elites have not managed to provocatively raise questions about the newly acquired wealth within the black population and the conspicuous consumption associated with it. Kunene's conspicuous consumption invited the nation, the media and other various organisations to reflect on the contested meanings of emancipation and empowerment in South Africa in an interesting way. Thus, Kunene serves as a case to answer the questions of how the accumulation and flaunting of wealth and conspicuous consumption amongst the "new" black elite are represented in South African mainstream media. His case also helped the research to determine the extent to which conspicuous consumption amongst the black elite is represented as empowering and a positive marker of the black elite identity.

1.1.1. The R700 000 birthday bash

This research focuses on the various discourses or themes that emerge from the portrayal of Kunene and how he celebrated his 40th birthday. The case of Kunene's lavish 40th birthday party celebrations warrants such investigation given the surmountable coverage the individual and the event in question received from the media. His party received overwhelming attention from news media, for many reasons, amongst them, for eating sushi off half naked models, hosting renowned politicians, and spending more than "R700 000" on the celebration.[1]

The texts analysed in this dissertation are drawn from the media coverage around this particularly dramatic party that took place in summer of late October 2010. This event contributed to South African debates about class, gender, race and consumption. Media reports about the party established a dominant framework for the understanding of the event, the special role and character of its main actors, especially, Kunene or the black elite, on the one hand and the female models and the poor on the other.

As reported in the media, on the night of Thursday 24 October 2010, hundreds of people ascended to Kunene's roof top club ZAR at a ritzy five-star hotel in Sandton, one of Johannesburg's plushest suburbs. The party had millions talking about it, social networks were abuzz with reports on the new conspicuous consumer in town, the media widely reported on his 40th birthday party and many parties hosted by him that followed suit. It was deemed the party of the year, and the mother of all parties. The patrons who attended the celebration were adorned with different brands of watches, shoes, and suits. Guests were

[1] See Abdul Milazi.2010.http://blogs.timeslive.co.za/common-dialogue/tag/kenny-kunene/

served imported expensive cigars, champagnes, and delectable foods, including sushi. All patrons were dressed in their finest white clothes (the theme of the party was White). Bentleys, Louis Vuitton, ostrich leather handbags, bespoke designer clothes and sunglasses were the order of the night.

The guests of honour included political big wigs, such as Julius Malema and Zizi Kodwa as well as celebrities and musicians. Kunene, the birthday boy, arrived fashionably late and made what everyone expected of him: a grand entrance. Mokgadi Seabi reports to readers how, "Kunene arrived fashionably late in a limousine (his own sports car was already parked), while the guests on the 13th floor waited for him" (*City Press*, 24 Oct 2010).

Dressed in a white tuxedo, and wearing Roberto Cavalli sunglasses (a trademark look he has come to be known by), Kunene walked in with two models clad in skimpy lingerie. The women clung to his arm, only to be released by Kunene when his favourite song by DJ Khaled played. Seabi gives the detailed account: "the minute the DJ played what can be assumed to be his favourite song, *All I Do Is Win* by DJ Khaled, Kunene dropped the girls like hot potatoes. He ran excitedly into the room, danced and popped a bottle of champagne – Grand Prix winner-style – and sprayed it all around"(*City Press*, 24 Oct 2010).

Seabi goes on to relate how the distinguished guests were treated to a total of "66 bottles of Dom Pérignon, 36 bottles of Cristal, and 32 bottles of 18-year old Chivas Regal" (*City Press* 24 Oct 2010). "Like the American rappers he emulates, Mr. Kunene himself swigged a bottle of Armand de Brignac Champagne that goes for more than $1,500 at his posh nightclub, ZAR" (*New York Times*, Feb 2011).

1.1.2. A media biography of people who are represented in relation to Kunene

The discursive construction of Kunene revolves around certain prominent figures.[2] It is of importance for the understanding of our analyses to give a summary of each character, as they hold sway in Kunene's representations.

[2] Information gathered from http://whoswho.co.za/

Julius Malema- former African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) and current chairperson of Economic Freedom Fighters movement.

Malema is known in the public as a very controversial political figure and has been involved in politics from an early age. He became a member of African National Congress (ANC) in his early teenage years and went on to become the chairperson of the organisation's youth wing. Malema, like Kunene has been in the media for the 'wrong' reasons such as his controversial statements, amongst them calling for the nationalisation of mines and land redistribution. At the time of Kunene's party, Malema was the Chairperson of the ANCYL. He is now the founding member of political party Economic Freedom Fighters following his expulsion from the ANC after he was found guilty of bringing the party into disrepute and sowing divisions. He has been appearing in court on charges of racketeering and most recently fraud.

Zizi Kodwa- former spokesperson of President Jacob Zuma and current special adviser to Gauteng premier Nomvula Mokonyane.

Zizi Kodwa is also a member of the ANCYL's National Executive Council, a seasoned communicator and a socialite. During Kunene's birthday party, Kodwa was a spokesperson of President Jacob Zuma. In 2012, Kodwa garnered media and public attention for his lavish wedding and for being arrested for drunk and driving. Kodwa is currently a special advisor to Gauteng Premier, Nomvula Mokonyane.

Zwelinzima Vavi- General Secretary of Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

Vavi has been Cosatu's general secretary since 1999. In the media, Vavi has been represented as an advocate for the poor and the marginalised, more especially the working class. He is known for speaking out against the oppression, suffering and exploitation of the working class under capitalism and has spearheaded many trade union protests in a fight for social and economic justice. At the time of Kunene's birthday he served as Cosatu's general secretary, until he was suspended recently, "pending a disciplinary hearing into allegations of misconduct and bringing the trade union federation into disrepute" (*Daily Maverick,* 2013).

Gayton Mkhize- Businessman and motivational speaker.

Mkhize is Kunene's bosom friend and the co-owner of club ZAR. Mkhize is known in the media as an ex-convict. He met Kunene in prison while he was serving his sentence for bank robbery. He has written two books and gives motivational talks to different organisations, including schools and companies.

Khanyi Mbau- Actor.

Khanyi Mbau is South Africa's young actor who became notorious in the media not for her great acting skills but for "dating sugar daddies." She caused a media frenzy for dating and getting married to a multi-millionaire businessman who was almost twice her age. She has been accused of being a "gold-digger" and dating rich men who took care of her financially. At the time of Kunene's birthday, Mbau was an actor. She has released a book titled "Bitch Please! I'm Khanyi Mbau" and is a Talk Show host.

1.2. Statement of Intention

The central aim of the research project is to explore how the media represents the "new" black elite and to identify and understand the dominant discourses with which the black elite's consumption are associated in the South African media. The research will use Kenny Kunene as an exemplary case study to try and unpack how his conspicuous consumption patterns and practices reflected in the South African media has fed discourses and notions about the "new" black elite. What consumption means has been debated across many platforms. There are many contentious if not inflammatory questions and views about the black elite's consumption such that the research found it fitting to map out, document and put into perspective some of these views as represented by the media and their implications thereof.

1.3. Research Problem

The topic of the new class of the black elite has been both spoken and written about extensively, much of which has not been obsequious. According to Matthews (2010:170-171) "On the one hand, academic discourse, the media and African literature present us with countless images of the corrupt or pathologically self-interested elite member who uses his, or occasionally her, position of privilege for no other purpose than self-aggrandisement and the relentless pursuit of obscene opulence." From media discourse, academic discourse and

literature one gets the impression that there seems to be a tendency to question the "new" elite, to associate them with overtly negative stereotypes of corruptness, immorality and selfishness. Research on the black elite is often founded on the view that the black elite have a moral obligation to uplift the poor and always act in their best interests (Matthews 2010).

In particular, this research holds that the problem about the media representations of the "new" black elite is that oftentimes it assumes black people who are rich have somehow used illegitimate mechanisms to garner their wealth, that black people have the tendency to exhibit their wealth unashamedly and thus are immoral. It can then be asked whether the media representations are painting a picture which negates and demonise being rich, especially when the majority are poor and given the economic status quo of our country? Do the media representations illustrate that there is something wrong and insensitive about young black people being rich, smoking cigars, wearing designer labels, expensive watches and colognes in a country riddled with poverty? That is,

> There are concerns that resistance to black wealth is rooted in racist notions of Africans being essentially simple and 'traditional' people whose identity is at risk when they become urbanized, educated and wealthy. The assertion of the acceptability of black wealth on the part of advocates of the patriotic bourgeoisie is, partly, an attempt to counter such racist ideas and to insist that there is nothing less moral about black wealth than there is about white wealth (Matthews 2010:173).

Thus, this points out to how consumption was and is dominantly racially politicised. According to Iqani (2012c: 10), "In the colonial/apartheid context, consumption was racialized and regulated so as to entrench the white supremacist capitalism and black consumers were denied the same consumer agency that white consumers took for granted." Therefore, such notions are deeply supported as they maintain and sought to not destabilise the status quo or the dominant ideas that support" what bell hooks (1995: 5) called "White supremacist capitalist patriarchy". The civilization and un-civilization of black people posed a paradox to white people during the colonial/ apartheid era (Posel 2010: 163) on the one hand "civilized blackness threatened to erode the racial boundary, risking an inadmissible racial proximity. The figure of a well-dressed, mannered black person, closely approximating his or her white counterpart, was thus deeply unsettling (Magubane 2004: 173)." On the other hand, the uncivilised blackness was deemed offensive, as the epitome of undisciplined affect"

(Posel 2010: 163). Therefore, black consumption, whether civilised or uncivilised was generally problematised.

1.4. Research Questions

Questions that this research seeks to address are:

1. In what ways did the media represent the conspicuous consumption of elite black 'business person', Kunene?
2. To what extent is the conspicuous consumption of the black elite represented as empowering and a positive marker of the black identity in South Africa? How do such representations relate to broader patterns of the representation of black people in the media?' What are the ramifications of such representations?

1.5. Rationale

According to Posel (2010: 173) "The ethics and politics of conspicuous consumption in South Africa merit further debate...the issues continue to dominate the headlines, and are powerfully insinuated in diagnoses of the country's social, economic and political well-being and likely future trajectories." The black elite class has proven itself as a rapidly mushrooming identity in the post-apartheid era that has come to influence many discourses around race, class and gender. Thus, such a rapid emergence of the identity of the black elite necessitates investigation into its portrayal in the media. Moreover, the dual relationship between the media and an emergent black elite identity in the South African context has not been exhaustively scrutinised.

As argued by Krige (2011) the burgeoning class of the elite is one of the under researched areas in South Africa recently. It is necessary to research this area as it is highly contested and there is a deep seated lack of understanding of what it means to be a black elite class in post-apartheid South Africa. Notwithstanding the growing amount of literature or research on post-apartheid South African identities, literature on wealthy black people, their consumption patterns and how they are portrayed in the media remains unduly minute. Research done on race often revolves around the representation of race in relation to gender and sexuality. This study is thus important because it can be useful in formulating a better informed understanding of the relationship between media representations and the emerging class of

the black elite, their consumption patterns as portrayed by the media and the ramifications thereof.

The media's representation of Kunene and his consumption activities arguably informed as well as perpetuated many ideologies about race, class and gender. The birthday party celebrations and in particular the individual concerned became a national media subject and Kunene became somewhat a subject of both public media scrutiny and critical commentary. This research thus wants to find out why and how the media gave prominence to such an event.

1.5.1. Why focus on the black elite?

Before continuing any further, a few explanations and qualifications ought to be made. In view of the fact that much of this study will refer to the concepts of the black elite and conspicuous consumption, it is only fitting that the use of the terms is defined. The term black elite in this research is used to refer to those black people who are deemed to be affluent, exude prestige and who lead lavish lifestyles and are thus not afraid to exhibit their wealth in public. This definition of black elite however, excludes the political elite, those who are actively involved in politics, as high ranking members of a party or organisation. This research will however clarify the latter notion of conspicuous consumption at the literature review section of the research (see page 14).

There are a number of reasons why black elite consumption patterns warrant separate attention. Firstly, during the apartheid era, media often perpetuated images of black people that placed them at a disadvantage. These images of the black people either portrayed them as secondary or inferior, stereotyping black people as inherently poor (Iqani 2012c). Thus, the research aims to probe whether the media continues to portray a distorted image of black consumers, given that the status quo has changed and that black consumers are in positions of power and influence. More so, black consumers now enjoy more coverage from the media than previously, thus it will be interesting to gauge how the media represent black consumers and in particular black elite consumers in the new era of democracy and to find out whether the media can contribute to a racially tolerant society. Furthermore, it is important to study the representation of consumption patterns of the black elite because the impact of media's

representation of them "builds upon a much longer history of racially politicized consumption in South Africa" (Posel 2010:160)

This study is of the view that we live in a contemporary South Africa, two decades into democracy, where the political, social and economic landscapes have either transformed or are in the process of transforming. This necessitates an environment where media portrayals of black people are reflective of the diversified society we live in as well as diversified ownership and editorship. Martindale (1986: 182) quoted in Campbell (1995: 112) concurs,

> Since the media are, by the very nature of their work, thrust into a central role in race relations, it seems only logical that they would strive to perform their jobs in such a way as to contribute toward the development of a healthier and more democratic society, rather than produce coverage that creates even more divisiveness and interracial hostility.

1.5. Structure and outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, of which this introduction is one. The **second chapter** of this research is constructed in such a way as to give the reader the background information on studies that have conducted research on consumption, and it delineates the three areas, of race, class and gender and how they link to consumption. The three areas are then taken into account and how they are represented in the media. The chapter also explores the relationship of the consumption and the media, in relation to the three mentioned axes of inquiry. It maps out the various perspectives informing consumption. Included in chapter two, is the conceptual or theoretical framework underpinning the study. The discussion of the theoretical framework is crucial in explaining which perspectives the research relies upon to explain the consumption of the black elite, as well as illuminating which direction the research will take in exploring how consumption of the black elite is constructed or conceptualised.

The **third chapter** of the research focuses on giving the reader a clear picture of how the research was conducted. It does so by looking at the ways in which data was gathered, how the corpus was constructed and the direction the research took in analysing the data.

The **fourth chapter** and **fifth chapters** deal with the analysis of the research findings. They both describe in detail the discursive constructions of Kunene as a "big man" and a "big spender". They draw links between the corpus, the literature review and conceptual

framework. Through the empirical illustrations the research also takes critically aspects of race, class and gender identities in explaining some of the features of Kunene's consumption patterns as represented in and by the media.

The last chapter of the research, **chapter six**, draws some analytic conclusions based on the materials and arguments made in the preceding chapters.

1.6. Conclusion

The popularity of ostentatious displays of opulence by the black elite, and in particular Kunene makes it necessary to enquire how the media represents them and how these representations inform issues of gender, class and race in the post-apartheid South Africa. This section of the research was interested in demonstrating the research questions that underpin this study as well as the rationale for undertaking this research. Having made arguments for why this study was worth undertaking, the following chapter will provide a critical description assessment of literature that has been written on the subject of this study and explore the input that this research will contribute.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following chapter aims to map out literature written on consumption and identify the main arguments presented by various scholars on the topic. A detailed account of what conspicuous consumption is will also be provided in the following chapter. The literature discussion will also highlight the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that will help understand and contextualise the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption and pertinent issues of race, class and gender.

2.1. Conspicuous consumption

Consumption has been a far reaching debate across various disciplines; these include but are not limited to history, economics, sociology, anthropology. While spending money on material goods is not a new phenomenon, it is the politics and controversies surrounding it that makes conspicuous consumption an extraordinary subject worthy of enquiry. Some scholars argue that "the desire to conspicuously consume dates back to tribal times when men possessed women and slaves as trophies of their status" (Page 1992: 82).

The Latin word "conspicuous" is defined in standard English dictionary as "Open to the view," "obvious to the eye," "easy to be seen," "plainly visible," "manifest," "attracting the eye," "easily recognized," "clearly defined," "notable," "prominent," "eminent, "distinguished,". On the other hand "consumption", also of Latin origin means "using up", "loss," "waste," "exhaustion", "depletion,", "utilization," dissipation". When combined, the words "conspicuous" and "consumption" obtain a considerably altered connotation. When one combines the two, the interesting definition of "spending in a lavish or ostentatious way, especially to impress others with one's wealth" (*Collins dictionary*) is created. The term conspicuous consumption, coined by Thorstein Veblen, has come to define consumption as inherently a sign of social status. In his *Theory of the Leisure Class*, Veblen observed that "the flaunting of luxury possessions had occurred across societies and epochs" (Veblen, 1899: 1).He argued that purchasing especially expensive goods and services can be labeled conspicuous consumption, a practice defined by Sundie et al (2011: 664) as the act of "attaining and exhibiting costly items to impress upon others that one possesses wealth or status".

Drawing from his own experiences in late nineteenth century America, Veblen traces the behavioral patterns of the leisure class and how they avoided the demands of work or duty.

From Veblen's perspective, the leisure class distinguished themselves from other classes through their accumulation of wealth, material possessions and through substantial leisure activities. The relevance of Veblen's conceptualization of the leisure class is very much evident in the modern day, where one can identify a particular class comprising of the nouveau rich and the wealthy, who sought to make a distinction between themselves and the lower classes by emphasising their immunity from hard labour.

According to Veblen (1899: 2), "the strength of one's reputation is in direct relationship to the amount of money possessed and displayed." The more money you display the more respect, dignity and esteem you receive. Veblen's conceptualisation of conspicuous consumption is an interesting and foundational one. For Veblen, the culture of conspicuous consumption was born through comparisons of dissimilar classes to one another. This competitive culture was characterised by the subordinate classes mimicking the upper classes. Veblen however did not focus on the repercussions of this culture marred with emulation and competition. For example, modern scholars of conspicuous consumption have highlighted the self-destructive nature of conspicuous consumption on the subordinate classes. In particular, Varnam and Vikas (2005), scholars who critically studied consumer culture in India and the role of the media in reproducing discourses of consumerism, highlighted how the material aspirations of the working class resulted in their demise. The impact of consumption will however be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of this dissertation.

While Veblen's theory offers a rich explanation of conspicuous consumer behaviour, consumption in the modern days has come to mean more than that. Social status is merely one of the reasons amongst a plethora of motives driving consumers to conspicuously consume. Consumption as many scholars (see Woodward 2007 and Buckingham 2011) have come to find out serves myriad symbolic functions. Not only do individuals through their flaunting of wealth actively engage in reflecting, reproducing and reinforcing a certain class and reputation, they also reaffirm a particular identity. However, it is not all scholars who share this sentiment; consumption in other societies has been and continues to be an indicator of what is wrong with our societies. That is there is a popularly held view that consumption of goods and activities emphasises or accentuates many societal problems (see McCracken 1990: xi). It is such views that make us shy away from realising the "cultural significance of consumption plainly" McCracken (1990: xi). This therefore only serves to alienate consumption or material culture and the people who engage in it. It leads to a very limited and poor view of the subject.

When reviewing literature on consumption, one cannot help but notice the degree of polarisation on the debates about the subject. Many scholars celebrate consumption as empowering and as the dawn of popular culture and consumer sovereignty. Other scholars critique it on the basis of its capitalist and exploitative nature, a process that seeks to marginalise consumers and exacerbate the gap between the rich and poor (Iqani 2012a).

2.1.1. Cultural scholars approach to conspicuous consumption

Many scholars have attempted to conceptualise the symbolic functions of consumption (See Miller (1987), Forty (1986), Veblen (1899)). Some believe that consumption is a sign of empowerment, liberation, while others believe that it is a cultural phenomenon (McCracken 1990). Buckingham (2011: 44), for example argues that "consumption serves functions that are "both material and cultural or instrumental and expressive". It is also noted by Appadurai and Breckenridge (1995: 6) that consumption in both India and China is emerging as both "a profound basis for group identity and a central site for social display and competition." More so, conspicuous consumption is also seen as a site for displaying distinction and exclusivity. This underlying motive to conspicuously consume is well theorised by a "modern" study on Veblen's work, done by Duesenberry (1967), a Harvard economist writing just after the Second World War who developed his own theory which he regarded as the "demonstration" or "bandwagon" effect. In essence, this effect is an attempt to "keep up with the Joneses" in order to preserve one's self-esteem (McCormick 1983). A reverse theory of the bandwagon effect, also expressive of "modern" day consumptive behaviour, is the "snob" effect (Mason, 1981). This theory states that people preoccupied with social status reject mass produced products that are seemingly readily available to the most ordinary masses. Thus, the "snob" consumer seeks to purchase products which have limited availability.

Therefore, as lavish spending has become an ordinary product of mass appeal and "vulgar" (Galbraith 1984), the rich have tried to come up with other avenues to broadcast their achievements. One way they have done this is to purchase shockingly luxurious goods that guarantee the general exclusion of the great majority of potential customers (Mason 1981). According to Galbraith (1984), "such goods would not be considered vulgar, since they are accessible only to the very rich of affluent societies." This behaviour is evidently theorised by the snob effect, characterised by the elite's refusal to blend in with layman by purchasing

mass produced commodities, and instead only buy exclusively designed products. Page (1992: 84) further suggests that,

> Possessions now not only reveal status, but also identify the taste and values of the possessor. Objects of conspicuous display can disclose the ideal self, whether congruent or not with the real self... that possessions are instrumental in giving us identity and the ability to feel more capable of doing and being.

Notably, the conceptualisation of the symbolic functions of consumption as argued for by many scholars and advocates of consumption revolves around consumption as principally an identity marker. Objects are used and flaunted in the bid to express oneself and define who one is. According to Woodward (2007: 135), "it is this expressive capacity of objects that affords individuals the opportunity to articulate aspects of self through material engagements, in an attempt to communicate something about- and indeed to themselves."

Kellner (1995) argued that whilst it is easy to dismiss rap music as unnecessary acts of flashy and luxurious lifestyles characterised by self-absorbed rap artist who boast about their latest automobiles, designer labels and the likes, for rap musicians this is the only avenue for them to express their identity in a society dominated by enmity towards all kinds of self-expression by African Americans. Conspicuous consumption can therefore play a huge role in identity formation. Buckingham (2011:27) concurs and argues that "people's sense of identity now derives from their roles not as workers or producers, but as consumers." He further cites Zygmunt Bauman (2007), well renowned for his critical perspectives on consumption for his view of consumption as "central to people's lives and has become somewhat a condition of their identity, their very reason for being" (2011: "1987).

More so, consumption as asserted by Buckingham (2011: 44), whether it is purchasing, displaying, using and circulation of commodities "reflects broader processes of social communication and identity construction." Consumption has become a site to reinforce and redefine one's identity. This can be seen as a politically driven action. Consumption is in itself politically driven as one seeks to change an identity that was imposed to them by those in power. That is, goods have come to be used as important tools to "communicate potentially controversial political messages...these messages are largely hidden from the conscious awareness of the recipient" (McCracken 1990:133).

Literature has thus moved beyond Veblen's conceptualisation of grandiose display exclusively for reasons of invidious distinction. Instead, as noted by several authors quoted above, affluent social groups consume to symbolise a sense of belonging to a particular group or class. This positive perspective on consumption and consumer culture has however not deterred opposing views from critical pundits.

2.1.2. Critical perspectives on conspicuous consumption

Critical scholars have often questioned the burgeoning culture of crass materialism and overt flaunting of conspicuous consumption. Scholars such as Marx, Althusser, Gramsci, the Frankfurt school have ruled out consumer culture as the repressive means through which the dominant classes continue to oppress and exploit the poorer classes. A ground breaking study on the post-Second World War capitalism done by Horkheimer and Adorno (1946/1998) is a key example on the social implications of consumption. In their study they looked at how consumer culture is a direct result of ownership and control of the media and cultural industries. The two scholars also argued that experiences produced by the capitalist culture industry and in turn derived by consumers from consumption are nothing but uniform mass culture, devoid of any meaning than the need to manipulate and program the people into consumers.

From Gramsci's (1990) perspective, the hegemonic character of 'culture industries' makes it impossible for consumer's to have ultimate control over their agency and consciousness. In his contribution to the argument on culture industries and their overriding impact on consumers and consumer behaviour, Chomsky (1989) argued that "consumers are like products", through the media, consumers are constantly sold to big corporations. The culture industries powerfully inhibit the consciousness of consumers to a point that they are powerless to resist engaging in acts of consumerism. The scholars therefore perceived consumption as exploitative and as evidence of social control.

Similarly, Woodward (2007: 54) posits that we are made aware by critical accounts of the hostile, exploitative and discriminatory conditions existing in the systems of production and consumption. Woodward (2007) suggests that it all boils down to one's principles in relation to issues of socio-economic disparities, destruction to the environment and danger to animals in determining whether consumption and consumerism are worthy.

The last point Woodward (2007: 54) raises about arguments of critical scholars is that "critical theory allows us to reflect on how our consumption might be fetishistic". In addition, Marx, while he claims to support social motivations to conspicuously consume, elucidates such behaviour as the result of "commodity fetishism" whereby possessions are mistakenly considered to possess status significance and hence grant reverence, influence, and admiration to those who own such objects of prominence (Marx 1848). These critical perspectives on conspicuous consumption provide a platform to weigh the consequences of conspicuous consumption and question the culture of materialism. The critical scholars look at consumption as an embodiment and acceptance of exploitation, enslavement and socio-economic inequalities. However, critical and Marxist accounts have their major flaws. Most notably, critical account's arguments give more prominence to structure than they do consumer agency.

The consumers are portrayed as passive dupes. Woodward (2007: 54-55) corroborates this by arguing that "the most serious objection to critical and Marxist accounts is that they undertheorise agency in their relation between people and objects". Marxist accounts have thus been criticised for adopting a one sided view of consumerism, they fail to acknowledge the liberatory, constructive and expressive effects consumer culture has to offer to the consumer (Iqani 2012: 35). More so, their accounts are often deterministic and reductive, reducing as well as equating "all commodity objects to exploitation and as serving ideological interests" (Woodward 2005: 55). An interesting and critical response to Marxist perspectives offered by Miller (1987: 215) further notes that "Not only mass produced goods constitute the material environment we traverse, but they are integral to the process of objectification through which we establish our identities, affiliations and practices in everyday life".

Evidently, the debate on consumption is often a paradoxical one, leading scholars to be at different ends, arguing for and against consumption and in so doing characterising the debate into binaries. However, it is too simplistic and unforgiving to categorise the debate of consumption into binary oppositions. One needs to understand the rationale behind consumption. By just reducing the debate to mere dual definitions, one does not get to understand the gist of the topic; the debates therefore wind up failing to capture the essence of the subject. One therefore needs to probe deeper into the ramifications and the discourses that shape and emerge from conspicuous consumption. The definition of conspicuous consumption and insight into the topic is often lost in the different schools of thought trying

to prove and disprove the merits and demerits of the topic. Iqani (2012: 37) concurs and suggests that acts of consumption should not be pigeonholed into binaries of evil versus good or "manipulation" versus "empowerment" instead they "need to be viewed as existing somewhere between the poles of pleasurable identity construction and mindless mimicry rather than as reductively one or the other."

2.2. Conspicuous consumption, representations, race, class and gender in the media

This section of the thesis looks into the representations of conspicuous consumption in the media and through this examines how race, class and gender shape these representations.

2.2.1. Representations of conspicuous consumption in the media

An interesting observation can be made with regards to the media's role in consumption. The role of the media in consumption is two way, the media as commodities to be consumed and as sites for the promotion of other commodities. Thus, media are in this way perceived as "meta-commodities" (Laden, 1997: 123).

The media often serves as a vehicle through which consumption patterns of various social groups are publicised. It in turn creates an exclusive account of how consumption should be defined. It does this by representing the consumption of upper classes as the most appropriate way of consuming. The upper classes' consumption activities are therefore used as yardsticks to identify and confirm one's taste, social standing and place in the social strata. Consequently, the media is perpetually successful in drawing a distinction between those who can afford and those who cannot. Page (1992: 85) suggested that the media created "cultural categories in order to establish new market segments". This assertion is further supported by Belk (1986: 515) who noted that, prime examples of these cultural categories are the "preppie (a person who consumes signature products indicative of elite prep school lifestyle)," and the "yuppie (young urban professional), whose quality consumption pattern makes him or her an ideal role model for others to emulate."

Indeed, consumption is fast becoming a global phenomenon and more and more social scientists are attributing its prevalence to the media (Appadurai 1996: 27-47). From Varman and Vikas' (2005) viewpoint, the media's influence over cultures is evident through its

representations of products and their consumption. For every product represented in the media, there is always a symbolical meaning attached to it. Representations are mediated realities, thus the mediation takes away the substance of what is really represented. Dutton (1997:38) holds that due to "technological mediation," media cannot purely reflect a precise image of what is being represented word for word; media is therefore devoid of the physical experience innate in lived events and encounters.

What we often observe in the media is consequently a result or the end product of processes of technological and social mediation. The latter as noted by Dutton (1997:38) "encompasses everything from selecting what subject to cover, to how it should be treated and presented to the audience." Inherent in these representations are discourses which are used to infer meaning and understanding of social issues or certain subjects (Foucault 1969). For this reason, Varnam and Vikas (2005) argued that "media representations create a discourse about lifestyles and consumption of objects that affects the culture or specifically the consumer culture in a society". Discourse thus becomes the channel through which the media naturalise and legitimise consumer culture, and subsequently the means through which consumers internalise media representations.

The media portrays the political and economic elite, celebrities and nouveau riche as ever eager to flaunt their wealth for everyone to see. Their conduct in the public domain is often reduced to unapologetic showing off of luxury, glamorous and lavish lifestyles. The media's fascination with the lives of the rich and how they conspicuously consume dates back several centuries ago (Kendall 2005: 23). Newspapers were historically, the primary sources of the comings and goings of the rich. According to Kendall (2005: 23), portions in newspapers, typically referred to as "the society or women's page" were specially designated to report on the luxurious escapades of America's nouveau riche. These pages became not only the source for the riche to flaunt and brag about their material possessions, they also became a wide reaching source of information and admiration to the less privileged.

Today, the viral dissemination of the rich and their consumption patterns dominates all sections of newspaper publications, from business news to entertainment news. The rich have in a way come to define consumption. Interestingly, television, particularly "reality" television, internet and social media have all become alternative avenues for the rich to flaunt their wealth. Kendall (2005) refers to the *New York Social Diary* as one of the many examples on the internet being utilised as a platform to profile the lives of the rich. In this

website, Kendall (2005: 28) mentions, a host of events and activities profiled in the social websites, these include "pictures of social and charity benefits attended by the rich... and a social diary describing Colombia's (the founder/ writer of the website) interactions with members of the top tiers at parties and other exclusive events". Thus, past newspaper coverage of the elite has been re-adapted into new media. But this does not therefore mean the death of newspapers and other mainstream media as sources of information, because newspapers and television still remain relevant primary mediums of news.

The representation of conspicuous consumption in the media is shaped by three noteworthy discourses. The discourses of race, class and gender can be identified. This dissertation holds that conspicuous consumption has become not only an instrument used to assert ones identity and express oneself, it has also become a significant site for race, class and gender relations. In our consumption oriented society, issues of race, class and gender have increasingly defined consumption patterns and activities. The research is of the view that not only do the discourses of these critical variables play a pivotal role in the ways in which we have come to understand and conceptualise consumption, they are reflective of power relations that often shape conspicuous consumption and its portrayal in the media. They are the lenses which structure and mediate the experiences of all people in society, contemporary issues and debates. That is to say, conspicuous consumption is viewed through the dominant lenses of race, class and gender such that it makes it fundamental to enquire how they matter in the production of discourses on conspicuous consumption in the media. The research will thus discuss the discourses that shape conspicuous consumption and the role of the media in constructing and maintaining such discourses, in the subsequent sections.

2.2.2. Conspicuous consumption and race in the media

Race has been and continues to be a subject of scholarly, public and media scrutiny. With the advent of democracy and policies that have been put in place to ensure that racial social hierarchies are redefined, one can notice a shift, albeit minimal, in race relations in the country. Race, however still remains a discourse that is given prominence in various levels of society. One finds that race, is a significant benchmark of one's success, prominence and opportunity for social mobility. Race remains a key element or the basis of how one is judged on their choices in life. Emphasis is still placed on race. Race is important in this regard in that we are still stratified by race more than any other issue, gender and class still play a role,

however a marginal one compared to race. What is however interesting, is how media discourse changed to reflect the changing status quo of post-apartheid South Africa. This was largely done through the embracing of "the rainbow nation" concept. This was endorsed as a shift towards a racially unified or inclusive South Africa. This signified unity amongst the different racial groups, it signified, "unity in diversity".

Despite all this, the segregation of people in terms of race still lurks. Hall (1996:161) argued that "since (like gender) race appears to be 'given' by Nature, racism is one of the most profoundly 'naturalised' of existing ideologies." Hall furthers his argument by making a distinction between 'overt' and 'inferential' racism. In his view overt racism refers to those instances where "open and favourable coverage is given to arguments, positions and spokespersons who are in the business of elaborating an openly racist argument or advancing a racist policy or view" (Hall 1996: 162). This type of racism therefore speaks to a deliberate and intentional advancement of racist ideologies by the media.

The second type of racism, inferential racism alludes to "those apparently naturalised representations of events and situations relating to race, whether 'factual' or 'fictional', which have racists premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of *unquestioned assumptions*" (Hall 1996: 162). What this therefore means is that media discourse can be unconsciously racist, that media output is always laden with unintended messages or ideas that are inherently racist.

Dutton (1997: 73) holds that "this ideology of racism explains white rule in Africa and Asia in terms of white culture as 'civilised' or 'developed' and black culture as 'primitive' or at worst 'savage'". One can be forgiven for assuming that these images have no place in contemporary media. Scholars have unfortunately, proven that the utilisation of these images still exists and the media still conforms to negative racial stereotyping. Studies (see Hall 1996) have identified the representation of black people as revolving around them being trouble makers, entertainers, dependents. The media thus act not only as "a powerful source of ideas about race, they are also one place where these ideas are articulated, worked on, transformed and elaborated" (Hall 1996: 161). Moreover, media representations have often adhered to polarised fixed relations of white versus black, good versus evil, civilised versus primitive, domination versus subordination.

The same polarised representations are evident in the conspicuous consumption patterns of different races. Notably, a study done by Lamont and Molnar (2008: 89) focused on how

black African Americans use conspicuous consumption to foster their collective identity. In their findings, they emphasised how conspicuous consumption has been transformed into a site for the African American's to compensate for years of "oppression, exploitation, discrimination and humiliation". Consumption in this regard, offers "immediate gratification and inclusion in mainstream society for affluent and not so affluent people" (Lamont and Molnar, 2008: 89). One can therefore deduce that for American Africans, consumption is escapism, in a sense that it offers an elusive and illusive integration, inclusion and acceptance in a consumption- oriented society. Consumption is an arena that allows for black people to focus on the "fulfilment" brought about material possessions, as opposed to the hard realities of struggling to fit in, poverty and other issues affecting their race.

Other scholars studying the interplay between race and conspicuous consumption argue that consumption has become a site for resistance. These scholars focus on the expressive use of conspicuous consumption by races, in particular black people. Gilroy's (1987) analysis cited in Lamont and Molnar (2008: 92) offers an essential insight into this phenomenon. For Gilroy (1987) black consumption is "an active, celebratory process" characterised by the creation of counter and oppositional meanings through the subversion and redefinition of "mainstream" meaning of mass produced goods to suit their own definitions (Gilroy 1987 cited in Lamont and Molnar 2008: 92). Lamont and Molnar (2008: 92) emphasised this view by arguing that "black men and women who bleach their hair shades of blonde nowhere found in nature" as a key example to this practice. The resistance often present in Hip-hop/ Rap sub-cultures is also highlighted as a vital illustration of the "expressive use of consumption in contemporary black culture" (Lamont and Molnar 2008: 92).

