

Portland State University

PDXScholar

University Honors Theses

University Honors College

Spring 6-5-2024

Investigating How Celebrities Monetize Black Culture for Their Business and Investment Ventures

Abbie Carey

Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorstheses>



Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), [Business Law, Public Responsibility, and Ethics Commons](#), and the [Sales and Merchandising Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Carey, Abbie, "Investigating How Celebrities Monetize Black Culture for Their Business and Investment Ventures" (2024). *University Honors Theses*. Paper 1507.

<https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.1539>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

Investigating How Celebrities Monetize Black Culture for Their Business and Investment
Ventures

By
Abbie Carey

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Bachelor of Science
in
Political Science

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Safia Farole

Portland State University

2024

I. Introduction

The influence of celebrities on American society is obvious by the barrage of cultural appropriation in pop culture and media. The Kardashian family promotes and embodies this socio-political faux pas of the digital era of cultural appropriation and exploitation. The systematic monetization of Black culture has become mainstream due to celebrities' widespread access to fans through mediums like social media and reality TV. The Kardashians are prime examples of celebrities converting a culture that is not theirs and monetizing said culture through advertising mediums such as their reality television shows "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" airing on E! Network from 2007 to 2021, and their current reality show "The Kardashians" streaming on Hulu since 2022. This thesis examines the means and essences of cultural appropriation, concentrating on the Kardashian family as a subject of analysis to explore the wider societal consequences.

Cultural appropriation is the assumption or usage of components of one culture by individuals of a different culture, frequently barring consent and normally for proceeds. This approach is embedded in American history and inequality of systematic oppression, where certain groups manipulate marginalized societies' cultural traditions and art. The Kardashian family's business efforts, such as their wellness and beauty domains, personify this concept. Their calculated theft of Black culture has strengthened their brand, eternalized destructive stereotypes, and sabotaged the historical and cultural meaning. The parasocial marketing techniques utilized by stars like Kim

Kardashian, supply incalculable discernment into how celebrities exploit their fans' perspectives via social media campaigns. Celebrities cultivate a veneer of familiarity; they obscure the lines between private and business relationships. This parasocial exchange promotes camaraderie among their audience to improve their brand deals.

The Kardashians view black culture as a 'product' to grow their businesses and position as captains of industry in glamorizing white women by stealing black women's culture. This seizure of culture makes their brand more profitable and famous while also effacing the cultural-historical importance of the expropriated details. This study reveals the horrors of this practice and explores how celebrity culture appropriation, like the Kardashians, mirrors systematic racism in America. America needs to stop encouraging cultural exploitation. American politicians must legally manage cultural appropriation in marketing and media to abolish these unethical business ventures. Pop culture and the media act as integral contributors in guiding social etiquette, and it starts with these entities to end celebrities and brands from profiting from the exploitation of marginalized cultures. Legislation that defends culture as art and intellectual property will prevent cultural appropriation in marketing plots. Thus, academic and political endeavors that promote diverse literacy for culture and mandate cultural ownership are necessary for handling the extensive nonchalance of cultural appropriation in America.

II. Literature Review

Celebrities have changed the landscape for celebrity endorsements by being the Hollywood monolith to mold cultural investment and business ventures. Throughout the

years, there has been a steady shift in white celebrities monetizing minority culture, especially in the domain of Black culture. Thus, this thesis will examine how Black culture faces obtuse economic and artistic exploitation in the name of profit and fame for white celebrities and their business and investment aspirations. The thesis will also include the convergence of the psychological implications and the effects of social media that celebrities construct by monetizing Black culture without restitution or proper acknowledgment.

Monetizing Black culture is an often overlooked racist cornerstone in celebrities' art, brands, and business and investment endeavors. Ethical representation and cultural consideration discourse arise when celebrities casually turn black culture into a product to put on a shelf with a barcode. Therefore, the exploration of this thesis promises to extend the conversation surrounding this sensitive subject and expose the relationship between celebrity business and investment ventures and cultural appropriation.

This literature review will elucidate the integral themes of the thesis, unfolding with an investigation into comprehending the influence of social media. For example, Halls and Vilanilam (2020) provide apt insight into how celebrities are culturally appropriate by posting ads that monetize Black culture on social media. The academic inquiry expands into how celebrities, specifically the Kardashian family, exploit Black culture for profit in the business and investment sector. Robin E. Sheriff explores the power celebrities have on consumers' psychology. The literature employs academic methods to find contradictions, patterns, and gaps based on contemporary existing

research, as the subsequent pages uncover the depth and importance of the literature utilized to support the thesis.

Social media's vast pop culture expansion rearranged celebrity faculty, permitting celebrities to personally engage with their fans and the public. This forces this literature review to deconstruct the intricate ideology of celebrities' influence using social media as a lightning bolt catalyst for their business endeavors. Hall (2014) constructs a foundation for comprehending how social media expedites any celebrity business and delves into the complexities of contemporary marketing tools through an academic perspective of quantitative study.

Vilanilam (2020) provides a collateral interpretation of social media metrics and how their accessibility permits a professional marketing device disguised in the name of personal connection. Vilanilam (2020) explains how interventional neuroradiologists seamlessly connect to how social media provides celebrities, like the Kardashians, with a brilliant use of their social media platforms.

