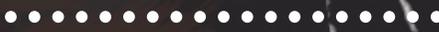


# Culture Talk

July 2020



## Cultural Appropriation



A selection of pieces that delve into  
the deeper meaning of culture

VOLUME 1:  
**CULTURAL APPROPRIATION**

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*COVER ARTIST: ALICE MAO*



FIND HER ART AT:  
@ALICEMAOART ON INSTAGRAM  
[ALICE-MAO.COM](http://ALICE-MAO.COM)

# July 2020

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to our **first magazine** edition and Culture Talk!

Culture Talk was founded in January 2020, at the brink of a year that would be flush with international conflicts, environmental disasters, a global pandemic, and social violences. With everything happening, we feel even more inspired now to spark the growth of cultural education through our six pillars—heritage, trends, government, history, geography, and law—bringing them together to propagate cultural awareness.

With all the uncertainty in the world, our team hopes to unpack one theme, one monthly-issue at a time. This first magazine issue, we dedicate to cultural appropriation. From systemic racial inequities to unjust economic structures, imbalances in power are exposed through turbulent times like we face today. Cultural appropriation is a manifestation of such power imbalance, in which a dominant culture is able to profit from and tokenize another culture.

And while it puts elements of a culture in the limelight of mainstream pop culture, so too does it strip meaning, heritage, and history. Alicia Mao's cover art illustrates the complexity of cultures blending—the colors and strokes that can be gained through appreciation, and the identity that can be lost through appropriation.

Where do cultural appreciation and appropriation differentiate? When does taking inspiration become exploitive? What is culture, and how does it weave throughout other systems?



Explore the intersection of cultural appreciation, cultural appropriation, and lunchbox-racism through Zara Jahan's piece on ethnic **foods**.

Probe the **fashion** industry with Milla Nguyen and Lindsay Chen as they share their interview with Professor Shannon Ludington.

In Maryssa's article, examine culture in **literature** through narrators and authors.

Consider the foundation of your favorite artists and genres in Nancy Bhensdadia's reflection of the **music** industry's complex history with intersecting cultures.

To dive further into music, join Yoojin Han in examining **multicultural rappers** and their place in a time so decisive for Black communities.

About the influence Gen Z has at our fingertips, Nita Kulkarni writes on **social media**'s increasing role in activism and education.

Divya Natarajan reviews another aspect of media, analyzing the cultural representations that children internalize through **Disney** films.

Finally, search for the roots of cultural appropriation in Stormy Light's article on **historical policies** that root the system racism the U.S. has today.

Whether you are looking to learn or looking to educate, we are here to guide you in your journey around the world and throughout time!

---- Katherine Chou, Anusha Natarajan, & Milla Nguyen

# CULINARY APPROPRIATION OR APPRECIATION?

BY: ZARA JAHAN

When it comes to food as an element of culture, it is often difficult to understand the difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation. At its core, cultural appropriation of food, or culinary appropriation, is when a dominant culture profits off of cuisine from a non-dominant culture without providing any recognition or financial benefit to the communities that the cuisine originated from. This often misunderstood definition of culinary appropriation is best exemplified in the case of the **Kooks Burritos** food truck in Portland, Oregon. In 2016, two non-Hispanic women took a trip to Puerto Nuevo, Mexico and learned the secrets to authentic burrito-making by peering into the windows of local kitchens without any sort of permission or monetary compensation to the restaurant owners. When the women returned to Portland, they opened the Kooks Burritos food truck, claiming to serve original burritos -- which in reality were made from the recipes stolen from the locals of Puerto Nuevo. The founders of Kooks Burritos came from a dominant culture and they profited from a cuisine that came from communities of a nondominant culture. Since no credit nor compensation were given to those communities, their actions exemplify the most basic definition of culinary appropriation. Eventually, the reveal of the burrito recipe's true origins led to the shut down of the food truck itself.

The fiasco that was Kooks Burritos served as a lesson to all chefs and restaurateurs, especially those from dominant cultures, about the importance of regarding foods from cultures different from



their own with respect. By no means should chefs stop making dishes from different cultures or adding their own twist on such dishes; after all, experimentation with different foods is essential to the creation of new, modern cuisines. These chefs must take time to learn the cultural significance and history behind each dish while also acknowledging their traditional contexts that might differ from their own restaurant's theme. Giving credit to communities from marginalized cultures would facilitate a better response in paying homage to those groups.

Another less-recognized form of cultural appropriation of food is associated with "lunchbox racism," a concept that can be best understood through examples. Imagine: You wake up late for school one morning, so you decide to pack last night's dinner of butter chicken and rice for lunch. When lunchtime eventually rolls around, you open your lunchbox and are immediately met with disgusted glares and comments from your peers like "that looks gross" and "why is your food so smelly?" The shame that you feel leads you to not eat your lunch, even though your mom's butter chicken is your favorite food. Such an encounter might even lead someone to stray away from bringing their culture's dishes to school ever again. This is lunchbox racism-- making others feel ashamed of their culture's cuisine-- and this scenario is all too common for children and adults alike who eat cultural foods in a public setting. But, while it is inappropriate and unacceptable, lunchbox racism itself does not qualify as culinary appropriation. The cultural appropriation comes into play when those same people who questioned your choice of lunch suddenly claim to "love" your culture's cuisine simply because a chef from a different, dominant culture decides that your culture's dishes are trendy.