Popular music and in particular Rap/Hip-hop music has been a prolific representation of black conspicuous consumption, particularly in the United States. Rap and hip hop music and music videos have been known to be the greatest embracers of material culture. Most scholars believe that conspicuous consumption has been made fashionable by these popular music genres. Thompson (2011: 26) in her study on youth culture and the popular trend of flaunting of wealth in the Bahamas by prom goers holds that, impressionable prom goers have begun to adopt and mimic the practices of materialism and crass displays of wealth often seen in hip hop music videos.

Hip-hop music further promotes the culture of conspicuous consumption through its lyrical content. The lyrics often span from bragging about the latest brand of cars, designer wear,

shoes, phones, kinds of liquor the hip hop star possesses to giving details of the kind of property they own, and the fancy places in which they dine. The music videos therefore work to cement the products by offering a visual and aesthetic display of the conspicuous products. According to Brainchik and Davis (2007: 47) this new category of affluent African Americans "has emerged since the 1980s, they are more inclined toward ostentatious consumption in clothes, automobiles, homes, etc. and may be characterized by brash behaviour". In his study, Brainchik and Davis (2007) document the growth and mobility of black people and the changes in their consumption patterns over the years through five phases.

The first phase profiles a period where African Americans were oppressed and their activities subject to mockery in mainstream media, the second phase comprises of a period where black people became urbanised, and they also began occupying positions of influence and could thus afford fine homes, valuable and branded goods. Thirdly is the phase where black people became awakened and consequently marketers and other industries began recognising them as legitimate budding consumers. The fourth phase as noted by Brainchik and Davis (2007) is dominated by the empowerment of the black consumer, here an unprecedented rate of black affluence could be noticed, industries and the media alike not only recognise but also embrace the black consumer. Lastly, the diversified phase is characterised by the manifestation of black affluence across many spheres of life and the growing rate of what Brainchik and Davis (2007: 39) coined "black suburbanization".

Conspicuous consumption in the African context is well documented by the likes of Comaroff and Comaroff (1997), Laden (2003), Posel (2010); Matthews (2010) and Krige (2011) who argue for consumption as more symbolic than what it is presented to be. Sonja Laden (2003: 204) argues that "in Africa at large, and in the South African conjuncture in particular, consumption is more than just private gratification, signifying personal choice and/or style. Rather, "the ability to 'objectify' success by accumulating material objects is congruent with the dominant pattern of socialization".

A study done by Sally Matthews (2010) also looked at the emergence of the black elite. She looked at the responsibilities of African elites in uplifting and empowering the poor and other expectations that the elite are expected to meet. Matthews (2010) argued that there is overwhelming responsibility placed on the African elite to always act in the interests of the poor. However, what is absent from Matthews study is the media's portrayal of the role of the

black or "African" elite. The recent study by Deborah Posel (2010) is also crucial to understanding the emergence of the new wealthy black class in South Africa. Posel (2010) looked at the relationship between freedom and the consumption patterns of the black elite. She argues that many black people believed that the post-apartheid era signalled a dawn for acquiring wealth. Freedom was and is still equated to aspirations to conspicuously consume. Her greater focus of course is the "wider proliferation of the consumerist desire" as provocatively displayed by many in the black population (2010:159). However, Posel does not explore the role the media plays in her topic of racialised politics of consumption. And the extent to which the media constructed the black elite identity, although she looks at how *Drum* magazine often profiled the dreams and aspirations of the African middle class, she does not go into detail into discussing the role of the media as agents of pro- or anti-black conspicuous consumption. The two authors are however, pivotal in helping the research explore the complicated matrix of the black elite, consumption, and race.

Surveillance on the historical representation of black people in the South African context helps us gauge how far the media has come in terms of eliminating stereotypical images which caused racial inequalities. The ideology of apartheid brought division among the South African society along racial lines where all that was white was pure, celebratory and legitimate and everything black was the stark opposite. During apartheid black people lived in poverty and could not afford to lead luxurious lives. In apartheid South Africa, black people were considered as the 'minority' because they lacked political, economic and social power (Zegeye and Harris, 2003: 7). But, their lack of political, economic and social power was a direct result of the restrictive policies of the apartheid regime. It was not that they lacked power by choice but because they were not allowed to have that power at the first place.

Kuper (1965) cited in Posel (2010, 169) holds that "statutory restrictions were imposed on African earning and purchasing power, with wages racially pegged, and job reservation measures intended to bar black people from higher-paying and more skilled work." Black consumption and the flaunting of it therefore, was deemed to be an offence. Black people were not allowed to show any ambitions of luxury or wealth acquisition, their consumption was clearly monitored, regulated and confined to the lower echelons of the society, the manageable enclaves. Their consumption or economic activities in general, had to adhere to the requirements or standards set by the apartheid regime, as such they had to be small-scale,

within the bounds of the townships. Thus, the "popular economies"[3] of the townships, in particular, Soweto, such as the informal money lender (mashonisa), stokvels (saving clubs), lottery-type Chinese game, fahfee, informal trading, tuck shops otherwise known as spaza shops, shebeens were and still are the dominant forms of economic activities and modes of consumption in townships.

It is for these reasons that scholars argue that black conspicuous consumption often emanates from years of deprivation, exclusion, subjugation and oppression (Posel 2010; Lamont and Molnar 2001). In this way conspicuous consumption is often used as the means to compensate for the years of not having access. By conspicuously consuming, the black elite affirm their emancipation and empowerment. Thus conspicuous consumption has become more than a status symbol but a symbol of power (Rucker and Galinsky 2008).

The media had previously used race as a key marker to differentiate black and white people in their coverage. Black people's skin colour was used as a signifier of how the story unravels or how journalists would frame their stories. The black people were framed as subjects of fear and danger. The media reported on ways that will maintain the status quo, they framed their stories on black people to propagate the ideology of the ruling party (Media Monitoring Project, 1999). Both print and broadcast media overtly portrayed black people negatively. For example, while the image of the black population living in dire poverty was an irrefutable truth, because of them being excluded from a series of economic, political and social opportunities, the association of black people with poverty has been a constant negative stereotype (Hartigan, 1997; O'Hare 1986). Such stereotypes were further used to entrench the condition of black people as inferior.

In the post-apartheid era, one can notice the changing complexion of wealth/conspicuous consumption. Indeed, a new political dispensation in South Africa impacted on the consumption patterns of black people. Although the majority of black people continue to be poor, a class of rich black elite is rising. Today, arguably the images of black people have ideally changed because of the changing political, economic and social spheres. They live in places that were predominantly reserved for white people; they dine in world class restaurants, sleep in five star hotels, drive the latest cars and even fly first class. According to Matthews (2010:172) "wealthy black South Africans are seen to contribute to transformation

[3] "Popular economies" is a term coined by Paul Krige to denote "actual flows of monies between actors and through popular economic institutions which are embedded in social relations of friendship and kinship, neighbourhood life and socially constructed identities" (2011, ii)

by challenging racial divisions through taking up positions and lifestyles that were previously denied to them."

Many studies done on the post-apartheid media representations of black people reveal that there exists an almost identical resemblance of the original characterisations. An enquiry done by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) is one such study. In 1998, the SAHRC initiated an enquiry into racism in the media. Amongst its findings, the SAHRC (2000: 89) established that the South African media could be characterised as a "racist institution", the research's findings also highlighted the existence of the growing outcome of continual racially informed stereotypes, as well as desensitised and ignorant dismissal of the effects of racist expressions on others. The media according to the findings of SAHRC therefore continues to dominantly view the present South Africa through the prism of race relations. These claims were however critiqued by Berger (2001:10) who argued that the findings consist of uninformed, poor and unfounded conceptualisation of the concept of racism.

According to the Media Monitoring Project, now Media Monitoring Africa (1994: 43), "Whilst South Africa is in a post-apartheid era where racial oppression has been constitutionally removed...some of the stereotypes about black criminality still exist in the media". More so, research into the topical issue of South African media representation of race and racism has tended to show that "while there is generally no longer blatant racial profiling or advocacy of racial hatred, discrimination or violence stereotypes that exist are not sufficiently challenged"(MMA 2009:14).

Given that consumption is a central site of discrimination (see Williams 1991, Feagin and Sikes 1994), Austin (1994: 151) argues that the prevalence of racial discrimination in consumption is evident in the way in which black people are prejudiced in commercial transactions. She notes in her study how the common stereotypes alluded to in the previous sections of the paper, used to frame blacks in the media, are again used in consumption culture, stereotypical racial categories such as deviant, trouble makers, dependents all function to inhibit black people from producing and consuming cultural objects as they please. Such stereotypes question the basis of black wealth, they create a hostile and dismissive reception and are ipso facto intolerant of how blacks earn and spend their money on goods.

"When blacks have money, they squander it and cannot save it. If blacks are cheated in the course of commercial transactions, it is because they cheat themselves either by being unsophisticated or incompetent consumers or by making it difficult for a decent ethical person to make profit from doing business with them" Austin (1994: 151). Their consumption practises as alluded to before, where looked down upon, not only by the white people but by other black elites and the media. Krige (2011) cited Lukhele (1990), Brandel-Syrier (1971) and Kramer (1974) as few scholars who argued that the perception of stokvels (money saving scheme) by black people received severe criticisms from both white media reports and some of the black elite.

This suggests that the tendency to nullify black consumption on the basis of it being unsophisticated and backward. Thus, black consumption was never taken seriously because of the premise that blackness is equated with poverty, while whiteness is equated with success. In this way, ideas that challenged the status quo were ridiculed and silenced. These dimensions speak to some of the arguments propagated by the post-colonial theory, which sought to highlight the extent to which colonial perspectives of the colonised were founded and informed by 'othering' and the alienation of the colonised as inferior and backward. The post-colonial theory then explains how these facets of colonialism still lurk and continue to shape the cultural, economic and social lives of post-colonial identities. Thus, the post-colonial theory helps sets the scene and inform the research on the effects of colonialism in postcolonial identities, cultures and society. It looks at the experiences of those who were colonised and how the regime has affected their current way of living.

Therefore, to change negative perceptions perpetuated during the apartheid and colonial eras, voracious black consumption is seen by the black people as a way of reclaiming their identity and deconstructing the dominant views informing their prejudice in society (Lamont and Molnar, 2001). Displays of wealth by black people, either through their newly acquired expensive cars, Rolex watches, their consumption of expensive whisky or scotch speaks to their resistance to the stereotypical representation of them as primitive and undeveloped (Lamont and Molnar, 2001). Black consumption, seen this way therefore aims to refute the stereotypes, to rid themselves of the "poor black" stigma, to reclaim the black identity, and to enjoy the privileges that they were once denied.

In summing the debate on consumption and race, Thabo Mbeki's "Two nations speech" delivered in 1998, chronicles the dominant representations and views on race and class,

where he argues that South Africa is "a country of two nations "One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographic dispersal. The second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor, with the worst affected being women in the rural areas, the black population in general and the disabled."

2.2.3. Conspicuous consumption and class in the media

Karl Marx, a scholar in the topical issue of class relations saw class as "the axial principle of social division" (Murdock 2000: 9). He saw class as the greatest source of structural inequalities. Moreover, according to Dutton (1997:40) Karl Marx in *The German Ideology* wrote that the "owners of the means of production, the ruling class, also control the production and distribution of ideas." He further goes on to argue that the dominant ideas of the owners of the means of production not only make it possible for the ruling class to exercise their power and control without applying any force, but they are also responsible for legitimising their dominance as well as rendering it natural. Ideology, then, is a way of cementing and authenticating the ideas of the dominant class and thus the domination of one class over the other. Gans (1979: 61) argued that news media often supports the "social order" under which privileged classes are viewed as superior and the working class as inferior.

The media has therefore received criticisms from the neo-Marxist scholars as the means or agents through which class domination is propagated or achieved. Scholars, often the pluralists and the Marxists (see Herbert Marcuse 1964, Murdock and Golding, 1977) have been at loggerheads trying to prove and disprove that the media are compliant in spreading conformist views on class control. Notably the critical scholars have often been of the view that the media consensually represents the social reality of the ruling class, while the pluralists on the other hand have always shared a perspective that the media faithfully represents the dynamic and diversified society in which we live in and that media are essentially democratic. However, the problem with the cited scholars lies in presupposing that the audiences have no agency. That the audience do not actively engage with what the media produces. The audience are often dismissed as not being conscious of the ideological nature of the media.

Class has become an important tool for understanding conspicuous consumption. The term class, as defined here, takes a holistic view of the word and takes into account, the relative

grouping of people according to variables such as common beliefs, interests, values, lifestyle, behaviours and norms. The definition of class in this research also takes into consideration the divisions of people according to their social status, it also considers how consumers in different social classes are grouped according their social standing, tastes and consumption patterns. In other words, the research foregrounds class in Bourdieusian terms as situated in what one does, their disposition and aspirations. That is, class according to social distinction, power and privilege (Bourdieu, 1984).

The bourgeois or the upper classes are often the ones who conspicuously consume and always seek to exude class distinction and expensive taste, while the middle and lower classes subsequently aspire, follow and try to emulate the elite class. Therefore, because of the significant role they play as the trendsetters, the upper classes are always perceived as the originators of conspicuous consumption and the lower and the middle classes as perpetually trying to occupy the roles of imitators (Noel, 2009; Veblen 1899).

This as a result goes back to the dichotomous ideology of the upper classes as dominant and superior and the poorer classes consequently as inferior and subservient. In the same vein, Woodward (2007: 125) further argues that "the ruthless thriving for difference is frantic, though it is a one way process only- always the lower classes look to the upper classes for the direction..." This behaviour is also well explained by the "bandwagon effect" (Duesenberry, 1967), where cognisance is given to the appeal of conspicuous consumption behaviours not only to a distinguished class but also to lower groups who desire their prestigious ranks.

The relationship between consumption and class is well illustrated by French Sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) in his book *Distinction,* where he focused on the relationship between consumption and social divisions. Bourdieu drew on empirical research to argue that consumption contributed to social inequalities. In his research he demonstrated how taste, preferences and consumption activities are significant key indicators of class. According to Bourdieu (1984: 25) conspicuous consumption is a direct result of class through the mechanism of *taste*. *Taste* is a critical class differentiator; it sets apart various classes of people.

Additionally, classes as defined by Halsey (1995: 31),

> Are formed socially out of the division of labor. They make up more or less cohesive and socially conscious groups from those occupational groups and their families which share similar work and market situations. [In turn] Status is formed out of the no less fundamental tendency of human beings to attach positive and negative values to human attributes, and to distribute respect or honour and contempt or derogation accordingly.

Thus, while classes occur "naturally", for a lack of a better word, for one to attain social status one has to acquire goods that he/she can attach significant meaning to or alternatively one has to have a taste for goods or activities that a certain dominant group of people deem as worthy or valuable. Ultimately, social status or recognition is not determined by ones social class rather it is prompted by ones taste and the conspicuous display of one's wealth or preferences.

In his analysis, Bourdieu (1984) differentiates between the taste of both the working class and the upper classes. He holds that the taste and thus the way in which the bourgeois relate to objects is centred around their attempt to naturalise and authenticate their consumption culture, in so doing, justifying consumption culture and their taste in what they consume as intrinsic part of their being. On the one hand, the working class, according to Bourdieu's analysis adopt a pragmatic approach to how they relate to cultural objects. To them taste is defined as generated by necessity (1984: 374). At most, the working class' matter of taste is rooted on modesty and morality. To follow Bourdieu, the working class are "obvious" in their consumption practices, this is to say, their efforts are intentional whereas with the upper classes, their consumption patterns are acquired and therefore require little effort if not none at all, as they have been conditioned to act, feel and perceive in a particular way. In other words, the habitus[4] as argued by Bourdieu functions as a principle that guides individuals on appropriate behaviour and etiquette, without constantly making a conscious effort.

Ultimately, it is consumption patterns, taste and preferences that draw a social class division between groups. The media serve to perpetuate these class differences between the rich and everyone else by using frames that maintain and support the status quo. These frames are typically those that reflect on the lifestyles and the material possessions of the elite and

[4] The habitus is a central topic in Bourdieu's theory. It describes a predetermined system/ field of dispositions which generates the manner and style at which individuals carry themselves.

powerful (Kendall 2005: 23). It is therefore safe to posit that consumption practices do in ipso facto contribute to the reinforcement and appropriation of social hierarchies.

2.2.4. Conspicuous consumption and gender in the media

Feminists have often spearheaded conversations and discussions around the issue of media representations of gender. The media has often adopted a dominant view in the society of women as subordinate and men as superior, assigning women to roles that portray them as inferior and peripheral. Feminists have thus adopted the concept of patriarchal ideology to account to the media's portrayal of men and women. According to Dutton (1997:67), the traditional roles of men as "economic providers" and women as "emotional providers" are reinforced and naturalised by the patriarchal ideology. The men's responsibility in creating and emphasising such 'unavoidable' roles is often concealed. Many scholars have thus identified that a patriarchal ideology runs through various genres of the media.

One theme recurrent in the media is that of women "represented as objects of male desire" (Dutton 1997: 68). Oftentimes females are broadly posed as submissive objects of men's gaze and pleasure. This ideology as she has come to conclude, replicates the subordination and objectification of women in the society. Moreover, Gaye Tuchman (1981) shared a similar view to Dutton (1997). In his study he complained that the media are continuously involved in what he calls "the symbolic annihilation of women". Regardless of the radical change witnessed over the years in gender roles, the media arguably, still conforms to the stereotypical view of women as subservient. This is evident in various genres of the media, in particular music videos. Clad in tight clothes and bikinis, women are portrayed as subjects of the male gaze and pleasure (see Iqani, 2012a).

The representation of women in relation to men is different in lyrics and music videos of hip-hop. According to, Hunter (2011: 21) "In the new logic of hip-hop consumption, gender relations are mediated through consumption of high-end designer products including clothes, shoes, jewelry, and cars." Clothes however stand out as arguably the most pervasive goods of consumption. Clothes and their symbolic function is an important subject of this study. This is so because of how most coverage of Kunene, tended to make reference to what he was wearing. Thus, this speaks to clothing as a medium of communication or what McCracken (1990: 58) calls an "expressive medium." Clothes have become more than articles of utility but a benchmark against which one's social status is measured.

In her research on the Hip-hop music genre, conspicuous consumption, gender and race relations, Hunter (2011: 23- 24) highlighted the extent to which material objects are used to attract and lure women. She illustrated this by using two songs, the first song titled "Whatever You Like," by rapper TI focuses on the expensive products the male character can provide as well as the "rapper's ability to provide expensive objects for the woman and her love of consuming those objects." The second example, she draws from is that of rapper 2 Pistols, titled "She Got It". The latter single according to Hunter (2011: 23) focuses on "consumption *with* and consumption *of* the female character in the song." The song as she posits describes an "object" centred relation of a man to a female stripper. This therefore means that instead of the relationship between the man and the woman being centred on the subject of love, care, passion or any "subject" relations, the man and the woman are drawn to each other because of their love for the consumption of lavish "objects" (Hunter, 2011: 23).

Baudrillard (1988) referred to this recurrent phenomenon omnipresent in the Rap and Hip-hop music genres as "object relations". In his view, consumption has become so prevalent in our lives that subject relations are replaced by object relations. That is, more and more people relate to one another not because of their principles, set of values or any other subjects, but more so because of their common consumption patterns and their likes for opulent objects (Baudrillard 1988). As noted, there exist tensions between portraying the woman as a consumer and as an object to be consumed. Oftentimes, these tensions can be generally witnessed in advertising. Feminist scholars have identified the common theme evident in the representation of women in the media as dominantly that of women as objects (Nussbaum, 1995: 257). Women are often portrayed as commodities or objects, presented for male consumption. This is often done through using the sexual frame to portray women in the media. Under this frame, women are shown as sexually desirable objects. This frame is mostly used in advertisements (see Goffman 1979).

Buckingham (2011: 26) also noted that women's consumption has always been seen as "inherently problematic". She argued that, women's consumption patterns are often categorised using negative frames, for example, 'retail therapy', 'fashion victims', 'shopaholics', are the common frames used to describe female consumption. For Buckingham (2011: 16), these frames tend to render women's consumption "as somehow excessive, trivial, irrational and even pathological- while men's consumption is, of course, implicitly defined as autonomous, self-controlled and rational." Thus, literature and the media

at large tend to justify the conspicuous consumption of men and dismiss that of women. Conspicuous consumption is therefore a profoundly gendered process.

This assertion is further proved by virtue of the unprecedented growth of cosmetic surgery, predominately done by females as a product of excessive consumption in the eighties. According to Page (1992: 85) "cosmetic surgery was perceived as a status symbol of the yuppies...designed to visibly enhance certain body features thereby bestowing increased status recognition to the recipient." She further suggests that with cosmetic surgery, "a usually healthy patient pays an extravagant fee to undergo pain, medical risk and a period of social isolation to remove wrinkles, enlarge breasts, tuck tummies or siphon unwanted fat from the buttocks, hips or thighs" (Brooks, 1981). Indeed, "cosmetic surgery gave new meaning to displaying the "correct"' look to gain social prestige" (Page 1992: 85).

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The discussion that follows looks in to the ways in which consumption has been conceptualised and explained. It looks at the conflicting ideas surrounding what the concept of consumption means and what it does not mean. It further looks into the role that the media plays in consumption.

2.3.1. Conflicting views on consumption

> The challenge is to frame the terms of debate in ways that transcend simplistic moral binaries: on the one hand, an outright dismissal of African consumerism as simply crass and vulgar, a betrayal of the 'true' project of liberation and capitulation to the forces of capitalist markets and class interests; and on the other, a naively romantic celebration of rampant consumerism, evading or denying wider questions of global exploitation along with the more local politics of class, power, deepening inequality and poverty. If our relationships to commodities may be both alienating and self-expressive, so too the debate about the place of conspicuous consumption in a new and fragile democracy should consider appropriate modalities and limits that, while cognizant of the racially charged symbolic politics of acquisition, also keep the aspiration to a humane and just society at the forefront. (Posel, 2010: 173-174)

The quote above captures brilliantly the conflicting ideas informing consumption of the black elite. What was previously shunned as a futile and opulent activity is now a topic of discussion among ordinary people, media and civil society. The bourgeois classes who have been known to partake in the acts of ostentatious consumption always did so with the belief that they were making rational choices based on their tastes; no matter how peculiar those tastes may have been perceived by others. Scholars have chronicled their keen yet polarised perspectives on the issue. Many of the typical views on consumption that one encounters in mainstream discussions argue for consumption as either an act of autonomy, or as a result of exploitation. Thus, consumption as a concept has become to borrow Aldridge's (2003: 6-7) words, "a moral battleground for competing values and ideologies." These definitions of consumption often revolve around what de Grazia (1996: 7) identifies as 'moralizing debate about whether commercial culture, and consumption more broadly, is emancipatory or stultifying, liberating or repressive.'

In the same vein, Iqani's (2012a) analytical framework of the dialectical tensions inherent in consumption explains the conflicting views on consumption as they have been presented in the literature review. Iqani (2012a: 38) argues that "consumer culture is mediated through the dialectics of materiality/hyperreality, subject/object and manipulation/empowerment." The latter two are relevant to the study. The theme of subject/object is relevant as it provides insight into how consumers as subjects relate to objects (commodities or the meanings and experiences derived from consumption) (Iqani 2012a: 39).

In other words, this theme explicitly explains, in relation to the research, how Kunene as a subject, for example, through his consumption patterns, possessions and flaunting of them thereof derives multifaceted meanings from objects (object). These as highlighted previously in the review could be meanings or manifestations of social status, expression of identity, empowerment and so forth. More so, commodities (object) are seen as key definers of consumer's identity (subject). The object/subject theme is thus important to this research because it aims to find out whether Kunene's (subject) identity or personality is defined by his possessions or commodities (objects). It will be effective in explaining the interplay between objects and subjects and determining how media representations in the case of Kunene give prominence to this dialectic.

The second dialectic sourced from Iqani's (2012a: 39) analytic framework is that of manipulation/empowerment. This dialectic speaks to the research in that it recognises the

tensions inherent in the topic of consumption as chronicled in the previous sections of the literature review. The relevance of this dialectic therefore is its capacity to capture and adequately explain the debates characterising consumer society and consumption in general. More so, the manipulation/ empowerment dialectic "opens up space to consider the ways in which consumer culture both pleasurably liberates, and manipulatively constrains, individual actions" (Iqani 2012a: 39)

Evidently, issues of manipulation and empowerment have often dominated the debate on consumption. Advocates in the cultural studies and anthropological disciplines often highlight the possibilities consumption offers in empowering consumers (see Buckingham 2011, Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995, Page 1992, Woodward 2007, Kellner, 1995, Barnard 2002), while those in the critical school of thought argue the contrary. The former, have argued for consumption as a positive force of empowerment because of its ability to construct one's identity, fulfil aesthetic pleasure and experiences as well as a means of expression and a site for resistance, nonconformity and differentiation. As described by Iqani (2012: 6) this empowerment is realised through "both individual and collective identity expression and in terms of materially marking access to pleasures disallowed or regulated by class, race or gender boundaries." She further argues that "certain forms of consumption can be considered political acts in their own right" (Iqani 2012a: 7). Dauton and Hinton (2001: 13) concur and argue that "consumption has always been seen as a highly political act that must be regulated, directed or organized according to the political agendas of various groups." These debates therefore, speak to how the commodities that are often consumed have the ability to both be sites of self-expression as well as alienation (Posel 2010).

This dilemma between discourses of empowerment and alienation can be witnessed in the BEE policy which unequivocally highlights the aspect of empowerment of the black people through consumption. This is evident in how the policy calls for empowerment through increased levels to which "black communities, workers, co-operatives and other collective enterprises own and manage existing and new enterprises, and increase their access to economic activities, infrastructure" (*National Gazette*, 2012: 8). The policy therefore in this regard, provides a thorough understanding of the discourse of empowerment in relation of consumption. The policy extensively explains the nature and origin of the economic empowerment of the black elite in post-apartheid South Africa. It further provides a framework to explain the ways in which the black elite try to reinforce self-empowerment and accomplishment through their consumption activities. However, the policy which intends

to "empower" black people has also arguably run the risk of alienating or disempowering them. People who tend to benefit from the policy are always viewed as a small group of beneficiaries of privilege, preference and political connections (Moore, 2010). Thus, the policy is critiqued on the basis of it catering to a selected few who have established connections with political big shots. This therefore alienates those who benefit from BEE because they are perceived to have not accumulated their wealth on merits.

The views expressed above also speak to the arguments put forward by the scholars of post-colonial theory. Post-colonial theory "sheds further light on the cultural, historical and emotional circumstances out of which certain consumption communities emerge" (Brace-Govan and de Burgh-Woodman 2008: 93). Post-colonial theory addresses the logic behind consumption of previously marginalised groups. It helps highlight, the motivations of their consumption by contextualising or locating their consumption in historical, cultural and experiential circumstances of race. So, applying post-colonial analysis to Kunene's consumption allows the research to understand what the conspicuous consumer, in this case Kunene, derives from conspicuously consuming. The research thus finds this framework important because it argues that consumption is embedded in the historical, cultural experiences of the consumer. This is important to the study as it takes cognisance into how Kunene, or the black elite, as the previously disenfranchised consume and how their consumption is predicated on their historical racial contexts. Applying the theory will help us locate or establish whether the media's representation of Kunene's material ambitions and consumption patterns are informed by how black people were generally portrayed or viewed the colonial era.

This research contends that black consumption is situated in specific social and historical contexts. That is why the research found elements and arguments put forth by theoretical framework of post colonialism theory particularly useful in thinking about consumption of the black elite and their consumption practices and how these practices are in turn influenced by segregationist policies and practices of the colonial and apartheid regimes. It recognises that to understand black consumption one needs to understand the historical and ethnographic knowledge on how black people or the colonised were treated. In other words, post-colonial theory helps us to explain why we see black consumption as we do and to an extent it also explains the media's representations of the black elite in relation to how the history of oppression and "othering" plays a role in the present sociological conditions of the lives of the black elite.

The consumption of the black elite and Kunene in this case is arguably a legacy of both colonialism and apartheid. And it is thus important for public and media discourse to take cognisance of this. Vu Nyugen, Moschis and Shanon (2009) corroborate this and argue that it is important to take heed of the background of the consumers as it often has a bearing on their consumption practices. In other words, the political oppression of black people during apartheid, curtailed most aspects of their lives, including the economic life, this therefore serves as a catalyst to the rampant consumption displayed by the black elite today. Thus, the relevance of post-colonial theory to this research is well put by Parsons and Harding (2011: 2) who argued that as a theory, post-colonial theory "identifies the complicated process of establishing an identity that is both different from, yet influenced by, the colonist who has left."

2.3.2. The media's representations as a battlefield of the conflicting views on consumption

Given that various consumers derive different experiences and fulfilment from conspicuously consuming, it is interesting to observe the media's approach in representing consumer behaviours in society. The media's portrayal of how and the reasons why consumers engage in their consumption activities should not be ignored or overlooked. Moreover, the media's representations are vital in explaining the origin of the preferences, and how they are shaped. What influences the consumers' pursuit and flaunting of their material possessions should be accounted for in media's representations.

The constructionist theory of representation by Stuart Hall is integral to this study because it acknowledges the power of language and its role in mediating meaning making. Hall's (1997) theory provides considerable insight into how the media do not only mirror reality but are actively involved in constructing it. "Such construction is never neutral, reflecting as it does the ideas of the dominant social class or group" (Devereux 2007: 128). Furthermore, as observed by Newbold, Boyd Baret and Van Den Bulck (2002: 261), media representations "are selective, limited or framed, and mediated". In line with this, the coverage of conspicuous consumption patterns of the black elite, in particular Kunene, in the media is the direct result of selective systems of mediation and framing. Evidently, representations do not exist in vacuum; instead they are developed and thus operate in existing or established systems such as those that relate to stereotypes and ideologies. For examining and observing conspicuous consumption of the black elites, in particular Kunene, in various newspapers, the theory of representation provides the most suitable foundation, because it places substantial

emphasis on how what we see in the news is a result of mediated reality. The analytic frameworks of representation, mediation and framing are thus important to this study because of its focus on the ways in which conspicuous consumption is represented in the media, using Kunene as an instrumental case study.

The media provides a space where the clashing views on consumption can ensue. It is somewhat a battlefield through which the empowering and the disempowering discourses of consumption are played out. The media should then capture this battle as it is, as fair as possible. Given that mainstream media routinely provide inherently biased messages due to the nature of deciding what news is and what it is not, the media tends to favour one view to the detriment of the other (Brodie 2009: 161). Thus, the media to some degree work to define and appropriate consumption to fit a certain description or dominant view. Therefore, the concepts of framing and mediation will help us determine how the media frames and mediates the process of conspicuous consumption of the black elite. The value of mediation and framing thus exist is in their capacity to recognise the imperative role that media adopt in describing, constructing and ultimately in re-presenting reality, and consequently in swaying public views.

2.4. Key concepts

The conceptual framework draws on the literature review to develop the foundation that guides the critical discourse analysis. As pointed out in the literature review, power is a central theme that characterises the study of consumption. Consumption is seen as a site in which power can be enacted or exercised (Posel 2010, 162). More so, consumption is about power relations, given the precedence given to who can consume and how. As Foucault (2004: 29) maintains, "power is something that circulates or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth . . . exercised through networks [so that] individuals are in a position both to submit and to exercise this power". In other words power is constantly evolving and it is not centralised. Power is perhaps one of the most omnipresent forces in consumers' social world.

Throughout the day individuals are likely to have experiences of feeling both powerful and powerless (Rucker and Galinsky 2008:257).Goods and services are used to publicly display economic and political power. Thus, the concept of power will be used as a fruitful approach

to analyse and explain the process of Kunene's consumption. The research will look at how power is central to most if not all of the conspicuous consumption practices, and how his power is used to not only empower himself but consequently to disempower others. Thus, in this case, by applying the definitions of power/empowerment or disempowerment to this dissertation, it is assumed that consumption is ironically a site for experiences of both empowerment and disempowerment. In considering how the media reports on Kunene's consumption patterns, this thesis examines how the media might potentially construct them as either empowering or disempowering. The concept of power, is thus assumed to be relevant to see the extent to which the media constructs the consumption of the black elite as empowering or and a positive marker of the black identity in South Africa, in so doing answering the research question.

Also linked to the concept of power is pleasure. The pleasure derived from consumption is assumed to be the driving force behind the consumption practices of the black elite. Objects of consumption are used for their pleasure functions. Thus, not only does the black elite consume for symbolic reasons, they derive enjoyment from their consumption. This pleasure or enjoyment might be experienced as satisfying the yearning of fun, leisure or comfort. That is to say apart from the common conceptions of consumption as a status symbol, consumption can be understood as conferring pleasure. Therefore, one advantage of employing the concept of pleasure as a key concept of analysis is that it allows the research to determine whether the media provides a full account of the meanings derived from the black elites' consumption practices. Given that with the exception of spending practices, consuming commodities can be in itself pleasure, satisfying and fulfilling.

To state the obvious, the concepts of race, class and gender are important considerations in this research. The debates of how consumption is significantly a process that has implications on gender, race and class, are central to this research and will be visited persistently in the analysis of the findings. These three axes of inquiry are important tools because they help in understanding, explaining and analysing the consumption of the black elite. Most importantly, these concepts are crucial markers of Kunene's identity as constructed by the media. Thus, the application of these concepts will shed light on how the media uses these concepts to negotiate Kunene's identity as a consumer. How they are interpreted in relation to his consumption, does his masculinity or maleness take precedence in his consumption patterns, or is his class foregrounded, or does the media pronounce his race? The research,

based on the literature reviewed, assumes that Kunene's consumption is dictated upon by his race, his class and his gender. These three concepts are thus important in shaping his consumption patterns and they will also be important in understanding how the media uses them to construct Kunene's identity.

2.5. Conclusion

This literature review has sought to identify the principle academic works produced concerning conspicuous consumption, race, class, gender and the media. First consumption and what it means was explored. Consumption was defined from varying perspectives of Marxism and Cultural studies. The research shows that from the critical perspective consumption is defined as characterised by manipulation or alienation that is derived from material goods, and consumers are portrayed as passive dupes who uncritically fall for the false idea of pleasure that consuming goods offers. On the other hand, cultural studies perspective hails consumption as a true benchmark of liberation.

Literature strongly suggests that consumption is largely defined in these binary oppositions, a discourse that the conceptual framework of the dialectics of manipulation and empowerment seeks to subvert. The dialectic of manipulation and empowerment speaks to the problematic nature of defining consumption as one or the other, empowering or alienating/manipulative. Therefore, this study uses the concepts of empowerment/manipulation and object/ subject to investigate how Kunene's consumption is framed in the media. It does so, with the awareness that media's representations do not necessarily mirror the truth or reality and instead work to construct or manufacture their own definition of what is real; and more so with the awareness that these representations are often premised on certain ideologies.

More so, the literature review has enabled the research to gain insights into how conspicuous consumption does not exist in vacuum and is not a neutral process. Theoretical underpinnings of the post-colonial theory will also help guide the research in explaining consumption as about power relations and as essentially about the effects that colonialism and apartheid had on the colonised or the oppressed and the actions undertaken by the post-colonial identities to potentially alleviate themselves of these stereotypical representations. In systematically examining the discourses surrounding the black elite and their consumption patterns in the media, this study used various methodological approaches, which are explained in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an account of the methodologies employed for data collection and analysis. It draws on the qualitative methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, and the concepts of multimodality and social semiotics to examine a corpus of texts constructed from archival searches.