There is also some scholarly focus on parasocial advertising. Lueck (2015) investigates how celebrities leverage parasocial relationships with their fans to advertise their products. The Kardashians, since the early 2000s, have understood the parallel between their brand and using social media to parlay a fan base. This revelation showcases a cohesive thread in how celebrities anchor their business ventures through their celebrity image on social media. Consumer behavior in the time of social media provides a novel look into celebrity businesses and the digital age.

The Kardashians are prominent celebrities who integrate social media marketing and cultural appropriation, specifically Black culture, for their profit. Hussain (2022) examines how the Kardashians repeatedly exploit Black culture with little repercussion and significant monetary gains. The lack of public rage toward the Kardashian's blatant racist transgression allows for their continued exploitation of Black Culture. The implications of stealing black culture without proper acknowledgment or permission continue the systematic oppression of black Americans. Oppression is not simply physical violence and segregation; oppression can present itself in the silencing and theft of black culture and art by white celebrities who claim the culture as their musings for profit.

Requires exploration into how celebrity influence translates to media content and brands in parasocial psychological marketing campaigns. These campaigns mold consumers' behavior and perception of beauty, fashion, and culture, which is a dangerous summation when white celebrities twist Black culture for their gain. Sheriff (2017) writes about the psychological tie between celebrities and their fans, especially with the Kardashian family. In his academic musing, "Dreaming of the Kardashians."

Sheriff's (2017) findings reveal how celebrities rely on manipulative psychology to sell their products to naive consumers, in awe of the celebrity and spectacle that is Hollywood. Sheriff (2017) examines the Kardashians and how their subconscious parasocial relationship with their fans that they nurture through their social media and "revealing" reality show, "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" On E! and "The Kardashians" on Hulu. On their TV shows, they wear traditional African braids (box

braids, dreadlocks, cornrows, etc.) and fashion without credit to black women. They casually use the word “ghetto,” and Sheriff (2017) analyzes the racist tendencies that have helped them build a billion-dollar empire. The Kardashian family’s disrespect for black culture works in their favor when factoring in their symbiotic relationship with consumer engagement and social media content to further their brand.

The Kardashian brand relies on being edgy, sexy, and a businesswoman meets a porn star. Since the Kardashians exploit black culture so often, they are intrinsically objectifying black culture, a severe offense as black women already face a higher rate of sexual violence in America. Thus, the Kardashian’s psychological grip on American pop culture with their business ventures perpetuates racism by relying on social media intimacy and parasocial trust.

Consumer behavior and investment choices tend to reflect the consumer's psychological relationship with celebrity culture. The Kardashians, despite their massive fortune, hold on to the public relations brand that they are like any American family. It is imperative to comprehend this tacky psychological ploy the Kardashians use in a repetitive formula that shows up in their shows and social media. It defines the contemporary way marketing occurs, and culture is appropriated easily, allowing for racism and hurt to continue in a digital age.

The synthesized finding of the literature review uncovers the intricate connection between social media, celebrity psychological impact, and cultural appropriation, honing in on the Kardashian families’ exploitation and monetization of black culture. Social

media's influence on consumer investments is highlighted by Hall (2014) and Vilanilam (2020).

The social media investigation transitioned into how the Kardashian family empire abuses black culture for their gain, as noted by Hussain's (2022) academic investigation into cultural appropriation. Sheriff (2017) exposes how the Kardashian family employs psychological pull to market their businesses. Sheriff (2017) provides an in-depth look into how consumers are subconsciously urged to buy products from celebrity businesses. The danger of this psychological scheme allows for celebrities, like the Kardashian family, to sell their products while simultaneously pushing a narrative that further disrespects black culture and pushes racist rhetoric.

This literature review allows for intensive inquiry and research to examine how the ethical implications of celebrities exploiting black culture derive from societal moral corruption that stains the momentum the civil rights movement fought for so nobly. There is also room for comparative study to other research on how white celebrities monetize cultural appropriation. Celebrities have more influence than the public realizes, and even subtle racist messaging can infiltrate the American culture subconscious. Celebrity influence has been a defining aspect of American culture, but with the rise of social media, celebrities have had more influence since the genesis of the silver screen. That power can wield intersectional empowerment, but celebrities continue to live up to their disappointing reputations of being out of touch and narcissistic, which is why it is required to utilize this literature and more to combat the unethical celebrity business culture academically.

III. Argument

Cultural appropriation, as promoted by celebrities, has evolved into a principal and controversial characteristic of modern American culture. This caustic idea, demonstrated by the Kardashian family's health realm, echoes a more comprehensive sensation where black culture is commodified systematically for capital growth. Jennifer Anette Lueck observes the disturbing trend via her research on the parasocial advertising tactics of Kim Kardashian. Celebrities energetically leverage private issues and brands and use social media to support brands. Heena Hussain's academic investigation of "The Surveillance of Blackness in the Kardashians' Wellness Empire" illuminates the detailed methods of cultural appropriation entwined with economic initiatives. Hussain (2022) explains: "The sisters engage with blackness in a way that bolsters their claims of capacitive and beautifying white feminine subjects..." Using the insightful theory of the "Commodification of Cultural Identity," I analyze how celebrities, particularly the Kardashian family, manipulate, monetize, and exploit black culture, concentrating on its moral and financial significance.