While I have never experienced lunchbox racism and culinary appropriation myself, I have heard about the experiences of many of my family members and peers. My sister, for example, who is Bangladeshi-American, had her first experience with lunchbox racism in fifth grade, when her peers made her feel ashamed of her culture's cuisine by ridiculing her favorite Bangladeshi curry when she brought it to school for lunch.

By sixth grade, however, one of the girls who had insulted my sister's lunch just a few months before told her that she loved Bangladeshi and Indian curries because she had recently eaten food from a trendy South Asian restaurant owned by a white chef. Due to her classmate's disgusted reaction to her culture's cuisine one day but sudden adoration for it a few months after, my sister was understandably confused as to how her "weird" dish became a sensation when it was made by someone who wasn't a member of her culture. While my sister ultimately did not allow lunchbox racism and culinary appropriation to affect her appreciation for Bangladeshi cuisine, many with experiences similar to my sister's unfortunately find it difficult to fully embrace their culture's foods.

So, how can we become more conscious of culinary appropriation and avoid taking part in it ourselves? We can start by remembering that when we try foods from different cultures, we must be mindful of where they come from and how they become a symbol of the people who created them-- honoring locals who dedicate their craft to such dishes. And, whenever possible, we can avoid eateries that we feel may be appropriating a culture's cuisine and instead opt for a local restaurant owned by people who truly understand and appreciate the culture behind the foods that they are serving

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# Fashion Luxury & Credit Where It's Due

BY: MILLA NGUYEN AND LINDSAY CHEN



**What is cultural appropriation?** Normally, the concept would automatically draw a negative connotation to mind. In a textbook definition context, cultural appropriation refers to elements of a minority culture that are being exploited by a dominant, mainstream culture. In terms of the fashion industry, luxury brands have been under fire by the press as well as social media for cultural appropriation acts- though, it depends on the company on how they handle the outcome. Their handling of the accusations is what determines their future as a leader in the industry- whether it be positive or negative. Some cases include Gucci's spring show that took place on **February 21, 2018** as a large offense was made against the Sikh Community due to the fact the brand styled a cast of white models wearing turbans. The turban was deemed the "Indy full turban" and was priced at \$790 on Nordstrom's website. After the first wave of backlash, the company renamed it the "Indy full headscarf" to minimize the negative responses.

Unsurprisingly, the Sikh Coalition (an organization that advances members of the Sikh community based in NYC) were unsatisfied and criticized Gucci for being not only culturally insensitive but also foolish for exploiting a community that fell victim to 9/11 hate crimes in 2011.

Many more examples come to mind, one being Victoria Secret's most infamous mishaps. On **November 29, 2017**, Victoria Secret's lingerie runway show took place in Shanghai, China. Despite being approved, the public was anything but joyous when they witnessed the feathered war bonnets and Native American symbols that were plastered onto the lingerie sets. Though war bonnets, crests, and certain materials are sacred to many tribes, often representing virtues of unity, courage, and honor- people were appalled by the lack of credit as well as the brand's portrayal of such values. Previously, the brand was in hot water during their 2016 show when models were adorned with Polynesian tattoos and metal rings that were combined with skimpy lingerie items. In today's world, the less progressive the brand and business model is, the less likely it will entice the younger generations. Despite the brand's reasoning of model diversity, having different ethnic models is simply not enough. In lieu of all of this, celebrity designers/ musicians are not entirely exempt from cultural appropriation either. Kim Kardashian and Katy Perry have been both heavily criticized by the public for their lack of effort to understand the Japanese kimono. Both have used the traditional garment in their brands, altering it to make it more "stylish and trendy" without paying any homage to the culture itself.

Most times, it is difficult to differentiate the difference between appropriation and appreciation? What draws the line? Who gets to decide? One thing that is marvelous about today's society is that social media and it's speedy outreach has the power to hold large corporations accountable. If you are someone who is well-versed in where that garment comes from, it's history, and it's representational significance- you're on the right track. The effort of doing research beyond common knowledge to understand the language, people, food, fashion, and other multiple components is a form of respect/credit. Claiming a garment or concept of a garment as your own without knowledge of what it stands for is misappropriating it.

As a Arizona State University student who is studying fashion design, I had the gracious opportunity of speaking with **Shannon Ludington**, ASU professor for textiles survey as well as self-taught textiles artist.

**Question: Why is student awareness on the topic of cultural appropriation important? How does facilitating a discussion in textiles survey relate to your work?**

**Professor Shannon Ludington: "One of the amazing things about ASU is how diverse the student body is, and I want my class to be a time when students can learn from each other. Especially, in this case, white students or students of monocultural backgrounds listening to students of color or diverse backgrounds. I too often see white students from middle class backgrounds perpetuate racism and cultural appropriation by being oblivious to the fact that these are issues and problems, here and now. (not all of course, but too often). If I can help those students learn to listen and change, and give other students a voice to share their experiences, then I have succeeded as an instructor."**

She goes on to say that her origins are rooted in Central Asia, Germany, and Russia. There, she's spent time learning and immersing herself within the textiles industry- especially Uzbek patterns. After moving to the United States, she has witnessed corporation designers source Uzbek designs without giving proper credit let alone any acknowledgement. During the Soviet times, many craftspeople supported their families by weaving/creating Uzbek garments for scarce pay- something that can not be forgotten just once it is made into a trendy product by a wealthy company.

