

The Carver Times

Appreciation or Appropriation?

By: Sawda Sarah

Cultural Appropriation is the adoption or exploitation of parts of a culture. Usually the members of the dominant culture adopt parts of the less privileged minority, and then take credit for it. Quite often, this is done with little understanding of the culture's history, experience, and traditions. It is a concept that the public doesn't talk about often and most people are unfamiliar with its meaning.



Confusing, isn't it? Well, this is the simplest way of explaining cultural appropriation.

Recently a lot of people have used their voices to speak out against cultural appropriation and why it is so terrible.

Last year E! News Correspondent, Giuliana Rancic, upon seeing former Disney actress Zendaya wearing cornrows at a red carpet, said: "I feel like she smells like patchouli oil ... and maybe weed." But the same correspondent applauded Miley Cyrus for wearing the same hairstyle. Zendaya expressed her frustration with double standards in the media when by saying "Black women have been wearing braids for a very long time. ... It became new and



Imagine you worked really hard on a project and then got an F on it, but someone else copied your project and got an A and full credit for the exact same work.

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Flexin' Our Complexion

By: Akirah Harris-Watson

Some would say that we possess super powers
A "Black Magic" of some kind
From the kinks of our hair to the soles of our feet
We exhibit versatility
Ranging from the deepest and richest of shades
We form an amalgam
Of heavy nightfalls, burnt ambers, buttery toffees,
silk cocoa, singed brûlée, and glazed mahoganies
Crowned by the royal coils of our ancestral roots
Our tresses STRETCH
towards the heavens above
And sit something like a diadem
Encrusted with jewels
Our names
Signify the innovation and power that exists within us
WE are creativity and originality in their purest form.



Appreciation or Appropriation continued

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...fresh and fun because it was on someone else other than a black woman. You know what I mean? So that is the frustration.

That's where the culture appropriation element comes into play, the credit gets taken away from us when we make certain statements or when we do certain things. People want to be around for the positives and the things that we bring as far as culture, but they don't want to be around when we have problems or when we're getting shot in the streets. You know what I'm saying? You have to be there for the whole experience. You can't just decide when you want to be a part of our culture."

"I wish society would love black people as much as they love black culture."

She also shouts out Amandla Stenberg who once said: "I wish society would love black people as much as they love black culture."

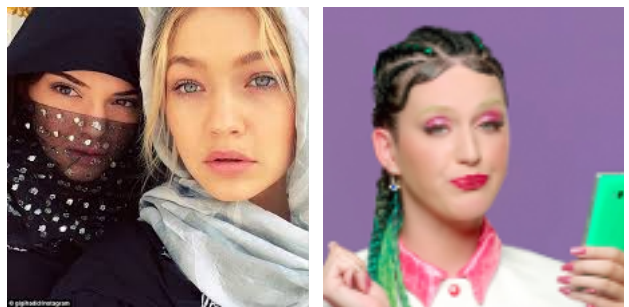
Many other celebrities like Kylie Jenner heavily profit off of Black creativity and culture. Because mainstream media's depiction of beauty standards resemble features of a white woman, Black women constantly face racism for the appearance of their features; for example, their lips are criticized while Jenner's lip jobs have received monumental profits and praise in the makeup industry.

Stars like Jesse Williams have called out these double standards saying in his now very famous speech *"We've been floating this country on credit for centuries, yo, and we're done watching and waiting while this invention called whiteness uses and abuses us, burying black people out of sight and out of mind, while extracting our culture, our dollars, our entertainment like oil, black gold, ghettoizing and demeaning our creations, then stealing them, gentrifying our genius, and then trying us on like costumes before discarding our bodies like rinds of strange fruit..."*



Williams received many praises for his speech, and a lot more people were aware of this issue because of him, but we still see celebrities time and again repeating their mistakes and not apologizing because they claim this issue was unbeknownst to them. Others claim that they were paying homage to a certain group. But my question is, if you really wanted to feature a model wearing dreads on a runway why not just hire a black model?

There's a fine line between paying tribute and exploitation, and it is extremely important to understand the difference and consider it carefully.



