

Is the materialistic effect on celebrity culture caused by the obsession with fame?

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Product Design

Independent Inquiry ADAD6001

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA (Hons)

University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea, December 11th 2019

Word count: 6369

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Table of contents

List of illustrations.....	2
Abstract.....	4
Introduction	5
Main body of text.....	6
Conclusion	33
Bibliography:	35
References	35
Illustrations.....	39
Sources.....	41

List of illustrations

Fig.1, <i>Love island 2019 contestants</i> (Evans, 2019)	11
Fig.2, <i>Custom painting no.5</i> , Peter Phillips, 1965 (Honnef, 2015, p.65)	12
Fig.3, <i>Select-o-mat rear axle</i> , Peter Philips, 1971 (Phillips, 2019)	13
Fig.4, <i>Art-o-matic cudacutie</i> , Peter Philips, 1972 (Phillips, 2019)	14
Fig.5, <i>Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?</i> , Richard Hamilton, 1956 (Honnef, p.39)	14
Fig.6, <i>Self-portrait</i> , Richard Hamilton, 1963 (Tvemlow, 2011)	15
Fig.7, <i>Dr Pepper</i> , Eduardo Paolozzi, 1948 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.50)	15
Fig.8, <i>Sliver Liz</i> , Andy Warhol, 1963 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.117)	18
Fig.9, <i>Mick Jagger</i> , Andy Warhol, 1975 (Blondet, 2007 p.148)	18
Fig.10, <i>Red Elvis</i> , Andy Warhol, 1962 (Bluttal, 2009, p.190)	19
Fig.11, <i>Marilyn Diptych</i> , Andy Warhol, 1962 (Bluttal, 2009, p.184)	21
Fig.12, <i>For men only-starring MM and BB</i> , Peter Philips, 1961 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.88)	21
Fig.13, <i>My Marilyn</i> , Richards Hamilton, 1965 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.151)	22
Fig.14, <i>Marilyn</i> , Mimmo Rotella, 1962 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.101)	22
Fig.15, <i>Standard Station</i> , by Edward Ruscha, 1966 (Honnef, 2015, p.73)	24
Fig.16, <i>Brittany spears breakdown</i> (Backgrid, 2019)	25

Fig.17, <i>Shia Labeouf appearance for the Nymphomaniac premiere</i> (Wenn, 2014) ..	25
Fig.18, <i>The Hermes Birkin bag was on sale for £45,000</i> (Pledger, 2015)	29
Fig.19, <i>Kim Kardashian collection of Hermes bags</i> (Rainey, 2015)	30
Fig.20, <i>Jones body painted by Haring, taken by Robert Mapplethorpe, 1984</i> (Dib, 2017)	33

Abstract

This Independent Inquiry provides an exploration of celebrity culture, our culture's obsession with fame and how this relates to materialism. Links are made to Andy Warhol's declaration that in the future everyone will be *Famous for Fifteen Minutes*, and his portraits of famous individuals, showing how both contributed to the manufacturing of reality TV. As such, I explore the world in which celebrity is now upheld in the same form of prestige that others hold through their actual skills and talents. These celebrities use social networks that act as a language of communication to demonstrate their credibility. This is important to such famous individuals and those who aim to be so. Materialism is shown to impact on these processes.

Introduction

The attempt to become internationally renowned has become overburdened with the ideology/belief you can be famous without a skill or talent. It is now possible to be famous by following trends that are deemed relevant by the media, therefore becoming an idiom of current social identification of what is popular. By showing off a designer brand on social media means you are on par with the famous that have perfected their god-given talents to obtain this title. This inclination of showing off is described by Mumford as "Desire...linked to aesthetics, ostentation and the consumption of luxury to express status" (cited by Dant, 1999, p.132-133). Not every person is interested in owning this status but the ones who seek luxurious lifestyles can become delusional of what is relevant. Overconsumption of haute couture garments or cosmetics becomes the only thing that matters, creating a dominating happiness manifested by a gluttonous lifestyle. This is a glamorous lie of satisfaction epitomized by the fundamental belief that indulging in materialism is a necessity of being famous; resulting in the impression they are something special when they may not be.

