



# ENLIGHTENMENT WORKSHOP SERIES

**Conceptualization, Commercialization, and  
Commodification of Ethnicity and Race**

**A CONVERSATION FACILITATED BY:  
Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman, Ph.D  
Kelly Cowart, Ph.D**

Organized under the auspices of the USF Black Employee Steering Committee,  
Black Faculty & Staff Association, and the Institute on Black Life

# Commercialization vs. Commodification

**Commodification:** process by which things or activities are transformed into commodities or services based on their exchange-value for trade.

**Commercialization:** process of introducing a new product or production method into commerce—making it available on the market.



**What are examples of the commodification or commercialization of race and ethnicity?**

*(Provide your answer in the chat)*



# Contemporary examples



*"People think they're honoring us with these mascots and logos, but they're mocking us." Michael Spears, member of Sioux South Dakota tribe. (USA Today, 2021)*



More than 20 Kansas school districts still use Native American-themed mascots or imagery.



Hugo Phan / KMUW

More than 20 Kansas school districts still use Native American-themed mascots or imagery.





Commodity activism - the practice of merging consumer behavior with political or social goals.

Mukherjee, R., & Banet-Weiser, S. (Eds.). (2012). Commodity activism: Cultural resistance in neoliberal times. NYU Press.



# The over commercialization of Lunar New Year

Michelle Jin, Graphics Editor

January 28, 2022



Art by Sophia Fang.



# Commercialization of Juneteenth



# GREAT SALE

of

# SLAVES

JANUARY 10, 1855

There Will Be Offered For Sale at Public Auction at the SLAVE MARKET, CHEAPSIDE, LEXINGTON, All The SLAVES of JOHN CARTER, Esquire, of LEWIS COUNTY, KY. On Account of His Removal to Indiana, a Free State. The Slaves Listed Below Were All Raised on the CARTER PLANTATION at QUICK'S RUN, Lewis County, Kentucky.

- 3 Bucks Aged from 20 to 26, Strong, Ablebodied
- 1 Wench, Sallie, Aged 42, Excellent Cook
- 1 Wench, Lize, Aged 23 with 6 mo. old Picinniny
- One Buck Aged 52, good Kennel Man
- 17 Bucks Aged from twelve to twenty, Excellent

TERMS: Strictly CASH at Sale, as owner must realize cash, owing to his removal to West. Offers for the entire lot will be entertained previous to sale by addressing the undersigned.

**JOHN CARTER, Esq.**  
Po. Clarksburg                      Lewis County, Kentucky





**We live in an era of  
“spectacle” production –  
where audiences are  
motivated by entertaining,  
spectacular imagery.**

Gotham, K. F. (2017). Touristic disaster: Spectacle and recovery in post-Katrina New Orleans. *Geoforum*, 86, 127-135.

What are current examples of spectacle in the media?



# George Floyd Murder: One spectacle replaces another ...



# Entertainment Increasingly Permeates Society and Culture

**Eduertainment: Education & Entertainment**

**Infotainment: Information & Entertainment**

Pontiewozik, J. (2005). "The Year of Charitainment" December 19, 2005.  
<https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1142281,00.html>  
Retrieved 2/6/2023.

Do you believe that the media is  
sensationalizing violence and brutality?



**One major limitation –  
spectacles are focused  
around consumption and  
entertainment, not  
politics and societal  
transformation.**



# Corporate Commitments to Equity

Awesome Diversity Goal Examples

Source: <https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-goals/>





# NIKE: TURNING CONTROVERSY INTO DOLLARS

Do you think you're getting credit  
for a low price? Well, it's not.



# Give The People What They Want

87 % of consumers would purchase a product from a company that “stood up or advocated for” an issue they care about

70 % of consumers want brands to take a stand on social and political issues

Sprout Social 2022

## YET

53 % of consumers believe brands that take a stand do so for PR and marketing purposes

35 % believe that when a brand speaks out it’s “jumping on the bandwagon”

# Commercialization of Breast cancer



Pinkwashing is a form of cause marketing that uses a pink ribbon logos.



YouTube Search Sign in



0:02 / 0:30

### Interracial Cheerios Commercial (2013-06-05)

 The Oklahoman Video Archive ✓  
10.9K subscribers

Subscribe

724

Share

Save

83K views 5 years ago  
Cheerios commercial Show more

Commercial #1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J\\_M2qa4xh0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J_M2qa4xh0)





# Boticário ad - Brazil



“When an all-white family was portrayed, it earned an 89% approval rating. When an all-black family was portrayed, it received a 40% negative rating.”





Diversity is Good for Business,

But.....

What About Racial Justice?

How do we hold companies and organizations accountable?

# Questions & answers



# Please complete the survey!



[https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4VDWIgFLJbkQkZw](https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4VDWIgFLJbkQkZw)



# Movimento Black Money (MBM)



“Our objective is to generate our own production chain, from supply to conscious and intentional consumption of black products and services. The movement is a kind of system hacking: an innovation center that seeks emancipation through digital tools.—  
Movimento Black Money Leadership <https://www.nesst.org/movimento-black-money>



# Can violent spectacles move people to action?