3.1. Data Collection methods

Conspicuous consumption has been practiced by many members of the new black elite. The case of Kunene is to some extent unique because of the huge amounts of media coverage it received. As such, it is an excellent case study for examining how discourses about the consumption of black elites manifested in various aspects of the media. This case is pivotal in determining the discourses inherent in the representations of the black elite and in addressing empirical and explanatory questions posed by the research. The case study is instrumental and examined "in order to understand some broader issue" (Lodico, Voegthe and Spaulding, 2010: 158). The broader issue or issues in this case, is how the black elite or black wealth is represented in the media. As well as the extent to which these representations problematise or promote the consumption of the black elite.

In an attempt to determine themes and develop substantial arguments about the representation of the conspicuous consumption patterns of the black elite class and the representation of the black elite in the media, this study analysed a corpus of texts relating to Kunene and his lifestyle activities taken from all South African mainstream media over a period of 15 months. Data collection began when the central figure in the case study, Kunene, began attaining extensive media coverage after his 40th birthday celebration on the 24th of October 2010 and continued to the December 2011, when media's focus on his conspicuous consumption patterns stagnated.

The archival search retrieved various types of media texts. These include videos, clips from television programmes, audio clips from a radio interview, newspaper articles, newspaper photographs, cartoons and an artwork. A detailed summary of all the text collected can be found in Appendix A.

Newspaper articles were accessed from the SABINET database and online archives of newspapers including *Mail and Guardian* (henceforth *M&G*), *City Press, The Star*, *Times, Business Day, Sowetan* and *Sunday World.* The key words "Kenny Kunene", "King of sushi," "sushi king," "Zar club," and "sushi party" were used to find relevant articles. Thematic analysis was utilised to identify repeated ideas within a large body of the corpus by counting the frequency of a word, a phrase or a theme in a given data set (Ryan and Bernard 2000:776). This approach helped identify the prevalent themes, which were in turn used to narrow the focus of the research analysis.

It was also considered fitting to include in the research corpus other types of media texts which took Kunene and his birthday celebration as their subject. Thus, videos, cartoons and artworks that made reference to the party and Kunene were also added to the corpus. These were sourced from a variety of online sources, including *YouTube, Zoopy*, *Africartoons, Zapiro.com,* and *zanelemuholi.com*. One art work in particular stands out and was included in the corpus is "I am just doing my job" by Zanele Muholi (2010). Muholi (2010) in her response to Kunene's sushi party produced a photograph to mock and express her views on the event. In the photograph, a naked Muholi is covered with animal offal and two women are eating the meat.

Twenty satirical cartoons were found in mainstream newspapers. Others were located on *africartoons.com,* a resource database for cartoons produced in different parts of Africa. Two cartoons were located on *zapiro.com,* an official website for South African cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro, also known as Zapiro. These artworks and cartoons are relevant to this study because they capture the intricacies and controversies inherent in media representation of the sushi-party using a different genre. Political cartoons are other forms of "*visual opinion discourse"* (Greenberg, 2002) and like editorial and opinion pieces serve to inform and educate, impact public opinion, as well influence how we perceive society.

While the public might view cartoons as comical and humorous pieces, they are primarily designed to express opinions and comment on social issues. Greenberg (2002: 182) holds that political cartoons are sites of meaning and opinion making. For example, cartoons by Zapiro have often caused uproar, to an extent of him being sued by the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, for a cartoon he drew of him. This shows that cartoons are not only used for their element of humour but to serve other purposes as well. Cartoons are often used to pass judgement and comment on issues that are of national importance or to comment on current

affairs. Campbell (2004: 62-63) argues that (photographic) "images never exist in isolation. Not only are they made available with an intertextual setting – where title, caption and text [surrounding] the particular content of the photograph – they are read within an historical, political and social context."

As mentioned earlier, videos were also included in the research analysis. To find the relevant videos from *Youtube* the research searched the site with the words "Kenny Kunene" and "Kenny Kunene's sushi party". The search yielded seven videos which were transcribed (see appendix C) into text. The videos provided the research with insights of what happened at the party, who was there and what they were doing. The videos also helped the research gain insights into Kunene as an individual, as some of the videos collected and assessed comprised of Kunene being interviewed by Jeremy Maggs (a TV personality, who has a current affairs programme, *Maggs on Media*) and Bongani Madondo of *M&G Online*. These videos were used for the purposes of acquiring a nuanced and in-depth understanding of Kunene's personality or character that is usually not adequately profiled in other mediums, especially images, and newspaper articles. Apart from the fact that video recorded data can "provide us with more contextual data", Dufon, (2002: 43) also asserts that video data can "give us a more complete sense of who the people are, and acquaint us with the setting in which the people function and the types of activities they engage in as well as the nature of these activities themselves." Notably, the data also "provides information about posture, gestures, clothing, facial expressions, tone of voice and other visual interactional cues" (Dufon 2002: 43) that can possibly enrich the analysis in many ways.

A total of 180 articles, 32 images and cartoons across various media platforms, four videos, and three audio clips were collected (See Appendix B for a summary of all texts included in the corpus).The research corpus therefore includes multimodal data in the form of newspaper articles, audio-visual material and images/ cartoons. The corpus comprises of diversified and extensive material about the "sushi party" that will enable the research to address the research questions and offer possibilities of interpretation on the representation of Kunene.

3.2. Data Analysis methods

The data analysis was divided into two phases. In the first phase the research corpus gathered was divided according to the dominant and recurring categories or themes used to refer to and

describe Kunene and the sushi party. This was done by first preparing data for analysis by transcribing all the data that needs to be transcribed into text, grouping all the articles according to their respective newspapers and cartoons collected according to proto themes. Secondly, through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice and Ezzy, 1999: 258), an inductive approach was applied to the text, in order to allow flexible interpretation of the data.

The second phase of the thematic analysis comprised of sorting the major issues or items that stand out into proto-themes. The analysis provided a definition of the proto-themes as well as examples of each theme. The proto-themes were then temporarily labelled or named. The table below lists some of the initial-themes that emerged from the thematic analysis and examples extracted from the data collected.

Table 1: Proto-themes and examples from the corpus

Proto-themes	**Examples from the corpus**
Illegitimate wealth	"There is something debilitating when in a country of gross socio-economic inequality such as hours, a few latter-day-filthy-rich blacks flaunt their loot by living platters of sushi..."- Abbey Makoe (*The Star*, 05. Nov. 2010, p.16) The elite display their wealth, often secured by questionable methods"- Zwelinzima Vavi, union secretary general (*Sowetan* 28. Oct 2010)
Crass/ crude/ embarrassing taste	An embarrassment of riches (*M&G*, 23. Dec. 2010) "lurid depiction of grossly conspicuous consumption" (*Times Live* editorial, 31. Jan 2011)
Using women like objects	"These half-naked women are being treated as sex objects - little more than party accessories, to decorate the room and provide some lewd enjoyment to the invited men, as they enjoyed their sushi, champagne and whisky." (*Times Live* 31.Oct. 2010) "The sight of rich fat cats ogling delightedly as some

	moron uses a bikini-clad woman as a prop for erectile-dysfunctional ego should make any South African sick." (*M&G*, 01.Feb. 2011)
Betraying the poor	"And as the new class of millionaires partied extravagantly, children were going to bed on an empty stomach down the road in Alexandra"-Abbey Makoe (*The Star*, 05. Nov. 2010, p.16) Elite 'spitting in faces of poor' (*Sowetan* 28.Oct. 2010)
Expensive taste	"A month after drawing public fury for his R700 000 birthday party, former gangster Kenny Kunene has ordered a yellow Lamborghini valued at around R1.5-million, and is shopping for a helicopter." (*Times Live*, 14. Nov. 2010)
Rich and famous friends	"Kunene, reportedly Malema's new best friend, also allegedly indicated that Malema had his vote if he ever ran for president." (*M&G* 31. Jan. 2011).

A thorough re-examination of the data was then conducted again to search for themes that did not emerge during the initial reading of the text or those that might have been overlooked. The research then proceeded to construct the final form of each theme and transfer a few citations from the original text to help the reader understand the meaning of the theme. In the second phase of the analysis the research zoomed in on key selected articles which were then discussed in more detail informed by critical discourse analysis. The main recurring themes identified from thematic analysis will be used later in answering the research question and in interpreting the findings.

Articles selected for inclusion in the corpus were chosen based on their relevance to the topic and the research questions. For an article to be considered relevant to the representation of the black elite or Kunene and hence to qualify for inclusion in this study, it had to satisfy one of two criteria. Either the main angle of the story concerned a topic that explicitly and primarily referred to the 40th birthday party and Kunene, or the main angle of the story related explicitly and primarily to how Kunene's consumption patterns or activities, and this angle was

sufficiently relevant to the portrayal of Kunene. The main angle of a story was determined by referring to both the headline and the entire article or text. The research ended up with two main themes viz. the "big man" and the "big spender" as well as subthemes to capture the essence of what the main themes were about.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The following sections delineate the tools used to analyse the research findings. It starts with a breakdown of how the linguistic elements of the corpus were analysed, followed by an explanation of the tools employed to analyse the visual elements.

3.3.1. Analysis of linguistic elements

Language plays an overarching role in the construction and reception of meaning. The powerful nature of language is evident in its aptitude to not only influence but to also inform and control. Simply put in Kress and Hodge's (1993: 6) words, language is "an instrument of control as well as communication". Language is therefore not 'neutral'. "While it may reflect reality in the sense that it reflects how we have organised society, for the same reason, it does not reflect equality" (Goddard and Patterson 2000: 73). This implies that language is used as an instrument that serves to socially engineer asymmetrical representations of power and class relations. Thus, the use of language is a broader focus of this study; attention is paid to language as key in the construction of the black elite identity and how it is used to maintain power relations. According to Berger and Luckman (1967: 37-39), it is the ability and capacity of *language* to typify, stabilize and accumulate meanings and experiences and to transmit them to future generations. Norman Fairclough writes that 'language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language' (Fairclough 2003: 2)

Language as we have come to know can be spoken, gestural as well as visual. Given that the texts under scrutiny are both visual and written, the study will utilise thus use a multimodal approach as a method of choice for this research as it has the capacity to find meaning in texts which use varied modes of language. According to Nugroho (2009: 71) multimodality or multimodal discourse analysis "provides the tools and techniques to analyse texts which employ more than one mode of discourse". The decision to select the multimodal analysis method to carry out this research project also arose from the research approach the study is

underpinned by and also because the approach is the most appropriate and valid way to answer the research questions. Given that the research corpus comprises of varied modes of texts, multimodal discourse analysis will be effective in analysing the audio, visual, written aspects of the data.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method of analysis "specialises in unveiling the relations between power, ideology, language and other non-linguistic semiotic modes in society" (de Gregorio-Godeo 2009:15).It examines and reveals processes that often seem simple and commonsensical. Fairclough's (1995b) work on CDA focuses on questions of "socio-cultural change and change in discourse – and how discourse constructs and reflects identities and social relations" (de Gregorio-Godeo 2009:15). CDA is also suitable to this study because it helped the study highlight the often concealed issues of power intrinsic in texts. In his analytical framework of CDA, Fairclough (1995a: 201-205) recommends paying attention to a number of variables including "intertexuality, lexical choices, voices, modality and the interplay between language and images". In analysing the empirical material, the research focused on the grammatical analyses of the findings.

According to Teun Van Dijk (1988: 11) "Grammatical analysis of language use in the press may also reveal the perspective of the journalist or newspaper." The application of critical discourse analysis therefore enforced an understanding of the complexities innate in the representations of the black elite's conspicuous consumption and how these complexities are reflective of power relations and ideologies. Thus, in the analysis of the linguistic elements of the findings, the study adopted a holistic approach, it took into consideration the linguistic features of wording and vocabulary, speech, images, structure and the style used in the texts, additionally the linguistic aspects of the texts such as tone, diction, syntax, and imagery as well as figurative language were meticulously scrutinised. By taking into consideration the aforementioned linguistic aspects, the research believes that a thorough understanding and thus explanation of the point of view adopted by the various media to represent Kunene and ultimately the black elite was provided.

3.3.2. Analysis of visual elements

In analysing the visual data (videos, cartoons and images) of this study, the research used the tools presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) and to a much larger extent Jonathan

Schroeder's (2006) model of critical visual analysis. These, of course, are not all of their tools but those identified by the research as useful in the analysis. Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 164), define social semiotics as a method which "draws attention to the multi-semiotic character of most texts in contemporary society, and explores ways of analysing visual images (from press photographs and television images to Renaissance art) and the relationship between language and visual images." Social semiotics as a method of analysis thus helped in explaining meaning-making as a socially constructed process and language as central to the social construction of meaning. It was therefore important to use this framework in the research in order to understand meanings and discourses suggested in the images and video material on Kunene.

More so, central to the Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996: 186-192) social semiotic methodology, is how they delineate three categories for describing the meaning making codes within visual texts. The three categories, representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning are all significant in analysing visual texts. The first category of representational meaning refers to the representation features, for example how the participants and objects, their actions and the scenery in which the actions occur are portrayed in the visual text. The second category of interactive meaning, describes the visual construction of the relationship between the audience and the participants. The compositional feature, illustrates how the visual information is communicated and received by the audience (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996: 186-192). The construction of meaning from visual texts is therefore embedded in the social context.

Like the previous framework, Schroeder's (2006) model proved useful and provided insights into understanding and contextualising media images. Given that the research corpus comprises of various modes, critical visual analysis is significant because of the capacity to explain and unpack the verbal and visual elements of a text. In this model, Schroeder stresses the importance of a basic description of the text under scrutiny as the first step of analysing the text. The description should clearly point out all the features, the subject matter, the form, medium, and genre within the image. The level of description is then followed by a more in depth analysis or interpretation of the image.

As in Schroeder's (2006: 13) model, the interpretative level in the researches' analysis looked at the aspects of gender, race and class that have emerged as three crucial contextual issues in this research. The research turned to Schroeder's model to try and demonstrate how gender,

race and class are inscribed in most of the media images of Kunene. The research was also able to show how these images are used to negotiate and purvey Kunene's identity.

3.3. Presentation of findings

An analysis of media texts on Kunene's birthday celebrations identified two key discursive themes: 1) "The big man" 2) "The big spender." For the purpose of the analysis the research broke down the main theme into smaller units or subsections to explain the general images that each theme communicates to the general public by way of using the subsections. The sub-themes will give a comprehensive view of the main theme and also provide deeper insight into aspects of the theme. The research also divided the analysis of each theme into three levels. The first level aims to provide a basic explanation or description of the themes. It will highlight a few concrete examples to illustrate the theme. The rationale behind this phase is to acquaint or familiarise the reader with the main themes, and what they are all about. This part of the analysis answers the "what" question. In other words it describes what we see Kunene as in the media, this part is therefore more concerned about the surface meanings that can be derived from Kunene's representations. What do the texts generally say?

The intermediate level aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the themes and discourses. This part of the research will thus focus on giving examples of text from the corpus to illustrate how meaning is constructed. To do this, it will analyse the linguistic and visual components of the texts. The study hopes that this part of the research will help the reader gain insight into how meaning is constructed through the linguistic and visual codes of the text. This part of the research answers the "how" question. Thus, to unpack the "how" we ought to ask how discourses are constructed or represented and which symbols are used to portray Kunene and how are these symbols used to make meaning. Which particular truths are being constructed? What do the texts do, what kind of effects do they try to achieve?

The third and last level of analysis will look into why such meanings are created, what dominant/ theoretical views inform such meanings. This part of the analysis focuses on the "why" question. It therefore revisits the theoretical framework and Literature review frameworks to draw links as to why the meanings extrapolated in the intermediate level of analysis are the way they are. In other words, the research situates the findings in the broader contexts of academic scholarship on the area. Through the exploration of the representations of Kunene, it is evident that there are many meanings constructed about Kunene. These meanings are predominantly constructed around issues of gender, class and race. The

constructions of Kunene therefore make references to the three areas that were documented in the literature review. At one point or the other, the representations made inferences to the three axes of identity. The discussion will look at what are the implications of media's representations of Kunene's consumption practices according to the three main issues of class, gender and race and what these representations symbolise. It lays out the ideological dispositions in each theme and what these ideologies serve. Kunene's consumption signifies two opposite extremes. On the one hand it shows fulfilment through consumption and on the other shows disempowerment through consumption. The findings reveal the tension inherent in consumption patterns of the black elite.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has described the different methods which were used to answer the research questions both in collecting and in analysing the data. The chapter described how the research intend on utilising a methodological integration of Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) social semiotics framework and Fairclough's (1995b) CDA methodology and Schroeders method of critical visual analysis for the examination of multimodal nature of videos from *Youtube*, cartoons, images and articles on Kunene's sushi party. The analysis examined two dominant themes: Kunene as the "big man" and the "big spender". These discourses are broken down into sub sections that illustrate the particular features of Kunene's dominant themes. Thus the following sections aim to give a detailed account of the results from the research conducted. The three sections are organised according to the levels of analysis of the themes and discourses that emerged from the thematic analysis. The first section will give a descriptive account of the findings by looking at the visual and the linguistic elements of the key themes and discourses. The second section will provide an in-depth analysis on certain key texts with the hope of showing how meaning is inferred by these discourses. Lastly, the study will theorise the themes and discourses in relation to the literature reviewed and the conceptual frameworks. Thus, in ipso facto, the research analysis chapters, will account to "what" is being represented to the society, how is this represented, that is how are the meanings constructed and lastly, why are the meanings constructed or represented in that way.

Chapter 4: The "Big Man"

This chapter discusses the discursive construction and contestation of Kunene as the "big man". The analysis will begin by giving a basic description of the theme and by introducing illustrative examples from the available evidence. The second aspect of the chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the two sub-themes of Kunene's "bigness"/prominence: as a politically connected man and as "King" Kunene. It uses pragmatic examples to illustrate how visual and linguistic elements of the text construct these meanings. The examples from the corpus were chosen based on their ability to lucidly capture the key thematic elements of each discursive theme. The last level of investigation links the in-depth analysis to arguments raised in the literature review and the conceptual framework.

4.1. Characteristics of Kunene's representation as a "big man"

Very often, the texts painted a picture of Kunene as a powerfully prominent man through his tendency to host the most influential people in the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), and perhaps even the country. This analysis summarises this form of power as the "big man". Kunene's eminence is demonstrated, amongst others, through the following headline:

- "From ghetto to global power" (*M&G*, 11 Nov 2011)

The ideological postures in these headlines portray Kunene as a powerful individual who went from zero to hero, and who is worthy to be lauded. However, it can be argued that Kunene is constructed as prominent by the virtue of him being the agent of actions in most of the text analysed. His prominence is narrated through him being the subject, a grammatical agent or protagonist in most stories. That is, Kunene is often topicalised thus making him a prominent subject. Below are some of the examples to illustrate this point:

- "Kunene has a place in history" (*News24*, 22. Nov. 2010)
- "Kenny Kunene plans extravagant opening" (*News24*, 26 Jan. 2011)

The point is, as demonstrated by Van Dijk (1995: 265) that, "ideologically controlled models of situations may allocate differential actor status, importance and initiative to members of different groups." Kunene's actions and agency are however, often downplayed by the fact that his actions were portrayed as negative. For example, Kunene eating sushi off a naked woman might portray him as semantically powerful or prominent, given that he is the one who is initiating the action or is the "doer" of the action, but because the woman is at the receiving end, it paints Kunene in a negative light. That is, he may be viewed as being a perpetrator as he uses a woman as an accessory to eat his sushi.

Despite all this negativity Kunene still garners media and public attention. Kunene's agency – though "immoral" or seen as not conforming to socially accepted standards/norms – has a particular kind of power. This power comes through because of his immoral acts. To a certain extent high powered people who are immoral tend to get the attention that is being given to Kunene by the media. An attraction to powerful men and "dangerous" men during the days of American mobster John Dilinger (Matera, 2004) is the same malaise that grips society today. To point to recent examples of men revered and celebrated for their power despite their immoral behaviours, the discourses surrounding Bill Clinton, Hugh Hefner, and Jacob Zuma's immoral sexual exploits come to mind. These people are revered by the media regardless of their immoral actions. Bill Clinton for example enjoyed media attention as well as attention from the public even after it was found that he had an affair with 20-year old Whitehouse intern, Monica Lewinsky. In fact, the public seemed not to mind his affair as shown by the success he garnered in the public approval ratings (Warshaw, 2004). He, like the many others mentioned, obtained media and public attention precisely because of his immoral acts. For example, a Hip-hop artist whose rap lyrics are misogynistic and laced with profanities/ vulgarities still get mainstream acceptance and applause and to a larger extent admiration and more record sales.

This begs the question: what is it that the public and the media gain from profiling and in most cases giving agency to "bad boys" like Kunene and glorifying them as "big men" or "top togs". What is the logic behind this media attention? Deviant behaviour is associated with some sort of power. People, and in particular men whose conduct is unbecoming tend to enjoy a lot of admiration. The society is often drawn to and is sometimes more supportive of them. These unabashed views do not exist in a vacuum. They thrive in patriarchal ideologies and macho posturing that still reveres men as powerful agents and women as inferior. The

study returns to this point in the subsequent sections of this chapter but first let us take a closer look at the varied constructions of Kunene as a prominent figure, firstly by defining him primarily through his political connections and later through his "bizarre" consumption practices.

4.1.1. The politically connected "tenderpreneur"

Although Kunene is never explicitly labelled as a "tenderpreneur", to a certain extent the media constructed him as one. Thus, media coverage about him used the discourse of the "tenderpreneur" to frame him and he was often described as having distinctive features of a "tenderpreneur." The media's lack of usage of the term, the research suggests, has to do with the awareness of the negative connotations the name has. Moreover, it is easy to describe the features than to label him as a "tenderpreneur," as that labelling will come across as being biased and unfair. The research therefore relied on the definitions or features used to define "tenderpreneurs." These included dressing in a smart way (for example wearing sharp pointy shoes, double collar shirts etc), and making a huge sum of money from tenders and political or corporate elites who are undeserving of their wealth and who boast of political patronage. These features were prominent in how the media discursively described Kunene. A typical example of this reporting can be evidenced in an article that was published in *M&G* (31 January 2011) in which the author highlighted that: "Kunene, reportedly Malema's new best friend, also allegedly indicated that Malema had his vote if he ever ran for president."

Painted as the beneficiary of the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy, Kunene is often represented as not having acquired his wealth on his own, but through political allies. Some articles suggest that the policy of BEE has done little to benefit the majority of the black population. For example, the *Sunday Times* (22 May 2011) detailed how community members near the Central Rand Gold (CRG) mine, that is owned by Gayton McKenzie and Kunene, were promised "the world to get the mining rights - but were ditched soon afterwards" by both McKenzie and Kunene. The article goes on to say that "only a few individuals have benefited."

This article titled, "The poor who were 'used and misled'" (*Sunday Times*, 22 May 2011) reinforces the commonly shared belief that most black people who benefit from the BEE policy and most especially from tenders are greedy and selfish "fat cats." It further promotes

the view that people, who tend to benefit from the policy, are a small group of beneficiaries of privilege, preference and political connections (Moore, 2010).

The term "tenderpreneur" itself has negative connotations, evidenced both in texts and cartoons. "Tenderpreneur", is a portmanteau that describes those business people who obtain business through government tenders (Mashigo, 2011: 125-126). The two core parts of the word are "tendering", a service given to government, and "entrepreneur", which a process of adding value to good and services with the view of profits (Mlangeni, 2010: 74).

The process of tendering has been criticised by political parties, the media and other stakeholders for its impracticality and for being a corruption-ridden process. The tender system was largely created for the benefit and advancement of black business people. However, it has come under spotlight many times for being used in an illegitimate manner. Mashigo (2011: 125-126) alludes to how the "tenderpreneurs" are always in the media spotlight for negative things such as "their companies experiencing financial difficulties, and owing workers salaries' their companies not following safety regulation laws, etc."

Thus, this has created a perception of tenders as a means through which people can acquire wealth in a short space of time, despite their lack of acumen in providing the services that they are intended to. Desperate to jump onto the tender bandwagon, some people have allegedly resorted to obtaining tenders through illegal means. How Kunene is portrayed in the media fits the description of a "tenderpreneur." The media's association of Kunene with tenders arguably paints him in a negative light. For example, *Sunday Times*, in an article titled "From Mr Price to Mr Pricey" (22 May 2011) published an "explosive forensic report" by Nexus Forensic Services, which revealed that "Kunene and McKenzie used their political connections to get the mining rights in record time."

The article further described how Kunene and McKenzie were employed by CRG as executives with the particular role of using their political connections to secure mining rights from the Department of Mineral Resources, and did so within a short time. The media has often portrayed Kunene as being "friends" with some of South Africa's political heavyweights and constantly made reference to how his "sushi party" was well-stocked with ANC members. The explicit linking of Kunene to characters such as Julius Malema and Zizi Kodwa has cemented the notion that Kunene is in fact benefitting through tenders because of his political connections to some members of the ANC party.

We have gauged how Kunene is described as a "big man" on the surface. Next, it is important to understand how the media texts discursively construct Kunene as a "big man" through his political connections. As noted above, one of the ways in which Kunene is represented as being politically connected is that he is often portrayed as engaging in direct conversations with key political figures, which the "average person" cannot do. The construction of Kunene's "political" power can be analytically divided into two categories, Political antagonism and political alliance. The media's representation of Kunene glorifies his connections on the one hand and criticises them on the other. Thus, Kunene achieves his prominence in the media both through his political allies and enemies. This chapter will now go on to discuss this dialectic nature of Kunene's political connectedness as seen through his political allies and political enemies.

The first category of political antagonism is effectively illustrated by Kunene's relationship with Zwelinzima Vavi. After receiving a scathing attack from Vavi, who criticised his extravagant partying lifestyle, Kunene, in his own defense wrote an open letter to Cosatu's general secretary, in which he described his success as proof of the nation's democracy. He told "Mr.Vavi, who is also black that: "You remind me of what it felt like to live under apartheid. You are telling me, a black man, what I can and cannot do with my life" (*Pretoria News*, 29 October 2010: 19). This suggests that Kunene's voracious consumption and the display of it may emanate from his intentions to affirm his self-worth and refute the prejudice that black people were faced with during apartheid. Given that the apartheid regime limited what black people could and could not enjoy, his birthday party and his lifestyle changes this perception of black people as the stereotypical "faces" of poverty and misfortune.

Thus, in this case we see how consumption is politicised, how it serves as a site through which identities can be negotiated or renegotiated. Kunene is claiming that his self-worth is negotiated through his consumption and ability to afford things that he previously couldn't. By situating Vavi's utterances in the historical context of the apartheid era, Kunene's response to Vavi's indictment of his lifestyle, transferred particular understandings of his condemnation to a hostile period where black South Africans lived in fear and discomfort due to harsh, unjust and irrational policies. More so, by likening Vavi's condemnation of his lifestyle to apartheid, Kunene reminds the society of a period where, as argued by Posel (2010: 168) "whiteness was an entitlement to privilege and relative affluence; blackness became an official judgement about being unworthy of certain modes and orders of

consumption." His consumption patterns are now used to effectively communicate a positive black identity that is different from that of apartheid. It is the means through which one can transcend the meaning of blackness or being a black consumer.

By exploiting the apartheid narrative, Kunene positions himself and his consumption patterns as necessary and justifiable because they are concerted efforts to do away with or distil the prejudices of apartheid on black people. Kunene thus arguably presents himself as a hero in changing the apartheid mentality of black consumption. This is intended to obtain sympathy for Kunene, especially from the black readers who can identify with how it felt like to be told what one "can and cannot do." In defending his conspicuous consumption patterns and his opulent lifestyle, Kunene also argues that he is "self-made": "I live luxury, I live elegance, I am flashy unashamedly so. These have been my dreams when I was throwing stones in the 80's" (Kenny's interview with Jeremy Maggs on *Maggs on Media*, see Appendix B). These findings resonate with the literature scrutinised, which pointed out that conspicuous consumption is often used symbolically to indicate that one has "arrived" or has "made it" (Belk 1988).

Kunene's patterns of conspicuous consumption also demonstrates Veblen's (1899) pecuniary emulation concept with his tendency to show status, acquiring possessions to define his place in the social hierarchy. Lamont and Molnar (2010) argued that this kind of voracious consumption by black people is a conscious effort to be accepted and to gain membership into society. However, the absence of a nuanced explanation of the motives behind such conspicuous flaunting of consumption leads to a banal and superficial understanding of Kunene and his spending practises. Sihaam Nieftagodien and Servaas van der Berg (2007: 7-9) in their study on consumption patterns of the black middle class make a compelling argument for understanding the consumption patterns of the emerging black middle class. They argue that,

> Most analysis of South African consumption patterns has been driven by marketing needs rather than a desire for economic understanding of the factors influencing consumption behaviour.

They note "asset deficit that most blacks still experience as a result of South Africa's history" as one of the important candidates that influences black consumption behaviour.

Figure 1: Kodwa, Malema and Kunene at Kunene's 40th birthday at club ZAR (The New Age, 02 Sep 2011)



Figure 1 above launches us into the second category of political allies in which Kunene's association with some of ANC's influential members received dominant coverage from the media. The media's attention to Kunene and his "bosom friends," Malema and Kodwa, never failed to take precedence. So serious and profound was their friendship that the media never missed the opportunity to tout and ingrain their friendship to the public. The following excerpts from an article published by the *The New Age* titled "ANCYL praises Kunene's decision on 'sushi parties'" (03 February 2011) bears testament to this:

- "In a picture published in The Sowetan on Monday, Malema stood beside Kunene, smiling broadly at the party goers in Cape Town on Saturday."
- "The Sowetan reported that Kunene praised Malema as being the only politician who had supported his first sushi party last year, saying someone like Malema was needed to lead the country as the future president."

The construction of Kunene as a prominent man is evident in the media's tendency to associate him with political big wigs or heavyweights as documented by the above mentioned article. The images analysed also purvey the view that Kunene is a well-connected man. The image above (Figure. 1) sourced from *The New Age* newspaper, illustrates Kunene posing for a picture with Kodwa on the far left and Malema in the middle. Both Kunene and Kodwa are wearing sunglasses while Malema is not. The three men are all dressed in white clothes, and smiling, suggesting that they seem to be enjoying themselves. Images do not exist in a

vacuum. While the intention might be to show who was there and who was not, the images are in fact created for a purpose. In this case the image of Kunene with Malema and Kodwa signifies Kunene's connection to them. It communicates their association with the intention to aptly portray Kunene's alliance with the network of "good old friends" that brought him his successes. Their white clothes are also symbolic. The similar outfits connote a kind of "brotherhood" or allegiance. According to Schroeder (2004: 233), "Group portraits, genealogically linked to the golden era of Dutch art, are a masculine genre – historically, men inhabited most portraits of groups such as guilds, corporate boards and sports teams." The white also signifies youth. According to Pomeroy (1989:57) "white or light colours set apart the younger generation...white was the colour of chivalry."

Reporting on Kunene's birthday party, a *Sowetan* journalist makes explicit Kunene's political affiliation when he states that "City Press reported on Sunday that politically connected businessman Kunene spent R700,000 on his 40th birthday at Zar in Sandton a week ago" (Majavu, 2010). The usage of the term "Politically connected businessman" serves to emphasise that his businesses are not the result of his hard work but an outcome of his political connections. Thus, it comes as no surprise that media often rides on a wave of suspicion when writing about Kunene and his businesses.

In one article published in *The Star* (11 Feb. 2011) under the headline "This nightclub belongs to the ANC", Malema, then African Congress Youth League (ANCYL) chairperson at the time, defends the launch of Kunene's club in Cape Town. The article states that "The ANC youth league leader also warned Zille to leave the new city super club owned by tycoon Kunene alone because it 'belongs to the ANC'." Malema's defense of Kunene's also subtly links Kunene to being so allied with the big wigs that they stand up for him and protect his interests.

Kunene's life as a mining tycoon and an economically connected and powerful individual constantly came under spotlight. An article in *Moneyweb* called "Gold Fields, an advocate and two convicted criminals" (26 May 2011), details Kunene and his business partner's involvement with mining groups. They link the two to Gold Fields and Central Rand Gold mining companies. The article claims that Kunene and McKenzie worked as consultants. They also mention how *The New York Times* (2011) in their article wrote how, "Mr. Kunene and Mr. McKenzie helped Gold Fields, a major gold producer, retain its mining rights to the South Deep mine southwest of Johannesburg, which the company describes as 'one of the

greatest undeveloped ore bodies in the world.'" What seem to be problematic about this article is the headline and how the journalist uses persuasive language to try and discredit Kunene and his business dealings as well as expose his political connections.

The headline of the article sends a clear and unequivocal message that Kunene and his business partner are "convicted criminals" and hence their businesses involve criminal elements. By just reading the article one would assume that it is about convicted criminals and not ex-convicts. Labelling them as convicted criminals informs and influences the reader's perceptions of Kunene and his business partner. These labels arguably establish a tone of fear and hostility towards Kunene. Moreover, the journalist deliberately questions Kunene as a businessman by also labelling him and his business partner as "questionable consultants" in the subheading. There is also an insinuation that Kunene does not know what he is doing as a mining consultant, thus making a deliberate attempt to suggest that Kunene did not get the job based on merit and instead relied on his political affiliates to earn his wealth. The following extract from the opening paragraph of the article bears testimony to this,

> When a company needs to put a black economic empowerment (BEE) deal together as well as secure mining rights who does it go to? An established corporate sponsor located on the top floors of a Sandton office building? Or a convicted bank robber with a questionable (if not unknown) mining history, who seemingly owns night clubs, and counts amongst his group of friends a fellow convicted fraudster with a reputation for eating sushi off half-naked women whose main enterprise happens to also be located, on the top floor of a Sandton hotel? Well if you're Gold Fields (JSE:GFI)'s CEO Nick Holland and his board, it's a no brainer (*Moneyweb* , 26 May 2011).

This leaves the reader with the perception that Kunene is unqualified and clueless about business and relied on his connections to get the job. It further shows the potency of his political connections.

4.1.2. Royalty Tropes: "King" Kunene

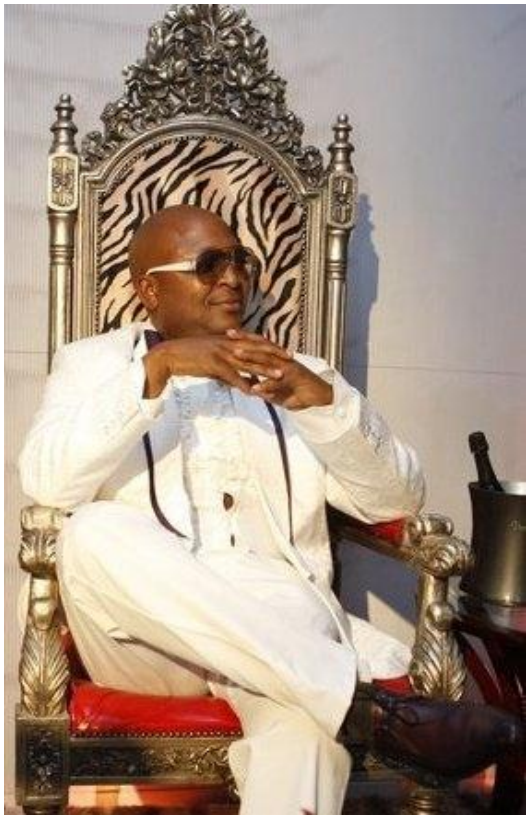
In the data scrutinised, it was almost impossible to find an article that did not refer to Kunene using the dominant discourse of "sushi king". Kunene earned himself the moniker "sushi-king" or "king of sushi" due to his penchant for indulging in the savoury dish he consumed

from the body of a woman at his party. So significantly legitimate and symbolic was the name "sushi king" that it became a norm to use his name in news headlines without making reference to his actual name. Kunene's sushi antics, more than any other aspect of his persona, thus became a widely used trope or metonymy of the man himself almost immediately.