Materialism comes from consumption and consumption is a form of expression by showing others what appeals to you. However, it is noted that materialism is "A tendency to consider material possessions... as more important than spiritual values" (Anon, 2005, p.628). These possessions are used "like a mirror faithful not to real images but to images desired" (Rheims cited by Baudrillard, 1996, p.89). Meaning materialism is an expressive language of consumption between the person and the objects they have accumulated. Because a relationship is being created that is reflected into the collective others (people you pass by on the street for example) gazes by portraying the materialistic person desired social status. Since "individuals define themselves through their objects" (Baudrillard, 1996, p.195). Therefore the materialistic part of consumption is not buying for purpose instead it is to satisfy your desired/wanted reflection seen by the public. Still, your reflection of what appeals to you or particular taste may not sit well with others, so do you compromise and become what is deemed the norm.

"The establishment of normalcy (i.e. what is accepted as 'normal') through social-and stereotypes is one aspect of the habit of ruling groups...to attempt to fashion the whole of society according to their own world view" (Dyer referenced by Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013, p.248)

The norm is everywhere you observe, it is part of society an ever-changing appearance of suggestion decided by the uncommon entourage of social classes, the rich and the famous a "ruling class...in the possession of things who are themselves therefore possessed by images" (Debord, 2014, p.143). But is only taken hold of when the common folk invest into it. Meaning the norm is developed by the elite yet the ordinary manufacture the norm in mass production by wanting to be perceived like the developers. Possessed by images refers to how the objects

(related to the norm) are linked to "formal expression...a universal system for the identification of social rank: the code of status" (Baudrillard, 1996, p.193)

Therefore obsessing over the famous (developers) is in some way an addiction but it is not buying your much-needed necessities off some dealer in a street corner.

Instead, it is being able to indulge in its atmospheric appeal by watching TV, noticing billboards, following certain accounts on social media which creates the need of being wanted to be seen like what you've seen on such advertisements.

"The individual consumer will be successfully persuaded that he personally desires...that his own image is reflected back to him in advance as part of a synthesis" (Baudrillard, 1996, p.179). By believing that you are like the figures on the advertisements (the synthesis in this case) could incline the individual to wonder and suspect that they are now the norm as well. If so then it could develop into thoughts such as I look like these images so why shouldn't I be on these images aren't I famous? As a result, this could drive the person into focusing on obtaining a form of renowned credibility. Their goal is to become the developer not the one of the ordinary anymore. "If I hadn't seen such riches, I could live with being poor" (Sil, 2007).

Simmel suggests fame is perceived as "an abstract existence, a freedom from direct concern with things" (cited by Dant, 1999, p.138) it enables them to live a life that others desire. It is valued as a form of success. Success is linked to happiness, being able to do what you want without care therefore it does "entitles one to experience one's own existence as meaningful" (Graw, 2009, p.58) but if you were to fail then it can have an overwhelming effect of despair. The problem is let's say the attempt (an image on social media) you made to be famous is lucky enough to trend for a short

while then you could use this moment to exaggerate the attention to become reality relevant. However, reality constantly changes so the moment can become part of yesterday and you would become irrelevant. To recapture the moment that was felt could be sought through consuming items that are considered to be for the noteworthy thus recreating the happiness. Eventually, the happiness wears away provoked by the overindulging which becomes a joyless void of dissatisfaction. The realisation that nothing will come from the time spent in participating in the consumption of noteworthy brands becomes more apparent. Therefore, satisfaction once felt turns to loathing for those who became renown for nothing actually worth being famous for.

This materialistically driven path to so-called stardom has grown exponentially throughout history. Its connection to society known and modern history can be documented in many places such as the dandy men who strove to make their appearance a form of aesthetics quality. To the Pharaohs who egos and vanities were made to be as great in the afterlife as their reigns. The rich kids of Instagram showing off their inherited wealth to incite envy in fellow peers of social networks. Yet its undeniable presence in the celebrity culture of all things to do with fame can be viewed almost everywhere in present times. Explained with "In this age of disposability, brevity of mode is celebrated; we buy for the season, endlessly hungry for what is fed to us as the next big thing, no longer pausing to savour this big thing, or investing in timelessness"(Gradiner, 2011). Since materialism has always been there, known and unknown throughout history, there is no need for an explanation for the role it has played throughout time. Instead, the correlation that will be exemplified is how the obsession with fame is linked to the materialism counterpart of celebrity culture.