**Though, we must not be too discouraged. There have been instances where cultural appropriation in the fashion industry that have been resolved and counted as successfully redeemable.**

Maria Grazia Chiuri is the current creative director for Dior. In her 2019 showcase for African fashion in Marrakech she received wide praise for her attention to detail. She received such a positive reaction through conducting research and hiring local experts on African textiles. The show included benches with cushions embroidered by local weavers in Africa for the guests to sit on. These experts also appeared in multiple talk shows to educate the audience about the African culture and fashion. Similarly, Yevu is an Australian-Ghanian fashion social enterprise founded by Anna Robertson. Robertson

employs women from Ghana and pay them above the living wage even though the company is based in Australia. Hiring these people allowed Robertson to apply primary knowledge and thoroughly illustrate the Ghanian culture in her fashion line accurately and appropriately.

Some ways we can learn from and avoid cultural appropriation is to ask questions, research, and engage with other cultures in an authentic way. Now, thanks to social media, there is more dialogue about these issues and it is important to talk about it. Dialogue encourages people to be open minded and educate themselves on the matter and ultimately can prevent insensitive actions. It is also important that the industry appoints diversity councils and collaborates with experts on the particular culture. The fashion industry has definitely come a long way in terms of diversity and it is our responsibility as a society to ensure that they move in the right direction; we can do this by simply educating ourselves.

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# "The Other Writer"

BY: MARYSSA ORTA



## **Authors write the story, but a narrator tells the story.**

There are plenty of stories where the narrator is "other" from the author---times when both authors and narrators have different genders, backgrounds, sexualities, etc. We've had women like Donna Tartt who uses a male voice to tell her first-person stories, and we've had men like Charles Dickens who uses a female narrator. We've also had Kathryn Stockett's *Help*, a story told in the first-person view of black women told by a white woman. Ultimately, the author and narrator are not one but compliment each other through synergy to tell a story.

So, should authors avoid writing in a voice that isn't theirs? Well, no, and yes. No, because how else would we get such a great array of stories? If authors were limited to their own experiences then genres such as horror, fantasy, and sci-fi wouldn't

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exist. Even historical fiction wouldn't exist. The creation of complex characters and world-building stories wouldn't have been born out of narrator/author constraints. When a great level of respect is put into research, then the sky's the limit.

Then, there's the "yes." Yes, authors should, at times, avoid writing in a voice that isn't theirs. The key words are "respect" and "research" and when an author doesn't do either, problems arise. When an author doesn't respect their subject, you end up reading an inaccurate, cringe-worthy piece that can't be enjoyed. When an author doesn't do research you end up with an ignorant story. When the author doesn't do either, it creates a negative connotation and response from the readers. Authors should be celebrated for telling a beautiful, ever-lasting story, and not for their blatant ignorance and disrespect towards another culture.

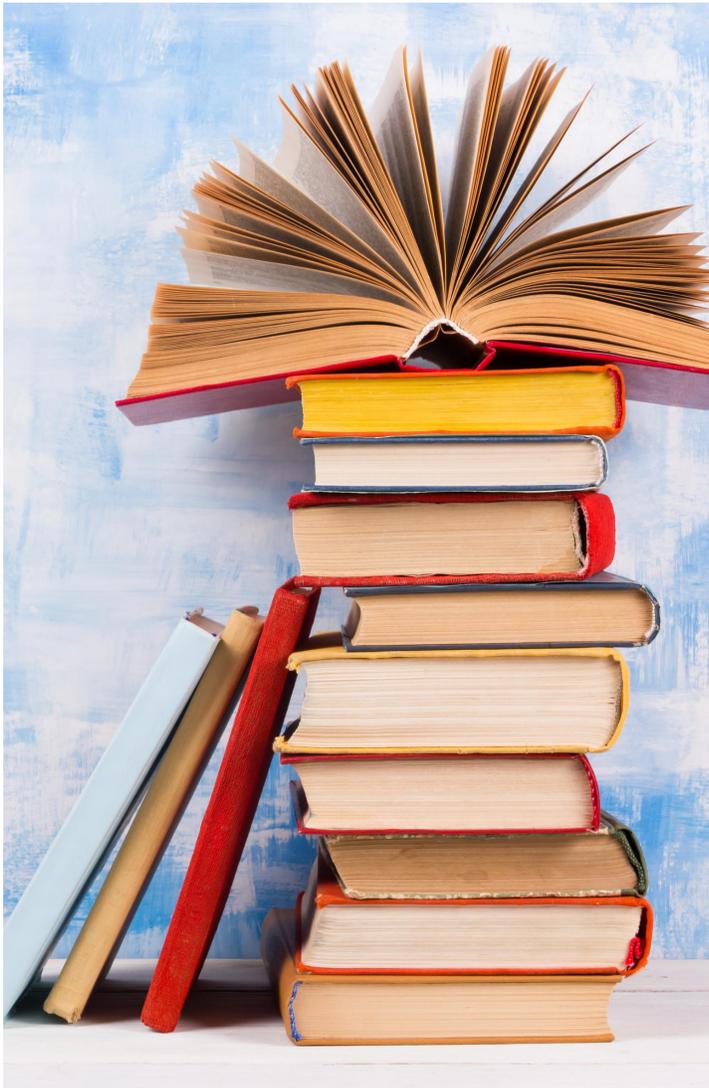
As readers, it is essential to recognize that a cast of characters whether it is limited to two or more people, that those cast members do not represent the entirety of a culture/community. Authors should not claim a culture as their own when specifically writing about people of color or of a minority community especially when they do not originate from said groups. The act of exploiting these groups for profit, franchise, and enhancement of image counts as a tally towards cultural appropriation in literature-- a problem that is often undiscussed. Ultimately, as a reader, it is your job to recognize that an individual does not represent a whole group and that the author cannot fully represent the culture they're not a part of.