The monetization and economic and artistic exploitation of black culture by celebrities, as symbolized by the Kardashian family, has developed into a prevalent and controversial spectacle in contemporary America. The Kardashian family's reality TV show, "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" On E! and "The Kardashians" on Hulu, hold a strong grip on public influence that has expanded to their social media platforms. Their TV shows and social media accounts are the primary platforms to support their brands and engage in black culture commodification, especially concerning wellness and

beauty brand endorsements and marketing campaigns. The Kardashian family's chronic use of cultural appropriation in their marketing gambits is more than an aesthetic plagiarism concern. Still, it advances to the domain of economic returns, assembling an intricate quagmire of moral and monetary crises.

Pulling from the analysis of "The Surveillance of Blackness in the Kardashians' Wellness Empire" and the reflection of celebrities' blatant appropriation of black culture for enterprise gain, an academic structure arises. This foundation finds its origins in the convergence of racial capitalism, cultural appropriation, and social media advertising, constructing the "Commodification of Cultural Identity" hypothesis.

This theory postulates that celebrities, like the Kardashians, monetize and exploit black culture in a manipulative framework for relevance and financial prosperity. The theory comprises ideas of parasocial exchanges, where celebrities use social media to assemble a partisan relationship with their fans, enabling a feeling of familiarity that obscures promotional content for brands and personal narratives.

This theory forms a roadmap for comprehending the miscellaneous qualities of cultural appropriation regarding celebrity brands, business endorsements, and advertisements, accentuating the amalgamation of personal narratives. Further, it positions the setting for further inquiry into the moral and economic measurements of such procedures, such as probable routes for diminishing the adverse consequences of black communities' cultures being appropriated and commodified.

The Kardashian family, specifically Kim Kardashian, are paradigmatic models of celebrities who exert substantial social and political influence through social media and their reality television shows in a historical manner and achievements. "The unparalleled

success of five sisters managed by their mother has continued to increase over time (Sheriff, 2017)." Lueck's analysis elucidates how Kim Kardashian interlaces personal accounts with product and brand endorsements on social media platforms, particularly Instagram. These calculated parasocial exchanges strive to build online rapport and intimacy with their audiences to heighten the profitability of products analogous to the family's business and health empire. The monetization of black culture is entrenched in this approach, as indicated by the Kardashian family's expropriation of components such as beauty and health (Hussain, 2022).

Lueck's investigation of brands endorsed by celebrities steeped in personal accounts corresponds with the Kardashian family's permeating social media usage to boost health and wellness products "due to findings that yielded a high amount of endorsements embedded into personal stories... (Lueck, 2015)." The commercialization of black culture, specifically in the dominion of beauty and health, metamorphs into an adjuvant for the Kardashian family to retain pertinence and profitability. This parasocial publicity technique, as marked in their concentration on public attention, denotes the meshing of personal and commercial content and brands and the deliberate unification of black culture casually into their rhetoric and brand.

Heena Hussain's study on the administration of black culture appropriation exposes the Kardashian family's modes of misappropriating and commodifying black culture, "Participatory self-surveillance through their formidable use of social media (Hussain, 2022)". The Kardashian family, frequently indicted of 'black fishing,' tactically encounters black culture appropriation to offer an "honest" masquerade that together leverages cultural characteristics. The Kardashian's billion-dollar business empire's

capitalization of black culture epitomizes a routine of misuse that stretches past aesthetic preferences and saturates into monetary schemes and ventures.

The Kardashian family's implementation of social media for advertising and publicity objectives, as examined by Lueck, institutes an explicit connection between the commodification of black culture and parasocial interactions facilitated online. The Kardashian family's attention to blackness as a "product" is more than a hegemonic attempt to steal and monopolize cultures for their monetary gain; it is a sociological tool to market a culture that is not theirs to advance their businesses and brand through product endorsements and advertisements. The parasocial connections founded on social media outlets function as a catalyst for the circulation of wellness products, underlining how promotional content is directly tied to celebrities' ability to portray a sense of honesty and transparency online to their fans in the form of social manipulation. As Hussain (2022) writes, "A focus on health and well-being has led the sisters to endorse products for weight loss and health."

Cultural appropriation within the Kardashian family's wellness empire is not limited to aesthetics; it extends into financial endeavors. The DAWN and DEFUSE landmark trials mentioned by Hussain mark a significant shift in the cultural atmosphere, and the Kardashian family capitalizes on this shift through their endorsements. The Kardashian family's callousness toward reducing black culture into a commodity, and specifically black women's bodies into an idea that can be "sold," is not just racist but a testament to the fact slavery has not been entirely abolished in America as racial capitalism continues to abuse and exploit black Americans, as Hussain (2022) notes about black women's bodies being seen as a commodity, "using their bodies as spaces

of commodification and advertisement online" (Hussain, 2022). The economic triumph of these efforts exhibits the economic substances of stealing and appropriating black culture and the awful fact that the Kardashian family's chronic monetization of black culture continues racism, stealing culture with no consequences, and instead reinforces their racist ways by rewarding them with money, relevance, and fame.