The correlation will begin with the factor of how the emergence of reality television which documented the everyday life of celebrities. An example of this would be *The Osbournes* which aired in the early 2000s. Described as "Cameras...shooting the banality of life in their homes and wider suburbia...of what would turn The Osbournes into MTV's most successful show to date, at that time" (Mokoena, 2016). The show won an Emmy, proving that there was a market for this style of TV which became massively popular in the preceding years. This inspired similar shows but an alternative came to prominence which was granting the average citizen to take part in talent shows with the chance of winning, therefore, to become famous. Such as the X factor which offers contestants' record deals if they win. When it first aired in 2004 it gained an average of 7.4 million viewers (BARB, 2019) in the UK per show, eventually reaching 14.13 million in 2010. By 2018 the weekly viewing declined to less than 6.19 million indicating this type of reality TV was becoming less popular and doesn't offer the same entertainment anymore.

In the same year, the BAFTA award for best reality show was won by Love Island. Originally the show aired in 2005 with a cast of celebrities but failed to create an impact. Reappearing 10 years later with regular citizens, with the pilot of the show is the chance of winging £50,000 by coupling up and proving to the audience at home they should win since they've shown that they and their partner, who've only known each other for 5-7 weeks, are truly in love. Although £50,000 is a lump sum, the additional press coverage accumulates in them becoming famous for short while. But if clever enough they learn to "exploit the new economic power of celebrity...through the careful cultivation of their own personal image and a trademark mode of self-presentation" (Gibson, 2013, p.184). This presentation involves the person doing various antics to rejuvenate their presence into a celeb/famous status. By mentally

and physically transforming their self-concept into a cosmopolitan of what they think is esteemed important and noteworthy but the public are the ones who control this status and decide who should own it. Initially only gaining 0.57 million views per episode but in 2019 it was having 5.61 million views per episode (BARB, 2019), proving how it has become an embedded fixation that has concurred the star-struck minds of many hopefuls.

"Love Island is a riveting human rights violation... a cross between 'The Bachelor' and the Stanford Prison Experiment" (Jeong, 2019). Even the most popular shows can be criticised "more young people applied to appear on the latest season of Love Island than applied to either Oxford or Cambridge" and how "one apparent requisite for anyone who appears on the show is a thriving social media presence" (Busby, 2018). In my mind, I don't see this as such a shocking truth but I can see why some people frown upon it. The reason for going to university is to gain a better future that could hopefully offer a comfortable lifestyle but by having a show that has contestants the same age as many students could cause many of them to believe that they could get on the show. This could propel the individual to focus on social media presence instead real life. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the show is meant for regular citizens but it's meant for 20 to 30ish men and women who have to fit a stereotypical "Instagram-attractive, perma-tanned singles" (Maltby, 2019). Therefore to be on the show you have to be this or attempt to be this (figure.1). Moss in 2019 revealed how this can affect an individual with the following:

"Ahead of this year's series, the Mental Health Foundation surveyed more than 4,500 young people about body image and the impact of reality TV shows – including Love Island. Almost one in four people (24%) aged 18 to 24 said reality TV made them worry about their body image, while a similar number (23%) said they had

experienced suicidal thoughts and feelings because of concerns about how they look”.



Fig.1, *Love island 2019 contestants* (Evans, 2019)

A factor is not a circumstance that appears out of thin air it occurs when a previous factor gives away to it. If this is so then the reason for there being an acceptance of being famous for nothing relevant, such as taking part in reality T.V. could have started with how society moved towards accepting this practice of becoming famous when the trivial everyday started to offer more worth living for. Meaning instead of worrying over past, present and future they accepted that life was what it was and just got on with it. But this created an astute mind among many people that helped lay way for Pop art to become mainstream which Lippard described as “For other observes, however, such a brash and uncritical reflection of our environment was a breath of fresh air” (cited in Honnef, 2015, p.12). Pop art became imbedded in the materialism lifestyle that was developing and consuming the American population, becoming the new embodiment of the American dream e.g. I must have this, watch this, do this to become this. “Because they bring identities into being” the paintings

“are powerful media for social action and shared public understandings” (Gosden referenced by Sofaer, 2007, p.2).

This lifestyle, the American dream meant success and continuous improvement by hard work which would grant an opportunity worth taking. With all due respect it does still uphold significant meaning but is it still as highly regarded since over time opinions change and as stated by Hamilton “Pop art is popular, transient, witty, gimmicky, sexy, young” (Honnef, 2015, inside cover). Society engulfed it (referring to the statement just mentioned) and couldn’t get over it allowing it to become regarded as one of the omnipresent factors of the 60s. Although pop art emerged during the 50’s it came to prominence during the ‘60s.