Research is easy to do when you have respect towards a culture. Authors should: conduct interviews, read articles online, read other novels written by people who are a part of the culture you may be writing about, watch documentaries, just do some research! Readers should do the same thing: talk with friends to see if a piece is accurate, look at how the author did their own research, look at reviews and criticisms of a piece to see if it was written respectfully.

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Being the writer who tells stories through the "other" is acceptable in terms of story-telling yet writers and readers should remember the keywords: respect and research. When we consume media, we must be extremely mindful of how a culture is being portrayed. Same with creating media: being mindful when using a first person narrator while you are mentioning a culture that is not yours is crucial to the way it is received. Stories shouldn't be limited, but with the proper amount of respect and research a story can open the eyes of the audience.



## **My Personal Recommendations:**

- 1. "In the Orchard, The Swallows" by Peter Hobbs**
- 2. "The Song of Achilles" by Madeline Miller**
- 3. "Little Fires Everywhere" by Celeste Ng**

Each of these others elevate their stories by doing the necessary research and by discussing topics that involve people of color/ culture that are not their own- therefore showing ways in which literature can be honored.

# Tracing Our Musical Roots

BY: NENCY BHENSDADIA



Cultural appropriation is taking historically and emotionally significant elements from a particular culture, often marginalized cultures, without truly understanding the elements. Cultural appropriation is not a new concept in the music industry. For several years, artists have been accused of “borrowing” art forms from certain cultures and popularizing them as their own, whether it’s presented through the music video or embedded in the lyrics. It is a complex and relevant issue today, and in order to gain insight into discriminatory processes in contemporary popular music, a deeper understanding of this issue is required. After all, popular music and the broader popular culture is fleeting and forever changing. Many popular styles of music such as Jazz, Rap, and Hip-Hop originated from the Bronx/Harlem in New York City. While mainstream media took a great liking to this new style of music, some artists have not given it the appreciation and acknowledgement that the community deserves.

Elvis Presley’s music was heavily influenced by Black artists. The “King of Rock and Roll” gained his popularity through covers of songs crafted by Black artists such as: Big Mama Thornton, Arthur Neal Gunter, and more. Another famous artist and former child actor, Miley Cyrus, who is best known for her role in Hannah Montana, has faced criticism for years from other African American artists who have accused her of using their culture to advance her career. In 2013, Cyrus

released her single "We Can't Stop" and received a lot of other African American artists who have accused her of using their culture to advance her career. In 2013, Cyrus released her single "We Can't Stop" and received a lot of backlash for telling song producers Timothy and Theron Thomas that she wanted a "Black and urban track." She had also showcased the styling of cornrows, painted sneakers, and primarily Black brands without any confirmation that she knew anything beyond that. Many White artists and consumers of Black hip hop culture argue that their adoption and consumption derives from an appreciation of Black culture rather than appropriation. However, they often fail to give any sort of credit or recognize the true significance in how they portray Black culture. Music is often known as the language that has no boundaries; it transcends across languages and cultures, though this can only apply when minority cultures are embraced properly.

So where does the line become blurred between cultural appropriation and appreciation? There is no particular and clear answer, but the intention is what is critical to how the subject is consumed. It becomes an issue when there is a lack of understanding between the connection of history and genre. Given how diverse the music industry is, the acts of cultural appropriation and lack of effort to understand the origins of certain forms feign into ignorance. Though not all people who take after Black culture can relate to a deep history of disadvantages and hardship, they can do more to stand with the Black community itself. The definition of a true artist is someone who can admit their inspirations and credit them without any kind of animosity -- those who are not Black are permitted to enjoy its contributions through art, music, and other industries, yet must be held accountable for respecting it properly. Understanding Black history, influential figures, and roots would allow more audiences to ally alongside the Black community itself.