His status as a powerful and wealthy man also added to his representation as a "King." This was visually communicated through the iconography of the throne, amongst other things. Media attention to how Kunene conducted himself during his birthday celebration represented him as "royalty". His conduct, as represented in and by the media mirrored that of a "key player" or a "top dog", "a king." This is illustrated by Figure 2 (below), which shows Kunene sitting on a throne that resembles that of a king, wearing a white suit, with purple (a colour that is associated with royalty) trimmings on the lapels and matching purple shoes. His posture mirrors that of a king, thus emphasising his status as a prominent figure. The Figure, perhaps serves as a visual enactment of Kunene's portrayal as a "king" or as belonging to royalty.

By using an image which arguably reflects that of a royal portrait, the media emphasises Kunene as a prominent figure and shows a theatrical display of power. Carefully staged, he is sitting on a throne with one foot resting across his opposite knee, his elbows resting on the arms of the chair and his hands crossed as if waiting patiently for something to happen. This image arguably sends a message that he is confident, in his element and self-assured. The posture also communicates power or authority. Kunene can be seen as exuding power or as possessing a powerful or domineering character. The posture also projects arrogance, poise and self-possession. The frontal seated pose was also a commonly used symbolic sign in much early portraiture. As pointed out by Andrea Bayer (2008: 276), the frontal pose is iconic, "deriving from ruler portraits and conveying authority."

Figure 2: Kunene sitting on a throne at his birthday party celebrations (Africa is a country blog, 17 Feb 2011)



Apart from Kunene's body posture, the setting within which Kunene's portrait is placed can tell us much about his character and possibly his aspirations. The throne stands out, and is thus symbolic. A throne is a chair that seats prominent people such as monarchs or dignitaries in ceremonial occasions. Kunene's positioning on a throne communicates that Kunene is in position of power. Notably, the images of emperors, kings and queens seated on thrones are common iconographic visuals. Not only does the image of Kunene sitting on a throne have connotations of power, it also symbolises a sense of royalty, class, affluence and luxury. According to Umberto Eco (1973:64), instead of defining objects in terms of their primary function, signs tend to lead us to primarily define and perceive them in relation to what they symbolise. He uses the throne as his example and argues that a chair, adorned with precious stones, which functions as a place for "sitting", is dominantly perceived as symbolising "royalty." He holds that "if the seat is a throne, it must do more than seat one: it serves to seat one with a certain dignity….Indeed the connotation of dignity and regalness can become so functionally important that the basic function, to seat one, may even be slighted, or distorted" (ibid). Thus, the secondary function tends to be so dominant that the primary function is minimised or completely eliminated. As noted by Pease (1981: 132), the height of the back of

the chair also says a lot about the person occupying the chair. He holds that "the higher the back of the chair, the greater the power and the status of the person sitting in it" (ibid). This reinforces traditional masculine identity or power through the royal authority inherent in the picture. The throne also marks Kunene's royal superiority through the red colour used on the chair's seat as well as the zebra print detail at the chair's back. The picture also conveys his dominance, greatness and kingship. The animal skin is symbolic and prestigious in the context of African royalty. For example, the Kuba tribe in Congo, uses animal skin to represent the leader's power while the Zulu's in South Africa historically used the leopard skin to communicate the status of royalty (see Allen Memorial Art Museum catalogue 2009; Chidester 1997).

The champagne in the champagne cooler in the far right just makes it into the picture and, although it is not foregrounded, it is still adequately visible. This adds a touch of subtle elegance to the picture. John-Paul Trutnau (2005: 204) holds that "drinks such as champagnes or sometimes wine add to the aura of privilege... As a result champagne is more than simply a prop carrying a meaning of consumer commodity. Rather it is a symbol constructed around male power." These items (champagnes, thrones etc.) are therefore not merely items of luxury but as suggested by the social semiotics method, are and ought to be considered as non-verbal status and power raisers. Thus, both the commodities and chiefly the body language studied in this image amplify the importance of reading images and understanding the power of images. Images have the ability to tell a story or they serve as visual cues which are in themselves words and sentences. Jonathan Schroeder (2006), in his model of critical visual analysis which draws on classical art historical techniques of formal analysis, stresses the importance of analysing the framing, posture, colour and dress of the subjects. The representation of Kunene in this image arguably conforms to the genre of royal portraiture. The image builds on a long history of representing royalty, because of the key signifiers such as the throne, which is found in countless portrayals of royalty. More so, portraiture has historically been used as a site to enact power; it has been used to also articulate royal majesty.

Evidently, the discursive construction of Kunene as a big powerful man is achieved in many ways. One of the ways, as highlighted above, was the construction of him as a king which was done several times through his association with symbols of wealth/luxury/royalty. Symbols such as the throne, bespoke suits, champagne, posture, and sushi gave sufficient

evidence for how Kunene is discursively constructed as a "king." These semiotic indicators of "royalty" in representations of Kunene emphasise his affluence and his authority.

These aspects through which his affluence/"kingship" is symbolised will be highlighted in greater detail in the various parts of this section. The research will first start with the most popular indicator of wealth and luxury used by the media to discursively construct Kunene as a king, i.e. the sushi. As alluded to above, Kunene's power was highlighted through his sushi antics. The following headlines bear testament:

- "Mr Sushi now parties with bubbly at foreign venues" (*The Times*, 19.Aug. 2011)
- "Sushi king duped out of R3.5m" (*City Press*, 06. June. 2011)
- "Sushi king's reality show to start soon" (*News24*, 07. Sept. 2011)
- "I don't boast, I boost, says Mister Sushi" (*Sunday Times*, 14.Nov. 2010)
- "Mr Sushi, plans African Fest, next birthday blowout" (*Saturday Star*, 20. Aug. 2011)

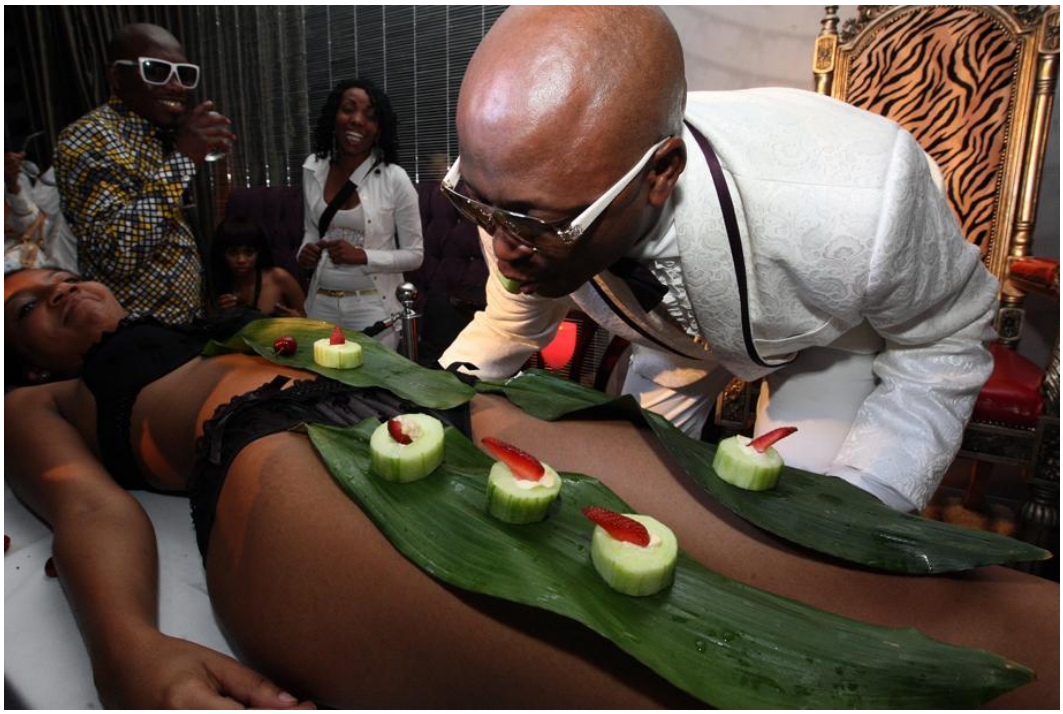
Addressing Kunene as Mister shows the sort of respect he is being given and ultimately the power he holds. The title Mister can be seen an honour, it conveys respect and reverence. Similarly the word "king" connotes superiority; it serves as an acknowledgement of power. The headlines above also show how Kunene as a sushi king or Mr Sushi are normalised. They assume that we all can identify the Sushi King or Mr Sushi tag with Kunene. The headlines above presuppose that the audiences have a certain stock of knowledge or shared knowledge of who the Sushi King / Mr Sushi is and what he does. Thus, for those readers who do not know who is being referred to as either "Sushi King" or "Mr Sushi" this makes them work out what or who is referred to by the phrase and thus incurrs extra processing efforts for most readers in trying to decode who he is.

Eating sushi off a woman's body arguably elevated Kunene's status to that of a prominent man. This aspect of his party received a huge amount of media attention, and it put him in the spotlight. It suggested that he was able to do whatever he wished (like a king, who does not have to answer to anyone). A man's power or prominence is often determined in how he treats a woman. Consequently, a man who reinforces dominant ideologies that privileges men over women is seen as somewhat powerful. In particular, this is a common occurrence in largely patriarchal social contexts, where how a man interacts with a woman can speak volumes about his authority. Patriarchal culture often serves as a form of power which is

exercised with impunity by certain high profile, powerful individuals (like kings, presidents, etc). However, the subordination of women is often met with disdain in liberal societies. Bearing this in mind, Kunene received a lot of tongue lashing from civil society and many other women organisations alike for eating sushi from a half-naked woman's body. The following are some examples of headlines, and quotes, in this regard: "ANCWL condemns sushi on women's bodies" (*Sapa*, 01 Feb 2011); "...Stripping women and reducing them to sex symbols for the pleasure of men does nothing but entrench stereotypes and reinforce patriarchal behaviour"-Patrick Craven, Cosatu spokesperson (*Daily Dispatch*, 08 Feb 2011)

The images such as the one below in Figure 3, were prominent features in many media platforms including newspapers, blogs and social media pages. The picture shows Kunene nibbling on what looks like a piece of fruit from a girl laid on a table, dressed only in lingerie and leaves of "the sushi" placed on top of her thighs and torso.

Figure 1: Kunene eating sushi (marieclairvoyant.com, 03 Feb 2011)



When one looks at the images of Kunene eating the sushi and the rest of the crowd watching and laughing at the situation, one gets the impression that this act is justified because no one is seen frowning at Kunene's actions or looking at him in contempt. He is seen as the centre of attention, as all eyes are on him and the guests look on admirably. His wealth seemingly serves as a justification of his lifestyle. Thus, because he can afford to eat sushi on a woman's body, there exists no problem. It is a symbolic sign of his affluence. Through this, he earns

respect and reverence for being able to afford the finer things in life. The other patrons who attended the party can only look in admiration as they witness this "higher style" of consumption.

Kunene's eating of sushi off a woman's body should not be read as an act of deriving pleasure but it should also be seen as an exercise of power. Eating sushi on the woman, therefore demonstrates Kunene's powerful manhood; he is shown as having the skill and guts to do what no man would dare to do or perhaps afford to do, at least in public. Thus, Kunene's power is arguably narrated through his objectification of women in using the female models as sushi platters. His power is arguably exercised through his ability to render the woman as a weaker gender, as merely an object to serve his sushi on. Women are relegated again to the lower status of them as objects of the "male gaze," (Mulvey, 1975) or playthings that can be used to achieve macho status.

This image serves to portray the woman as inactive. The woman is represented as only passive, lying down and merely watching the elite, in this case Kunene eating sushi off her body. Such representations are not neutral; visualisation of women in this way carries with it all the stereotypes of being "a woman in a man's world", they reinforce weakness, passivity, and submissiveness. There are many examples of women being objectified in this way. For example, Cortese (2007), Sexton and Habermann (1974) and Courtney & Whipple (1983) have all looked at media advertisements and concluded that women are usually portrayed in less significant roles, as objects and mere extensions of men.

In his defence, Kunene claimed that serving sushi off a woman's body was merely an act of having fun. This begs the question: to what extent was the act of eating sushi on a woman's body innocent and good clean fun? Murphy (2011) argues that "men who objectify women are applauded within our society – they're popular. Such men are considered to be real men, expressing a successful idea of masculinity." More so, the society has created norms that blame women for putting themselves in undesirable situations. As such in the case of Kunene, the model that was used as a platter was portrayed as having done so out of her free will and as having enjoyed doing so. Nonetheless what is identifiable from the media's representation of Kunene is how his deeds present him as a popular character and mobilises him to the upper echelons of a "hierarchy of masculinities."

This is seemingly a fitting example of the "who will get the girl" narrative, where men compete amongst themselves and go to the extent of betting, just to prove who is more man enough to get the girl. In Kunene's case one could similarly argue that the same narrative exists. However, this time it was about who will do the most unthinkable, who will eat sushi off a half-naked woman in full view of everyone. "Many people with high status attempt to gain their approval ratings by objectifying women – they get away with this because for centuries it's been seen as the right way to be a powerful man" (Murphy, 2011).

However, in as much as Kunene is seen in this description as a prominent man, he also faced prejudice for eating sushi off a woman's body. The irony of the prominence he received as a "real man" juxtaposed with the idea that he was objectifying and by extension disrespecting the female form was very much evident in the media's coverage. This came through a lot from opinion pieces and editorial pieces. The common thread running in most of the pieces revolved around and was arguably grounded in feminist reasoning or gender stereotypes. Thus, the opinion/ editorial pieces critiqued Kunene's Nyotaimori[5] for being symbolic of the further marginalisation of women. In this, they argued that women are not only portrayed as objects to be consumed, but also as the weaker gender, that will stoop to the lowest of low to get what they want. What the editorials argued against was the dominant representation of women in the stereotypical frame of selling their bodies for a "quick buck" and as having nothing to offer but their bodies.

Figure. 4, below, demonstrates these sentiments. The cartoon illustrates a woman caring a placard stating that she will serve sushi on her naked body for cash while the man will work for food and can be seen saying that he needs a new spot. This stereotypically portrays women as lacking the ability to "work" to make ends meet and instead relying or using their bodies to their advantage. Women are seen as readily available to "serve" or to be at a man's service. Women are therefore degraded and reduced to the iconic role of servitude. By using the predicates work and serve, the image deliberately attempts to pronounce and perpetuate the gender stereotypes. Men work, while women serve. Working can be seen as a more potent option, as it involves labour intensive actions and activities involving mental or physical effort rather than serving, which can be read as the direct opposite. Thus, serving is associated with femininity and working with a masculine framework. In his study on gender and advertisements, Irving Goffman (1979: 32) argued that it was a common practice for

[5] Nyotaimori translates as ""female body presentation" and is also known as 'body sushi' consists in its humiliating treatment of the model from whose naked body the food is taken" (Strong, 2011: 186)

adverts to portray women in subordinate roles. Figure 4 is a good example of this, as the woman's function or role in this image is that of a servant and a man, a master. More so, the cartoon illustrates and reinforces Kunene's role as a "king", in that he has someone there to serve him, in this case a woman. More so, given that during the medieval periods having a servant was a status symbol (Cox, 2006: 78), this bestows some status on Kunene. Interestingly, the status of "king" in the moniker "Sushi king" can also be linked to patriarchal power and an exercise of masculine domination over (often female) subjects/objects. "Royalty" which is inherently a system of patriarchy, expects those in power to be surrounded by servants and admirers. Similarly, this discourse of servitude and admiration is prevalent in the constructions of Kunene as a "king."

Figure 2: A cartoon from *Sowetan* (02 Nov 2010)



There were a few articles in the corpus that did not demonise Kunene for serving sushi on a woman's body. One article stands out, an opinion piece by Mokgadi Seabi of *City Press* (2010) went against the norm and defended Kunene and suggested that the model is a willing participant in that she agreed to have sushi eaten off her body. Seabi in her article argued how "The model is an adult and has agreed to take on the job as a sushi board. Who are we to cast aspersions on her decision?" Seabi seemingly shifts the attention and perhaps the onus from

Kunene and onto the woman who she sees as a willing participant and therefore an active agent in the whole event. This argument is in line with Murphy's (2011) assertion that society has created norms that put blame on women, for putting themselves in undesirable situations.

Again, Seabi's views and her defence of Kunene's actions speak directly to bell hooks definition of a benevolent patriarch. In her book, *We Real Cool: Black Men & Masculinity* (2004: 4) hooks defines benevolent patriarchs as men who "exercise their power without using force." More so, Gramsci (1990) argued that the exercise of power does not have to be direct or coerced, or involve physical violence, but can be exercised indirectly through hegemonic structures such as culture, social values and institutions, and language. This speaks to the nature of patriarchy, it does not have to be imposed forcefully, and instead it is presented as natural, as the inevitable. More so, discourse on why women tend to voluntarily serve men has been documented by many authors. The underlying rationale for this conduct as argued by these scholars is rooted in the patriarchal structure and socialisation patterns that valorise male supremacy and female inferiority. For instance, Hooks (2001) attributes women's compliancy or subservience to the socialisation patterns that both women and men have been conditioned to live in. She argues that obedience in females has and continues to be the dominant way in which women define themselves and are in turn defined. Women then comply with this treatment because it is the only identity they know.

The cartoon also raises many meanings in relation to black success. Black success is implicitly depicted by the cartoon as the privileges of subjugating women, attaining the status and power of royalty, and having women as servants or accessories. This ties into much larger debated discourses about black success and economic freedom as linked to material possessions. As argued by Deborah Posel (2010), the definition of black success and economic freedom is situated in polarised notions of emancipation and repression; that the power to consume is equated both with economic and political emancipation and dismissively so with immoral behaviour. Posel further argues that this particular narrative of black success and what she calls "the aspirations to demonstrable wealth" holds such sway because consumption has long been "racially politicised" (2010: 161). She holds that "commodity ownership enabled more assertive and subversive strategies of racial positioning" (2010: 163). Social and economic mobility through "material possessions and their display" was thus seen as a vector to eradicate racial differences and give black people an extra leverage. Posel's arguments therefore emphasise why black people, in particular Kunene, may hold material possessions in high esteem and view them as signs of empowerment. The arguments

purport that racial classifications being fluidly defined by one's social standing allowed for black people to "change" their perceived race and gain acceptance in the white society by accumulating and displaying wealth. Similar arguments can be made for Kunene's consumption and his definition of success. For Kunene, material possessions are by extension his endeavours to show his social standing and distinction.

Figure 3: A cartoon titled "Rich and Black" from mahala.co.za (13 Dec 2011)



Figure 5, is a discursive illustration of "black success." The parody shows Kunene eating sushi off a woman's buttocks using chopsticks in one hand and holding a cigar in another, wearing a tailored suit and sunglasses. The woman, with her eyes closed can be seen bending in an "all fours" position literally and figuratively over Kunene's feet. This emphasises the woman's obedience and submissiveness. The woman at Kunene's feet, figuratively or metaphorically shows that she is under Kunene's influence and power. The woman's posture communicates submission and powerlessness. The image also can be read as a visual metaphor of the woman throwing herself at Kunene's feet, or worshipping him. What is also interesting about the image is that it is a white woman who is subservient to a black man. This speaks volumes to not only gender issues but the issue of race as well. What the cartoon seems to suggest is that being rich and black is a gateway to having a white female 'slave.' And that black success has come with privileges that black men were previously denied.

Several images analysed by scholars such as Irving Goffman (1979) show the extent to which women's bodies are literally used to reinforce stereotypes of them as passive and powerless individuals. In his study, Goffman (1979) argued that this sort of portrayal can be seen as a

"ritualisation of subordination." The "ritualisation of subordination" speaks to a classic stereotype which suggests that by physically lowering oneself the individual will confer respect and admiration upon the one to whom the act is being directed (Goffman, 1979: 40).

Goffman (1979) argued that this discourse was prevalent in print advertisements, with women enacting the subordinate position by posing in recumbent positions or in canting postures. He argued that this was a prominent feature in most advertisements and that certain actions were performed to illustrate this "ritualisation of subordination." By positioning a man in relation to women in advertisements depicting both men and women, it is common for a man to be higher up in the picture. This, Goffman argued, is one of the most obvious symbols of status and holds certain assumptions about the social standings of the subjects involved. For example, the height of a person often gives them superiority. Figure 5, a classic example of ritualised subordination, does not only suggest the social superiority of Kunene and the passivity of the woman, but it also illustrates how the servitude of the woman reinforces the "royalty" of Kunene. It is a common practice for "subjects" to perform a bow or curtsey in show of respect to the royalty. The position the woman takes in the cartoon is in many respect similar to this gesture.

In this way he is seen as a "king" or "master" because the woman, through her actions has occupied the servant role. Such discourse has dominantly portrayed Kunene as exploiting women, taking pride and joy in women's servitude and their subservience. This paved the way to counter-discourses in many of the articles monitored where members of the public, in particular political movements, passed their condemnations on Kunene's behaviour. For example, in an article titled "ANCWL unimpressed with Kunene's sushi bash" (*News 24*, 02. Feb. 2011), ANC Women's League spokesperson, Edna Molewa, was quoted as saying, "It is a blatant attempt to undermine the selfless sacrifices made by all those who fought for the emancipation and respect of women in our country".

The excerpt tells us something about the perspective from which the event is being described. The most striking feature of the above article is how often they portrayed Kunene's actions in a negative way. They also seem to privilege the perspective of the ANC Women's League who made negative statement about Kunene. This is evident in how the women's league perspective was foregrounded and topicalised. The women were the ones "condemning" and they were also "unimpressed." The excerpt above shows Kunene as undermining all the efforts made by the league in fighting for women's liberty. This paints a picture of Kunene as

anti-women's empowerment and contributing to their further marginalisation. His notoriety or prominence in the media is thus illustrated or emphasised by his objectification of women to serve his needs. One aspect of royalty/presidents/people in power is that they are often criticised and ridiculed. The ANCWL is playing this role here, bringing in a counter discourse that challenges Kunene's claims to royal/celebrity status.

This ridiculing however also serves to valorise Kunene in a way. It reinforces Kunene's power, as it is a common occurrence for people in power to be mocked or ridiculed. As such, Kunene and his birthday party became sites of mockery from various segments of society and particularly from the cartoon sections of newspapers. Thus, the cartoons have been a prevalent form of media through which the portrayal of Kunene as a ridiculous character is evident. The cartoons have been used wittingly to undermine and mock his power or displays of conspicuous consumption. The cartoonists use humour to pointedly criticise Kunene's behaviour. The cartoons scrutinised used symbols and signs and established personifications often used to trivialise Kunene. According to Bruter (2005: 76-77), "Symbols make it easier for citizens to *identify* with the political community regardless of their levels of knowledge of the community and of their capacity for abstraction." Symbols used to identify Kunene in cartoons are usually: "the king of sushi label" or alternatively "sushi king", an individual wearing tailored suits, branded sunglasses, expensive wines/ whisky, cigars. The most familiar symbol to-date remains a group of people taking part in Nyotaimori. It is evident that most depictions of Kunene revolve around his consumption patterns.

Zanele Muholi's artwork re-enacted the role of one of the models in a mural she titled "I am just doing my job". This was a response given by one of the models used as a platter at Kunene's birthday celebrations and is another dominant example that was used to mock Kunene and his sushi escapades. Thus, aside from the cartoons, Muholi's artwork was a popular satirical representation of the birthday party.

Figure 4: An artwork by Zanele Muholi from zanelemuholi.com



The artwork depicts Muholi laid out on a table, representing one of the models at the party, while two women eat raw boerewors and offal off her naked torso. The mural uses humour to satirise Kunene serving sushi off a woman's body. The livers, offal and boerewors placed on Muholi's body denote her organs. The boerewors was used to represent Muholi's intestines, while the livers and offal were used to represent her breasts and genitals respectively. Suffice to argue that the artwork then denotatively portrays the women feasting off Muholi's internal organs.

The image creatively and cynically expresses how disgusting and atrocious it is for Kunene to eat sushi off a half-naked woman's body. What one also reads from Muholi's artwork is how Kunene is portrayed using animalistic traits. Eating raw meat, in particular, raw offal, livers and boerewors arguably is an animalistic behaviour, i.e. Kunene and the elites who took part in eating sushi served off a woman's body are shown in a distasteful and dehumanised manner. It is a means of expressing feelings of contempt and repulsiveness for eating sushi off a half-naked woman. It subverts conspicuous consumption and emphasises, albeit satirical, the viciousness of eating sushi off a half-naked woman.

It was also interesting to come across an opinion piece, which by far was the harshest criticism levelled against Kunene for eating sushi off a half-naked woman. In the opinion piece, written by Prince Mashele, Kunene's treatment of the models was described as follows: "Kunene's 'black slaves' offer their naked bodies as plates on which their 'masters' enjoy sushi" (*News24*, 22 Nov 2010).

In this sentence, Kunene is placed in a subject and agent position. He is seen as the agent of slavery and the women as the slaves and hence the victims. His action of serving sushi on the models' bodies may be equated with slavery. Needless to say, his actions are described as negative and dramatically emphasised by the use of the slave frame and the metaphor of women as plates, which arguably links to the arguments made above on the discourse of servitude and royalty. The woman occupies the role of a servant or in this case a slave, while the man, Kunene, re-enacts the role of a master. The metaphor of women as plates encodes another important implication of how women are represented. The women assuming the role of vessels from which their "masters" enjoy sushi is in itself dehumanising. Given that plates are devoid of any human characteristics, they are lifeless objects with which one can do as one pleases. More so, by referring to the models as Kunene's "black slaves", the author emphasises women as racialised commodities. This is of course takes into consideration that slaves were also treated as commodities by their owners in the colonial era. This does not only work to promote greater subjugation of women but it also emphasises the brutality of Kunene's actions.

Literature shows that women tend to be used as objects of consumption (Baudrillard 1988, Nussbaum 1995, Hunter 2011). Thus, it comes as no surprise that the female body is seen as an object in many of the representations of Kunene. Women are often the objects of consumption, while men are the subjects. This also ties in very well with the discourse of royalty where Kunene as king has "subjects" that must obey and serve him. And as expected of kings, possession of luxurious objects, jewels, clothes, and women of course serve as extensions of his power. More so, playing into the discourse of "royalty", media representations of Kunene reinforced him as a king though the comparison of his party to that of other equally prominent individuals with similar interests and pursuits of "the good life." One such character was Khanyi Mbau. Mokgadi Seabi wrote in her article that: "Compared to Mbau's three-day parties last week, Kunene's exclusive party on Thursday night made the socialite's event look like a tea party" (*City Press*, 24 Oct. 2010).

This comparison can be linked to the discourse of royalty and more importantly to the gendered nature of consumption given that kings are always seen as in control and queens, such as Marie Antoinette, as frivolous and fickle. One would associate a tea party with women. Thus, tea parties are too feminine and sort of a child's play, while Kunene's

consumption is deemed powerful and meaningful. Moreover, the attention to Mbau's party can also be seen as an effort to differentiate consumption according to the gender system. In so doing, this does not only significantly attach importance to male's consumption and put it under the spotlight; it also serves to uphold male consumption as the norm, thus justifying it. As pointed out in the literature, women's consumption is often framed negatively and is always trivialised (Buckingham 2011).

Figure 5: A cartoon from Sowetan (28 Sept 2011)



The image above also perpetuates the significant gender inequalities, and the discursive construction of Kunene as royalty. It shows a woman being a subordinate and Kunene as a prominent or superior figure. Interestingly the image, a parody of the image scrutinised previously in this section (see page 64), exploits all signifiers of royalty, such as the servant, the champagne, and the throne. It shows Kunene seated on a king's throne. It indicates that he is so wealthy that the shutting down of his gold mine doesn't seem to faze him. As illustrated by the cartoon, a lady wearing only her underwear alludes to his mine being shut down and Kunene responds nonchalantly by saying "so what" with a big grin on his face.

Representing Kunene this way is premised in discourses or ideologies that construct masculinity as unperturbed, calm, and composed in times of panic (Brown 2012). The masculine ideology or stereotype is therefore established in Kunene's "I don't care attitude" or notably, the "so what" remark. More so, the gold mine that the woman refers to is closely linked to the discourse of royalty and the discourse of Kunene as a "king." Kings and the

royalty in general are known to possess huge amounts of wealth, jewels and gold. The latter is an important luxury signifier which has been sought-out for coins, and jewelry, amongst other things (Iqani 2012a: 94-95).

Gold has come to symbolise many things amongst them, economic power, wealth, luxury, and status. The Communist school of thought critiqued the industrial tycoons and the bourgeoisie who adorned golden chains and pocket watches for their vulgarity. The same vulgarity was associated with Kunene's gold-mine which was at the centre of controversy with allegations of corruption. More so, the woman being the one who informs Kunene on the closure of his gold-mine arguably makes ideological inferences on the woman's character. The image constructs Kunene's relationship with the woman through the discourse of the "gold-digger." The woman can be seen as trying to gain proximity to his power by taking interest in and having knowledge of his gold-mine, a source of his revenue or wealth.

Like the gold, Kunene's trademark cigar, sunglasses and bespoke suits are also significant elements of royalty that can be deduced from his representations. In particular the cigar as a commodity speaks volumes to how Kunene is constructed as a prominent man. There is much meaning attached to cigars. Cigars have always been used as a means of "displaying superiority because of their cost and size" (Pease 1981: 100). More so, cigars are often used to celebrate many key events in one's life such as the birth of a baby, a new business deal that has been clenched and many other milestones. Thus, Kunene's smoking of a cigar is arguably indicative of his celebration of his success and perhaps the milestone in his life, his 40th birthday. Pease (1981: 100) further argued that "the big-time business executive, the gang leader and people in high status position often smoke cigars." Cigars are therefore seen as prominent devices used by mafias or kingpins. Cigars are often used in movies to emphasise and denote the "'sophistication' of criminal characters" (Trutnau 2005: 204). Thus, the usage of devices that often characterise the lifestyles of kingpins can be seen at play in the representations of Kunene. More so, cigars are also obvious and important phallic symbols. The cigar thus serves as a representation of Kunene's masculinity.

The wearing of sunglasses should also be noted as a symbolic act. The wearing of sunglasses reinforces celebrity status. Sunglasses ensure that the wearer does not have any eye contact with other people. Kunene's act of wearing sunglasses can be read as his attempt to distance himself from other people; it signifies that he is untouchable, inaccessible and elite. Furthermore, the bespoke suits are also symbolic devices in Kunene's representations as a

"king" and ultimately the "big" powerful man. Given that specially designed garments are significant aspects of royalty, Kunene assimilates this culture into his lifestyle by having a personal designer who designs clothes for him for special occasions. In the past, royalties wore clothing specially designed and made for particular activities. Kunene similarly enjoys the privileges of having clothes designed for him. This was highlighted in an article in *City Press*, where the author noted that: "The two (Malema and Kunene) made a fashionable pair when they got together in Cape Town last weekend, wearing tailored suits by top SA ¬designer David Tlale – known for seldom charging less than R8,000 for his bespoke suits" (*City Press*, 5 Feb. 2011). Having his suits custom made can also be seen as his way of maintaining his exclusivity and as an attempt to stand out from the crowd.

4.2. Race and gender stereotypes in Kunene as a "big man": What accounts for these images?

Throughout the analysis of Kunene as a prominent man both in terms of his political connectedness and his moniker as a kind of "king", many ideological inferences can be found. Some of these results affirm the arguments around consumption raised in the literature review and the conceptual framework. Others emphasise how consumption is a gendered process and how race is a instrumental lens through which consumption is defined. The depiction of Kunene's consumption as a "gendered" process was a recurrent discourse. Kunene's representations as a prominent man supported dominant notions of gender with regards to consumption. Consumption as illustrated in the literature review has long been a "gendered" process. There have always been two types of consumption, that of men and that of women. The only commonalties between the male and female consumption is probably that both derive some sense of pleasure from their consumption patterns, yet the pleasure derived by women is often dismissed as mundane.

Consumption has however been inherently used as a site to show and exercise Kunene's power, which is inherently masculinised. Thus, Kunene, as represented in the media, supported dominant gender ideologies of men as powerful and women as subservient. Kunene is therefore seen as emphasising or affirming these dominant gender roles. The discourse of women as voluntary servants to Kunene comes up quite a number of times. Which begs the question: why do women agree to be subservient? Consumption was

feminised in the past. When masculinised in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, however, it takes a different shape, which immediately puts the female body as a commodity into the centre of the male agency. This speaks to how women who used to be hailed as consumers have now become objects to be consumed. However, this discourse is a little more complex because, as evidenced in the corpus provided, the women "volunteer" to be Kunene's servants. They are not coerced into being used as his objects. To unravel this complexity of why in this case the women chose to be subservient, it is important to mention La Boetie's study on voluntary servitude. In his study, La Boetie (1975: 59) argued that subordinate groups are "habituated" to inequality,

> People will grow accustomed to the idea that they have always been in subjection, that their fathers lived in the same way; they will think they are obliged to suffer this evil, and will persuade themselves by example and imitation of others, finally investing those who order them around with proprietary rights, based on the idea that it has always been that way.

Thus, the women who allow sushi to be served on their bodies do so as a result of being inured to subservience. These women are customised to be subservient to men. David Hume makes the same argument as La Boetie in his essay, "Of the Origin of Government",

> Habit soon consolidates what other principles of human nature had imperfectly founded; and men, once accustomed to obedience, never think of departing from that path, in which they and their ancestors have constantly trod (1987: 39).

While this may be the case, as shown in the analysis, several media broke the mould and challenged the dominant representations of women as passive. This was done through sourcing and involving women and women organisations in discourses around Kunene's 40th birthday celebrations. These represent female agency and strength and counteract the traditional representations of women as lacking strength and being passive. Kunene defines his consumption as emancipatory as he has the ability to party hard and spend lots of money. While on the other hand the ANCWL argues it is something else: the oppression and subjugation of women. These two polarised arguments speak to the concept of discourses and counter discourses about what emancipation and consumption mean.

The power manifested in consumption was also evident in the analysis of Kunene's consumption activities. The binary description of consumption as both empowering and

manipulative is common to Kunene's representations as the "big man." In particular, with regards to the analysis of Kunene as a politically connected man, media seemingly promotes the view that through his consumption he is able to dine the most prominent figures. While he is seen as empowered enough to rub shoulders with the important people, he is also seen as fully buying into the neoliberal, individualist, profit-driven narratives about empowerment. As such, Marxist analysts would argue that he has been fully consumed (manipulated) by the false consciousness of consumption.

Evidently, race like gender, is also prioritised in the representations of Kunene as the "big man". Race as noted by Goldberg,

> has been a constitutive feature of modernity, ordering conceptions of self and other, of socio-political membership and exclusion. It has identified exploitable individuals and populations for subjection and it has been used to rationalize and legitimate domination, subjugation, even extermination. (1993: 148)

While this was not done explicitly, there were several instances pointed out in the analysis that conjoined Kunene with crime. From the perspective of this paper, the media links crime to black people. The representation of black people in this manner has a long standing history. There have been many studies that have revealed stereotypes that perpetrate the black man as the criminal 'other' (Gilroy 1982; Davies et al. (2007: 36)). This sort of representation was evident in the portrayal of Kunene using symbolic characteristics of a kingpin. These were alluded to through the use of props such as cigars and champagne to depict him. In popular culture, kingpins tend to be depicted as cigar carrying, flashy car owning, larger than life individuals; these characters usually have a woman, who's readily waiting to serve them, or who's at their disposal. Such tropes are also evident in Kunene's portrayals.