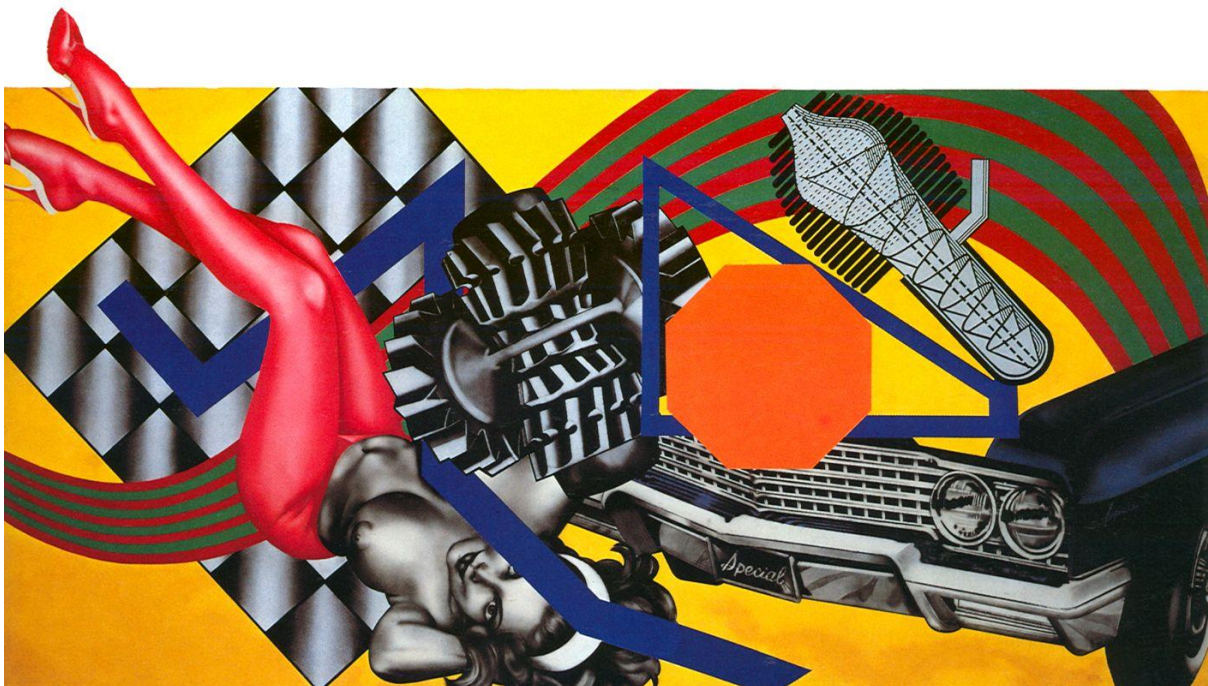


Fig.2, *Custom painting no.5*, Peter Phillips, 1965 (Honnef, 2015, p.65)

In 1965 Peter Philips completed *custom painting no.5* (figure.2), described by Honnef (2015, p.64) as “Fun, sex, technology, the trademarks of consumer society, are all concatenated in this turbulent picture”. The adjectives Hamilton described had

evolved into these trademarks, indicating how it became a major factor of society at the time. Considering Honnef statement was wrote 50 years later it's as if P. Phillips predicted a partial truth that today's society would still be the same as it was then, meaning the picture still upholds significant relevance. Since the trademarks projected on the image are still apparent in present day. The fun, sex and technology are not just acknowledged in turbulent pictures anymore but electrical devices. The difference between the two is that the pictures (figures.2-7) gather the trademarks together from different locations of the consumer life into projected ideas that are presented not as inanimate paintings but the lifestyle that they want or are living. Honnef (2015, p.64) also describe *Custom painting no. 5* "As if from a projection screen, an abundance of... visual impressions storms the viewer...to form a visual correspondence of ...experience". This reaffirms how it's presented as a desired lifestyle which creates the satisfaction you require.