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# The Authenticity of Iggy Azalea and Multicultural Rappers

BY : YOOJIN HAN



As Iggy Azalea topped global music charts, made international headlines, and received Billboard's 2015 Top Streaming Artist Award as well as 2016's Woman of the Year Award, her future seemed nothing but promising. Two years later in a 2018 Billboard interview, the Australian rapper opened up about her faulty, inconsiderate actions towards the Black community and confessed, "I have regrets, yes, tons, of course." Her music career seemed to have appeared devoid of her once solidified, glorified reputation. In 2015, her old tweets, remarks, and lyrics resurfaced all around social media for insulting Black accents and disrespecting Black culture. Her name made headlines once again, however this time, for a diametrically different reason: misusing her platform and being completely insensitive to an entire community and the cultural, symbolic elements behind them. Unfortunately, she stirred up even more controversy when she responded with the backlash with "cultural appropriation is subjective... I'm not sorry for my behavior". Haters emerged all across the

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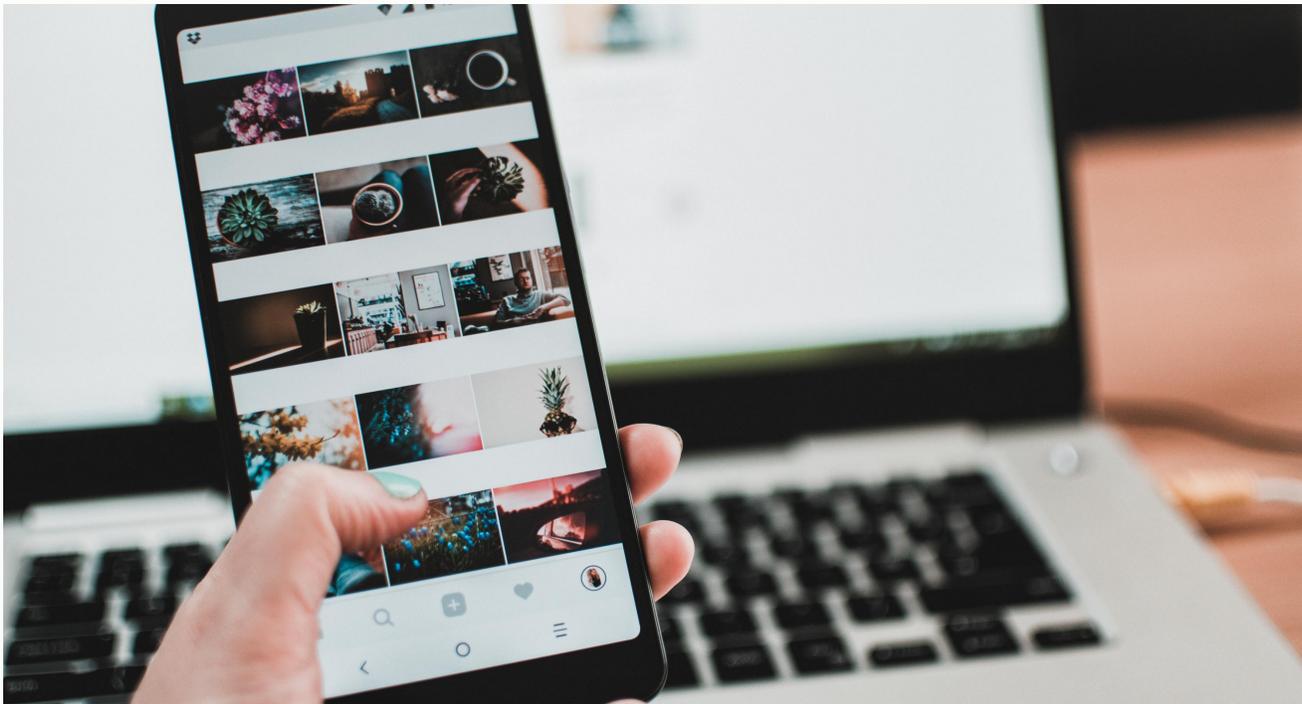
globe and even her die-hard fans turned their backs on their “changed, problematic” idol. Fellow artists, Halsey, Snoop Dog, Azealia Banks, along with the public showed absolutely no signs of mercy when denouncing her Black mimicry and labeling her as a cultural appropriator. Iggy Azalea soon found herself being actively trolled in the media, jeered at her own concerts, and treated contemptuously by interviewers and paparazzi alike for her cultural appropriation of the Black community. Rightfully, so? However, some had defended her Black mimicry as a mere form of a nuanced language with variance in accents: African American English, or AAE. This specific “accent” is distinctive as centuries of slavery and dialects of the native languages of Africa: Swahili, Igbo, and Berber, and countless of different languages originated from African roots.

Conversely, the appropriation of music is seen on another end: the listeners. While music producers are seen to embody the stereotypes of cultures, it has become a common theme for young audiences to act similarly. In the mid-2010s rap music resurged popularity, however this (somewhat unexpectedly if watched from an outside view) led to counterproductive impacts to the Black communities that created this music. Rather than the general audience listening to the music, appreciating its history, and educating themselves on the communities that created it (as many would expect to occur), many white audiences ultimately appropriated Black culture by labeling all rap as a specific image of “cool” and “thug.” It soon became the goal of young white teenagers to become the stereotype that the music portrayed in their minds and taking the parts of Black culture that benefited them, without further educating themselves on the impacts of this or the history behind it. The popularity of the music also led to an increase in white people finding it acceptable to sing the n-word, since it is “just a song.” This further symbolizes the lack of education and appreciation for the creators of the music and its deep-rooted history. And that is why this image that is still popular today, is the cause of much frustration in Black communities. Many people often ask, “Why do white people stereotype music written by Black creators, but can't fight for Black social movements such as Black Lives Matter?” And this question highlights the exact problem that society is disguising.