Images of black people as deviant and troublemakers have been a mainstay in the representation of blackness in the media (Hall, 1996). Literature thus tells us that the black man has long been associated with criminal and deviant behaviour. It is therefore not surprising that Kunene is painted as a criminal. Unfortunately such representations have informed one-dimensional views of black people and have resulted in their further marginalisation. According to Dutton (1997) most of the images and meanings constructed follow the colonial and/or apartheid construction of black people as the other. It is this very identity that has propelled black people to erode such views through consumption. However, it seems that these ideals are not manifest. What also stands out in his representations, albeit

in a contradictory manner, is that in as much as he is painted as a "criminal" his criminalisation is partially admired and glamourised by a few who aspire to be just like him. This is no different to how black kingpins are valorised in most songs by hip hop artists and at the same time seen as criminals. These artists tend to name drop and idolise these kingpins as heroes.

What we can also deduce from the analysis is how political affiliations are used as tell-tale signs of how Kunene's empowerment was achieved. The analysis shows that while cultures of consumption are celebrated by the black elite as empowering and as tools for levelling the economic playing field and perhaps enjoying the economic freedoms that come with democracy, the view that media portrays is different to that of Kunene and perhaps the general black elite when conceptualised in terms of class. This dichotomy speaks to how consumption can be viewed as an empowering and equally disempowering process. For example, Kunene sees his consumption as empowering the underprivileged youth. In the article "I don't boast, I boost, says Mister Sushi" (*City Press,* 14 Nov 2010) Kunene claimed that he is a "new-generation role model" for the youth of SA. His self-perceptions however differ from the public and the media's perception of him.

As highlighted above, Kunene came under attack from both Cosatu and ANC Women's league for disrespecting women and "objectifying" them by serving sushi on their bodies. These (Sushi) parties, political analyst Steven Friedman said, "sent a message that people with money could spend it in greater quantity and this might as well be an invitation to those without money to become criminals" (*City Press* 31 October 2010). Cosatu spokesperson Zingiswa Losi also described Kunene's behaviour as "an attack on the bodily integrity and dignity of all women" (*City Press*31 October 2010). Thus, while Kunene claims that his consumption patterns serve as a site for empowerment and inspiration to the youth, others claim that his consumption practices are disempowering to women and to a large extent the youth, who will be easily swayed into a life of crime just to enjoy Kunene's lifestyle.

The consumption cultures of others are seen as curtailing others' freedom. In other words, the freedoms that Kunene enjoys are responsible for the disempowerment of the poor or women. Kunene's performance of power and his derivation of pleasure through his consumption patterns reflect a disregard and disempowerment of women. Kunene exercises his power to consume and, by so doing, commodifies and disempowers the women he turns into servants. This speaks to Iqani's (2012a: 36) conceptualisation of consumption through

the empowerment/manipulation dialectic in that she argues that "consumerist power incorporates both empowerment and manipulation in a complex manner and consumers are thus both constrained and pleasured by it." Thus, while Kunene derives empowerment through consuming, his consumption is seen as resulting in his alienation, as he is criticised for the very process that empowers him. Therefore, his consumption activities serve to both alienate and empower him. According to the conceptual model, empowerment and manipulation are common dialectic constructions of consumption. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Kunene's representations are founded on these tensions. The problem with these representations however lies in their biased tendency to valorise one view of the dialectic over the other. Iqani argues that it is important not to dismiss one element over the other. Instead both elements are important to understanding consumption. However, as observed by the texts from the corpus, the media tend to focus on one aspect of consumption over the other. These representations follow a reductionist formula that Iqani (2012a) opposes, where the subjugation of women and ultimately the disempowering effect of consumption override the empowering aspect of Kunene's consumption. This dissertation contends that these representations serve to reinforce common stereotypes about women as objects of consumption.

They are reflective of popular discourse surrounding women's representations in the media. As revealed by the analysis, Kunene's representations illustrate the way in which the media promotes the perpetuation of race and gender based stereotypes. They also reinforce arguments put forward by various scholars. It can be argued that Kunene as "the big man" can be seen from a negative and positive point of view. His power and prominence was often reproduced in how he treated women. Objectifying them gave him power, while the tongue-lashing he received from the women's league and other organisations diminished his power completely or rendered him powerless. Thus, there are varying frames through which Kunene was represented. However, the frame of Kunene as having received criticism from various organisations was a popular discourse.

4.3. Conclusion

The preceding analysis was aimed at reflecting upon insights from the media's representation of Kunene as a "big man" and to some extent to use the meanings derived from Kunene's representations to understand the implications of these discursive constructions. This part of the research thus opened up the research to the recurrent theme of Kunene as the 'big man' in

the media. His prominence was amplified through the analytical tensions in his political connections and through his relations/ interactions with other people, particularly women. The chapter also showed us the different ways in which Kunene's representation as a "big man" is shown antagonistically as a positive thing, which he in turn exploits shamelessly in order to raise his own profile, and in on the other side how his "big man" status is mocked by the media coverage, as being an empty kind of "bigness".

Further, the chapter also highlighted the ambiguities of how Kunene's prominence is at once discursively constructed by his own appearances in the media, and torn down and ridiculed by other counter discourses about his claims to bigness. More so, a bigger debate takes place about whether as a high profile black businessman, he is entitled to enjoy empowerment on behalf of the disempowered others. He claims yes, the press however claims no. The chapter also showed us that the political voices engaging with Kunene are mixed. On the one hand ANC Youth League lauds him for being empowered and a role model to the youth. While the ANC, the ANC Women's League and member of the tripartite alliance, Cosatu lambast him for his consumption. Here we saw that Kunene's character as a "big man" was largely constructed through both his political affiliations and political nemesis. Both portray a certain kind of influence and sway, but in different ways. The research will now move on to discuss the construction of Kunene as the "big spender".

Chapter 5: The "Big Spender"

This chapter seeks to discuss in detail the theme of Kunene as the "big spender." In order to achieve this, the chapter will start by giving the reader a lucid description of the theme as well as the subthemes. The theme of Kunene as the "big spender" is broken down into two sub-themes: his cosmopolitan tastes and his wastefulness and/or betrayal. These sub-themes exemplify how the main theme is achieved or constructed. The description of the themes will be followed by an in-depth analysis of examples extracted from the corpus. This includes a critical examination of the ideas with which Kunene has been strongly associated, the key presuppositions of these news narratives and the connotations of these images and forms of language use. The chapter ends with a theoretical discussion of this theme in relation to the literature review and conceptual framework.

5.1. Characteristics of Kunene's spending patterns and the discursive construction of his lavish spending as empowering and disempowering

Kunene's love for the finer things in life has made him a target of media's attention. As discussed (in Chapter 4), one of the many reasons Kunene came under the media spotlight was the amount of money he spent at his birthday party. The expensive clothes he wore and the expensive car he drove were also extensively highlighted. The construction of Kunene as a "big spender" was therefore evidenced in how the media primarily represented the party as "extravagant", as synonymous with "MTV's My Super Sweet 16", "the definition of bling," "exclusive," and the guest list's description as "a gold-diggers dream"(*City Press* 24, October 2010). The party scene was labelled as the "glitz and glamour, tinsel town at its best" (refer to Appendix B, video 1).Some of the descriptions were arguably irrelevant and unnecessary but implicitly and explicitly demonstrated and entrenched the media's view and qualification of Kunene as a "big spender."

Also common to the representation of Kunene as a "big spender" was the dominant appearance of Kunene as a multimillionaire, a tycoon, as opposed to more "natural" or "normal" roles of him being an individual, a father, a husband, or an ordinary businessman. There was a tendency to make known his exaggerated roles, that of him being a multimillionaire, tycoon and so forth. Kunene's lifestyle is presented to us as something out

of the ordinary, as a bizarre spectacle. This was done through pronouncing him as a connoisseur of champagnes, cigars and a purchaser of items of luxury. What follows now are the descriptions of discourses that are manifest in the construction of Kunene as a "big spender."

5.1.1. Cosmopolitan tastes

Kunene's taste for extraordinarily expensive items has been profiled many times in the media. This was achieved by the media's usage of terms such as "Big spender", "Mr Pricey", and "King of Bling", to describe Kunene. The latter links closely to the king discourse discussed in the previous chapter. This discourse is further appropriated in representations of Kunene as the "big spender." Spending a lot of money is a key characteristic of being "royalty." As the king discourse has already been discussed thoroughly, let us then move on to focus on the "bling" aspect. His expensive tastes were also demonstrated by the media's focus on his purchasing of items of luxury that are not only high priced but also exclusive. His taste of high priced champagnes, cigars, cuisine, clothes, shoes, and all things "bling" puts him in a pedestal of the "big spender." 'If it is not expensive, then it is not for him,' is a picture that is embedded in Kunene's representations.

Kunene is seemingly constantly made to answer questions from journalists about the cost of his watches or his clothes and his most expensive items of expenditure. For example, in an interview article with *Sunday Times* journalist, Kunene was asked questions such as "What is the most expensive item you have ever bought for yourself? How much was it and was it special to you?" How often do you go shopping? Do you have a personal shopper?" "On what do you spend most of you money - cars, women, whisky, clothes, or sushi?" (*Sunday Times*, 05 March 2011). In another interview, Jeremy Maggs, asked Kunene "What is the Kenny Kunene brand worth? (Jeremy Maggs interviewing Kunene on his current affairs show *Maggs on Media*, refer to appendix B, video 4, for more information).

Such questions arguably take the attention away from his reasons and motivations of conspicuously consuming. In particular the media's attention to Kunene's clothes relates to how clothing, as explained in the literature review, is a key symbol used to distinguish the leisure class. Consequently, clothes must be "expensive and impractical" such that "they proclaim the unsuitability of labour" (Aldridge 2003: 65). For example, Figure 2 in the

previous section shows Kunene at his birthday celebrations wearing a white suite and a purple bow tie and matching purple belt and Italian leather pointed shoes. The purple detail can also be seen on the lapels. He also sported aviator sunglasses with a light tint coloured lens.

Another image (Figure 8) was taken of him at the J&B Met event standing alongside and holding hands with his friend Malema. He wore a "flashy red-and-white outfit with Swarovski crystal detail on the lapels" (*City Press*, 05. Feb 2011). More so, Kunene's expensive items of clothing are often described in the media. For instance one article states that "Kenny was a real superstar. In his Louis Vuitton shirt, matching man bag...he strutted his stuff in between the cars as people screamed his name" (*The Times*, 17 Feb. 2011). The journalist did not miss the opportunity to foreground the brand of his shirt and bag and in so doing portrayed him as a rampant consumer of international luxury brands.

Figure 6: Kunene and Malema at the pre-launch of club ZAR at the J&B Met event (IOL, 31 Jan 2011)



Kunene was also quoted talking about his love for wearing specially designed clothes. He stated that, "I enjoy wearing David's (a South African renowned designer) clothes because he understands my style. I go to him to make me clothing for every party I throw because I can't wear the same jacket I've already worn" (*City Press*, 05. Feb 2011). These images described above suggest a man who has an expensive taste and who uses his clothes to express himself. For instance, Kunene was quoted explaining his outfit and said "I chose these colours because white represents peace and love for all my friends who have stood by me through all this. Red represents blood running through the haters' veins when they see me do well" (*City Press*, 05. Feb 2011). Evidently, the clothes he wears extend beyond their functional use;

instead, what Kunene wears can be understood as symbols that represent his wealth, power and most significantly his identity. The latter is however often overlooked. The media tends to only focus on exhibiting Kunene's expensive tastes which arguably contributes to a superficial construction of him. And, in instances where they portray him in a superficial way, they tend to frame his consumption one way or the other. For example, the article by *Sunday Times*, titled "How sushi king went from Mr Price to Mr Pricey" (22 May 2011) frames Kunene's consumption using the rags to riches discourse. This discourse as evidenced was adopted by many media to entrench the view of Kunene as a "big spender," who sought the most "pricey" items. As demonstrated by the headline, Kunene is framed as having started from humble beginnings at "Mr Price", a chain store that sells anything from furniture, clothes and other paraphernalia at reasonable prices to buying items that are "pricey."

Through this frame the media constantly portrayed to us Kunene as a spectacle, "an elaborate and remarkable display on a lavish scale" (*The Free Online Dictionary*, 2013). He is packaged and sold to the public through his "pricey" mansion, clothes, designer shoes and bags. Guy Debord in his book, *The* S*ociety of the Spectacle* (1967) argues that the commodities often control those who consume them. The consumers are then passive subjects who fall for the images of material satisfaction through consumption that continually permeates the society. In this case, Kunene is seen as a spectacle and potently so, a victim of the spectacle. He appears to have a desire to attain fulfilment through commodities. This false consciousness is further manufactured and promoted through Kunene, whose lifestyle seemingly adheres to the ideals of a capitalist society. Kunene's lifestyle is to a certain degree an image that pressures us to consume expensive products in order to have a sense of self-worth or to enjoy the life that he currently enjoys.

His well-publicised consumption patterns and expenditures pose him as a template to be emulated. Kunene as a "big spender" is thus evidenced by him being depicted as a 'black diamond' whose success has come to be defined by his peculiar taste for lavish cars, designer brands, his love of a particular make of shoes, clothes and watches, living a high-end lifestyle and enjoying success that was achieved in a short space of time. The following excerpt bears testament to this: "Kunene is the infamous 'black diamond' who clawed his way into up the corporate ladder after being released from prison in 2003 with next to nothing." (*M&G,* 02 Dec 2010)

The so called black diamonds, also known as South Africa's black middle class who possess economic power and affluence, have acquired a reputation from the media as being high rollers who only enjoy the finest things in life. The representation of Kunene in the media as a black diamond does not fall short of this description. His status as a black diamond can be observed in how the media tends to focus on his attempts to always stand out and be seen. Social visibility as argued by O'Cass and McEwen (2004) is an important element or facet of conspicuous consumption. This explains the tendency of the media to pay greater attention to symbolic "showing off" of Kunene's possessions and expenditures. Talking about the bill he accumulated for his 40th birthday party, Kunene is quoted saying in a Veblenesque manner, "'I want to correct your misapprehension that my party cost 700,000 rand. It cost more.'" (*The Times*, 29 Oct 2010). This shows Kunene as unashamed and unapologetic of how much he spent. The pronouncement also shows his boastful pride in his opulent lifestyle. It shows that he is not modest in how he spends his money. He further uses this platform to distinguish himself from others through his expensive taste and his wealth. By so doing Kunene socially and economically separates himself from those who do not have such money to spend.

There were, however, instances where Kunene was given the chance to account to his "wayward" behaviour of spending ostentatiously. He was quoted as saying, "My birthdays were never celebrated when I was growing up, mainly because we couldn't afford it" (*City Press*, 24 Oct. 2010). The afore-mentioned excerpt offers a glimpse into the reasons behind Kunene's opulent lifestyle and suggests that his lifestyle has become a signifying practice. To some extent it explains Kunene's lifestyle as a "big spender" or a showman. His pursuit of an expensive lifestyle is justified because he was deprived of this good life whilst growing up. This highlights Kunene's entitlement to his wealth and the flaunting of it.

However, his entitlement, and perhaps other reasons for his consumption, was not often taken into cognisance in and by most media reports. In other words the reasons behind the copious flaunting of excess were not exhaustively explored by the media. For instance, as chronicled by the above quote, the media often did not recognise more charitable or tolerable motives that influence Kunene's tastes. Thus, by not contextualising the conspicuous consumption, the society is left feeling that Kunene's lifestyle cannot be justified on any grounds. Rather, it is absurd and illogical. The media however, missed the opportunity to mention how social deprivation can play a role in how one leads their lifestyles. In this way, the media reports would have not alienated or vilified Kunene's consumption. This would have left a room for his deprivation to be understood as a possible cause of his conspicuous consumption.

Evidently, the all-important question of "why" is not asked. Instead, the media seems to provide answers for who, when, what, where, when and how. That is, most media did not ask Kunene why he consumes so copiously.

The stories examined in this study largely reveal that Kunene's tastes are often characterised as conspicuously cosmopolitan. The term cosmopolitan has its origin in the Greek language. It can be defined as having "worldwide rather than limited or provincial scope or bearing" or alternatively "composed of persons, constituents, or elements from all or many parts of the world" (*Merriam Webster online dictionary*). The construction of Kunene's expensive tastes pictures him as a cosmopolitan consumer in many ways. His tastes are defined as foreign influenced, because he is described as wearing "Louis Vuitton shirt and a matching handbag," (*City Press*, 17 Feb 2010), as ordering "a yellow Lamborghini valued at around R1.5m, and is shopping for a helicopter" (*Sunday Times*, 14. Nov 2010), and as accumulating an alcohol bill that included "66 bottles of Dom Pérignon, 36 bottles of Cristal, and 32 bottles of 18-year-old Chivas Regal" which amounted to "R500,000 (about $70,000)" (ibid). He too sees himself as a cosmopolitan consumer and takes pride in his "globalness." For example in his interview with Jeremy Maggs on the programme *Maggs on Media* he revealed that: "I am an ambassador of the Ace of Spades, Armand de Brignac which is a number one champagne in the world, Jay Z is the ambassador of the same brand. So it shows how I planned the Kenny Kunene brand to take it global" (Appendix B).

The constant referral to western brands such as Louis Vuitton, Lamborghini's and imported alcohol tellingly illustrate Kunene's cosmopolitan tastes. His fascination with western luxury also paints him as a cosmopolitan consumer. On the face of it, these representations of Kunene as a cosmopolitan consumer evoke two polarised constructions–one of African essentialism and the other of western universalism. Cosmopolitan consumers are often seen as choosing the global over the local (Beck 2006, Roberts and Arnett, 2008). This is indeed problematic as cosmopolitan consumers risk being labelled as finding local consumption patterns unsophisticated and lacking variety or being too traditional for their taste. Such views have come to define Kunene's consumption as betraying his national roots and going against the supposed shared vision of nation building or national patriotism. The proponents of anti-cosmopolitan views perceive cosmopolitanism as responsible for the erosion of personal and national identity. Hildebert (1937: 458) thus defined cosmopolitanism as existing "among persons whom fortune has relieved them the immediate struggle for

existence and from pressing social responsibility and who can afford to indulge their fads and enthusiasms." The same definition can be related to how Kunene's patterns of consumption are depicted in the media.

Kunene was largely depicted through the prism of a conspicuous cosmopolitan consumer. This was well illustrated in an article by *Mail and Guardian* which expressed how "Vavi launched a tirade against Kunene following his R700 000 birthday blowout, much of it spent on expensive *imported* alcohol" (*M&G*, 02 Dec. 2010). Thus not only was Kunene criticised for his expensive tastes, he was also criticised for his conspicuous consumption of international imports. His consumption of "expensive imported alcohol" was referred to frequently, for example, it was pointed out in the *Times Live* (02 Feb 2011) article how "He owns a 70-year-old 200ml bottle of *Mortlach whisky*, which he displays at his Sandton ZAR Lounge." His cosmopolitan tastes were further made evident during his interview with Jeremy Maggs,

> Jeremy Maggs: Why do you wear two wrist watches?
>
> Kenny: Because I am global, you know, I talk to people in New York I talk to people in LA. So, I don't have the seconds to calculate six hours backwards, I can afford it why not. It is also branding, to say this is two watches and you associate with Kenny Kunene. (Maggs in Media interview, (Appendix B, video 4)

Moreover, Kunene as a cosmopolitan consumer speaks to his peculiar taste of spending his money on many objects of international origin. The more international, the more credible the object of consumption is. His love for Italian cars such as Lamborghinis, Italian shoes, Cuban cigars, Japanese cuisine (sushi), imported French booze such as Moet and Chandon's Dom Perignon and Luis Roederer's Cristal Champagnes and the Chivas Regal whisky as captured by the media paints a picture of him as a cosmopolitan or global consumer and ultimately a "big spender." The consumption of these items and brands can be seen as fun, enjoyable and pleasurable. A video taken at his party (appendix B, video 1) showed Kunene looking at the patrons who attended his party while nodding his head with a big grin on his face; the video clearly showed that Kunene and his guests were having fun.

While the consumption of these expensive luxury brands is symbolic of having fun they, by extension, also serve as his own way of communicating his spending power, power which

black people never had during the apartheid era. The media however, often vilify him for his expenditures. This research thus emphasises the importance of providing context, and not solely focusing on Kunene's "showing off" and excessive spending as this way of reporting tends to feed into this narrative of excess. This then effectively prevents the public from examining the meanings of consumption, as symbolic of empowerment and as attempts of eradicating negative effigies on blackness (Krige, 2011; 294).

More so, the media primarily defined the birthday party as a display of a medley of objects or activities of consumption from different foreign countries. Patrons experienced Italy in the form of the champagnes, clothes, shoes, watches; Ireland in the form of whisky. And of course, Japan, in the form of the sushi. As demonstrated in the previous sections, it is the latter that caused an uproar, and led to Kunene's acts being labelled as anti-revolutionary by the ANC. This is illustrated by Gwede Mantashe, ANC secretary general's statement, "We furthermore reiterate [sic] our condemnation to [sic] the act of serving sushi on a woman's body, as this act is anti-ANC and anti-revolutionary" (*Times Live*, 31 Jan. 2011).

Describing Kunene's actions as counter revolutionary, paints him as an opponent of the strides made by the ANC. He is seen as challenging the dominant or established order underwritten by socialist values. This enhances his actions as a threat to the fundamental change effected by the ANC or a betrayal of the ANC's vision of social transformation. This directly links with the manipulation/ empowerment dialectic. By using words such as "Anti-ANC" and "anti- revolutionary", Kunene's consumption is depicted in a one-dimensional form as selling-out, as a form of false consciousness, and as succumbing to capitalism. Some media reports went beyond such accounts of anti-revolution, and saw Kunene's actions as depraved.

However, eating sushi has more implications for how Kunene is viewed in the public discourse. Not only is eating sushi off a naked woman's body anti-revolutionary and anti-ANC, it is also seen as being cosmopolitan instead of ethnocentric in the form of consumption. Sushi is of foreign origin, Japanese to be exact. Thus, Kunene is often seen as "un-African" in his tastes or preferences. His choice of consumption practices points to the absence of his pride in local brands and the loss of his cultural identity. This also echoes anti-cosmopolitan views which are founded on the premise that cosmopolitanism is a threat to distinct national identity (See Miller, 1995: 14; Hildebert 1937: 458). Needless to say, this is seen as the corrosion of moral values and traditional ways of being.

Seen this way, Kunene's exhibitionism is constructed as abandoning his moral ways for western ideals or way of living. The same critique levelled against Kunene is similar to the one received by the Les Sapeurs, a subculture in Congo known for wearing expensive European clothes (Gondola 1999: 26). Not only does the group's lifestyle symbolise the crass materialism that Kunene has been accused of, but it also highlights the hyper consumption of western items over traditional regal. Other similarities that can be drawn from Kunene and the Les Sapeurs lifestyles are that their consumption is used as a site to define their identity. Their clothes are channels through which they exercise their political power and in Kunene's case, both political and economic power. Bourdieu sees nothing wrong with embracing foreign culture. He argues that being open to and embracing foreign culture is seen by the middle classes as being "liberated" and espousing a "laid back" way of life (Bourdieu 1984: 295-315). Thus, by embracing the foreign culture, Kunene is in a way practicing a form of "distinction", and is communicating his class position.

Media reports, discourses and sources scrutinised in reference to Kunene also seemed to suggest that South Africa has produced a new class of black elite who seem to have "lost their roots": "These men worship at the altar of naked materialism, at which bling, veneer and avarice have replaced "old-fashioned" values" (*The Times*, 31. Jan 2011). This ties in precisely to the discourse of cosmopolitanism as a loss of culture and national identity which are often cited as direct impacts of embracing cosmopolitanism. The critique from detractors on Kunene's consumption culture as "un-African" raises many questions. Questions of what is not "African" about Kunene's consumption and what is, as well as who dictates how African one is, crop up.

These questions point us to an ambiguous topic that requires us to define often complex, contested and subjective views on what is African and what is not. However, it is not in the scope of this paper to give a detailed account of what is "African" about Kunene's consumption and what is not. Rather this research intends to take a critical look at where these claims of "un-Africanism" stem from and to attempt to uncover what the implications of such representations are. Notions of what is considered "African" and "un-African" are fundamentally tied to the afro-centric ideologies and claims of the African value system that is entrenched in the principle of Ubuntu or mutual aid and consequently, the claim that African people have abandoned their value systems by trying to embrace a euro-centric value

system of liberalism[6] and capitalism. Neoliberalism is a doctrine driven by individual or personal interests (see Peter 2001) and therefore stands in sharp contrast to the African value of ubuntu that puts mutual or collective benefit at the forefront of individual benefit. Therefore, the adoption of principles of neo-liberalism is highlighted as discarding principles of ubuntu premised on collective solidarity and community interdependence.

These ideas also stem from Post- colonial theory which deconstructs colonial ideologies of power that privilege Western Cultural practices (Giroux 1992, cited in Vivian, Agbaw 2008: 4). These compelling moral arguments have become rooted in the African way of being so much so that Kunene by consuming products and practising a lifestyle that is considered of western origin was portrayed as betraying the African value system. This discourse stigmatises Kunene as the "other." The portrayal of Kunene as "un-African" suggests that he is fake and falls short of the archetypal African. The following section discusses in detail how Kunene was represented as having betrayed these principles through his consumption.

5.1.2. Wastefulness and betrayal

The theme of wastefulness and betrayal was very common in most texts scrutinised. The wastefulness and betrayal theme came across for three reasons. Firstly, Kunene's spending of a huge sum of money on the party, secondly for allegedly using the poor to enrich himself and lastly for using women as platters to serve his sushi and in so doing objectifying them. On the face of it, the party was seen as a waste of money that could have been spent on things that would have been of benefit to the poor. Kunene was chastised for spending thousands on the party. His big spending ways were seen as wasteful and unnecessary, especially considering that South Africa is an unequal society. *Sunday Times'* article "The poor who were 'used and misled"' (22 May 2011) as well as an excerpt from the article, which says, "A miner said the men were '"hurt"' and felt '"betrayed"' when Kunene bragged that one of his belts was worth R3500" detail how Kunene's spending patterns were often deemed as irresponsible, unnecessary and wasteful acts of betrayal.

The article cited above clearly highlights the betrayal of miners by Kunene. The headline tellingly illustrates that the poor were betrayed by Kunene who used and misled them for his own benefit. Similarly the excerpt quotes a miner, who alleges that Kunene promised him and other miners "the world to get the mining rights - but ditched them soon afterwards" (*Sunday*

[6] Liberalism is used here to refer to a philosophy which advocates and promotes the freedom of the individual and government

Times, 22 May 2011). His description emphasises feelings of betrayal. More so, the use of the words "hurt" and "betrayed" in the same sentence, as Kunene boasts about his expenditure, tries to draw parallels between Kunene's lifestyle and the consumption patterns that betray the poor. Ultimately, it is Kunene's opulent lifestyle and conspicuous consumption patterns that are responsible for his betrayal of the miners. His spending patterns are seen as representative of betrayal, as his economic power was supposed to trickle down to the rest of the poor black community and in turn improve their lives. Instead he has kept his riches for himself and has forgotten about the miners through whom he gained his wealth and his ability to afford the R3500 belt.

This theme of betrayal is arguably rooted in the socialist values that underwrote the liberation movement. Because Kunene is politically allied with certain figures in that movement, he is singled out as betraying those morals, even though he never explicitly claimed allegiance to them. He is seen as unashamedly trumpeting on the founding principles of the ANC and turning his back on the very movement and ideals that made him who he is. He is also seen as choosing personal gain over the interests of the black poor majority. This is evident in how he was shown as having acquired his power through the sacrifices of poor miners, whom he discarded to a life of poverty and misery after he accumulated his wealth.

We also see the theme of wastefulness and betrayal most acutely in the following sentence: Another resident said he felt like "putting a bomb" in McKenzie's and Kunene's nightclub, ZAR, when he saw TV images of them flaunting their wealth. Kunene was "eating our money", said another man. "We want the government to revoke the licence. If not, we will see another 1976 uprising in Soweto" (*Sunday Times*, 22 May 2011).

This sense of betrayal is seen as culminating in acts of retaliation and the re-emergence of older forms of resistance, as evidenced by the resident threatening Kunene with the "1976 uprising in Soweto." The resident's sentiments suggest that Kunene's actions are not any different to those of the apartheid government. Thus, by waging an uprising at Kunene he discursively paints Kunene as the enemy and an oppressor. This was not the first time that Kunene's actions were compared to the oppressive regimes of apartheid or colonialism. In his opinion piece titled "Kunene has a special place in history" (*News24*, 22 Nov 2010), Prince Mashele likened Kunene's behaviour to that of the white oppressive rule. He argued that "Kunene is a black incarnate of white slave owners who used to derive great pleasure from the humiliation of other human beings."

At the centre of this betrayal and wastefulness theme is the critique of Kunene's conspicuous consumption lifestyle as indicative of his shunning the ideals of the struggle of liberation for a capitalistic lifestyle. The media tended to merely represent Kunene as wasteful for spending a huge sum of money in just one night, and thus enhancing the irrationality of the party. Thus, unsurprisingly, reading the texts, the research found negative attitudes towards Kunene for maintaining his expensive lifestyle at the expense of the poor's dignity. The article by *City Press* illustrate these sentiments: "Even the flimsiest understanding of ethical conduct suggests that our behaviour must not mock those whose circumstances are worse than ours (*City Press*, 07 Nov 2010). It suggests that Kunene by spending and flaunting his money is mocking those who are less fortunate.

Kunene's spending and the poor are yet again linked in an article by the *Sunday Times*, "It is not the amount that he spent, but the grotesque public display of conspicuous consumption that is in bad taste in a country where so many are struggling to feed their families. Sure, spend your money as you wish. But don't rub the noses of the poor in it" (*Sunday Times*, 31 Oct 2010). These articles create a particular picture of Kunene as a selfish individual who will enrich himself at any cost and an individual who is indifferent to the struggles of the poor or subordinate groups. In these instances, Kunene was painted as a slave master, who enjoyed the "privilege" of treating subordinate groups, especially black women like slaves (*News24*, 22 Nov 2010). Words and labels such as "tacky showman," "shameful" and businessman with a "tendency to use cheap shock tactics" (*The Times* editorial, 31 Jan 2011) reflect a deliberate choice and provides an indication of how the editor attempts to frame the story. Thus, his tastes are not just expensive but they are cheap as well. This creates some sort of contradiction.

Indeed, Kunene's opulent lifestyle, being labelled as a symbol of his lack of morals was a recurring theme. The notion that Kunene has a moral obligation to help his fellow poor black people was a popular frame used in the media. This theme created the idea that Kunene owes black people and should, instead of conspicuously consuming, use the money he has to help the poor. Because he is rich, he is expected to help others to be in the same position as he is. For example, the following excerpts illustrate this point:

- "As for bullied Kenny Kunene, as a wonderful example of a savvy businessman in post-apartheid South Africa, he should be showing us poorer folk how to create wealth not how to squander it like there's no old age to plan for"(*City Press,* 07 Nov 2010).
- "If the new rich really want to be role-models, they must come out of their own bubble for a moment and inspire the youth through their hard work, not hard spending" (*City Press*, 06 Nov 2010).

These tie in very well with some of the perspectives discussed in the literature review. In particular, Matthews (2010) in her research looked at how the African elite were expected to contribute to empowering the poor. In other words one must become a 'patriotic bourgeoisie.' But Matthews (2010: 173) problematised this way of thinking based on the fact that it is assumed that because "these elites share some kind of identity with the poor African majorities, they will be able to determine what the interests of the poor are and will be motivated to act in accordance with these interests."

A case in point into how the black elite are expected and assumed to act in the best interests of the less privileged can be evidenced in Zwelinzima Vavi and Kunene's "public spat." The "public spat" alluded to in the preceding sections (see p. 58) points to an issue that has been briefly touched upon previously but deserves further analysis or discussion. In particular how Vavi was quoted in the media deserves special discussion. Vavi's condemnation of Kunene's birthday celebration was defined as, "'spitting in the face of the poor...a decadent sushi orgy, where he and is guests posed for photographs nibbling sushi off the stomachs of shapely semi-naked human platters" (*Sowetan,* 28 Oct. 2010).

The choice of the headline for the article, "Elite 'spitting in faces of poor'" frames the birthday celebration as the elite or Kunene "spitting in faces of poor." The words of Vavi are reproduced to emphasise the fact that Kunene is regarded as guilty of "spitting in the faces of the poor" as well as to regurgitate the discourse of Kunene's "cheapness" – he is materially wealthy but morally/socially bankrupt and lacking class. Interestingly, the phrase "spitting in the faces of the poor" is being distanced by the use of quotation marks, in order to immediately inform the reader that these are not the words of the journalist or newspaper *per se*, but it is tactical as it still gets the reader's attention instantly. It is worth mentioning that spitting in someone's face is considered one of the most offensive acts. Spitting literally

dribbles contempt and it is the noxious, viscous disdain of the act that makes it such a powerful and intimate insult. The article foregrounds this metaphor, extracted from Vavi's commentary on the party, to entrench the view that the only thing that matters about the party and hence Kunene is that he disrespects the poor. Spitting in the faces of the poor conveys disrespect of the poor- an act of humiliation.

The article does not delve deeper to understand and unpack the reasons the "elite" feel the need to conspicuously consume or in this case "blow up to R700 000 in one night." More so, the article does not give Kunene a platform to respond. This does not only silence Kunene but it also frames Kunene in a less favourable way. By giving priority to what Vavi has to say and not accessing Kunene's views, he is arguably disempowered. Furthermore, the article does not source other people who can give a background of what happened at the party and instead chooses to go with Vavi's description of the event. Only the perspective of Vavi is presented. It is only in a few sentences later that the journalist mentions why the elite are "spitting in the face of the poor."

By solely quoting Vavi, the journalist does not present a balanced view of the events. By excluding the opinions of other people involved, in particular Kunene, it can naturally be assumed that he or she is on Vavi's side; given that "those who are ideologically close will be given primary attention as possible sources of opinions" (Van Dijk, 1988: 85).The article is one-sided, because only anti-Kunene voices are represented in the form of quotations. One-sided quotations do not offer the reader a full spectrum of information. They also reflect the reporter's bias, as they choose to relate with one view or disseminate that selected view (Van Dijk, 1988).

More so, the voices of the poor are the most marginalised in the article. The poor who are apparently being spat on are omitted from the news report. The reasons for not accessing the poor are not given, yet they are the main subjects of the article. They are the victims of Kunene's extravagant lifestyle. This begs the question of why are they then silenced and spoken for? Does it mean they do not have voice or the agency to speak for themselves? This only causes the poor to be further marginalised. Everyone speaks, the trade unionists, the women's league of African National Congress, the rich who are themselves criticised, the political elite, civil society, but the poor's voices are absent. The answers to these questions lie in the relative process of news framing, where official sources are foregrounded as the primary sources that set the boundaries of legitimate discourse (what is talked about and how)

(Henry &Tator, 2002). The media, in so doing manipulates the reader by using selective and authoritative voices to convey the message that certain points of view are more correct, legitimate, reliable, and significant while leaving out other voices. The words of those in power are therefore taken as self-evident truths and the words of those that are not in power are dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate, or without substance (Van Dijk, 2000).

Moving along, the article in question also quotes Vavi, warning the public of "predatory elites" who "were encouraging everyone else to adopt greedy, hyena-like behaviour." (*Sowetan*, 28 Oct. 2010). The overall article demonstrably paints the elite as the ones initiating actions: "They spit at the faces of the poor," they "blow up to R700 000 in one night," they "encourage everyone to adopt greedy-hyena-like behaviour," and they "host victory parties to scavenge on the carcass of the people." The elite are thus seen as agents or villains and the poor as the victims or the ones at the receiving end.