Fig.3, *Select-o-mat rear axle*, Peter Philips, 1971 (Phillips, 2019)



Fig.4, *Art-o-matic cudacutie*, Peter Philips, 1972 (Phillips, 2019)



Fig.5, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, Richard Hamilton, 1956 (Honnef, p.39)



Fig.6, *Self-portrait*, Richard Hamilton, 1963 (Tvemlow, 2011)



Fig.7, *Dr Pepper*, Eduardo Paolozzi, 1948 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.50)

The trademarks shown in this presented lifestyle refer to the fast/impressive car, the pretty girl, the strong man and the crazy thrills (bright abstract colours in the background) showing a stereotypical view of what everyone wants. Since this is the ingredients needed for living a satisfying life, means that this view also fits into the suggestive norm. The way it fits in is by how there's a creation of purpose / a dream of wanting to make your existence like the paintings, therefore, a "social relation between people that is mediated by images" (Debord, 2014, p.4). Further proven by how the art offers "permission given the consumer freely to enjoy life, and proof that he has the right to surround himself with products that enrich his existence and give him pleasure" (Dichter cited by Baudrillard, 1996, p.185).

Whereas fast forward 50 years or so, the electrical device allows the consumer to obtain the trademarks without going to different locations with little ease. The trademarks of consumer society are reachable at any given time. Instead of going out to a gallery and gazing upon turbulent paintings to witness and gain a daring imagination of what it would be like all at once, you can sit in the comfort of your own home. The electrical device (the technology aspect) able many parts of society to excess the internet for endless fun and pleasure thus the imagination that was sought to be real by looking at suggestive artworks (figures.2-7) has become a reality. But has it become too turbulent? "As an immeasurable storage of entertainment, the Internet is some way alike to that black hole that has no method to get out"(Watson 2017). Does this mean that this path of living hit a dead end? There is ample evidence that supports this statement as when Bloxham (2008) interviewed Jerald Block for *Internet addiction is a 'clinical disorder'*, who mentions:

"It becomes a significant other to them. They exhaust emotions that they could experience in the real world on the computer through any number of mechanisms:

emailing, gaming, porn. It's much more acceptable for kids to talk about game use, whereas adults keep it a secret”.

Afterwards, the Nhs released their own opinion on the matter which goes as follows

“Some people can become dependent on anything, so this is no surprise; if more cases are reported this could represent a real increase in incidence or simply in medical fashion” (Bazian, 2008). 10 years later the first internet addiction centre in the UK was opened. The clinic founder H. Bowden-Jones stated that it was “finally getting the attention it deserves. The distress and harm it can cause is extreme and I feel...the centre for internet disorders will be a life-changer”(Sky news, 2018).

When did it become too much, well it is hard to determine since there are considerable amount of factors that have contributed to this problem. A noticeable theme in pop art was how it features celebrities and how they are portrayed in the media therefore the reality viewed on TV. Andy Warhol did so or even pioneered it by screen printing mass amounts of portraits of such celebrity's including Liz Taylor, Mick Jagger and Elvis Presley (figures.8 -10).



Fig.8, *Silver Liz*, Andy Warhol, 1963 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.117)



Fig.9, *Mick Jagger*, Andy Warhol, 1975 (Blondet, 2007 p.158)



Fig.10, *Red Elvis*, Andy Warhol, 1962 (Bluttal, 2009, p.190)

“Let’s face it, Liz... you are not Monroe” (Diego cited by Blondet, 2007, p.20), without doubt, Marilyn Monroe (figure.11) was Warhol’s superstar as well as the public since she was adored in life and even in death. The fascination with Monroe is shown by other pop artists including Peter Phillips, Mimmo Rotella and Richard Hamilton (figure.12-14) due to how “her product is her life” (Graw, 2009, p.163) meaning that she is more brand/label than person since her visual features were the reason she was famous which prompted her into the starlight. Graw explains on p.170 the effect it had by how “Warhol’s commercial portraits were a ticket to the world of...the famous, acting as a shortcut on the arduous path to glory” (2009) fabricating a reality that meant if I’m rich, I’m famous. Paintings are bought for money, therefore, higher the price higher the value but does what the painting shows have the same principals. Warhol portraits of celebs were valued because of their image not because of the person’s fame. The brand (similar to Monroe) was owning Warhol work therefore if you could afford a portrait done by Warhol or for him to do a portrait of

yourself meant that because you own this original piece you should perhaps be as famous as the work. Therefore using a celebrity to create a buzz about your work with the hope of it being selected for exhibits would change what is presumed to be cultural significant since paintings and artworks are a form of communication, more or less an outlet of what was considered important and what was highly prized at the time.