Heena Hussain's examination of "The Surveillance of Blackness" also presents the idea of the "Kardashian index," stressing the possible escalation of social media observation without an immediate relation to scientific impact, "The sisters engage with blackness in a way that bolsters their claims of capacitive and beautifying white feminine subjects, engagements now commonly termed 'black fishing.'" While the analysis concentrates on interventional neuroradiologists, the argument identifies with the wider discourse of celebrity power. The "Kardashian index" is a metric to specify probable distinctions between social media following and natural scientific or cultural impact, presenting a viewpoint to dissect the provocations behind celebrity brand endorsements and marketing campaigns.

The Kardashian family's wellness and beauty empire functions as a minute representative of the more serious problem of cultural appropriation and the monetization of black culture by celebrities, with a specific concentration on the Kardashian family, as the Kardashians are savvy at creating a racist brand that, "construct themselves as both uncommonly, exotically sexual ("baring all") and respectable enough (white or white-passing) to sell various remedies with dubious health value (Hussain, 2022, pg.1)." The "Commodification of Cultural Identity" theory, which emanated from the breakdown of Lueck's and Hussain's academic investigation

and research, condenses the deliberate ensnaring of personal stories and promotional campaigns, producing a parasocial publicity ruse that manipulates cultural aspects like black culture for monetary advancements, "The findings of Lueck's research suggest a significant prevalence of endorsements embedded within personal narratives, highlighting the strategic fusion of personal and promotional content by celebrities like Kim Kardashian (Lueck, 2012)".

IV. Background

Societal perceptions of cultural values and the portrayal of identities all stem from modern media influence. This coalescence inspects academic pieces that tackle different facets of media manifestation and its impact on culture. These scholarly resources investigate sensations like the expression of black femininity and Black Cultural appropriation on social media platforms like Instagram. Through multifaceted viewpoints containing communication analyses and cultural commentary, this amalgam strives to discover how media operates as a place of artistic power and controversy. Thus, analyzing media material, I aim to inquire about prevalent annals and encourage social rectitude. In the subsequent sections, I will refine critical perspicuity from these academic sources, emphasizing how media develops societal standards and individualism.

Through this quest, I will expose the convoluted connection between the media, contemporary social identity, and cultural power dynamics. The study of sleep dream matter by Sheriff discloses the earnest consequence of celebrity culture and the media

on individuals' subconscious might, eclipsing their thoughts and stressing the pervasive character of these effects in modern culture. Stevens' (2021) breakdown into Instagram black fishing reveals how digital outlets enable racial identity monetization, illuminating how corrupt and complicated online racial aesthetics are in contemporary times.

Considered through the prism of post-feminist principles, Chatman (2015) presents indispensable wisdom about black femininity's representation in popular culture.

Contemporary media narratives about race, power, and gender are often stereotypical and perpetuate stigmas and advance bigotry, all powered by the machine of social media and social media marketing.

By harmonizing these philosophies, a holistic understanding of the intricate exchanges between gender, race, and media appears, demonstrating the elaborate agencies through which control and individuality are mediated and challenged.

Sheriff's questioning of sleep dream portrayals emphasizes the malleable nature and impassibility of borders between unconscious and waking consciousness thought, impugning conventional ideas of media consumption and impact. In the same vein, Stevens' commentary on black fishing explains how online social platforms function as areas of cultural exhibition and mass consumption, sculpting identity discernment in the age of social media epochs.

Utilizing their research and studies, Sheriff and Stevens brighten the versatile disposition of media effect, underlining its capability to structure personal and communal consciousness keenly. Chatman's probing of Beyoncé's narrative within post-feminist lessons expands this study to celebrity culture, displaying how celebrities steer and intervene in predominant tenets of gender and control by dissecting Beyoncé's account

regarding broader debates on feminism and race and an intersectional crossover that expands to black feminism theory. Chatman decorates the complications of representing black women in contemporary media, going against simplified concepts of autonomy and empowerment. Sheriff, Stevens, and Chatman present priceless understandings of the refinement of the modern construction of selfhood and manifestation, accentuating the demand for persistent academic investigation.

Pulling from Sheriff's review of sleep dream material, it evolves into discovering the solemn nature of media expressions that echo societal ethics but further saturate the subconscious, constructing acumen and demeanor on a profound status (Sheriff, 2017). Stevens' critique of black fishing on social media also explains how online media function as theaters for the racial identity of ruthless appropriation and monetization that spills into society (Stevens, 2021). These inaccuracies in the interchange between race, identity, and media deliver a minute interpretation of how people guide and reconcile problematic sociocultural terrains.

Concurrently, Chatman's analysis of Beyoncé's portrait within post-feminist homilies edifies the detailed junctions of gender, race, and power that sketch out celebrity modern culture (Chatman, 2015). Beyoncé's function as an emblem of victory and female empowerment, Chatman exposes how black women are appropriated into prevalent lessons of post-feminism and neoliberalism, constantly at the expenditure of communal toil and social activism (Chatman, 2015). These paramount studies emphasize the necessity for continued media expressions that shape and create identities in society.

Through their respective studies, Sheriff, Stevens, and Chatman offer valuable insights into the complex dynamics of media influence, racial representation, and gender politics in contemporary society. By interrogating how media representations permeate everyday life, Sheriff's examination of dream content highlights the subtle yet pervasive ways media shapes individual consciousness (Sheriff, 2017).

Correspondingly, Stevens' computation of black fishing on Instagram discloses the tools through which online forums promote the monetization of racial identity, demonstrating how online spaces "build and perform race" (Stevens, 2021).