This counter discourse is presented in order to undermine the former picture painted of Kunene in distinctly royalty tropes. His wealth is thus made obscene, vulgar, dirty, ugly, even though it is was at once put forward as a kind of glittering example of post-apartheid economic freedom. The author indulges in many quotes in which the elite or Kunene and his practices in this case was described in distinctly animalistic terms: "hyena-like behaviour, predatory elite, scavenge on the carcass, like typical hyenas they are" (*Sowetan* 28 Oct. 2010). Verbs such as blow up, secured and nouns such as victory, add a militaristic sense (or use "militarization of discourse" in Fairclough's words, 1992b: 195). For example, one commonly speaks of the general who led the troops to victory or that it was a decisive victory for the army. Soldiers blow up the tanker with grenades and soldiers secured the sites or surrounding areas and set security checkpoints to ensure safety. Arguably both sets of metaphors used in this context serve to dehumanise the elite. The animalistic metaphors depict the elite as irrational thereby reinforcing the equation of the black-elite as animals.

The militaristic metaphors on the other hand, make the elite seem violent and dangerous and in so doing emphasise their "otherness." The danger in such depictions is the way in which they represent and connote their subjects as animals that should be captured and eliminated. The military metaphors used in this context are served to highlight the existence of a threat. The threat is also justified because the "predatory elite" are not sensible or thinking straight. As explained by postcolonial theory, these metaphors amount to the "othering" of Kunene.

His construction as an animal, a threat, is fixed in the colonial mentality of black people as out of control savages. Posel (2010: 163) argues that "in nineteenth-century South Africa, the regulation of black consumption as central to 'the civilizing mission' and its efforts to produce God fearing subjects who were both docile workers and disciplined consumers." The "civilising mission" that Posel referes to suggests that Black people and by extension their consumption patterns were seen as uncivilised, and as vulnerable to irresponsibleness, destructiveness and wastefulness; thus the need to control and civilise them by means of the "civilising mission" policy. Vavi was further quoted in the *Sowetan* article warning "that drastic action might be needed to bring the "predatory elite" to their senses."(*Sowetan*, 28 Oct. 2010). Vavi's utterances reflect these views of Kunene as out of control senseless savages who need an intervention similar to that of the "civilising mission."

The quote also omitted the most important part of "who" will enforce this "drastic action" (*Sowetan,* 28 Oct 2010). When prompted to respond to an open letter that Kunene had written in response to his attack, Vavi refused to comment and said "I won't be drawn in. Who is he?"... However, Vavi later said: "I can't roll around in the mud with a pig. One would never win" (*News24*, 29 Oct 2010). Vavi chose yet another animal as a metaphor to describe Kunene. His pronouncements portray Kunene as a nonentity and his lifestyle as equivalent to that of a pig.

Particularly apparent when examining discussions of the party and Kunene, news media reports were seemingly of the view that not only is South Africa producing a new class of black elite who seem to have abandoned their roots but also have created a new class whose "success manifests itself in a lavish life of luxury which is characterised by excess" (*Daily News*, 2010, p.16). Pleasure is "derived from the humiliation of other human beings" (*News24,* 2010). Significantly, the black elite and in particular Kunene is assumed to be a disgrace to their "poverty stricken communities." His unrelenting flaunting of wealth is seen as "An embarrassment of the riches" (*M&G,* 2010), "new black money behaving badly" (*The Star*, 05. Nov. 2010).The public are also called to intervene and rid the society of the crude ostentation by the black elites that have befallen the country. They are warned that failure to do so will be at "our own peril" (*The Times*, 31 Jan 2011). The construction of Kunene as a threat is evident in the following example: "Kunene should not be allowed to become the poster-boy of achievement in the new South Africa. And if we allow him to, it will be at our own peril" (*Times Live*, 31 Jan. 2011).

Most notably, the journalist mobilises the public through interpellation; this can be witnessed in the use of words such as "we" and "our". Another point relates to the way in which a speculative prediction is made without any form of proof or sustenance. This can be observed, for example, in the second sentence as in the following: "And if we allow him to, it will be at our own *peril* (*The Times* 31 Jan 2011).

This is a subjective statement in that no supporting evidence is provided for the reporter's prediction. By using the modal verb "will", the reporter indicates what Halliday (1994: 355) calls "subjective probability." It is interesting to note that the article in *City Press* (7 Nov.2010) entitled "Fiddling while Rome burns is nothing new' also uses exactly the same phraseology in their description of the danger that Kunene may cause. Reporting on the dangers of the likes of Kunene spending obscene amounts of money, the article states: "Doing it in a country like ours where the gap between the have-plenties and the have-nothings gapes *dangerously* is a bit like setting off the fireworks near the flammable 50-year-old Glenfiddich Scotch: ill-advised and *potentially explosive*." (*City Press*, 07 Nov. 2010 Italics, my emphasis).

As seen above, interestingly, the similar expressions (italicised) are used to describe the situation in two different newspapers, namely *The Times* and *City Press.* Here again the modality of probability that Halliday (1994) spoke about is once again used and a subjective comment without any proof or substantiation is given and presented to the reader as an objective prediction. From these representations one can deduce that being a black elite and conspicuously consuming in the post-apartheid era can pose a great challenge – causing potential social unrest and upheaval caused by the poor. The quotes above that speak against Kunene's spending as a threat are trying to highlight the imminence of a revolt of the poor as a result of his lavish lifestyle. The quotes also are attempts to emphasise the growing frustration by the poor which results from the huge gap between them and the rich who, like Kunene, continue to rub their wealth in their faces.

On the one hand it can be empowering and at the same time disempowering. Being the black elite in the post-apartheid South Africa has come with so many rights and most importantly more responsibilities. The latter however holds more significance than the former. Indeed one's rights do not matter; instead it is the responsibilities that are deemed important. Black elites enjoy the right to the freedom of movement and association. The black elite can enjoy their shopping in fancy malls without the fear of being chucked out. They enjoy dining in

expensive restaurants and taking long walks in suburbia without being looked as suspect. They can and do play golf in the lush greens. However, according to the media discourse, the patrons who enjoy these sorts of privileges also bear the burdens of being responsible consumers of these privileges. The black elite often find themselves polarised about how they choose to enjoy the fruits of their hard work. Many of them find themselves being crucified for enjoying their successes. One finds how they often have to justify themselves and their consumption patterns. Media discourse suggests that there are special responsibilities of the black elite to the poor. Benjamin (2005: 27) argues that black people often become ambassadors of their race. He argues that "one of the heaviest race burdens the black elite must bear is the notion of responsibility in empowering the masses" (Benjamin 2005: 27). He continues by stating that, "This notion embodies a strongly held ethos among various strata of the black community that blacks who are "making it" in society have a "special obligation to uplift the masses." Interestingly, similar arguments are not made about the white elite. White people who have "made it" are not held to the same moral obligation as blacks. While this double standard is worthy of further analysis, it is beyond the scope of this research to examine it.

Moving along, the black elites, or Kunene's attempts of enjoying his life by throwing expensive parties and drinking expensive champagnes can be seen as him trying to be accepted and to gain membership into elite society. He therefore does this by emulating the life of upper classes. In other words, as a "former" member of the lower class, Kunene's voracious consumption is seen as a deliberate attempt to mimic the upper classes.

Veblen (1899) in his theory of conspicuous consumption recognised this competitive culture of emulation as central to consumption. This has a number of implications on Kunene's consumption. What the theory of conspicuous consumption implies, is that Kunene's consumption cannot be said to be authentic or original as it is seen as a mimicry of the other class' consumption. The competition is also emphasised in the media, for example, Kuli Roberts in her article "Kunene's sushi is a small fry" dismissed Kunene's party as basically a failed mimicry of the parties thrown by the "Brits" (a term referring to citizens of Britain). She states, "If Kunene thinks he can throw a party, he has nothing on the Brits" (*The Times,* 04. Nov. 2010). This shows that the upper class, in this case the "Brits," have set the standard and have defined how leisure activities should be and the lower classes, the likes of Kunene, constantly strive to indulge in those activities according to the standards of the upper classes.

But regardless of how hard the lower classes try, theirs will always be a "small fry." This discourse also suggests that white culture is a yardstick through which black people have always measured their success. Posel (2010: 170) holds that "sophisticated or affluent blackness was deemed a form of racial mimicry."

Here one notices a discourse of betrayal of the poor, of shame and disgust. This depiction arguably bears resonance to how Veblen in his theory of conspicuous consumption predominantly focused on painting the leisure class as "extravagant, ostentatious, deliberately wasteful: these people are parasites, yet they enjoy, through the power of emulation, disproportionate power in shaping public taste" (Aldridge 2003: 66).

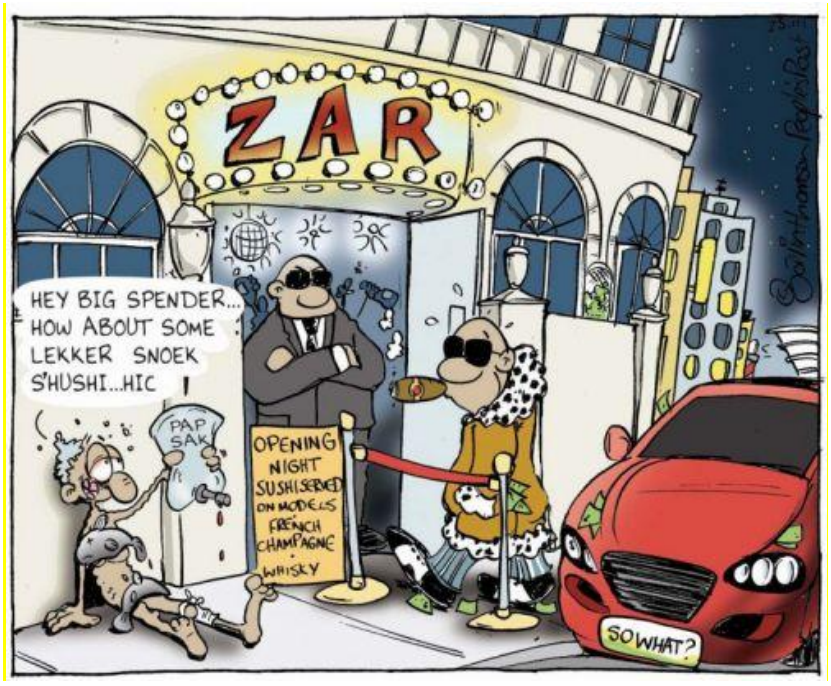
Figure 7: A cartoon from M & G (22 Dec 2010)



The cartoon in Figure 9 portrays Kunene and other black elites' betrayal of the poor. The cartoon by Zapiro depicts Kunene and other officials, such as President Jacob Zuma who is immediately recognisable by the infamous shower on his head and Khulubuse Zuma,easily recognised by his weight, eating sushi. The cartoon illustrates the "good life" of certain ANC politicians and their related business partners eating "the last sushi" on a naked model's body. Vavi can also be seen in the cartoon, but refusing to join the party as he objected to the R700,000 spent on the event and the subjugation of the woman who served as a sushi platter. The cartoon is a typical caricature of the night of Kunene's birthday party where he served sushi on a half-naked woman's body and where some of his guests of honour were well-known members of the ANC.

As stressed by Schroeder (2006) in his model of critical analysis of visual text, it is important to take into account the cultural and historical context of the visual text. Firstly, this cartoon can be genealogically linked to the era of Dutch art, which resembles a group portraits and hence the cartoon can be classified as a masculine genre (Schroeder 2006: 3). Schroeder holds that "historically, men inhabited most portraits of groups" (ibid). Thus the cartoon seemingly is underwritten by a gender discourse. Secondly, still on the cultural context of the cartoon, it is evident that it resembles the parody of Leonardo Da Vinci's iconic painting, "The Last Supper", which illustrated the Biblical passage of Christ telling his twelve apostles, "One of you shall betray me," at his last meal. The research argues that this is used in this context to capture and symbolise Kunene's betrayal of the black poor. Jacob Zuma is seated in the same position as Jesus in Da Vinci's famous painting, and he takes centre stage in the image. More so, "The Last Sushi" emblazoned on the table cloth is symbolic of Kunene's announcement that he will not be "throwing or attending any further such sushi parties" as he has "nothing but respect for the leadership of the ANC and the guiding principles of the Movement" (*Sowetan*, 02 Feb 2011).

Figure 8: A cartoon from africartoons (25 Jan 2011)



In the cartoon above, the same modality of ridicule as the one observed in the above analysis is applied. The cartoon in question shows a figure resembling Kunene walking into club Zar,

dressed in what looks like a fur coat, wearing sunglasses (Kunene's trademark), smoking a cigar and holding notes on his hand, while stepping on more notes on his way in. Behind him is a red car, presumably belonging to him, with personalised number plates stating "so what?" and more bank notes sticking out of the car's bonnet. In front of him stands a tall, well-built man, also wearing sunglasses and his arms folded. Kunene' gaze is fixed to a man on his left, sitting on the floor, on the far side, naked and covered by dead fish on his chest and genital area. The man stretches out his hand holding a bag with words 'pap sak' written on it. As illustrated in the speech blurb, he asks Kunene, "Hey Big spender…How about some lekkersnoek sushi…Hic." Kunene is being ridiculed– the poor person is smacking fun of him by inviting him to eat some "snoek" off his body. This could be read as an appeal – give me some attention, like you gave the girls in their lingerie. But the gender dynamics makes it laughable – as a macho man like Kunene would never eat off a man's body, and especially not a poor, old, dirty drunk man! The poor figure in the cartoon thus exposes Kunene's biases, both economic and gender, and make him look a little foolish, as well as exposing that he doesn't actually care about the poor.

The cartoon further signifies that Kunene has so much money to a point where he has some of his money stuffed in his car's bonnet and some of the money littered on the doorway of the club Zar. He is greedy and he rather keep his money than share it with the poor. What is also striking about the cartoon is how Kunene, just like in some newspaper articles, is silenced. He does not have a voice and just looks on. Kunene's silence in this instance suggests that he is not responsive to the plight of the poor. He is shown as being selfish and greedy, opting to walk on his bank notes and stash them in his bonnet, rather than to give it to the poor man. The man on the floor connotatively represents the impoverished conditions of the poor who have to suffer while Kunene lives a good life. The artist uses the cartoon to criticise Kunene for not doing anything to uplift and help the poor and to also portray the wide gap between the elite and the poor.

While Kenny is silenced in this cartoon, he has had a lot to say in defence of his consumption patterns. In an open piece, titled "I'll spend what I like" Kunene, criticised his critics, in particular, Vavi and said "I (sic) should not have to defend what I (sic) spend my money on - a huge milestone in my life - when it's (sic) honest money spent on honest fun" (*The Times*, 29 Oct 2010). Offering a counterpoint to the argument that he is indifferent to the suffering of the poor, Kunene was quoted as saying, "You speak of my party as if I only care about the elite. I am having a follow-up party this coming weekend for the underprivileged and poor,

who are also part of my life, and always will be" (*The Times*, 29 Oct. 2010). He also went further to assert his loyalty to the poor emphasising how his success has inspired young black people, "Today in my office I have piles of proposals from young black people who would never dream of going to the same people criticising me. Those young people have confidence in me and not in those people because they know they are useless, and will not help them" (*Sowetan*, 21 Sept. 2011).

The cartoons also show the power dynamics between those who have and those who do not. Figure 10, pointedly shows Kunene in the position of power and superiority compared to the old man sitting on the floor and powerlessly seeking help from Kunene. The power relationship is therefore expressed vividly. Kunene is powerful by virtue of him having money and the poor man calling him the "big spender" also reinforces his power. The discursive constructions evident in the cartoon discussed above run through the representation of Kunene as a "big spender." That is to say, representations of Kunene as a "big spender" are constantly defined in relation to the poor. Media have evidently drawn parallels between Kunene's big spending lifestyle with the "poor masses." This necessitates an inquiry into why the representation of Kunene's wealth is so tightly linked to the poverty of the masses?

5.2. Moral panics and the irony of power in consumption

This section attempts to situate the findings in theory and the literature review in order to understand and trace the emergence of these discourses discussed above. The research noted that there was an inclination to dismiss Kunene's consumption as vulgar and unbridled. Such representations are rooted in apartheid-inspired definitions of blackness and whiteness. For example, as argued by Posel (2010: 167) people "judged to be black were deemed to be less deserving of the economic opportunities" and the privilege of "upward mobility and social sophistication" was conferred to whiteness. Hence, black poverty or *in ipso facto* racial inequalities were seen as a natural occurrence as opposed to a socially engineered process. The research will however elaborate on how this was made possible at a later stage of this section.

The research also noted that there is a class discourse in the manner in which Kunene and his consumption patterns were represented in the media. This speaks to the problematic nature of the concept of empowerment or, more generally, power. While there is no set definition of empowerment, the term has proved to be a complex one in post-apartheid South Africa. For a

black man like Kunene, empowerment means enjoying the freedoms that were not afforded to him previously. It means in more ways than one, being empowered and also showing or rather producing evidence of your empowerment. The latter is, however, more meaningful or perhaps more tangible. The latter serves as a stamp or irrefutable proof of empowerment. That is to say, for one to be truly empowered there ought to be a significant visual proof or evidence that shows to the public that one is in fact liberated. Empowerment is more often than not defined in terms of visible or obvious manifestations. Empowerment should always be transparent. Empowerment and hence success is thus often defined in superficial or materialistic way. This links very well to the discourse of Kunene as a "big spender," where dominant attention was paid to the cost of his clothes, car and his party.

Thus, being a "big spender" is all done through seeking material possessions which will be obvious to the eye. These not only serve as extensions of Kunene's power but they also certify or reaffirm his empowerment. This is exactly what some of the members of the black elites are doing today. Like mining magnate Khulubuse Zuma, Kunene has found the need to show off how economically liberated he is. One could see this as nothing but actions or deeds that should be celebrated, given their ability to motivate and inspire others of the possibility of a black man to make it, as a marker that signifies the dawn of a new era of opportunities and perhaps a culmination of economic oppression. Others have dismissed these acts as devoid of morals and inspiration whereby the black bourgeoisie are then seen as having sold out to the interests of white capital.

Evidently, the empowering potential of consumption exists in a dialectic relation with disempowerment such that the experience of being economically liberated and openly engaging in consumption can simultaneously be represented as empowering and disempowering for Kunene. At a technical level there are also many developments that run counter to the heightened expectations for the empowerment of the disadvantaged. Iqani (2012a) captures this dynamic relation of this irony of consumption by arguing that on the one hand consumption can be empowering and on the other, disempowering. The empowered in this case are a small minority of black elite and the disempowered are a large proportion of the black poor.

The likes of Kunene are represented as entrenching and perpetuating the disempowerment of the poor by ignoring their fate and not sharing their wealth with them. The poor are thus implied to be marginalised and disempowered while the greedy elite enrich themselves. Thus,

Kunene's spending patterns, a show for his empowerment, are seen as contributing to the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. The discursive links made between these two concepts are that Kunene's consumption patterns incorporate both elements of empowerment and disempowerment. Therefore, power as a concept that is central to consumption and also to this study proves to be a slippery and ironic concept. In the same vein, Foucault and de Tocqueville (1969) cited in Miller (1995: 11) spoke of power as "diffuse and ambivalent, simultaneously liberating and oppressive." This shows how power can be ironic, in that while it can be liberating, it can also be oppressive.

The analysis has showed how Kunene's consumption patterns were portrayed on the one hand as unbridled, distasteful, greedy and corrupt and on the other hand as glamorous, glitzy and global. Dutton (1997: 73) explains that the notion that black elite consumption is "unbridled" stems from a colonial and racist ideology. She holds that the "ideology of racism explains white rule in Africa and Asia in terms of white culture as 'civilised' or 'developed' and black culture as 'primitive' or at worst 'savage'" (ibid). This therefore cements the general view that all things modern and the high-end lifestyle are a culture of white people and consequently that conspicuous consumption and leisure activities are implicitly white. It also implies that the notion of a black identity that is "different from the rest of us" is allowed to stand (Matthews 2010).Whiteness is naturalised as associated with wealth, and blackness with poverty, so when that is overturned, the power structures respond by labelling black wealth as immoral, vulgar, and a betrayal. The association of blackness with poverty was done to secure and naturalise the "superiority" of whiteness and to maintain white distinction and to annihilate the threat to the status quo (Iqani 2012c). Iqani (2012c) further noted how as a result, black consumption was subverted and downplayed by English-language press in South African during the 1990s.

As argued by Posel (2010: 168) "From this perspective, then, whiteness was an entitlement to privilege and relative affluence; blackness became an official judgement about being unworthy of certain modes and orders of consumption." Thus, Posel argues, black consumption was always critiqued on the basis of it being a mimicry of whiteness, or what Zine Magubane terms "racial impersonation" (Magubane 2004: 168). Kunene's consumption is denigrated as vulgar precisely because it is implied to be inauthentic, by mimicking white wealth (and getting it "wrong" in a crass way). Kunene is exposing himself as a fraud, which is how the media discourse tries to undermine his cultural power. The media discourse

implies that Kunene's consumption patterns are not legitimate as black people inherently do not have cultural capital. That is, they are not the legitimate aristocrats and therefore cannot claim that place in the social hierarchy. Media discourse denounces his power on the basis that it is fake; it does not fit with the socially defined categories of whiteness and blackness.

The critique of Kunene as a brash and vulgar nouveau riche also emanates from detractors who feel that his capitalist lifestyle has eroded the culture of "ubuntu" (Krige 2012) and of helping those who are less fortunate. This points to two explicit trends observed in the analysis. Firstly, black people are held to higher moral standards than white people. They are expected to be more moral than white South Africans when relating to the poor. This begs the question: why is this the case? According to Mathews, it is because of "racial solidarity" (Matthews 2010: 172). Black elites are seen as the best people to act in the interests of the poor majority which are black. The black elites are therefore expected to help their fellow black poor because they can relate to their struggles, by virtue of them sharing an identity, most importantly a racial identity. They therefore are more likely to be in solidarity with them.

According to Matthews (2010: 172), there is a general perception that the black elite are "expected to use their positions to be aspirational figures and to act in favour of the more general upliftment of poor black South Africans. The hope is that wealthy black South Africans will behave differently to wealthy white South Africans and will thus help empower the general population rather than themselves." Matthews (2010: 172) problematises this kind of thinking holding that "even if it is plausible that shared racial and national identity makes it more likely that African elites will act in the best interests of the poor than will non-African elites, there does not seem to be any reason to assume that simply having some kind of shared identity ensures that elites will act in the interests of the poor or even that it makes it makes this very likely."

Secondly, another trend worth observing was the arguments made against Kunene's lifestyle as anti-poor. This points to the usage of the poor by the media and individuals against Kunene's lifestyle to conveniently negate and criticise his consumption activities. This speaks to how texts analysed often showed a tendency to associate conspicuous consumption with being inconsiderate to the poor or supporting economic inequalities. This notion is well supported and raised by Miller (1995: 21) who argued that one of the key problems in "analysing consumption is that to attack assumptions about the nefarious effects of

consumerism is taken as a defence of either capitalism or inequality". This was done many times through emphasising how immoral Kunene was to throw a R700, 000 birthday bash in a country where the disparities between the rich and poor are excessive. For example, there were several critiques that emphasised the immorality of Kunene's conspicuous consumption: "Money or no money, we must never allow the rich to make the poor brush away flies, or mix rum and water, or avail their naked bodies to serve sushi. From history we should learn that morality can defeat wealth! (*News24*, 22 Nov 2010); "And as the new class of millionaires partied extravagantly, children were going to bed on an empty stomach down the road in Alexandra" (*The Star,* 05. Nov 2010).

All these showed greater concern not only to the poor but also with the extent to which such events could lead to a decline in the society's moral fibre. There is a concern that moral standards are in decline and the entire generation of the black elite can sometimes be accused of undermining society's moral structure of ubuntu. Moralising about consumers or the types of consumption is not a new thing. In fact, Casey and Martens (2007: 229) in their book *Gender and Consumption* made reference to a study (Casey 2003) which looked at how in particular female Lottery players were often seen as engaging in immoral acts. They argued that the participation of women in gambling was seen as women neglecting their duties and spending money that should have been spent in buying household necessities.

The same logic can be applied to how Kunene's consumption patterns have been critiqued. That is to say, Kunene's spending of his money is seen as irresponsible as he could have spent that money in a more acceptable way, or in a socially accepted manner that matches a person of his calibre. Thus, whereas moralities of women's gambling were conjoined with the patriarchal norms or what Casey and Martens (2007: 229) call the "motherly identity", Kunene's consumption is seen as more conjoined to the "self" than the "social entity," to borrow a phrase used by Casey and Martens.

This therefore means that neglecting the social entity in one's consumption is thus seen as immoral. What the media texts take for granted then is that consumption is innately a "self-directed" process rather than a social one (Casey and Martens, 2007: 232). The media alternatively confer their "social" ideals of consumption. The former, that is, self-directed consumption, is then portrayed as abnormal because it does not adhere to socially accepted norms of spending money. Bourdieu (1984: 1) nonetheless argues that "Sociology endeavours to establish the conditions in which consumers of cultural goods and their tastes

are produced." In this he argues that individual consumer choices or consumption patterns are very much predicated on one's social circumstances or generally the various agents of socialisation. This therefore negates the point that consumption is a "self-directed process." As argued by Bourdieu (1984: 1), "cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education".

As noted in the analysis, Kunene's wealth was continuously linked to the discourse of the "poor masses." In order to understand why this is the case, we ought to delve into the political history of the post-apartheid context in which this discourse was mobilised. And this ties in directly with the manipulation/empowerment dialectic. Here, we see evidence of "socialist" voices from within the ANC arguing that consumption is a sell-out, a form of false consciousness, succumbing to capitalism, etc. His spending power and claims to empowerment are seen as an adoption of "white" liberal ideals of success. On the one hand, Kunene's fledging spending power can be seen as symbolic of the success of the policies aimed at empowering black people and catapulting the economic emancipation of black people. And, on the other hand, it is seen as "buying-in to globalised neo-liberalism" (Iqani, 2012b: 7-8). This ambivalence is largely "a by-product of struggle activists' ideological preference for socialism" (Ihendru 2004: 5).

More so, the black elites' aspiration of social mobility is usually expressed as being preoccupied with both "status" and "acceptance by Whites" (Frazier 1957: 235). Thus, in adopting and embracing a white inspired consumerist lifestyle, Kunene is portrayed as not only trying to be white and betraying the "true" project of liberation (Posel 2010: 173), but also trying to distinguish and dissociate himself from the black poor. The extravagance of people like Kunene contrasts sharply with the lives of the majority of black people, who still live in abject poverty despite the government's black economic empowerment laws. The wealth he enjoys is supposed to be equally enjoyed by the poor. More so, black leaders are often held to moral high ground and are expected to uplift their communities as part of the African principles of ubuntu. Kunene is thus expected to practice these principles, which he has been portrayed as not doing. Black elite face a contradictory task of using their spending power to affirm their identities with the risk of being labelled as sell-outs who are indifferent to the struggles of the poor.

5.3. Conclusion

The representations discussed above are not meant to be taken as a comprehensive account of the discursive constructions of all the black elite in the media. However, they should be taken as symbolic representations or perceptions of the new class of the black elite that has cropped up and started gaining much media attention. The analysis of the texts allowed for the unpacking of the ideological implications derived from the lexical choices, grammar, and other factors, made by the media. Against the background of these results, this section has discussed in detail the meaning of these constructions and the theoretical frameworks underpinning such representations.

From the representations of Kunene as a "big spender," there are tentative conclusions that can be drawn. First, there are two ideologically different views presented in the discursive construction of Kunene as the "big spender." On one end of the scale lie representations that bear resemblance to the portrayal of black people during the colonial/apartheid era. The research identified traces of narratives and stereotypes that perpetuate the view that black people should remain in the lower ranks of the society as they cannot spend their money responsibly, and are inherently selfish and unwilling to share their wealth with the poor. Secondly, these representations project anxieties over the "danger" Kunene's consumption poses. For example, there seems to be a warning that if the black elite carry on like this, the poor will revolt. More so, as demonstrated in this chapter, there is an inclination to critique Kunene's consumption and render it immoral; as such moral absolutism was a profound thread running in most discursive constructions of Kunene as a "big spender."

Kunene was constantly portrayed as a morally depraved individual, who would rather spend his money lavishly and selfishly than help the poor. Most of the data revealed Kunene's conspicuous consumption as a charade of black liberation, both political and economic. This was demonstrated in how his practices were deemed "anti-revolutionary and anti-ANC" and as "embarrassing." On the other end of the scale, Kunene was largely painted as a poster boy of the few black who have "arrived" and whose flashy lifestyles herald their "arrival" into the wealthy enclaves of the society. In Kunene's own account, his lifestyle is admired by the youth and he referred to himself as a motivating success story of the rise and empowerment of a people who were once dismissed as nobodies. This discourse was however less domineering. These claims of being pro-poor and being a conduit of help and inspiration made by Kunene were largely ignored by the media, who instead chose to vilify him and to show him as betraying the masses rather than inspiring them.

Kunene was attacked quite viciously for his style of consumption. The discourse of Kunene's consumption, as unbridled, is presented in order to undermine the former picture of his consumption as sophisticated or cosmopolitan. Through the representations of Kunene as the "big spender," we also saw how his wealth was made to look obscene, vulgar, dirty, ugly, and at the same time put forward as a kind of glittering example of post-apartheid economic freedom. Thus, the underlying tension central to his representation as the "big spender" is informed by how his tastes are represented both as expensive/lavish and cheap/vulgar at the same time.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Concluding remarks

This study set out to analyse the representations of the black elite using Kunene as an exemplary case study. In addition, it investigated the extent to which the elite's consumption patterns are seen as symbolic of empowerment and/or immoralilty. This study also has sought to establish whether the way in which media represents the black elite laments or celebrates their consumption. This analysis was done by looking at various media and using Critical Discourse Analysis to unpack the themes relating to the representations of the black elite's conspicuous consumption patterns. This section will synthesise the empirical findings to answer the study's two research questions.

1. In what ways did the media represent the conspicuous consumption of elite black "business person", Kunene?
2. To what extent is the conspicuous consumption of the black elite represented as empowering and a positive marker of the black identity in South Africa? How do such representations relate to broader patterns of racist representation in the media?' What are the ramifications of such representations?

The main findings in relation to this research question were summarised within the respective empirical chapters, namely, the "big man" and the "big spender." Kunene's conspicuous consumption was represented as both empowering to him and his circle of allies and disempowering to the masses, especially the poor, and to a lesser extent to Kunene's own persona in terms of his moral failures. The negative narrative was more dominant than the positive one. The data scrutinised more often lamented rather than celebrated Kunene's consumption activities. Media coverage about Kunene's birthday party criticised his consumption based on three aspects.

Firstly, Kunene's consumption was criticised on the basis that he did not have a social conscience as he was incapable of thinking about the poor when he threw his extravagant party. Here, media discourse placed emphasis into critiquing his consumption for embracing a life that is not representative of the socialist ideals and moral principles that form the core of the ANC, a movement that Kunene was linked to because of his 'friends' who are prominent members of the organisation. This "friendship" he had with the ANC big wigs received media scrutiny. His upward mobility and wealth were tightly linked to his political

connections. His "bling" lifestyle attained with the help of his "friends" was also portrayed as a disrespect and disregard of the poor and as contributing to socio-economic inequalities. Kunene's conspicuous consumption was often portrayed as a barometer used by detractors in the media to gauge the inequalities between the rich and the poor. Questions of whether his wealth was displayed appropriately or not were also often asked. The media and other commentators often alluded to the "correct etiquette" for displaying Kunene's wealth or the correct way of spending his money. At the centre of these suggestions, was that he should use his money to uplift the poor. This was strongly expressed in the opinion piece below, which clearly supports Sally Matthews' (2010) arguments that there is overwhelming responsibility placed on the African elite to always act in the interests of the poor,

> It may be worth pointing out to the bling brigade that even during the height of colonial segregation some members of the then black elite and middle classes built schools like the Ohlange Institute. They dipped into their own resources to uplift the poor instead of leaving it to the state. This is something that today's über-rich should emulate (*The New Age*, 3 Feb 2011).

Most media coverage dismissed Kunene's consumption as founded in greed, lawlessness, immorality and selfishness (by virtue of not wanting to share his wealth with the poor). So the view that was primarily promoted was that there is no excuse or a reason good enough to justify Kunene's consumption patterns, which are thus illogical and depraved. More so, the ideology being proliferated is that of black consumption as problematic and that perhaps the policies that empower black people ought to be revisited and checked. The regulation of black consumption based on the current socio-economic status of the country is also strongly recommended by the media, albeit implicitly. They further suggested black spending or consumption, for the sake of the poor and for the sake of addressing their needs as needing to be controlled and closely monitored as it is vulgar, disorderly and too inconsiderate to the poor. Such definitions will likely inform prejudices or negative attitudes against the black elite.

Secondly, Kunene received criticism for his actions of eating sushi from a woman's body. This form of consumption received the most criticism from various detractors including the ANCWL. It was heralded as the betrayal of the years invested in eradicating women's oppression or subjugation. Commentators in the media moralised about how women are

treated in the society and how Kunene exacerbates this misogynistic and "anti-revolutionary" culture of mistreating women. Kunene's consumption was portrayed in macho terms and the women were portrayed as passive instruments for his consumption. Here we witnessed how this portrayal perpetuated the discourse of women as objects on and through which men perform their power or domination. The role of women as having agency and being empowered and active consumers is de-emphasised. Therefore, one of the critical observations presented in this paper is that gender plays a big role in consumption, by exploiting gender relations and commodifying women, Kunene was able to set himself up as a "big man." By capitalising on cultural constructions of gender, Kunene accentuated his masculinity.

Finally, his consumption was critiqued on the basis of it being "un-African" and it was emphasised that Kunene is not in touch with "the roots." He was represented as choosing the global lifestyle underpinned by the "betrayal of the 'true' project of liberation and capitulation to the forces of capitalist markets and class interests...naive rampant consumerism" (Posel 2010: 173) over the African value system underwritten by moral standards of *ubuntu*. Kunene's character was flimsily constructed as the "acme of bling," and the message he sends out is one of total excess and the construction of him as a symptom of the collapse of traditional cultural values, which Kunene has never pledged allegiance to.

On the one hand, Kunene's consumption was celebrated, albeit moderately, in comparison to the criticism he received. This was done through describing his consumption using royal iconography/ imagery. His discursive construction as a king was predominant in the media. This was implicitly and explicitly done through using symbols traditionally used to depict royalty, such as, thrones, champagne, portraiture poses, and bespoke clothing.

On the other hand, Kunene's consumption was celebrated because it was portrayed as international, sophisticated and as a show for success, superiority and inspiration to the youth. Considering that consumption of expensive goods are defined as symbols of success (Lamont and Molnar 2001), Kunene was portrayed by the media as a successful and business savvy man. In their study, Lamont and Molnar (2001) argued that black people's definition of success and by extension, society's perception of success is rooted in their consumption of material goods. They also point out that more than anything, consumption of material goods is a site for their resistance to the stereotypical representation of them. The same argument

put forward by Lamont and Molnar (2001) echoes the media's representation of Kunene's consumption as signalling black success - the changing socio-economic status of black people and the arrival of the economic class of blacks.