Major celebrities like Katy Perry, Kendall Jenner, Kylie Jenner and Iggy Azalea have all been accused of appropriating other cultures. A few years ago Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid uploaded a picture of them wearing a Hijab/Niqab that is traditionally worn by Muslim women as part of their religious practice around the world. Many people commented on how beautiful the two super models looked while others criticized the photo saying that Muslim women face all kinds of racism and Islamophobia because of their choice to cover themselves. They are often called "oppressed" and are targeted in certain

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institutions while Super models like Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid are praised for the very same thing.

Henna tattoos are mistaken for skin disease when it's on South Asians but creative and artistic for White people at Coachella. People dressing up as Geishas for Halloween without knowing the importance and value of it in Chinese culture, African Americans shamed for wearing natural hair but white models praised for walking runways wearing cornrows.

"In many ways, it feeds into stereotypes and overlooks someone's history, their struggles, their fights."

Other cultural traits, like Native American fashion, art, and rituals have also been appropriated into mainstream culture. Their fashion has been reproduced and sold for profit and their rituals are often adopted by eclectic religious and spiritual practitioners while for hundreds of years Native Americans were shunned, outcasted and looked down upon by people because of their culture.



Cultural appropriation is, in its own way, a form of racism. And it is not that only white people aren't guilty of this; many people of color have shamelessly appropriated other people's cultures. In many ways, it feeds into stereotypes and overlooks someone else's history, their struggles, their fights. It is very important to realize that certain things are sacred to a culture; some traditions are symbolic and some beliefs are holy and spiritual. It is often seen how a piece of their culture that they are often mocked is suddenly "edgy and cool" because someone else decided to use it as a costume. It is vital that these minority groups are given the credit they deserve.

While it might be very easy to put some paint on, braid your hair, or put some feathers in it, honest admiration comes from education. If you are inspired, educate yourself. Take steps to find more about the culture you respect so much. Help spread diversity and learn facts because real appreciation comes from knowledge.



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Music Recommendations

Most music critics create their opinions without living the music they're critiquing. Instead of being a critic, I use this column to show you the music I listen to.

By: James Hillyard

Gorillaz - Humanz

The Gorillaz are my favorite band of all time. As a fan who spent hours learning the lore behind the animated characters and equally animated music, I was excited to find out that they were starting stage four (releasing an album with an accompanying story line). This album's story follows 2D (character of the lead singer) as he goes through an apocalypse party where the elite and popular partake in their innermost desires.

Personal favorites: "Submission," "Busted and Blue," "She's My Collar"

Deem Spencer - We Think We Alone

I found Deem Spencer in a Pigeons and Planes article. They were recommending (fourth wall broken) a collaboration between him and my favorite rapper MF DOOM. Obviously, I had to listen after this. *We Think We Alone* has hauntingly beautiful production and interesting concepts conveyed within the verses

Personal Favorites: "Dirt," "Eve's (can't put this word in school publication)," "There Was Plenty of Time Before Us"

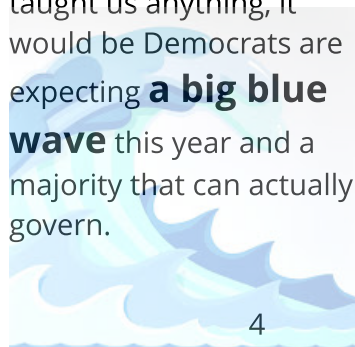
2020 is Coming:

Political Opinion By: Agung Putra

Midterm Madness

Midterms are here! Last week Texas had their primaries. There was a historic turnout for Democrats in early voting. While Democrats beat Republicans in the polls in early voting, on election day Republicans came out and voted in strong numbers. Democrats, however, turned out in higher number than previous elections. This passion and eagerness from Texas Democrats is outstanding. Democrats are competing in all districts, from the moderate Republicans to the ultra conservative. Texas' deep red has the potential to change. For example, in 2016 Republican counties in Texas voted for Hillary in a 3-5 point margin which is enough to change this midterm year. All positions

of government are in play in Texas and this could be a bellwether for this midterm year. The rules of politics, however, do agree with this trend. With a very unpopular president, Democrats are winning in districts where Trump won by a huge margin. Ever since the election of Trump, Democrats have won several state house races where Trump beat Hillary by a huge margin. Look how Democrats took a huge win last December when Democrat Doug Jones emerged victorious in red Alabama. If the history of midterms have taught us anything, it would be Democrats are expecting **a big blue wave** this year and a majority that can actually govern.



Editorial Board March Edition

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