**It's not the inability; but the unwillingness to appreciate the culture and those who stand with it.**

# SOCIAL MEDIA: GEN Z'S SECRET WEAPON TO TACKLING SOCIAL ISSUES

BY: NITA KULKARNI



HOW DOES GEN Z  
UTILIZE SOCIAL  
MEDIA TO  
FACILITATE  
CHANGE?

In an age of growing social media usage and dependence on technology, Gen Z has used Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and more as tools to spread awareness about pressing issues and facilitate civic engagement. Social media has increasingly become the medium through which individuals express their opinions about social injustice and even cultural appropriation.

## **Social Injustices**

On May 25, 2020 George Floyd was killed by police officer Derek Chauvin. This re-lit the embers of the Black Lives Matter movement that began in 2013, which centered around bringing the police brutality towards Black individuals to light.

Beginning June 2020, every state in the US and several countries around the world began hosting protests, demanding justice for the Black lives lost. Many of the supporters have used social media to spread awareness and organize these protests. On June 2, over 26.3 million individuals participated in Black Out Tuesday on Instagram and Snapchat. Celebrities, influencers, and individuals posted black squares on their social media accounts with the intention of showing their support towards the BLM movement. Many also have re-posted or created posts for their Instagram stories, containing information to share with their followers. As of mid-June, #BlackLivesMatter had over 22.2 million posts on Instagram and over 11.0 billion views on TikTok.

Another crucial time in which people took to social media to express their attitudes towards a social issue was the #MeToo movement. As of September of 2018, the hashtag was used over 19 million times on Twitter. All people, from different walks of life, spoke out about their experiences with sexual assault and harassment, showing survivors that they were not alone. Like the BLM movement, the #MeToo movement began earlier (2006) and gained more momentum and recognition after a pivotal event pertaining to the topic paired with increased attention from social media.

This movement found its way to TikTok, where creators used part of the song "It's Time" by Imagine Dragons to share their powerful stories of overcoming sexual assault and harassment. There are over 125.6k videos to the song. Users also spread information about Denim Day through TikTok.

### **Social Media and Activism**

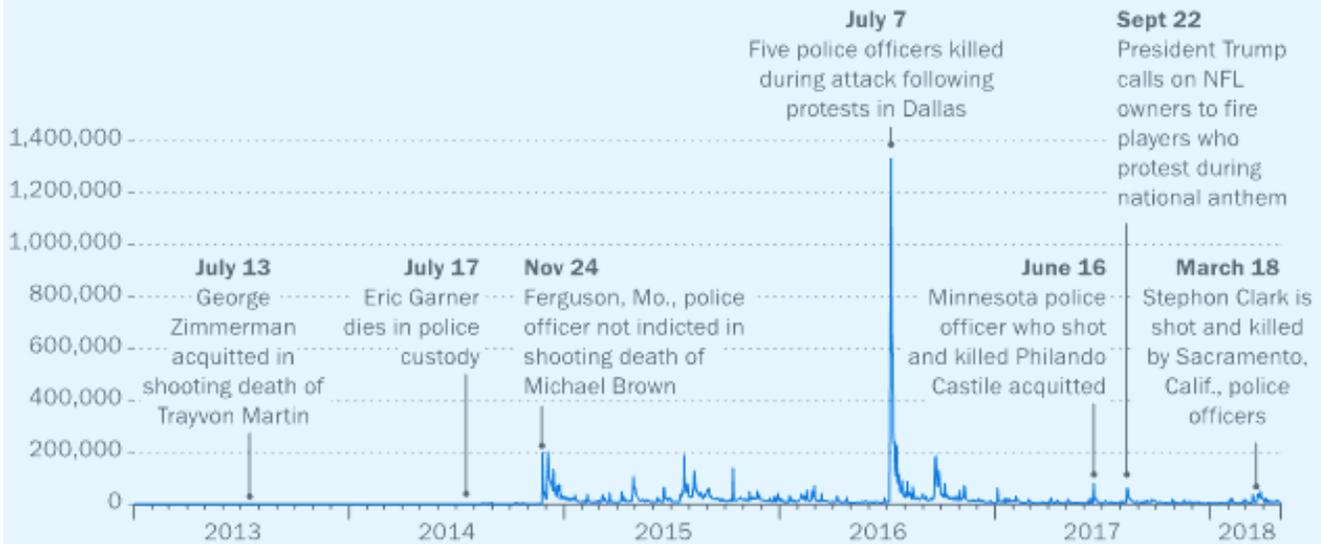
Along with spreading awareness and information about these topics, studies have shown that social media is a prime factor in facilitating civic engagement. One study surveyed individuals from 53 advocacy organizations of varying sizes and interests, and researchers found that every single group uses social media daily to communicate with citizens. Groups organize meetings,



**"Generation Z is not only passionate, but they are willing to speak up. This is because of the world they have grown up in. A world of comments, likes, and rebellion for the good."  
- unknown**

## Use of the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on Twitter periodically spikes in response to major news events

Number of Twitter posts mentioning the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, Jan. 1, 2013-May 1, 2018



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets using Crimson Hexagon. "Activism in the Social Media Age"

protests, events, etc through means of tweeting, posting, and sharing.