Beyoncé's portrayal within broader addresses of race and feminism, Chatman uncovers the dichotomies and suspense ingrained in expressions of black femininity in pop culture (Chatman, 2015). These analyses also stress the requirement for prevailing multilayered academia that explores how media presentations impact identity.

Sheriff's quest of dreaming as a rumination of cultural transitions underlines the significance of comprehending media content as pop culture entertainment and a viewpoint that refracts societal importance (Sheriff, 2017). Influencers on social media appropriate and monetize Black culture for social media advancement and monetary gain, which extrapolates existing gender and race power dynamics on Instagram. Stevens emphasizes how online platforms mirror and memorialize more comprehensive systems of exploitation (Stevens, 2021).

In unison, these academic studies emphasize the essential need for acute concentration on traditional media and social media graphics and the addresses they propagate. By emptying the elemental energy ingrained within media matter, intellectuals can sufficiently apprehend how these modern expressions subsidize the

recurrence of living inequalities and injustices. Moreover, synthesizing these sources emphasizes the significance of multidimensional techniques to media deconstructions, using senses from domains like anthropology, sociology, and cultural analyses to deliver a comprehensive knowledge of media's function in adjusting culture.

Academics must continue investigating the complicated cooperation that merges power dynamics, media and culture, and identity in quickly developing online spheres. By examining media illustrations and contesting prevalent annals, intellectuals can add to constructing equitable and inclusive media conditions. The composite of these examinations indicates the metamorphic possibility of conventional media and social media academia in promoting grander social cognition and transformation.

V. Analysis

Modern pop trends and society, led by a litany of celebrities, especially the infamous Kardashian family, exploit Black culture and denote a systematic, racist moral defect in contemporary America. The Kardashian family is synonymous with cultural appropriation by monetizing black culture, style, and art, such as appropriating black hairstyles. Appropriating and monetizing black culture is energized by celebrities' chronic objectification that sustains stereotypes and obliterates the cultural and historical implications of these traditions. This exploitation expands past sheer cultural esteem; it emphasizes more serious community and virtuous problems, echoing wider cases of inequity and systemic racism. Thus, comprehending black cultural exploitation is paramount for handling and disassembling the systems that authorize such patterns to prevail.

The plurality of this exploitation is transparent in the eclectic structures of contemporary American media, like social media like Instagram and reality TV, where celebrities famous for being famous, exemplified by the Kardashians, selfishly maximize Black culture's demand without suitable divergence or proper restitution. Although there are measures to increase cognition about black cultural appropriation, the Kardashian family persists in benefiting significantly from their commercialization of Black culture and art, stressing the provocations in fighting these confirmed courses.

Critically investigating the agencies celebrities utilize to control Black culture can alleviate the glare and authority ensuing and encourage an impartial and congenial cultural panorama. This deconstruction also underlines the demand for grander responsibility and moral contemplations encircling the entertainment enterprise to deter additional damage to black culture. Managing the overt celebrity business and artistic exploitation of Black culture demands a sophisticated strategy that contains both public consciousness about cultural appropriation and systemic transformation.

The ubiquitous leverage of American celebrities through social media like Instagram transfigures contemporary publicity, particularly parasocial promotion and endorsements from businesses. Celebrities, specifically, Kim Kardashian, Jennifer Anette Lueck's research delves into the intricate strategies employed by celebrities like Kim Kardashian to take advantage of parasocial connections via advertising manipulation to control their audience. By formulating a connotation of familiarity and intimacy with their supporters, celebrities obnubilate individual business content and advertising tactics, virtually entrenching brand endorsements to their social media platforms and reality TV shows.

This technique exploits the psychological consequence of social media (Instagram) leverage, as people can authorize and impersonate the demeanor of those they sense as standard or accessible. In this social regime, the Kardashian family projects their proficient employment of social media to publicize their trademarks and developments, flawlessly incorporating publicity into their social media antics. Through an amalgamation of exhibit range, strategic collaborations, and biased marketing, consequently, traditionally a daunting existence in the digital globe, exercising substantial power over customer conduct and choices.

Apprehending the intricate drapery of parasocial marketing and social media clout is indispensable for guiding the intricacies of modern advertising approaches. It likewise provokes compulsory deliberation on the moral deliberations adjacent to the misuse of parasocial correspondence for business acquisitions, notably based on celebrity approval in conjunction with brand affiliations. Thus, there is an urgent demand for more eminent clearness and responsibility in celebrity-guided advertising crusades to secure client confidence and safeguard against possible scheming gambits.

Neil Hall invented the Kardashian Index, which presents practical perspicuity into the exploitation of cultural appropriation encased in celebrity inscribing, apparent in the Kardashian Family conventions. These indicators function as a commensurate benchmark of the cacophony that differs between a scientist's scientific effect and social media footprint, which exposes the disparities that counter online discernible and absolute subsidies to their vocation. The Kardashian Index, regarding celebrity culture, emphasizes the permeating clout exerted by people with excessive social media followers.