The celebrity being shown is suggesting that this person is now worth being famous (they now own this ranking, it's not a nickname anymore) since the effect of being on a canvas implies the notion that "Images can live forever and we are constantly being convinced that they are real" (Hirst interviewed by Calle, Stallabrass, 2006, p.26) If Warhol was to create portraits of non-famous individual would they be valued as the celebrity portraits well yes because the idea behind the silkscreen portraits was that Warhol was making you into a superstar. Now because these works would be exhibited all over the world they would become famous and even more valued. Since technology now ables you to look up pieces of art with ease and buy appropriated reprints means that the merit is not as what it used to be. The new path to arduous glory is having a substantial following on social media instead. The amount of money that would have been paid for the artworks help make it renown but now the amount of likes/upvotes you gain from an image you've uploaded on twitter/Instagram etc. makes you renown like the celebs used in the portraits back then as well as the famous folk of today. "It is tempting to treat Warhol as a founding figure of celebrity culture, if only because his much-quoted dictum that everyone can be famous for fifteen minutes has proven so prophetic. After all, the desire for fame now supports entire industries" (Graw, 2009, p.169).



Fig.11, *Marilyn Diptych*, Andy Warhol, 1962 (Bluttal, 2009, p.184)



Fig.12, *For men only-starring MM and BB*, Peter Philips, 1961 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.88)

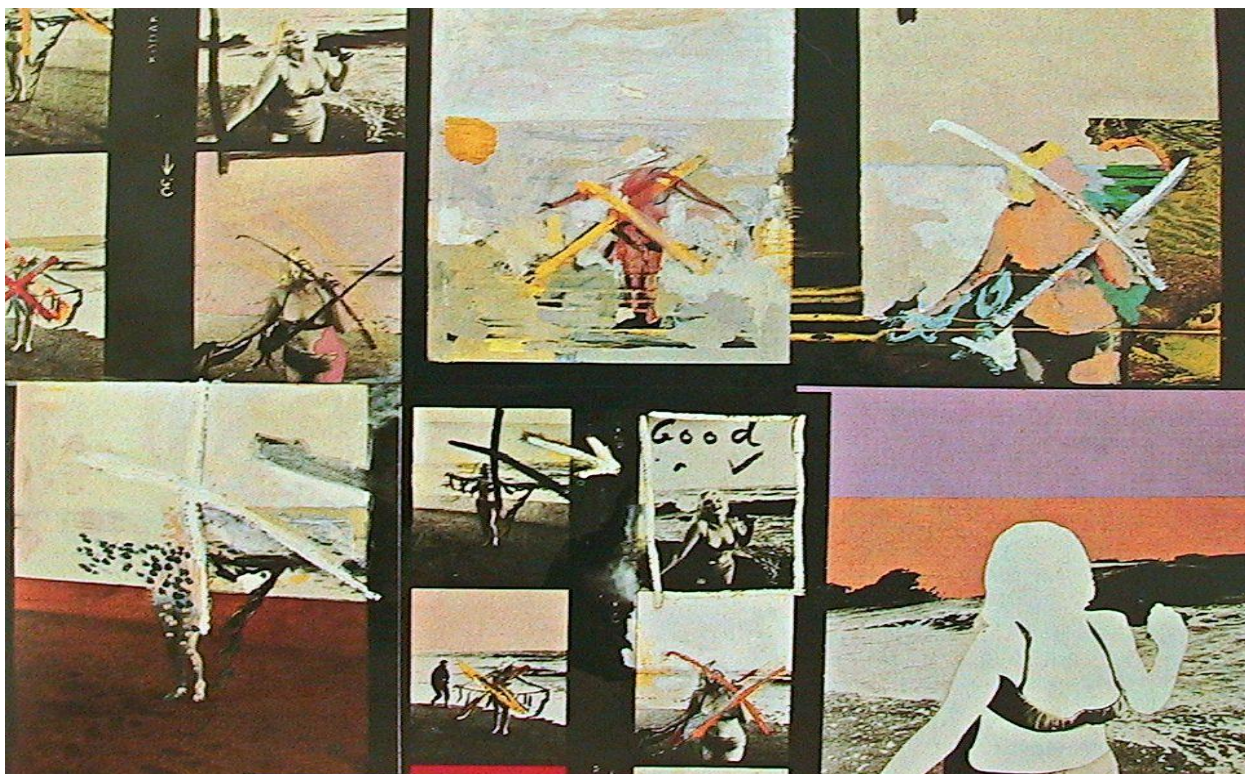


Fig.13, *My Marilyn*, Richard Hamilton, 1965 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.151)