In a study conducted regarding the BLM movement, the results showed that social media "reflect the evolution of the BLM movement" and the "engagement and linguistic attributes gleaned from Twitter around BLM [could] predict well the size of the protests." This meant that the BLM movement gained traction and attention as time passed, and social media showed accurate patterns that helped predict the outcome of participants who attended protests.

Pew Research Center created a timeline showing the usage of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter from 2013 to 2018. They found that 64% of Americans felt that social media "gives a voice to underrepresented groups."

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**"A new generation is on the rise and the first step to communicating with them, is understanding they aren't just another Millennial."  
-unkown**

## Social Media and Cultural Appropriation

Many consider the “n-word” a form of cultural appropriation. There has been much of an argument about the use of this word, dating back to the origin of the word. It was used as a derogatory term to describe slaves, and now the Black community has used a variation of this word to regain control of the meaning and connotation. When someone outside the Black community uses this word, it is appropriating and disrespecting their culture and history.

TikTokers have used their platforms to educate their followers about this topic. There are over 32.3 million views on videos spreading awareness about cultural appropriation on TikTok.

For example, user @curlyhairedchaos made a video saying why wearing cornrows or box braids is cultural appropriation of Black culture because those hairstyles are meant to protect that hair type. Additionally, TikTokers have called out some celebrities and influencers for wearing bindis to Coachella, which is an appropriation of Indian culture. By making videos on a platform that reaches the youth and educating them on these topics, Gen Z is able to avoid making the mistakes of the past -- letting cultural appropriation slide because of what is in fashion at the time.

Generation Z, with their attachments to social media, have used that tool as their secret weapon to tackle issues about social injustice and cultural appropriation. By spreading awareness about important topics and organizing protests through the means of social media, people are finally starting to make a change in society and start conversations that are long overdue.

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# DOES CULTURAL APPROPRIATION EXIST IN DISNEY CHILDHOODS?



BY: DIVYA NATARAJAN

Disney has contrived many significant, memorable, and timeless classic films, and most of these movies are still cherished to this day. Throughout many children's lives, these films are revered as magical, and marvelous, but as time goes by, it has become apparent that some of these films have some misinterpretations of certain cultures and pose stereotypical representations of people.

These films have been noted for their clichéd examples and representations of people from personified animals to princesses. Disney has given an opportunity to showcase and celebrate different cultures and embody the heritage and history by educating the public. All in all, these films will always be an enormous part of many people's lives and the

memories of magic will always live on. To begin with, many films have sparked controversy due to their shocking clichéd portrayals of notorious and popular characters.

Throughout Disney's career, they have produced many successful films that have become staples in many childhoods. In reality, many of Disney's most popular projects have set stereotypical and clichéd roles for characters. Such films that have quintessential characters include *The Jungle Book* (1967), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), and *The Little Mermaid* (1989), just to name a few. To start off with, in the adventurous film, *The Jungle Book* of 1967, this film is about a young boy and his adventures in the jungle with all of his animal friends.

According to the article, "Cultural Representation in Disney Films": "at the end of the movie, an Indian girl appears wearing a bindi never really change in the jungle." In this song, the girl sings about her future by stating that she will have a handsome husband who she will cook and clean for. This scenario portrays how women are supposed to clean homes, cook food, and other stereotypes. As for the Lady and the Tramp of 1955, the movie features, "a pair of Siamese cats that sing "The Siamese Cat Song" in stereotypical Asian voices" (Voytko). This portrayal of the Siamese cats is not only offensive, but it also paints a stereotypical picture of how many Asian people are seen.

In the Lady and the Tramp, the cats are animated to have slanted eyes and fabricated Asian accents and speak as well as sing with broken English phrases.

Next, in The Little Mermaid (1989), the story begins with curious, adventurous and bright-eyed Ariel exploring the sea, but as time passed, she fell in love and ended up losing her adventurous spirit. The Little Mermaid has painted a stereotypical picture that if a girl likes a guy, she should change her personality, for the sake of their relationship. In this day and

age, Disney has an important responsibility to instill positive, and unbiased values into the youth. Although many Disney films paint bias, and cliché roles for certain genders and races, some films also misinterpreted significant cultures and traditions.

As Disney's stereotyping becomes more apparent, its misinterpretation of culture also shines through. For instance, a few Disney movies that have taken elements of a certain culture and changed it for entertainment purposes include Peter Pan (1953), and Aladdin (1992). To begin with, the movie Peter Pan, of 1953 features a song called "What Makes The Red Man Red," and this song is about Native Americans, but rather than use this song as a teaching moment about Native American culture and heritage, this song has "broken jargon, and stereotypical examples of Native Americans" (VH1 News George). In that song, the main characters sing and dance around in a circle wearing Native American headdresses, and "running around making "whooping" noises while fanning their mouths with their hands" (VH1 News George).

Another movie that also misinterprets culture is Aladdin of 1992, this film takes Arabian



culture. This movie was a great opportunity to showcase and spotlight the Arabian culture, but Disney decided to use the stereotypical examples of Arabs.