These social media influencers exploit minority communities' culture and art by monetizing the culture for views and fame. Black culture is routinely commodified by corporations, and as Heena Hussain's research extrapolates, the "Surveillance of Blackness in the Kardashians' Wellness Empire" exposes the manipulative character of the Kardashian's social media identity in commercializing Black culture for profit. Through detailed examination, Hussain uncovers the means used by which the Kardashians memorialize cultural appropriation, from cultural preferences to products, while simultaneously monetizing the cachet of black culture. This study explores why it's necessary for a crucial arrangement with celebrity marketing techniques and the moral essence of satisfying the appropriation of minorities. The digital age has concocted novel issues in combating cultural appropriation that have led academics and customers to wrestle with the difficulties. Hussain's analysis serves as a shrill plea for advanced scrutiny and accountability in the realm of celebrity endorsements and social media influence.

Discoursing systematic cultural exploitation requires a united action to scatter power inequalities and encourage equal models in marketing and social media. By immersing in concentrated discussion and cultivating integral sentience enveloping the moral harms of cultural appropriation, collaborators can jointly aspire toward enabling a more inclusive society as a cohesive whole, as Hussain's (2022) examination accentuates the urgent need for assertive actions sought at shattering hegemonic systems that memorialize cultural commercialization and deletion within the domain of celebrities. Through the encouragement of espousing and intellectual investigation, it

evolves into a possible challenge in conquering standards that have a tight grip on celebrities' accountability for pushing racist narratives and typecasts.

The diffusion of Hussain's (2022) conclusions generates societal deliberation, provoking scholars and consumers to examine their collusion in devouring pop culture media that immortalizes black cultural appropriation without consequences. By boosting oppressed individuals and focusing their experiences within scholarly discourse, Hussain's investigation contributes to a subtle acumen of the crossroads that welds the media representation to power and race inequities. The fruition of these actions may foment essential modifications in contemporary societal perspectives and conducts, enabling equity and a fair media ecosphere. One that appreciates and encourages multifarious cultural viewpoints. In the convolutions of cultural appropriation and its implications, Hussain's study is a monolith of the potential of scholarly questions to yield favorable societal adaptation.

The monetary corruption of taking advantage of Black culture by celebrities denotes a powerful and disturbing tendency in modern society. The Kardashian family is a symbolic example of this sensation. They monetize and profit greatly from black culture without any permission, acknowledgment, or compensation. The Kardashians' business is vast and multifaceted, varying from fashion lines to beauty products, which have made them a consortium of billionaires. Kardashian, despite the minute cries for apologies and accountability, the family has encountered minimal public consequences for their final gain off of the commercialization of Black culture that presents queries about structural injustices and the homogenization of those traditions in Hollywood.

The more pressing issue of the exploitation of black women's bodies is intersectional, as the monetization and negative stereotypes promote oppression. Handling the financial thievery of Black culture entails a panoramic technique that concedes the confluence of economic authority and power that relies on a rutted structure of continued inequality and privilege that persists in media and economic opportunities. As allies like academics and activists aspire to demolish strategies of cultural exploitation and increase financial and social equality, it is urgent to concentrate on the minorities' needs for justice to create a sustainable change.

The societal reverberation and moral cogitation envelop why and how celebrities monetize and benefit from cultural appropriation. This topic is so pervasive in contemporary pop culture that it requires serious reflection. The Kardashians are the Midas force of celebrities that indulge in racist rhetoric for greedy, selfish monetary gain. White celebrities notoriously censor and rob Black culture, which annihilates the contributions of Black innovators while perpetuating a sphere of disenfranchisement. By scouring these racial justice issues and by accepting the unjust junctions of power tied together by race and gender, society can slowly undo the years and generations of cultural appropriation in the digital age that uplift and support minority communities.

There is a disturbing trend in a celebrity culture that fetishes black women's bodies that fortify inequities and racist systematic structures. Fransisca Bianca writes about this unsettling narrative in their academic article "Fetishism and Sexual Objectification towards African (Black) Women in Modern Society," creating a scholarly dialogue for the prevalent apotheosis in contemporary media of Black women in mainstream media. Through diverse configurations of media presentation, Black women

are frequently diminished to sexualized entities, strengthening poisonous annals and presenting societal inequalities. The hazards of fetishization develop outside personal articulation, contouring the public's perspectives on race and femininity.

If society does not take accountability to critically judge and dissect the horrific stereotypes and exploitation that sexualizing black women's bodies creates, real change cannot occur. Equity cannot exist without a cohesive desire by pop culture to nullify the stereotypes and make the media a diverse, intersectional space. Black women's voices must be the interior of the movement toward race to heighten their attitudes and champion significant metamorphosis in media declaration and cultural traditions.

The mark of celebrity consequence on media range and customer conduct is a complicated marvel that society is overshadowed by continuously. Sheriff's (2017) investigation on media matters in college students' dreams provides keen acuties into the dimensions of celebrity power and its significance for personal and communal demeanor. Celebrities exert considerable influence concerning portrayals and ideas that saturate Hollywood. This clout advances past endorsement business deals, surrounding wider societal manias and philosophies that create status in beauty and society. There is a perverse psychological machinist pushing celebrity acceptance and customers to help scholars comprehend the difficult relationship and interplay that creates a web of celebrities, media representation, and pop culture.