This line of arguing, presented by Lamont and Molnar (2001), is consistent with the arguments made in post-colonial theory, which vehemently challenges the historical representations of colonised groups (Adam and Tiffin, 1990). Post-colonial theory would explain Kunene's consumption as an act of identifying and resisting subtle and blatant social injustices to which blackness was and probably still is subjected. The research does not contend that there is any clear stereotyping in the media of Kunene as a criminal. It does however note the emphasis upon Kunene as an "ex-fraudster", "fraudster" and "ex-convict" and considers how a generalised threat functions as a significant context for much of his coverage. Simpson and Yinger (1972: 32) hold that words and labels such as these "prefigure and control experience to some degree; they are not simply innocent labels." Thus the media as a popular source of information transmits images that shape their audiences' perceptions of Kenny Kunene. These images, some which were notably good and bad, come to define him and consequently become stereotypes through which people recognise and identify him.

The dominant picture of Kunene and his consumption patterns painted by the media suggests his consumption as a sign of greed, hedonism, corruption and immorality. The dominance of these representations overshadows the celebration of his consumption patterns as means of self- expression, empowerment and success. They also do little to offer a variety of viewpoints about Kunene's consumption and those who will consume in a similar fashion. These polarised views fail to convey a nuanced and holistic portrayal of Kunene. It also amounts to reducing the consumption of the black elite and in particular Kunene to a set of binaries that narrows down the "essence" of what consumption really means. The dismissal of Kunene's spending patterns as "travesty" of the liberation struggle and as uncritically buying into neo-liberalism negates the understanding of why such consumption patterns exist. Posel (2010: 173) therefore stressed the importance of considering "how, if blackness was produced as in part a restricted regime of consumption, the politics of enrichment could readily adopt the discourse and symbolism of emancipation."

Thus, the research holds that just as much as there were critical views on Kunene's consumption, there were also was a mix of pride and astonishment at his behaviour, and a mix of those who considered it benign and harmless; views which were not given much media coverage. It would have been preferable that practices of conspicuous consumption of the black elite be equally represented by the media in the context of their consumption as being multi-layered and symbolically serving various functions. Amongst others, as the literature review has shown, it serves as an expression of their identity. It serves as a site through which notions of colonial and apartheid eras are challenged and resisted. Moreover, it is a sign of black people's empowerment.

Posel (2010: 173) argues that:

> The challenge is to frame the terms of debate in ways that transcend simplistic moral binaries: on the one hand, an outright dismissal of African consumerism as simply crass and vulgar, a betrayal of the 'true' project of liberation and capitulation to the forces of capitalist markets and class interests; and on the other, a naively romantic celebration of rampant consumerism, evading or denying wider questions of global exploitation along with the more local politics of class, power, deepening inequality and poverty.

These views also echo the debate raised by the dialectics of the empowerment/alienation framework, underpinning this study. The framework argues for the conceptualisation of consumption as not solely a struggle of ideologies of empowerment on one end and the struggle against ideologies of oppression on the other but "as existing somewhere between the poles of pleasurable identity construction and mindless mimicry, rather than reductively one or the other" (Iqani 2012a: 37). This study has thus made an attempt to point out how media representations of black elite consumption, in the case of Kunene, have relied mostly on the narrative of "mindless mimicry", immorality and betrayal to the detriment of other possibilities about what consumption might mean in post-apartheid South Africa.

This study makes a critical contribution to research on how consumption of the black elites in South Africa should be understood, constructed and defined. In particular, consumption patterns of the black elite in post-apartheid South Africa should not be narrowly defined as merely either empowering or disempowering, nor represented only in negative terms in the media. Instead, the debate about the pleasure or alienation that the black elite derive from

consumption should inform the media debates around conspicuous consumption in South Africa (Posel, 2010). As summed up by Tim Edwards (2000: 31) "Consumption is not the site of social division, inequity and poverty nor the focus of affluent, conspicuous and rapturous style cultures; rather it is about both and all of these, though not necessarily equally, and its significance in either respects varies from time to time and from culture to culture."

There is a need for more case studies such as this to allow further assessment of the media representations of consumption practices of the black elite in South Africa. It is important to see whether these representations are common across the scale. Further investigations might be undertaken to assess whether the narrative of media's representations of Kunene have shifted in light of more recent events involving him, including his involvement with the newly established party, Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Other interesting events that he has been involved in and could be worthy of empirical research are his financial woes due to closure of his clubs, his alleged divorce from his wife and his venture into the porn film industry. Suffice to say, Kunene continues to hog the media spotlight, for various reasons other than his partying. It will thus be interesting to investigate how his lifestyle as a conspicuous consumer is still a topic of reference in and by the media and whether these latest events have altered the media discourse that on him.

Future research might also uncover more understanding of the conspicuous consumption of the black elite by conducting a comparative study that looks at the representation of the black elite in relation to the white elite in the media. This will help in understanding whether there are any commonalities or differences between how the black elite and the white elite are represented. If there are any, it should be investigated why this is so. This will also help us understand the reasons to why the media represents black elites' conspicuous consumption in a particular way or in a way that is different to the white elites' conspicuous consumption.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Data collected

Types of data	Total number of corpus	List of databases
Videos	4	Youtube/Zoopy
Cartoons	32	*africartoons.com, zapiro.com*
Newspaper articles/ op-eds, analysis, letters	180	Avusa Archive, SABINET database
TV/radio programmes clips and audio clips	3	Youtube

Appendix B: List of Media Articles in Corpus

	Media Title	Headline	Genre	Date and page	Source
1	*Witness*	"A crassness of materialism"	newspaper aticle	01.November.2010 p8	Sabinet
2	*Sunday Times*	"Hawks eye Kunene firm"	newspaper article	12.June.2011 p.6	Sabinet
3	*Pretoria News*	"A poor show by the black rich"	newspaper article	04.November. 2011, p15	Sabinet
4	*Business Day*	"ANC averse to sushi but the taste for pork endures"	Opinion piece	04.February.2011. p11	Sabinet
5	*Weekend Post*	"Beware bite of the poor after tasteless sushi orgy"	Opinion piece	30. October.2010. p.10	Sabinet
6	*Daily Dispatch*	"Bling kings's 2am pre-nuptial bash"	newspaper article	25. April.2011, p.3	Sabinet
7	*Cape Argus*	"Sushi king Kunene opts for low-key launch of city club"	newspaper article	15.February.2011, p.1	Sabinet
8	*Beeld*	N/A	cartoon	30.October.2010, p.20	Sabinet
9	*The Times*	N/A	cartoon	03.February.2011, p.16	Sabinet
10	*Weekend Post*	N/A	cartoon	04.June.2011, p.6	Sabinet
11	*Weekend Post*	N/A	cartoon	30.October.2010, p.20	Sabinet
12	*Sowetan*	N/A	cartoon	28.September.2011, p.10	Sabinet
13	*City Press*	"Sushi Kings's party life on TV"	opinion piece	25.September.2011,p.32	Sabinet
14	*City Press*	"Sushi king duped"	newspaper article	05.June.2011, p. 3	Sabinet
15	*City Press*	"Meet Zimbabwe's very own Kenny Kunene"	newspaper article	20.November.2011, p18	Sabinet
16	*City Press*	"Gola disses sushi king's bulls**t"	newspaper article	04.September.2011, p1	Sabinet
17	*City Press*	"Sushi king prefers e.tv to "stupid' SABC"	newspaper article	04.sEptember.2011, p3	Sabinet
18	*Cape Argus*	"Club cacophony sparks ire of hotel residents"	newspaper article	29.July.2011, p.4	Sabinet
19	*Cape Argus*	"Club is about empowerment-Youth League"	newspaper article	01.February.2011. p.3	Sabinet
20	*Cape Times*	"Crass Act"	newspaper article	02.February.2011. p.8	Sabinet
21	*Independent on Saturday*	"Eating is own words"	opinion piece	05.February,2011, p.6	Sabinet
22	*Sunday Independent*	"Filthy rich savour sushi at parties, spits in faces of the poor"	Opinion piece	07.November.2010,p.17	Sabinet
23	*Sunday Times*	"Flashy, yes, and he's worked hard for it"	Opinion piece	30.January.2011, p.6	Sabinet
24	*Saturday Argus*	"Sushi king plans to "go large" for his 41st birthday	newspaper article	20.August.2011, p.3	Sabinet
25	*The Star*	"'Go hang or go to hell'"	newspaper article	29.October.2011, p.1	Sabinet

26	*Sunday Times*	"How sushi king went from Mr Price to Mr Pricey"	newspaper article	22.May.2011. p.3	Sabinet
27	*Sunday Times*	"I don't boast, I boost, says Mister Sushi"	newspaper aticle	14.November.2010, p.3	Sabinet
28	*Daily Dispatch*	"King of bling to launch Zar bar in EL"	newspaper article	20.April.2011, p.1	Sabinet
29	*Mail and Guardian*	"Kunene and partner resign directorships"	newspaper article	10.February.2011, p.15	Sabinet
30	*Saturday Star*	"Kunene give away his party leanings"	newspaper article	21.May.2011, p.5	Sabinet
31	*Saturday Star*	"Kunene had a gate crasher removed from R1.2m bash"	newspaper article	06.November.2010, p.3	Sabinet
32	*The Star*	"Kunene is living in his own world"	opinion piece	02.November.2010.p. 15	Sabinet
33	*The Star*	"Kunene spending spree"	newspaper article	10.January.2011. p.1	Sabinet
34	*Sunday Times*	"Kunene to blow big bucks on birthday bashes"	newspaper article	14.August.2011. p.12	Sabinet
35	*The Star*	"Kunene's firm paid millions to MK vets"	newspaper article	07.February.2011. p.3	Sabinet
36	*Saturday Star*	"Kunene's R20m Zarfest turns into a pop flop"	newspaper article	11.June.2011.p.3	Sabinet
37	*Pretoria News*	"'Let me put my mouth where my money is'"	opinion piece	29.October.2011, p.19	Sabinet
38	*Cape Argus*	"Let them eat sushi?"	opinion piece	02.February.2011. p.12	Sabinet
39	*The Times*	"Low-key opening for Zar"	newspaper article	16.February.2011, p.3	Sabinet
40	*City Press*	"McKenzie and Kunene's minds remain jailed"	opinion piece	13.February.2011, p.28	Sabinet
41	*Saturday Star*	"Mr Sushi plans African fest, next birthday blow-out"	newspaper article	20.Ausgust.2011. p.3	Sabinet
42	*Witness*	"'So what?'"	newspaper article	01.October.2011, p.10	Sabinet
43	*The Star*	"New blackmoney behaving badly"	Opinion/analysis	05.November.2010, p.16	Sabinet
44	*Daily News*	"No more human platters"	newspaper article	03.February.2011, p.14	Sabinet
45	*Daily Dispatch*	"No sushi for ANC's dependents"	newspaper article	08.February.2011. p.7	Sabinet
46	*Witness*	"Objectifying behaviour"	opinion/analysis	02.February.2011, p.8	Sabinet
47	*Business Day*	"Oppression lies at the heart of moral bluster"	opinion piece	21.February.2011, 12	Sabinet
48	*Daily News*	"Party extravagance a poor sow by black rich"	opinion piece	04.November. 2010, p16	Sabinet
49	*Sunday Times*	"Readers can often show the way on matters of taste"	opinion piece	31.October.2010, p.2	Sabinet
50	*Cape Times*	"Rich Pickings"	opinion piece	04.November.2010, p.10	Sabinet
51	*Saturday Star*	"Sushi king to serve Russian tipple"	newspaper article	31.December.2011, p.3	Sabinet
52	*Saturday*	"Sushi King Kunene saga goes on,	newspaper	20.November.201	Sabinet

	Star	women's activists wade in	article	0, p18	
53	*Saturday Star*	"Kenny to 'wow SA on reality show"	newspaper article	27.August.2011.p. 3	Sabinet
54	*Sunday Times*	"Self-doubt underpins the Kenny Kunene way of being"	opinion piece	16. January.2011, p.7	Sabinet
55	*Saturday Star*	"Soweto porn flick inspired by Kunene's sushi antics"	newspaper article	16.July.2011. p.3	Sabinet
56	*The Star*	"Sushi brigade out of step"	editorial	02.February.2011. p.12	Sabinet
57	*City Press*	"Sushi girl is just trying to make a living"	opinion piece	07.November.201 0,p.25	Sabinet
58	*The Star*	"Sushi king in mining row"	newspaper article	13.December.201 0,. P.1	Sabinet
59	*Saturday Star*	"Sushi king Kenny Kunene promises Cape Town an 'even better bash'"	newspaper article	22.January.2011. p3	Sabinet
60	*Weekend Post*	"Sushi King Kenny vows to put Xhosa foood on the menu"	newspaper article	04.June.2011, p.3	Sabinet
61	*City Press*	"Sushi King:Nothing's fishy about my fortune"	newspaper article	31.October.2010, p.2	Sabinet
62	*The Star*	"Sushi king parties over"	newspaper article	02.February.2011. p.1	Sabinet
63	*Saturday Star*	"Sushi king's' new year bash in a billion"	newspaper article	11.December.201 0. p.3	Sabinet
64	*Sunday Times*	"Sushi Kings risk sinking cash cow"	newspaper article	04.September.201 1. p.3	Sabinet
65	*Pretoria News*	"Sushi show-off not a symbol of corruption"	opinion piece	01.November.201 0 p.9	Sabinet
66	*Pretoria News*	"Think you're better than Kunene?Think again"	opinion piece	05.February,2011, p.7	Sabinet
67	*The Star*	'"The night club belongs to the ANC"'	newspaper article	01.February.2011. p.7	Sabinet
68	*City Press*	"To sushi or not to sushi?"	opinion piece	06.February.2011. p3	Sabinet
69	*Daily Dispatch*	"Ugly face of wealth flaunted, ministers seen to back this"	opinion/let ter	05.November.201 0, p.9	Sabinet
70	*Saturday Star*	"Unbashed tycoon prepares to party for second weekend in a row"	newspaper article	30. October.2010. p.3	Sabinet
71	*Citizen*	"Whiff off Kunene can contaminate"	opinion piece	03.February.2011, p.12	Sabinet
72	*Sunday Times*	"Zar:Shebeen or trendy nightclub?"	newspaper article	03.July.2011, p.5	Sabinet
73	*Sunday Argus*	"Zille 'cockroach' jibe by Malema"	newspaper article	31.October.2010, p.1	Sabinet
74	*Sunday Independent*	"Zuma slams sushi brigade in moral tirade"	newspaper article	28.November.201 2, p.1	Sabinet
75		"ANC doesn't own nightclubs - Mantashe"	online news	31.January.2011.	news24
76		"ANCWL condemns sushi on women's bodies"	online news	01.February.2011	news24
77		"ANCYL: Club a show of black empowerment"	online news	01.February.2011	news 24

78		"ANCYL welcomes Kunene's about turn"	online news	02.February.2011	news 24
79		"Ciara lands in SA"	online news	27.May.2011	news24
80		"Cold facts about nude sushi"	online news	18.February.2011	news24
81		"Cosatu: 'Sushi club' an insult to ANC"	online news	01.February.2011	news 24
82	*Sapa*	"CRG denies ownership by Kenny Kunene"	online news	03.October.2011	news 24
83	*City Press*	"How much sushi can one man eat?"	online news	30.November.2010	news 24
84	*Rapport*	"'I want to eat sushi off Debora Patta'"	online news	07.February.2011.	news 24
85	*Die Burger*	"Kenny Kunene plans extravagant opening"	online news	26.January.2011	news 24
86	*City Press*	"Kenny trades sushi for tacky"	online news	24.October.2011	news 24
87		"Kunene has a place in history"	online news	22.November.2010	news24
88	*Sapa*	"Kunene promises to stop sushi parties"	online news	02.February.2011	news24
89	*Mail and Guardian online*	"Kunene, the Lamborghini, the 'hot girls' and the fine"	online news	22.February.2011	Mail and Guardian
90	*Sowetan Live*	"No more sushi parties - Kenny Kunene"	online news	19.April.2011	Sowetan
91	*Sapa*	"No more sushi parties, says Kunene"	online news	02.Februry.2011	news24
92	*Sapa*	"Shabangu cancels Kunene's mining rights"	online news	27.September.2011	news24
93	*City Press*	"Sushi king duped out of R3.5m"	online news	06-June.2011	news24
94		"Sushi king's reality show to start soon"	online news	07.September.2011	news24
95		"Timbaland's SA shows cancelled"	online news	31.May.2011	news24
96	*City Press*	"Tycoon's super-sweet R700 000 bash"	online news	24.October.2010	news24
97	*Sapa*	"Vavi must be cut down to size - Malema"	online news	30.October.2010	news24
98	*Die Burger*	"Vavi told to 'go to hell'"	online news	29.0ctober.2010	news24
99	*Die Burger*	"VIPs skip Kunene's club opening"	online news	16.February.2011	news24
100	*Sapa*	"Zuma wedding - Lamborghinis at the fore"	online news	22.April.2011	news24
101	*Beeld*	N/A	online cartoons	30.October.2010	africartoons
102	*Sowetan*	N/A	online cartoons	03.November.2010	africartoons
103	*Mail and Guardian*	N/A	online cartoons	22.December.2010	africartoons

104	*Sowetan*	N/A	online cartoons	02.February.2011	africartoons
105		N/A	online cartoons	28.September.2011	africartoons
106		N/A	online cartoons	11.January.2012	africartoons
107	*Beeld*	N/A	online cartoons	10.November.2010	africartoons
108		N/A	online cartoons	25.January.2011	africartoons
109		N/A	online cartoons	17.March.2011	africartoons
110	*Sowetan*	N/A	online cartoons	28.September.2011	africartoons
111	*Rapport*	N/A	online cartoons	31.October.2010	africartoons
112		N/A	online cartoons	11.November.2010	africartoons
113	*Cape Argus*	N/A	online cartoons	01.February.2011	africartoons
114		N/A	online cartoons	26.April.2011	africartoons
115		N/A	online cartoons	13.December.2011	africartoons
116	*Daily Dispatch*	N/A	online cartoons	01.November.2010	africartoons
117	*Business Day*	N/A	online cartoons	24.November.2010	africartoons
118	*The New Age*	N/A	online cartoons	02.February.2012	africartoons
119	*Weekend Post*	N/A	online cartoons	11.June.2011	africartoons
120	*Mail and Guardian*	N/A	online cartoons	23.December.2011	africartoons
121	*The Times*	N/A	online cartoons	02.February.2011	zapiro
122	*Wonkie.com*	"who killed Kenny, the sushi King's vibe?"	online cartoons	03.February.2011	wonkie.com
123	*City Press*	N/A	image		CityPress
124		"I'm just doing my job"	artwork/image	02. December. 2010	Art South Africa V9.2
125		"Kenny Kunene - 40th Birthday (Sushi party)."	video	09.December.2010	youtube
126	*chai fm*	"Kenny Kunene Part 2 audio clip"	audio clip	01.December.2011	youtube
127	*E .news channel*	"Maggs on Media-Kenny Kunene"	video (e.news channel)	10.June.2011	youtube
128		"Zar club launch"	video	19.April.2011	youtube
129		"Sushi king cape town"	video	31.January.2011.	youtube
130	*City press online*	"Kenny Kunene: From Sushi King to reality TV star "	video	23.September.2011	youtube

131	*chai fm*	"Kenny Kunene Part 1 audio clip"	audio clip	01.December.2011	youtube
132	*chai fm*	"Kenny Kunene Part 3 audio clip"	audio clip	01.December.2011	youtube
133	*Mail and Guardian*	"Kenny keeps it real"	video	02.March.2012	youtube
134	*City Press online*	"Johannesburg businessman Kenny Kunene celebrates his 40th birthday"	image	29.November.2010	citypress online
135	*Sowetan Live*	"CHEERS: 'Sushi King' Kenny Kunene entertains guests at his birthday party"	image	24.July.2011	sowetanlive
136	*Sowetan Live*	"Whites made me what I am - Sushi king"	online news	21.September.2011	sowetanlive
137	*Sowetan Live*	"Kenny Kunene now wants 'class & elegance'"	online news	16.February.2011	sowetanlive
138	*Sowetan Live*	"Malema backs sushi tycoons"	online news	31.January.2011.	sowetanlive
139	*Sowetan Live*	"Zanele produces her sushi version"	online news	13.December.2010	sowetanlive
140	*Sowetan Live*	"Vavi's sushi war hots up"	online news	29.October.2010	sowetan live
141	*Sowetan Live*	"Elite 'spitting in faces of poor'"	online news	28.October.2010	sowetan live
142	*Sowetan Live*	"Cosatu deputy lashes Kunene"	online news	01.November.2010	sowetan live
143	*sowetan live*	"Rot in Kunene's gold mine led to closure"	online news	28.September.2011	Sowetan live
144	*Sowetan live*	"Minister shuts down Kunene's gold mine"	online news	27.September.2011	sowetan live
145	*Sowetan Live*	"Kenny inspires inmates"	online news	28.September.2011	sowetan live
146	*Sowetan Live*	"Sushi King in bitter divorce"	online news	28.November.2011	sowetan live
147	*Sowetan Live*	"Stupidity has now become South Africa's official ideology"	online news(opinion piece)	15.November.2011	sowetan live
148	*Sowetan live*	"Sushi parties tasteless: can we move on now?"	online news(opinion piece)	07.February.2011	sowetan live
149	*Sowetan Live*	"Money CAN buy you love"	online news	04.October.2011	sowetan live
150	*Sowetan Live*	"Willing victims?"	online news(opinion piece)	02.November.2010	sowetan live
151	*Sowetan Live*	"ANC distances itself from Malema's nightclub claim"	online news	01.February.2011	sowetan live
152	*sowetan live*	"Can't fault Sadtu for consistency"	online news(opinion piece)	03.December.2010	sowetan live
153	*Sowetan Live*	"Vavi is a hypocrite when it comes to riches"	online news(opinion piece)	02.November.2010	sowetan live
154	*Sowetan*	"Miners face bleak Christmas"	online	28.September.201	sowetan

	Live		news	1	live
155	*Sowetan Live*	"Fantasy is in because black reality is unbearable to confront"	online news(opinion piece)	08.February.2011	sowetan live
156	*Sowetan Live*	"Serving sushi on women's bodies is appalling - ANCWL"	online news	02.February.2011	sowetan live
157	*Saturday Star*	"Kunene threatens to 'take down' paper"	online news	05.December.2011	IOL
158	*IOL news*	"No more Mr Sushi – he's Mr Bubbles"	online news	23.April.2011	IOL
159	*IOL news*	"Kenny Kunene's swish sushi do"	online news	31.jANUAry.2011.	IOL
160	*IOL news*	"Kenny fined for overloading Lamborghini"	online news	24.February.2011	IOL
161	*Cape Times*	"Illegal nightclub case postponed"	online news	11.November.2011	IOL
162	*IOL news*	"Kenny's gaga for Gaddafi"	online news	11.November.2011	IOL
163	*IOL news*	"Sushi King's fishy girlfriend"	online news	28.September.2011	IOL
164	*City Press online*	"Sushi King: nothing's fishy about my fortune"	online news	31.October.2010	City Press
165	*City Press online*	"It's my party and I'll buy if I want to"	online news	05.November.2010	City Press
166	*City Press online*	"Sandton's ZAR club is all about big bucks"	online news	31.October.2010	City Press
167	*City Press online*	"Youth need true role models"	online news	13.November.2011	City Press
168	*City Press online*	"Tycoon hits Welkom"	online news	31.October.2010	City Press
169	*City Press online*	"Tycoon's super sweet R700 000 bash"	online news	24.October.2010	City Press
170	*City Press online*	"What's in the bag"	online news	25.September.2011	City Press
171	*City Press online*	"Porn, but it's 'classy like jazz ... '"	online news	02.November.2011	City Press
172	*City Press online*	"Malema calls Zille a cockroach"	online news	30.October.2010	City Press
173	*City Press online*	"Juju gets 'relevant' and Sushi King swags it"	online news	06.February.2011	City Press
174	*City Press online*	"Mbau's copycat sushi party"	online news	14.November.2010	City Press
175	*City Press online*	"Mr Sushi hooks some big showbiz fish"	online news	21.November.2010	City Press
176	*City Press online*	"Sushi King slapped with spot fines"	online news	22.November.2011	City Press
177	*City Press online*	"Lamborghinis for Zuma wedding"	online news	24.April.2011	City Press
178	*City Press online*	"Consumption and indigestion"	online news	26.December.2010	City Press
179	*Business Day*	"Divided by our history, united by shopping"	online news	08.April.2011	Business Day
180	*Mail and*	"They killed Kenny! You	online	02.February.2011	Mail and

	Guardian online	bastards!"	news		Guardian
181	*Mail and Guardian online*	"Cosatu backs ANC nightclub statement"	online news	01.February.2011	Mail and Guardian
182	*Mail and Guardian online*	"ANCWL unimpressed with Kunene's sushi bash"	online news	02.February.2011	Mail and Guardian
183	*Mail and Guardian online*	"From ghetto to global power"	online news	11.November.2011	Mail and Guardian
184	*Mail and Guardian online*	"An embarrassment of riches"	online news	23.December.2010	Mail and Guardian
185	*Mail and Guardian online*	"A luta vagina"	online news	01.February.2011	Mail and Guardian
186	*Times Live*	"Juju and Sushi King march for economic freedom"	online news	28.October.2011	Times Live
187	*Times Live*	"'I'm up for juju'"	online news	21.September.2011	Times Live
188	*Times Live*	"Mr Sushi now parties with bubbly at foreign venues"	online news	19.August.2011	Times Live
189	*Times Live*	"Kenny Kunene runs foul of booze law"	online news	30.June.2011	Times Live
190	*Times Live*	"The handful who did well on Kenny's watch"	online news	22.May.2011.	Times Live
191	*Times Live*	"The poor were 'used and misled'"	online news	22.May.2011	Times Live
192	*Times Live*	"Fame and Fortune"	online news	05.March.2011	Times Live
193	*Times Live*	"All about Kenny"	online news	03.February.2011	Times Live
194	*Times Live*	"Ten things many don’t know about Mr Sushi"	online news	02.February.2011	Times Live
195	*Times Live*	"League lauds contrite Kunene"	online news	02.February.2011	Times Live
196	*Times Live*	"A martyr to self-denial"	online news	02.February.2011	Times Live
197	*Times Live*	"ANCYL welcomes end to sushi parties"	Online news	02.February.2011	Times Live
198	*Times Live*	"The politics of eating sushi (again)"	online news	02.February.2011	Times Live
199	*Times Live*	"Crude ostentation now all the rage in the new, bling SA"	online news	31.January.2011	Times Live
200	*Times Live*	"ANC not into sushi and naked women: Mantashe"	online news	31.January.2011	Times Live
201	*Times Live*	"Self-doubt underpins the Kenny Kunene way of being"	online news	15.January.2011	Times Live
202	*Times Live*	"The man who dares SA to question his millions"	online news	14.November.2010	Times Live
203	*Times Live*	"Kenny's sushi is a small fry"	online news	04.Novemeber.2010	Times Live

204	*Times Live*	"Rich men. Flesh and sushi"	online news	01.November.2010	Times Live
205	*Times Live*	"Another Cosatu chief gets stuck into tycoon Kunene"	online news	31.October.2010	Times Live
206	*Sunday Times editorial*	"Rubbing their noses in it"	online news	31.October.2010	Times Live
207	*Times Live*	"I'll spend what I like"	online news(opinion piece)	29.October.2010	Times Live
208	*The New Age online*	"Mixing drinks with the ANC Youth League"	online news	20.June.2011	The New Age
209	*The New Age online*	"Sushi and big money at Zar"	online news	15.February.2011	The New Age
210	*The New Age online*	"words as bullets"	online news	07.February.2011	The New Age
211	*Sapa*	"Bling parties 'an insult to the poor's integrity'"	online news	date not supplied	The New Age online
212	*The New Age online*	"Stop flaunting your wealth"	online news (editorial)	date not supplied	The New Age online
213	*Mahala blog*	"suck-cess"	cartoon	13.December.2011	http://www.mahala.co.za/
214	*Mail and Guardian*	"From sushi to sausage"	online news	02. December. 2010	Mail and Guardian

Appendix C: Video Transcripts

Video 1

Web address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buWaqJxgLLk&feature=related

The first video retrieved from *Youtube* was 10 minutes and 23 seconds long. The video was about Kunene's 40th birthday celebrations, taken on the 24th of October 2010. It opens up with a narrator saying "We are at Zar, where it is always happening, Glitz and glamour, tinsel town at its best, where my main man had a party for four days, mfana re jaivile" (boy, we danced). Whilst the narrator is talking music is played in the background and the words "Happy Birthday Kenny!!!", written in blue appear on the screen. A montage of images of a group of performers dressed in white, and a few guests can be seen. The images are then intermitted by what looks like the name of the show/ programme, "Ziyamporoma" and the programmes theme song, plays for a second or two. Thirteen seconds into the clip, the words, "Happy Birthday Kenny!!!" then reappear on screen and the music that was playing initially is replayed. A man dressed in a white suite, and a bow tie, wearing sunglasses then takes centre stage surrounded by other patrons dressed in white regal. The man, Kunene, can be seen dancing around and waving the peace sign. The man is then escorted to a stage by a man wearing black clothes. When Kunene gets to the stage, he continues dancing and waving his hands.

Thirty five seconds later he sits on a throne with his hands and legs crossed, looks at the patrons, while nodding his head with a big grin on his face. The camera then zooms in and gives us a close shot image of Kunene, who is just nodding his head to the sides. The camera then focuses on a group of performers dancing and also shows some of the patrons at the celebration. The camera then shifts its focus to a man who declares that he him and Kunene are from the Free State and tha the knows him very well and that Kunene has been through a lot in life and he has made it this far and still is going further, that's the type of person he is, he is actually a role model to a lot of people and he takes care of a lot of people, where he comes from and right now beyond that, he employs a lot of people and making other people's better to some extent. The man then says, "Kenny Kunene Majozi, God bless you, happy 50th birthday we wish you another 50 and we like parties as long as you are alive my friend, we are going to party."

The clip also shows other patrons wishing Kunene a happy birthday and claiming that they are having fun, and admitting to respecting him and being inspired by where he comes from and where he is, and that they want to be just like him when they grow up, all the while showing images of Kunene dancing and holding a bottle of champagne, as well as other patrons dancing. Five minutes and 09 seconds later, the clip zooms in on two patrons, Julius Malema and Zizi Kodwa wearing white clothes singing happy birthday to Kunene. They then show Zizi, who claims to know Kunene very well and has grown to be a better man, he must be original. Julius Malema in his interview also states that he is there to celebrate Kunene's birthday and refers to Kunene as one of the emerging if not emerged black diamonds, and

makes “us” very proud that one of our own is today growing up and celebrating life which is accompanied by success, he is an inspiration to many other African children and they must look up to him and appreciate the mistakes he has made before and is prepared to learn from those mistakes and not remove them moving forward. That’s why “we” associate with him because he has proved with time that indeed a man grows and he will no longer become young, he is growing older and therefore he must behave like an older person. The camera then focuses on five ladies waving their glasses on the air so as to make a toast and later Kunene dancing with a young woman wearing a white dress. The narrator then says, “Yes, thank you Kenny very much for throwing us a lavish, glitz and glam party, all white was the theme everybody was looking very bright, definitely using surf. Mara if you guys wanna still party on down, Kenny threw another party on Sunday where we danced till we dropped, check it out. The clip then showcases the second party allegedly thrown by Kenny.

Video 2
Web address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEE8WYMPCsg
The second video clip, is relatively short. It is 14 seconds long and shows a white lady wearing black underwear, lying on a white car’s bonnet and sushi, placed on her thighs and torso. Music can be heard playing in the background.

Video 3
Web address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KeVXPL_4es

The video clip shows a strip written with big bold letters, “Kenny Keeps it real” and below the words, M&G Online, is written. The video has background montage of images of Kunene, taken at what looks like different occasions, in one of the images, we see Kunene wearing an orange bowtie, white shirt and a beige suit, sunglasses and smiling and a huge mirror behind him that reflects his rear, and other people who were standing next to him, the image the quickly shifts to a show a girl wearing a black bra, holding plates on both hands, with ZAR banners on her left, while these images are showing, we hear a voice in the background saying “my life is a movie, the sushi prepared the stage, the stage was Vavi and me.” The image of a man whose voice we heard in the background appears, the man is wearing a black golf shirt, and the strip below, has his name written, Kenny Kunene, and “entrepreneur’, below the name. He then says, the sushi was the starter, and Vavi was the meal.

Kunene: In everything that I do, I look for a marketing opportunity. Vavi has been a marketing tool for me and continues to be. If I feel like I that I want to sell something to the media and they don’t have interest in what I have to say, I just have to say something about Vavi, he will forever be my marketing tool until he dies.

How much am I worth (asks himself)? My finical advisor will give you a better answer to that.

Am I a spender or an investor (asks)? I am both. If you are an investor and you don't spend then you don't have a clue of why you are making money, money is there to be spent. My parents made me understand the importance of working for your money, not expecting anyone to give you hand-outs that's why I never even got excited by tenders, because sometimes they are just hand-outs. I am more successful than any guy whose first break was a R100 million tender. My success does not come from a phone call to sign a paper and you have R20 million in my account. I am not a tenderpreneur, I am a hustler. Most people talk about the M&G. when I told people yesterday, the other day that I was gonna to have an interview with you, Bongani Madondo, everybody said me, don't. You see me broer, I've got nothing to hide. If I've made a mistake I'll tell you that I have made a mistake. But my life in as far as I am concerned, is so clean, I don't have anything to hide. All, these CEO's, these MD's, all these moralists that are criticising Kenny Kunene, if you can get an opportunity, 3 O' Clock, 2 O' Clock in the morning, if the sun can shine and the walls fall and all of us can see what is happening in the world, (takes a long pause and laughs, while saying this) my broer, my brother (laughs), you will be shocked at what people do when its dark behind closed doors. The difference between me and them is, (he pauses), I keep it real, I am who I am. So everything that I am saying to you now, go and do your homework, let the M&G go and do their homework, let them come back and say to me, and please don't just come back if you find that there is nothing nasty to write about, don't shut up.

The video then credits all those who took part in the production and ends.

Video 4

Web address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n2EzZTBBfk&feature=related

The video is an original broadcast of the *Etv* television station's *Maggs on media,* a current affairs programme. The show, as expected opens with the theme song of the show.

The show's host Jeremy Maggs: Well he moves in rarefied political circles and is a big celebrity around town. He is also a club owner and a force behind the new celebrity website. Now, an extended interview on the power of personal branding with Kenny Kunene, owner of club Zar brand and a lover of the female form and sushi, preferably both together; so did he set out with the intention of building a personal brand? (The camera then shifts from Jeremy Maggs to Kunene Kunene, who's wearing a black shirt with the words ZAR inscribed on it)

Kunene: I'll say yes, I wanted to make sure that my brand stands out. I studied a lot of brands in the world, especially in the US, you know, how they operate, and how they get to be world known and world classed and I just put that it in the South African context. However, I must say that South Africa is still a little bit two steps backwards in terms of personal branding and also marketing of business. The US has taken it to another level and the South African society is still coming up to accept the type of guerrilla branding and marketing that I am introducing.

Jeremy Maggs: As far as you are concerned, do you just make this up as you go along or there is a Kenny Kunene brand strategy that you have actually sat down, thought about it and committed it to paper?

Kunene: there is a Kenny Kunene branding, you know. I have three names but Kenny Kunene is very easy to pronounce, is very easy for anyone to say. Since my vision was to have a world global brand, I had to make sure that I apply my names that are easy, you know what I am saying. However when you have a business, most businesses in South Africa don't have a face and in the entertainment business what makes that business is the face. So if you ask anyone now, if anyone sees ZAR, they see Kenny Kunene, if they see Kenny Kunene, they see ZAR. So its personal branding but it is linked to business branding also.