An example of Disney's stereotyping is in the original version of the opening song "Arabian Nights" that included the lyrics "Where they cut off your ear / If they don't like your face / It's barbaric, but hey, it's home" (Screen Rant Young). These lyrics have a misrepresentation of Middle Eastern culture, and can be seen as bias. To sum up, many Disney films have had a great opportunity to brandish cultures and heritage, but some films have gone a different route.

Disney has an important role of shaping the youth, and that is why they should take this responsibility with great honor. Throughout many childhoods, Disney has fabricated a world of dreams, magic, and timeless classic films. As many grow older though, it is important to appreciate and understand all of the different cultures. As time goes by, many people begin to see the racial stereotypes in these memorable movies. It is important to adhere and acknowledge all cultures and heritages.

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# Black Lives Matter: Students Seek Accountability in the Legal System

BY: STORMY LIGHT

Passionate chants, prayers, and posters consume the streets of every major city as protesters march arm in arm claiming justice for black lives. The death of yet another black life at the hands of police officers has sent a ripple of unrest and outrage across the world and people of all ethnicities are protesting that enough is enough. At George Floyd's memorial service, notable civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton expressed his concerns about the lack of historical justice in America stating, "Make America Great. Great for who and great when? We're going to make America great for everybody for the first time...Never was great for blacks, never was great for Latinos, it wasn't great for women."

Systematic racism, oppression, and exploitation are deeply rooted within the legal and political system of the United States and have cost African Americans both valuable opportunities and their lives. We can trace this system of racial injustice and inequality back to 1790 with the passing of the Naturalization Act, restricting citizenship to "free white



persons of good character".

By restricting African Americans from becoming citizens, the government was denying them protection under the Constitution and eliminating the possibility for them to advocate for themselves through voting..

This was followed by decades of practices intending to segregate and

and degrade African American lives with the legislation of Plessy v. Ferguson upholding the doctrine of "separate but equal."

In 1941, racial discrimination in the workplace became prevalent and African Americans believed a march on Washington would be an effective method to protest unequal access to defense jobs. Executive Order 8802 was passed as a result of this and prevented racial discrimination in the defense industry. Later, Executive Order 9980 would be passed ensuring fair employment practices that would not discriminate based on race. This spirit of activism that sparked social change permeated into the 1960's as the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) organized freedom rides and protestors emulated the courageous actions of Rosa Parks by participating in boycotts, sit-ins and anti-segregation protests.



The Civil Rights Act of 1964 became a pivotal piece of legislation in the Civil Rights movement, asserting that "discrimination in public accommodations and employment was prohibited." This Act was followed by the Civil Rights Act of 1968, providing for equal housing opportunities "regardless of race, creed, or national origin."

As a nation, we have reflected on the strength of the Civil Rights Movement while calling for reform today. Marches strengthen civic engagement and have created a space for candid dialogue to take place.

Specifically, there has been widespread support for reforming criminal justice policies and law enforcement policies to better represent diverse communities. Such changes include introducing bills that will ban chokeholds, requiring all officers use body cameras, and mandating that all officers complete implicit bias training.



As the 2020 presidential election nears in the United States, the future of policing in America will be a central issue that both candidates will have to address. As students, we have the power to advocate for oppressed communities by protesting, donating, and advocating for social justice issues through social media platforms. Most importantly, we have the ability to vote for candidates locally and nationally that will actively work to reform dated policies and create meaningful change for communities that have endured centuries of oppression.

As Rev. Al Sharpton concluded his speech and called for action at George Floyd's memorial service, he offered a powerful reminder to the public. He encouraged protestors to continue voicing their opinions by stating, "Protest against evil. Join the young people in the streets... we cannot cooperate with evil, we cannot cooperate with injustice."

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# THE FUTURE IS OURS.

## EDITORS:

KATHERINE CHOU  
ANUSHA NATARAJAN  
MILLA NGUYEN

## WRITERS:

NITA KULKARNI  
LINDSAY CHEN  
MARYSSA ORTA  
ZARA JAHAN  
YOOJIN HAN  
NENCY BHENSDADIA  
STORMY LIGHT  
DIYVYA NATARAJAN

## COVER ARTIST:

ALICE MAO

## THANK YOU.

BY: MILLA NGUYEN

When Culture Talk was created, it arose from a discussion between 3 students. With time and with passion, it became a network of 27 students- leaders, members, and writers. From all diverse backgrounds, universities, and cultures- it became of a melting pot that strives to share, cherish, and explore the world's numerous pockets of knowledge. While this would not be possible without the founders, every member contributes something to the table. It's a beautiful thing- how something so small grew into a movement and organization that continues to delve into the future, it is safe to say that we will uphold our mission until the end. No matter the generation or the year, Culture Talk will always be a place that brings students and teaching professionals together, even musing readers who are looking for some material to read. As time goes by, there will be many articles, many guest speakers, and many more collaborative plans. As Kamala Harris says, "Our unity is our strength & diversity is our power."

On that note, thank you for taking the time to read our first ever magazine issue, a mark of student-led history. It would not be possible without any of you. Our gift to you-- and many more to come.



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