Kim Kardashian, in conjunction with Paper Magazine, made a goal to "break the internet" in the winter of 2014. Kim Kardashian, as the muse, worked brilliantly and created the infamous expression "Kim Kardashian Paper magazine." The image drove people in masses to search engines to look up the engines five and a half million times

in the first 24 hours, exhibiting the enormous consequence of the partnership. At the epicenter of the dispute was the issue of the two controversial Paper magazine covers. The first magazine cover highlights Kim Kardashian with her side backside bare exposed while wearing a sequined dress and explicitly holding a champagne bottle and popping the bottle, so the champagne goes over her head, landing in the glass that is positioned on her backside. The second magazine cover shows Kim Kardashian revealing her nude buttocks as a shock factor attempt at claiming and maintaining the pop culture gaze.

The innovative concept prompting the intrepid photo shoot stems from the modern art director and photographer Jean-Paul Goude. Goude pulled the concept based on his memorable photograph, "Carolina Beaumont, New York, 1976." The photograph is infamous and iconic in the same vein and is often referred to as the "The Champagne Incident." The unique shot starred Carolina Beaumont, the Dominican model, with a bottle of champagne. Goude shifted from illustration to artistic pursuits to replace the medium with photography. Goude's creations muddled the conduits that crocheted the medium of advertising and fine art. His artistic signature was a specific approach called the "French Correction," implicating the flawless construction of numerous pictures.

Goude's greatness as an artist and as a trailblazer is often overlooked due to his many run-ins with racist expression and rhetoric. Goude was characterized as having a disturbing fetish of black women's bodies. This exposition is glaring in Goude's terrifyingly racist book "Jungle Fever," written in 1982. The book contains the troublesome portrayal of Grace Jones, a black woman, Goude's lifelong artistic muse,

restricted on the book's cover in a cage-like apparatus. These harmful images perpetuate sickening racist conversations. Kim Kardashian has refused to apologize or comment on her participation and promotion of the racist photograph, she only stated her sheer joy to work with Goude and praised him as a photographer and visionary artist. Once again, failing to take responsibility for her actions that promote racism and stereotypes in the digital world.

Goude's collection of photography is plagued by racial undertones that bestow upon him myriads of complaints and scrutiny. Gaud, despite the pertinent backlash, remains relatively unscathed by the accusations and has received praise and awards for his work. The dissension encircling Goude's creations expertly reveals the desperate demand for healthy, respectful dialogue about inequitable power dynamics that impact representation and role in celebrity culture and the art world.

Learning from the pitfalls of Goude, it's important to shift the narrative from sexualizing black women's bodies and monetizing black culture and instead support black culture for a diverse, intersectional society. White celebrities, such as Kim Kardashian, do not understand the cultural and historical significance of black art. Kim Kardashian and her sister continually style their hair in box braids and cornrows, appropriating black hairstyles that have faced criminalization and shame. The Kardashians fail to acknowledge how appropriate racism is by plagiarizing black art and demonizing that same art when a black person does the same thing. The California Crown Act, enacted on June 27, 2019, protects black Americans from racial hair harassment (SB 188, 2019, sec.2). Many people have been ridiculed and fired just for styling their hair in cornrows or box braids. Thus, when the Kardashians steal these

cultural hairstyles and pose in a bikini on Instagram for views and profit from the same style black people are judged for, it is morally wrong.

Jean-Paul Goude and Kim Kardashian's communal enterprise that catapulted the racist cover for Paper magazines, coined with the on-the-nose slogan "Break the Internet" crusade, exemplifies the problematic juxtaposition that intersects controversial celebrity and artistic pursuits. Their bold reconceptualizing of Goude's historical shot placing Kim Kardashian, a well-documented white woman profiting off of black culture, as the star of the magazine cover. This started a barrage of orations, enchanting people on a global scale that shows the concentrated force exerted by celebs in molding cultural descriptions and movements. The nucleus of the partnership symbolizes a confluence of creative imagination and commercial initiative that define pop culture and contemporary art.

Figure X.



Note: “Jean-Paul Goude’s Carolina Beaumont, New York, 1976, left, inspired a shot of Kim Kardashian West for the cover of Paper magazine, right.”

With the zeal of affection for their innovative valor, it is critical to contend with the tricky moral queries that emerge from the scheme's enactment. Goude's tacky chronology, represented by awards and objection, presents problems about the sexualization and, ultimately, the dehumanization of black women in Goude's portfolio, launching a pall over the alliance's triumphant camouflage. The contrast between Kim Kardashian's celebrity guise and Goude's creative fabrication reveals the elaborateness of race in modern America, inquiring observers to question the concurrent annals entrenched in the photograph. Cultural appropriation is easy to identify but difficult to stop or legislate, especially in the era of online platforms monopolizing the news and

media. However, that does not mean there is no hope for future restitutions, but it does mean, it will require a collective effort and time. But there is hope for change.

VI. Conclusion

Contemporary American culture has become infected with the vitriolic disease of cultural appropriation, which white celebrities, such as the Kardashian family, perpetuate and support through their various business and marketing endeavors. Even though the issue of cultural appropriation is generally seen as a negative, there is a large part of society that appears lethargic and apathetic to the problem. It seems some even find no complications when white celebrities monetize black culture, which is a disconcerting revelation. I have examined insightful works, for example, Hussain and Lueck, and numerous academic sources, to provide an in-depth scholarly analysis that identifies the perils of cultural appropriation in the digital age.