Jeremy Maggs: Couple of weeks ago we did a story on brand value. What is the Kenny Kunene brand worth?

Kunene (laughs)

Jeremy Maggs: I see the Kenny Kunene brand has also brought two watches with it today (the camera shows both Kenny's hands which show him wearing a wrist watch on both his hands).

Kunene: I never say the figures, but let me tell you what Kenny Kunene brand has achieved globally.

Jeremy Maggs interjects: so you also got it spinning stories too?

Kunene (laughs and continues): I think I am one of the few if not the only South African to get a two page article on not really content but a mixture of content, editorial news with your tabloid news on the *New York Times* website. I got a two page story there. And with that story I am an ambassador of the Ace of spades, Armand de Brignac which is a number one champagne in the world, Jay Z is the ambassador of the same brand. So it shows how I planned the Kenny Kunene brand to take it global. I am bringing 5 international artists in this country, Timbaland, Ciara, Lil Kim, Phat Joe, and DJ Scratch. Timbaland is the world's most celebrated producer for the last decade and now, he doesn't do tours, but because of my brand, he was persuaded to come to South Africa.

Jeremy Maggs: Do you live the brand Kenny Kunene, do you live a life of luxury, unashamedly?

Kunene: Yes, I don't believe that you should. Your brand must not represent your lifestyle because then you are going to be a fake. So I am not a fake, if you ask anyone from primary, they will tell you this is who Kenny Kunene is. So my brand and the type business I decided to follow links very well with my lifestyle so I live luxury, I live elegance, I am flashy unashamedly so. These have been my dreams when I was throwing stones in the 80's.

Jeremy Maggs: But you have also taken it to extremes, haven't you? To many people you will be known as the sushi on the girl guy. That can't have done your brand any good.

Kunene: It did my brand a lot of good. You see, Jeremy, anything that's new and unusual is often met with resistance and is often met with

Jeremy Maggs interjects: But it was also excessive and in bad taste Kenny Kunene
Kunene: But when people get used to it, they accept it and live it. Look at how many sushi parties have been hosted after my party and the media has taken interest in that.

Jeremy Maggs: do you still eat sushi off beautiful women

Kunene: I haven't done a party up to so far doing that

Jeremy Maggs: but you would do it again

Kunene: I said I wouldn't doit again. But you see, I would do it again if it brings me money and adds value to my brand. I will never sacrifice my brand

Jeremy Maggs: I suppose the brand lesson here as you've just said, you've got to keep reinventing yourself. But you've got to do new and outrageous things sometimes. Look at Lady Gaga for instance, I mean that's someone you must admire

Kunene: I admire Lady Gaga, in fact I went to the Sama's with sunglasses that are imported from Belgium. They have aluminium net. And in the papers I was called that, I did the Gaga thing, the most important thing in entertainment

Jeremy Maggs interjects: You didn't wear clothes made out of sushi though? (a clip of Lady Gaga dressed in meat is shown)

Kunene: No, I wore a very expensive coat (laughs) I still have to that one. In entertainment as a brand you have to be very creative, you have to come with new ideas, you have to be very entertaining. That's why I am saying South African society is still going there. But if you look at young people in South Africa, because their role models, their heroes are all in the states, guys that do these things they watch, the Kim Kardashian show, and so on and so on, they see a life of luxury and they associate with me more.

Jeremy Maggs: But do you really see yourself as a role model. You've been called an ex con, you've been called a fraudster; you've been called a ponzi guy. I mean you do have a chequered past. You are not really a role model are you?

Kunene: I am a role model, my past was not revealed by anyone else, it was revealed by me when we did schools with Gayton McKenzie, we have done more than 2000 schools, in this

country telling kids not to do crime, telling them about drugs and the reality of imprisonment. So I was the one who said this is my past. If you look at my Facebook and twitter, I have young people that say I am their role model. You see what gives them hope is the very fact of my past that, yes I was an ex-convict however when I came out of prison I didn't continue with the life of crime. I decided to change my life and be the best I could be. And most of my critics who were sitting basking in the sun whilst I was in prison and when I came out, I have become more successful than them. And some of them, it's out of jealousy, that they criticise me, that they call me ex-convict. Yes I am an ex-con I can never deny that, that's part of my past and that's what I tell most in mates when I motivate them that, don't be ashamed or try and run away from what you have become, embrace it, learn from it and grow with it. Yes, prison is a house that built me.
Jeremy Maggs: in the personal space that you occupy how important are political connections. You seem to know anybody who is anybody. Is that important?

Kunene (laughs): Jeremy I am former political activist. I was involved in Cosas in the struggle during the 80's. I was imprisoned during the 80's for political reasons. So I don't really need political connections. I need to portray myself as a brand. I need to sell myself; I need to convince the consumer out there that they need to associate with me and my business.

Jeremy Maggs: As a personal branding expert, how would you define Julius Malema's personal brand? He is a contemporary of yours, he is a colleague, a friend, isn't he?

Kunene: No he is not a friend, in the way I define a friend, but he is my comrade because we meet within the political circles and in the entertainment. But I must say that he is a very big brand. Most of the people lose their brand because what starts to make them, when they get criticised they run away from it. If you play soccer and soccer make you, immediately you get criticised by the way you play soccer and you decide to create a brand out of volley ball, that's not who you are. So Julius' brand is based on who he is; to be critical, to be vocal and to be straightforward.

Jeremy Maggs: And you think that he manages that brand well

Kunene: He manages it very very well. Whenever he speaks the media jumps and it is because of the brand that he has created. That is in politics, but even in entertainment, in my space, you have to be the same, you have to make sure that you stick to what made you. What has made me obviously as you said is controversy. A definition of controversy...

Jeremy Maggs interjects: do you find controversy or does controversy find you?

Kunene: I think controversy finds me. I plan how I.

Jeremy Maggs interjects: But you don't push it away though?

Kunene: Everybody that has been labelled controversial in the world is the best brand. Hugh Hefner was labelled as controversial, he is the biggest brand. P Diddy is labelled as controversial, all the big rappers they are the biggest brands. Lady Gaga is labelled as very controversial, she is the biggest brand. So when you are labelled as controversial, it means you have made it. It is like you are being given the accolades and now you are being given your degree that now you are a brand.

Jeremy Maggs: i understand all of that, but are we not also obsessed with the shallow and irrelevant in this country. I mean celebrity brands, what difference to they make, what change do they effect. It's a fleeting thing, isn't it, here one day, gone the next.

Kunene: I disagree with you. A brand goes because a brand lost ideas. It's like companies, companies come and companies go. It is because they don't work hard to be creative; they don't work hard to impress the consumer, they now become comfortable and say people will still come and buy. It's the same as celebrities, if you rest on your laurels and say that you believed that you are a brand and therefore out there, you will fade. So you have to make sure that you enhance that brand. If you look at me Jeremy, I decide when I want to be in the media, because I control my brand, I make sure that my brand is there for a particular reason.

Jeremy Maggs: You are also a young person's brand in many ways. How old are you now?
Kunene: I am 40.
Jeremy Maggs: I mean are you still going to be doing this when you are 50, when you are 60, surely at some point you have to look at that personal brand, the brand has got to mature or its gonna die or its gonna fade off completely
Kunene: Fortunately in the entertainment business, the brand doesn't die as long as its creative, look at Hugh Hefner, look at don king in boxing
Jeremy Maggs: do you admire Hugh Hefner?
Kunene: I adore Hugh Hefner, he started, he was highly criticised, 10-15 years down the line he was having coffee-tea with presidents of countries and billionaires of countries, that's how he has built his brand and he is still going on up until now

Jeremy Maggs interjects: Kunene a lot of people say that the Hugh Hefner brand has become a caricature; he is a silly old man now, cavorting with women who are old enough to be his grandchildren.

Kunene: Exactly you see, those are moralists who always criticise and tell you what to do, yet, they have never done it. So High Hefner is living his life. Whose morality are talking about? So what I am saying is as long as my knees carry me, I will go on partying with young people, even when I am 80, when I am 90 and my knees carry me, I will keep on.
Jeremy Maggs: providing you have the energy
Kunene: As long as I have the energy, entertainment is very easy.

Jeremy Maggs: why do you wear two wrist watches?

Kunene: Because I am global, you know I talk to people in New York; I talk to people in LA. So, I don't have the seconds to calculate six hours backwards, I can afford it why not. It is also branding, to say this is two watches and you associate with Kenny Kunene.
Jeremy Maggs interjects: That's you, that's the trademark. Kenny Kunene it's been good talking to you thank you very much for joining us.
Kunene: it's a pleasure. Thank you

Jeremy Maggs: Well that's the man, that's the interview, your thoughts not on brand Kenny on our Facebook page and also on twitter feed.

Audio clips of a radio interview (Niki Seberini interviews Kunene on 101.9 Chai FM)
The following transcript is of a radio clip in which Kunene was interviewed. The clips were separated and uploaded in *Youtube* in three parts.

Part 1 (15:03 minutes)
Web link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMCHCEDeGVQ&feature=relmfu

Niki Seberini: In the studio we have Kenny Kunene, who has been you know, I mean Kenny, you have been on everyone's lips, what can I say, everyone is talking about you. (Kenny laughs in the background). Everyone is reading about you, and now you've been awarded, what is fag of the year, fag hag of the year, what is that?

Kunene: (laughs) A fag hag (Kunene pauses and laughs, Niki Seberini in the background laughs and exclaim, "that's funny"), firstly let me say good morning to you and the listeners

Niki Seberini interjects: Good morning, good morning, thanks for joining us.

Kunene: No. It's a great honour

Niki Seberini: I know you are very busy, cos you have everybody coming back to you about the disciplinary hearing. Which I think it was quite important that we have you on the studio but will get back to that. How do you feel about being winner of the fag hag of the year? How does that feel?

Kunene: Look Fag hag when the guys explain it goes to someone that accepts gay community, that hang out with gays and lesbians of course, someone that does not judge them, someone that parties with them and gets a call from them. So, My PA is gay, my previous manager was gay, one of my good friends who is also now becoming my PA is gay. So, I am within the gay community, so that's why I guess they gave me the award of fag hag of the year. I go to the gay pride (Kunene laughs, and Niki Seberini interjects and says "you do).So, I believe that, you know, sometimes we need to just follow the basic principles within the bible, don't judge others so that you cannot be judged

Niki Seberini: So Kenny you are a real trendsetter. You've got a lot of up and coming youngsters who watch you, they're look at what you are wearing, they look at what you are doing and I think that you realise that you are a role model for a lot of people out there. So in fact being a recipient of this kind of award, you know can be a tongue in cheek, we can smile about it, but there is a lot more serious implications. Do you take that? Do you realise what a responsibility that is?

Kunene: I do. First of all most people look at the Feather awards as humorous awards. But I look at them deeply. I think gay people are fun loving people and the way they name the awards is different and that makes them different. If you look at the gays and lesbian awards in the US, they are also named differently. So I take them very seriously that's why I went. The Fag Hag, yes, I am humbled that the gay community recognises my acceptance of them as people, but I think that the most important award for me that I could have received is the Cutest couple of the year award (Niki Seberini interjects- "you and your business partner").

Kunene continues: You see, Gayton and I (Niki Seberini interjects- "is it Gayton McCkenzie")
Kunene continues: Yes, Gayton McCkenzie, we met in prison (Niki Seberini interjects- "that's a very interesting place to meet. (Both Kunene and Niki Seberini laugh). That's a whole another story Kunene, you just strew that in)

Kunene continues: we met in prison and I guess we were more embraced by the white people when we came out, when we started doing motivational talks in schools, doing corporate talks, you know the English speaking people, Afrikaner, the Jewish people. Gayton has been adopted by one of our mentors, who is also a Jewish person, a very successful businessman, as his son. And it is out of that acknowledgement that you know, you have changed your life around. And we haven't really had much embracing from our own after our imprisonment. It is then that when we became successful, is then when that we got to be embraced by some of our own, black people and coloured people, just to be specific, because Gayton is coloured. So, for the gay community to recognise our brotherhood, our friendship and our partnership in business, for us is the highest accolade. If you look at the Cutest Couple, they say it goes to a couple or friends that people look up to, that people adore. So, for them to sit down and say look, this is a couple, these are partners and this is their story and it's an inspiring story for young people, it's an inspiring story for them for me that was the highest accolade that I could have ever received that night. No award, even the Fag Hag does not come close, emotionally to me. I really appreciate the Fag Hag but this one said to me, at least there's a group within our society that recognises our brotherhood, our friendship, and our success of course.

Niki Seberini: So Kenny why were you in jail? What where you in jail for?

Kunene: I was a criminal, I was a gangster

Niki Seberini: You were a gangster? (laughs)

Kunene: I made bad choices unfortunately. But I think that was a journey I had to travel.I guess I became a better person, whilst in prison and after imprisonment. Each one of us.(Niki Niki Seberini interjects- "How come? Did you see the light; so to speak, I mean prison can turn you the other way)

Kunene continues: Yes, it depends; look I was a teacher, so I had a bit of education. However in prison, you see life from the outside better than when you are part of it. You know, you see the hypocrisy, you see real people, you see how politics play people, you see how business messes up with people. You know you look at it from that side. (Niki Seberini interjects: "Like an observer")

Kunene: Yes, but most importantly you find yourself. And that's true finding yourself; you know I always say to guys in prison when I go to motivate them. Prison can make or break you. It's your choice. Again it's your choice when you commit crimes. When you are in prison there is still a choice you have to make, whether you make yourself through prison, or we there you let prison to break you. So I made a choice for prison to make me. And I always say to them that you must embrace what you have become, you have become an ex-criminal, you have become an ex-convict. The society out there does not owe you any explanation, it does not owe you any sympathy, and you in fact owe them, to prove to them that you are changed person.

But there's people in the society who want you to go back to prison. I always say to them don't listen to people being politically correct and saying we are worried about a number of ex-offenders who go back to prison; they want you to go back. And I say so because, Gayton and I, after we made it as I said, we were embraced by a few people in business, but most of these people didn't even want to see us. Media still labels us as ex-convicts, they can't just say Kenny Kunene, successful businessman, there's always an 'ex-convict turned businessman". And every time they say it, I look back and I'm like wow, I come far. And I really like what they are doing because somebody that does not know me already sees an inspiration, ex-convict turned businessman, wow. I look at the good that it does for me, you see. So it is the highest accolade. Prison is hell. Anyone that thinks prison is a 5 star hotel. Has one, either not been to prison, or never been to a 5 star hotel. Because prison is certainly not a five star hotel.

Niki Seberini: How long have you been in prison for?
Kunene: Six years
Niki Seberini: At what stage did you meet Gayton?
Kunene: I think in my second or third year
Niki Seberini: It must be a quite isolating experience. You arrive, the realisation that you this is where you are going to be for a long time. You get taken to your room. And you know this is it. And as you say you can make the decision, but I am sure it wasn't an instant decision, I am sure it was over a period of time that you had this metamorphosis, this change, or the way you looked at the world, the outside looking in.

Kunene: When you go into prison, people differ, I wasa gangster, I was hardcore. And there's people who go to prison because they made a mistake, he stole money at his company. So when he walks in there, for him, it's like he's lost. I have been in and out of prison, I was in prison for six months for political reasons, in the 80s, so I was already used to the atmosphere basically. But the most important thing is, a guy like me when you walk inside prison, and it is for the first time you get to that prison, you are like hard-core because you don't want anyone telling you what to do when you go in. So you are targeting the first prison that's gonna try and treat you like a lady to just mess him up very quickly so that everybody can know that this one is hard-core. But over a period of time, you will reflect.

Niki Seberini: so you and Gayton formed this wonderful friendship, you probably thought about these brilliant business ideas. You had a lot of time to think about brilliant business ideas. And so you are, you are a walking success Kenny. I mean as I said you have been in front pages of newspapers nibbling sushi off beautiful women (Kunene laughs), you are not afraid of controversy, you are not afraid to stand up and say I have worked hard and this is what I have achieved. Having now met you, I see the Kenny that I have read about in the newspapers, and now I am seeing Kenny the person. Are you are aware that you have such a public persona and the Kenny persona, the real Kenny persona.

Kunene: Yes, yes, definitely most of the things that are happening in my life at the moment I have done a lot of research about when I was in prison, as you said we had more time in our hands. I think South Africa, hasn't reached a point, our society or part of it or majority of it where hasn't reached a point where they differentiate between a brand and the person. So you see, I guess, Kenny Kunene as a brand, is a different person when we come to character compared to Kenny Kunene as a person. The brand is not far from the person. Naturally I love fun, I love entertainment, I am an outgoing person, I love people, that's my nature. So I didn't want my brand to be far from my person.

Niki Seberini: You have to be authentic, i mean you have to.
Kunene: However, I sometimes don't understand myself when I read in the newspapers, who is this, is this me?(They laugh), There's so much exaggerations, there's so many lies. Sometimes I don't even comment. I love radio because radio is live, what you ask me is what I say. If you asked me something, and then boom, it's a front page, at least I said it, but with print media you do an interview with a journalist, and the next thing you read, you wonder who did this journalist do an interview with after me. This is certainly not what I said, this is certainly not me. You know what I am saying, they always misrepresent now and again. But it's part of being a public figure, you just have to deal with it.

Niki Seberini: I mentioned, I don't know how many youngsters are probably looking at the sunglasses you are wearing, the watches, the fact that you are wearing two watches, the tops, the jeans, the t-shirts, whatever. So there is this trend of looking good, of having the right brand. So what do you think is more important, Kenny the brand or Kenny the person?

Kunene: My person is very important to people who are close to me, my brand is very important to my fans, so I have to balance that. If you look at hip hop, I listen to hip hop a lot, because hip hop artists come from the same background as me, they were gangsters and they don't see themselves as conservative businessman, they see themselves as hustlers, you look at Jay Z, you look at P Diddy, they still behave like they are hustling but they are wealthy. But the most important thing is they have redefined branding in the world and not just the US, they have redefined sales of products. Anything that hip hop artist's Sing about sells. You look at Cristal, the MD of Cristal offended the hip hop community and Jay Z went on radio and everywhere and said listen, I'll never buy this brand again, I will never ever even sell it in my club. Ace of Spades, and he became the ambassador, just instantly, instantly Ace of Spades took and is been the number one champagne in the world its going into different countries, I don't know for how long now, I get mails from them, I am the ambassador of Ace of Spades in South Africa and Africa. So they've redefined that and so I looked at my brand and said if they can have that type of an impact, and branding in South Africa needs to be different, let me see the brand Kenny Kunene and how much power does it have in redefining how people think about fashion, about certain things. Now I meet young people and they say, they call me Kenny Kunene in my hood I wear two watches, my daughter wears two watches. Even older guys they wear two watches. Yesterday I was driving into Sandhurst and this guy is selling at the corner and he has this Nigerian look that Maummar Gadaffi used to wear.

Part 2 (clip continues) (15:02 minutes)
Web link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSvB48yLugo&feature=related

Kunene: He knocks on my window and says I am dressed like you, I saw you at Alex at your birthday party. Now we are gonna dress like this

Niki Seberini: Wow Kenny that's powerful

Kunene: Now that defines my brand. We decided to be associated with the Charity Mile event, in Turfontein. We signed first week of October, We had three weeks to market that event. We said to Phumelela look you guys have less than 5 000 people, this is a charity event you need to bring more people. Give us hospitality, let us run withyour hospitality, will bring you the numbers. We did not go to the media, we didn't go to radio, nor print media nor tv, we only used social media. And our approach was Kenny Kunene is hosting a horse racing event, the charity mile at Turfontein. This is what you pay for hospitality, you are getting for free. It was all about awareness, so that next year we can take it to another level. We got them 26 000 people, three weeks of marketing. And everyone that was there went there because of the brand Kenny Kunene. So those are the numbers that you pull. Everywhere I go, now, I have to travel to do parties in almost every city because there's a high demand for people who want to follow me. I am even thinking now of having my own beer that I will drink, my own whisky. In the US brands pay millions to hip-hop artists, to celebrities from clothing to alcohol, to cars. They started singing about these brands for free, but now they don't sing about any brand if it does not pay them. Kentucky can pay someone, Jay Z, a

million dollars in the US to be on the billboard eating Kentucky, but in this country they want to pay you 50 000 to be on the billboard. So i have been saying, I need to redefine that also. They must pay.
Niki Seberine: And you are doing, you are doing it as we speak. Kenny we gonna take a break and we wanna talk about the findings of the disciplinary hearing. We've got people who gonna be reporting on it but you've got the inside information, we want the inside info. Niki Seberini links to the ads.

Niki Seberini: Welcome back you are with Niki Seberini, we have been talking about the Feather Awards that took place on Tuesday the 8 at a venue in Melrose Arch and one of the winners of two awards in fact is in the studio, Fag Hag of the year and best couple of the year, and we have Kenny Kunene in the studio. And it's just so interesting Kenny that we are talking about a specific brand Kenny. You know the Kenny Kunene that I have read about, and the person I am meeting now in the studio and it just says so much for the way a person can use their mind, their outlook to change things in life, cos, you really are the walking and talking example of that. And I think of you have realised the responsibility and the power you have over people so you can do it in the brand way, the watches, the sunglasses and all of that but i think that possibly in your future you are going to be doing it more and more, as in passing those messages to the youth that you have, your experiences. Am I right Kenny? I think you are going to be doing it more and more.

Kunene: Yes I am, Look, I have a reality show, So What.

Niki Seberini: On E?

Kunene: Yes it's on E every Saturday, half past seven. I am an entertainer and that's what I am known for. People expect my reality show to be motivational ad inspirational only. Then it's not a reality show, it has to be about Kenny Kunene, his real life. So there's parties on my reality show, there's inspirational stuff on my reality show, I write quotes on my reality show but I don't say it obvious. At the moment we are in a weight loss completion with Gayton, and our CEO Riaan. But it's something that just came up and we said look this thing is gonna to take time so let it be part of the content of the reality show. But through that we are saying to people who are watching my show it is important to lose weight. It's a message that we are sending, but I am not telling them that lose weight, but my actions, what I do, will inspire them to lose weight; you understand what I am saying. We are running a mentorship programme, we went on twitter, because we stay with the social media, we went on twitter and we said to young people, those who are interested in marketing, PR and branding let them write a motivation as to why should we consider them for our mentorship programme. We got17 400 emails in 4 days, and we selected 3-000 in Johannesburg and some of them, come from Pretoria. We've been doing this mentorship programme and you must hear, Gayton give them a motivational part, I mentor them on marketing and branding and some of them are studying marketing but you must hear these kids when they engage with us after the session. Because after every session we give them about 45 minutes of interacting with us.

Niki Seberini interjects: And?

Kunene: It's amazing. It's amazing. Some of them say look, I can drop now and come and listen to you guys, because I don't just walk away with knowledge I walk away motivated, I walk away inspired.

Niki Seberini interjects: I can do it. (As if adding to what Kenny is saying)
These are the things that we don't speak about. I am sick and tired of these summits where kids are given sandwiches and juice and are given all these concepts and they go back home but they still have nothing. These ones know that the winners, those that show more hard work and more passion and more intelligence we are going to employ under the ZAR empire.

Niki Seberini: It is like an entrepreneurial spirit, there is that entrepreneurial spirit

Kunene: Yes that's what we are doing but we don't make noise about stuff like that, we do it because it is the right thing to do.

Niki Seberini: So Kenny, right now or just a short while ago, we've been following the Julius Malema trial, and the trial of all the others as well that you are friends with. So I mean you are getting the BBM's or I don't know if it's an sms, I don't know, I haven't seen your phone yet, but I am sure it's a beautiful one. Tell us your thoughts on the disciplinary hearing. (a message tone can be heard in the background)

Nikki: is that another message
Kunene: (laughs) yes,
Nikki: mumbles something and laughs

Kunene; Iama really confused, really, I don't want to get to whether the disciplinary was right or wrong, that's not my space, you know what I am saying. But I must say that it is just unfortunate for young people, because for me, what these disciplinary hearing are meant to say or send a message is that, if you are a young person and you have a voice, we will shut you down. That is the biggest challenge, let me tell you why. I always say that as business people, including myself, we have to thank people like Julius Malema. The reason being, I interact with you people, young people when they don't have a voice they burn. if there is no one speaking for them they burn.

And My fear is that if we don't have very aggressive young people that are gonna speak in the same tone as those young people unemployed standing at street corners, they will resort to burning. Look at Xenophobia, it's wrong, it's very wrong, I believe that whoever orchestrates it must be imprisoned to life, because the same people that we drive out of the country are the same people that welcomed us during our liberation struggle. But because there was no voice, to say we have these frustrations they ended up following one or two people that said let us burn. So that is my biggest, biggest fear for this country. And the youth league leadership has

been doing that very well, to talk, to spark debates, to introduce topics that young people in their branch meetings and everywhere else introduce.

The issue, yes Julius Malema will be suspended, Floyd Chivambu will be suspended, if they are suspended because what I heard, I still have to get a newspaper to clarify what's happening, because he was suspended for three years but the suspension in itself was suspended , (Niki interjects –"we are confused) what the damn is going on. It's like this was a more confusing briefing than trying to shed light. At least Floyd dropped me an sms, and explained to me cos, I sent him an sms and said cadre I am lost, what's happening? So what I am saying is, it is the biggest challenge but the point is, the point is, Julius Malema, is Julius Malema, Floyd is Floyd, they are representing the views of young people. These young people are not suspended, these young people are not expelled, these young people remain within the ANC's Youth League and the next conference they would still want to know, where the debate on nationalisation is, they would still want to know where the debate on economic emancipation is. That is the challenge we are facing, you can get rid of him, but the masses that said to him go and speak, if Julius Malema said to the people go and burn, they will burn but he has never made that decision because knowing him and having interacted with him and Floyd in particular, they loved this country, they loved peace that is happening in this country, That is the point, if he were careless, if he were selfish, he would have said, let us burn and these young people would have burned because they look up to him, he is their leader.

Nikki: You know Kenny I heard Fiona Forde, have you read her book *An Inconvenient Youth*?
Kunene: No, no, no, I didn't even wanna read it, to be honest with you. I saw the book, but I don't know where she comes from.

Nikki cuts in: Well she shadowed him for a while, he was completely aware that she was writing this book. She had access to him all the time and he knew that, and he gave her access to all the people in his life, to his grandmother, he gave her access to everybody. And she just writes about him and what I found so interesting, she sat exactly where you are seating now. And she just spoke again about the Julius Malema, the person, the political figure. And she said exactly what you've said, Julius Malema is the voice of the youth, if it's not gonna be Julius Malema, it's gonna be someone else because they are not listen to the youth, the people, the youngsters, the coming up, who want to be economically free, who want to have the opportunity. And it's a very important voice that needs to be heard, exactly what you've said.

Kunene: It's a very important voice. And you must look at the Julius as the person; I have gone out public and said I was made by white people. And Julius on the other hand and the youth league were saying, look, down to white minority capital, and we need to get our land back. And Julius was seen as a hater of white people. But Julius has never said to me, stop saying you are made by the white, I hate white people. Julius has always said to me, and Floyd, look, our liberation struggle, some of our heroes are white, we have the Joe Slovos,

Dennis Goldbergs, Ruth Firsts, you name them, George Bizos these are the white people that fought for our struggle with us.He always said I don't hate white people, I hate their system. And that's exactly what I said in America, I hate the American government not the American people, I despise the British government not the British people because where there is oil they invest a lot of money in ammunition to go and murder people in those countries just to remove one person who does not say yes to their imperialist tendencies. So Julius, the youth league challenges the system it doesn't challenge the people.

Nikki: But, in so doing Kenny, in challenging the system he has stepped on many people's toes. He's been incredibly outspoken, and I think that in the beginning a lot of people turned around and they set up and they noticed Julius Malema and that's how he rose to fame so incredibly at such a short space of time.

Kunene: But that's what all the leaders of the youth league have been doing, they have been very very vocal, when it comes to national issues that challenge young people and if you look at him, when he was in Limpopo, he became vocal again, he said I don't hate white people. Julius respects Nelson Mandela and he said, in the spirit of reconciliation we accept white people, we are not chasing them away. The media did not publicize that aggressively as they publicised the hate part, which is not there. They interpret what he says as hate, and the man clarifies and no one makes even a debate about it. So, you just see the hypocrisy, because now they are attacking the man. But mark my words, mark my words, the youth league will bounce back with the same voice again and again and again. Hunger, hunger, young people are hungry, young people are unemployed. I see them, I interact with them.

Part 3 (12:03 minutes)
Web link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SZaBt1ILmk&feature=relmfu

You understand what I am saying to you. This is not gonna go away. No one is gonna shut anyone. The apartheid government tried to arrest those who are vocal. But the masses kept on rising. When you shut one, another one that's even much more revolutionary than the previous one comes up. It is the culture of young people. We hope that young people will receive this. I know that the NEC of the Youth League is meeting on Saturday to discuss a way forward on these findings. However they will be appeals, while there's an appeal I think that they allowed to still be members and lead and then there will be another appeal, if that appeal upholds these findings and there will be another appeal and then we will see where it ends. At the end of the day it might even end up with the highest body of the ANC where then it will be deliberated.

Nikki: But we will be watching closely
Kunene: Definitely/ Look I don't support any group within the ANC, but as a matter of principle, I support young people, so whether it is Julius leading young people or whether it's Floyd leading the young people, or whether it's Jabu, I support young people. Whether it's in politic, whether it's in business or in sports, I support young people.

Nikki: Thank you Kenny, thank you for that. You know, I just want to say and maybe you can just comment on what I say. When you are talking about young people, young people are impressionable, and when you are talking about a lot of young people who are hungry, they can be very angry if they are hungry as well, that's what you've say they are burning. That's why I do think that sometimes as a leader, if you are a role model to young people, you have to also be responsible for the words that you use. While I hear you say that he uses other words that are sometimes not reported, while he has a great understanding of what he is saying, where he is coming from, does he have the hate, doesn't he, maybe a whole group of young people who do not know any better and you are very hungry what it does is, it burns the anger, it burns the hatred, it burns you're this colour and you're that colour. And I am not saying that is specifically what he is doing and any leader of the youth, cos you are talking about the youth. You have to be responsible when you are dealing with youth because if they don't know any better, they're gonna follow you in whatever direction, whether it is burning, whether it is talking, or whether it is education, whatever it is, it is being very mindful of the responsibility you have.

Kunene: I definitely agree with you, you have to be responsible. But let me just indicate that most people undermine unity and brains that young people have. Young people are very united and they have brains. You see all these marches that have been happening of the youth league in Joburg, you get young people being bussed from Kwa Zulu Natal, North West, the Free State, Eastern Cape; they come from over the country. And how they get to these young people is because, young people have leaders in their branches, in their regions, in their provinces, so when there's issues of misunderstanding these are deliberated within the branches, comrade this is not what the leader is saying, the leader is saying 1,2,3,4,5.

Nikki interjects: But the message is communicated down
Kunene continues: The message is communicated properly down; it's communicated properly to young people. But if you don't understand the politics of the ANC and the ANC youth league, you wouldn't understand that there is that communication, that is what there has never been burning, that is why young people have never burned white people's properties, that is why young people have never come in and said we are taking over land by force, because they understand that the leadership is saying let us debate, because they are the ones that give the leadership the mandate from the branches and say look, this is what we are not happy with. A branch would come and say in the Eastern Cape we are struggling with Land redistribution and KZN they will say, the same applies to us, you as the leadership need to raise this issue of land redistribution. And others from the city will say economic development, we are unemployed, you as the leadership this is your mandate, these are the issues that you need to deal with. So they mandate them, so it is not from up down

Niki cuts in: not from top down, it's from down up, okay

Kunene continues: So young people are the ones who are telling them. So they know exactly what Julius is supposed to be saying. That is why when he says it. They support it because it

is what he represents; you understand what I am saying to you. That is why they respond to his marches, that is why whether he is charged or not charged, young people are still behind him because they have instructed him to do that.

Niki Seberini: Okay we've got a couple of callers. Hi good morning.
Caller: Hi
Niki Seberini: Hi
Caller: This is Jeff speaking
Niki Seberini: Hi Jeff
Jeff: I attended an address by the vice president, where he said one of the biggest problems facing the nation, is that there are 2.8 million young black people uneducated and unemployed. I am sure a multitude of these are part of the youth league, so my question is , why doesn't the government institute a national call up- conscription, not a military conscription, but a civil service conscription, where these people, I am sure there's a fortune of available camps form South Africa from the previous regime, where these people can be trained in discipline, trained in languages, trained in a multitude of skills from farming to, traffic control, to ambulance to CPU, to whatever it is, that will make them employable. And the question is what will this cost the government to do this and the next question is what is it gonna cost them not do this.

Niki Seberini: Thanks the caller and ask him to hang up
Kunene answers: I think that's a brilliant question and statement. You can ask that question again why is government not doing 1,2,3,4,5. You see what makes young people angry it's not the success of black people through tenders. Who should get tenders if black people don't get tenders? That's the way government is empowering black people. That is why the Youth league is saying, let us nationalise mines. And when they speak about nationalisation from my understanding, they are not saying take over existing mines and make them government mines. They are basically saying, and this happens in Norway, it happens everywhere else, they're saying if you say you don't have enough capital, instead of having Kenny Kunene as a BEE partner in a mining deal with investors from outside rather have government as a partner so that profit comes to government and not to an individual or not to five people or six people, so that , that money comes to government; when you have that money from the mines, you can then use that money to train young people, to employ young people and create jobs because you are saying you don't have.

If you look at Norway, Norway has nationalised its oil, everyone in Norway, it's a small population, but those people know that in time they will be wealthy. So I think these are the issues that the youth league is raising, exactly that question, that he is asking and if these young people continue to be unemployed, to have nothing, look anger builds up and by the time, they are growing up, and other young people are coming in and are complaining they will then say look, we have been trying to talk, talk doesn't work. When Nelson Mandela became a leader as a young lion, he said to the previous leadership, you guys have been talking to the apartheid government, these people are not listening, let us have a military wing. There will be those that say you guys have been talking, but we are still unemployed

and now we have to take over. You see, I will make another example, I hope that answers the question, that is my fear how young people are going to react; I hope they will not burn. And you must remember now that the police force is made out of MK cadres, Metro police is made up of MK cadres amongst other people. They are made up of other young people who come from their townships. Some of the people that march for employment are their brothers and sisters, are their cousins, so it might just be a difficult one to deal with when that time comes.

Niki Seberini: Very interesting Kenny Are you a whisky Drinker? You are
Kunene: Yes I am
Niki Seberini: Tell me the label
I never sell any brand that doesn't pay me. Even on my show, on my reality show I blur any branding, because corporates need to understand that celebrities have got a following and that's marketing for them. So if they don't endorse us I will never ever sell them. I drink whisky and I always say I don't commit statutory rape on whisky; I don't drink anything under 18.

Nikki: (Laughs)So listen, are you gonna go to go to the festival, you can taste a 128 whisky and no one will be confused because you won't be endorsing any of them, you will just be enjoying them

Kunene: I was there last year, I think I'll make a turn maybe tonight

Niki Seberini: there's gonna be a lady there, she's French, she is living in Scotland, and she is a connoisseur when it comes to food and a connoisseur when it comes to whisky, and if you are lucky enough to attend her workshop she's gonna tell you what food goes well with whisky and what food does not go well with whisky. See, I am just giving you an idea. Just another thing to add to your schedule. Kenny it's been wonderful having you in the studio and congratulations for winning those awards. And just thank you for spending time, and i loved having this chat, I really enjoyed it.
Kunene: Thank you very much. I just want to add that Jewish people own business in this country. They must also try and get involved with people like us so that we can give them ideas on how they can assist these unemployed young people opportunity