The core of this academic query relies on the notion of the "Commodification of Cultural Identity." This hypothesis, derived from the research of the Kardashian family's company enterprises and investments, elucidates how the appropriation of black culture has turned into systematic monetary and social exploitation. The Kardashians have mastered the art of leveraging cultural symbols and narratives to cultivate their brand and empire, from their strategic use of social media to their endorsements of wellness and beauty products.

Lueck completes an exhaustive breakdown of parasocial marketing strategies, and Hussain's research into the "Surveillance of Blackness in the Kardashians'

Wellness Empire" contributes to the practical intuitions into the apparatus that catalyzes cultural appropriation in Hollywood and American culture. The Kardashian family's despicable attitude of chronically appropriating black culture prolongs exceeding creative selections; it saturates their whole company standard, which influences consumer conduct and public appearance.

This thesis investigation proceeds past review; it encourages the contemplation of the substances of cultural appropriation in modern culture. Therefore, the public and consumer must ensure that white celebrities who monetize black culture are held responsible for their actions and the negative consequences that entrench societal consciousness. The Kardashian family holds vast economic and societal authority, however, they are unable to silence the rising voices of critics that torment the public discourse enshrining their infamous surname. That is why, by boosting cognition and stimulating conversation concerning the moral essences of cultural appropriation, Americans can nurture and establish a culturally just and equitable society.

Works Cited

Babu, S. Influencer Marketing: The Voice of a Media Brand. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2021.

Bianca, Fransisca. "Fetishism and Sexual Objectification towards African (Black) Women in Modern Society: Analyzing the Portrayal of African Women in the Media." Sentries, vol. 1, no. 1, Parahyangan Catholic University, <https://doi.org/10.26593/sentries.v1i1.4132.91-99>.

Bynoe, T. N. The Beauty of Blackness: The Black Influence on Social Media and Digital Appropriation. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2022.

Chatman, D. "Pregnancy, Then It is "Back To Business": Beyoncé, Black Femininity, and the Politics of a Post-Feminist Gender Regime." Feminist Media Studies, vol. 15, no. 6, 2015, pp. 926–941. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2015.1036901>.

Danwa, A. Kim Kardashian: A Marketing Mastermind, 2022.

Hall, N. "The Kardashian Index: A Measure of Discrepant Social Media Profile for Scientists." Genome Biology, vol. 15, no. 7, 2014, p. 424. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13059-014-0424-0>.

Handrop, J. L. "OK Girls, the FBI Is Here- Look Your Best!": The Defining of Postfeminism in Keeping up with the Kardashians. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2018.

Hobson, J. "Remnants of Venus: Signifying Black Beauty and Sexuality."

Women's Studies Quarterly, vol. 46, no. 1/2, 2018, pp. 105–120.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/wsqa.2018.0015>.

Hussain, H. "The Surveillance of Blackness in the Kardashians' Wellness

Empire." Review of International American Studies, vol. 15, no. 1, 2022, pp. 107–

125. <https://doi.org/10.31261/rias.12748>.

Kardashian Accused of Poaching SKKN Name from Black-Owned Brands.

Cosmetics Business, 2022, p. 11.

Lueck, J. A. "Friend-zone with Benefits: The Parasocial Advertising of Kim

Kardashian." Journal of Marketing Communications, vol. 21, no. 2, 2015, pp. 91–

109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2012.726235>.

Mitchell, Holly J. "SB-188 Discrimination: Hairstyles." California Legislative

Information, California State Legislature, 4 July 2019,

https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB188.

Sheriff, R. E. "Dreaming of the Kardashians: Media Content in the Dreams of US

College Students." Ethos (Berkeley, Calif.), vol. 45, no. 4, 2017, pp. 532–554.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12179>.

Smith, C. C. Business As Usual: The Objectification of Black Women in

America's Sexual Predation Culture. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Socha, M. "What the Kimono Can Teach Fashion About Cultural Appropriation." WWD, 2020, pp. 14-15.

Sastre, A. "Hottentot in the Age of Reality TV: Sexuality, Race, and Kim Kardashian's Visible Body." *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1–2, 2014, pp. 123–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2013.810838>.

Stevens, W. E. "Blackfishing on Instagram: Influencing and the Commodification of Black Urban Aesthetics." *Social Media + Society*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2021, pp. 205630512110382-. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211038236>.

Tehrani, J. "Is Kim Kardashian White? (and Why Does It Matter Anyway?) Racial Fluidity, Identity Mutability & the Future of Civil Rights Jurisprudence." *Houston Law Review*, vol. 58, no. 1, 2020, p. 151-.

Toshumba, N. I. *The Disavowment of Black Women's Bodies: The Rise of the Brazilian Butt Lift*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2020.

Vilanilam, G. K., et al. "The Kardashian Index of Interventional Neuroradiologists: Measuring Discrepant Social Media Influence." *The Neuroradiology Journal*, vol. 33, no. 6, 2020, pp. 525–527. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1971400920950928>.

Wallner, C. et al. "Interethnic Influencing Factors Regarding Buttocks Body Image in Women from Nigeria, Germany, USA, and Japan." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 19, no. 20, 2022, p. 13212-. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192013212>.

1stDibs Editors. "[UPDATED] See the Shot That Inspired Kim Kardashian's
'Paper' Magazine Cover." The Study, 1stDibs, 12 Nov. 2014,

<https://www.1stdibs.com/blogs/the-study/kim-kardashian-jean-paul-goude/>.