Fig.14, *Marilyn*, Mimmo Rotella, 1962 (Francis & Foster, 2005, p.101)

Ironically to become famously renowned can take a heavy toll, leading you to be disdain with your life and what's it all about. Strangely enough, the same book that displays *Custom painting number 5* predicted another partial truth of modern-day living by showcasing a screen print made in 1966 by Edward Ruscha called *Standard Station*. The screenprint is a rework he came up with while driving along route 66 to Hollywood, in which he took photos of all the petrol/gasoline stations on the way. The foreshadowing it holds is a representation of modern living by how the hazed colours in the background can refer to the presence of social media, therefore, the fame, the Hollywood that surrounds you which is the station. The station is standard which implies normal demonstrating that even though social media/Hollywood is surrounding it like a claustrophobic claw; it doesn't have to dominate your life. "For better or worse. Paintings and prints...seem to lend themselves readily to the construction of meaning in people's lives by becoming signs of...experiences and relationships" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p.66).

But it could be assumed (an imaginative presumption) that there is a materialistic view hidden behind the hazed colours which intertwines social media, reality T.V etc. into celebrity culture. It starts to appear when your attempts of becoming famous involves buying objects, products and garments to pretend that you something special and not nothing. Consequently surrounding yourself with unnecessary things just to make other people notice you as if you were the hazed lights of fame due to how "material culture provides the ... frame through which people communicate identities" (Harrison-Moore referenced by Sofaer, 2007, p.121).



Fig.15, *Standard Station* by Edward Ruscha, 1966 (Honnef, 2015, p.73)

Obtaining a status of fame is difficult and requires a very driven mindset but what about the population of people who are famous already. Well, you can't label yourself famous, it's an opinionated description crowned upon you when people decide you are esteemed enough to bear it. Being branded famous comes from being born to a parent whose status still has some relevance or you've been lucky enough to earn it. But the crown can be laborious and can be unbeknownst poison to the owner's ego.

Fame doesn't last forever it has to be maintained by methods that are sensible or explicit so that your persona/ image are still upheld in the public eye. By being upheld for a considerate amount of time (e.g. a popular movie) comes the luscious reward of money which funds the persona lifestyle but this can change how the famous person can view the public and close ones. It can edit the person behaviour and manner by giving them the belief they are above everyone else making them pretentious and vulgar. That they only want your money turning the mind into a propensity for anxiety and that the fame needs to be abated because it's too much pressure. More

examples of how it can shape the mind are not hard to find, all is needed is to observe the behaviour of famed people.



Fig.16, *Brittany spears breakdown* (Backgrid, 2019)

Fig.17, *Shia Labeouf appearance for the Nymphomaniac premiere* (Wenn, 2014)

Such examples include the celebrities in figures.16 & 17 who were both suffering from mental health caused by the haunting of the media which provoked public breakdowns. *Unwritten* released an article defending Spears 2007 antics stating she was “Suffering in front of the world stage where everyone was amused by her antics, unaware of the demons she was battling” and “She was constantly under scrutiny for every move she made, in a fishbowl for all of us to watch. She had no privacy” (Christopoulos, 2017). Without a doubt, the same can be said for Labeouf who explains how it “robs you of your individuality and separates you... you must become an enslaved body. Just flesh — a commodity” (Setoodeh, 2015). Lévi-Strauss

(quoted in Thackara, 2015, p.166) reassures that "we all have within the call of the wild... the savage mind is our mind". We morph into savage mode unintentionally (or maybe not) when evoked by our own reactions to our thoughts/despair. The dishevelled conscious slips out into actual reality parading the rashness of an animal by acts of violence, silliness and uncontrollable behaviour. This links with the famed since an animal can be viewed in the wild, in a zoo, in a cage and a fishbowl. The public is curious and pays to observe the different habitats and take photos or even interact for their delight, not caring for the animal since it's viewed as a commodity. The public do pretty much the same to famed people and this can affect the person positive or negative such as they're grateful for the attention and time the public have given them and want to give something back but if negative they lash out becoming the animal, the savage.

By lashing out could feed the media apatite to over exaggerate the ordeal, if this does occur then it might swindle a public group to lash out back at you. Labelling you as cold-blooded/hearted someone who is selfish and deserves all the hate they get. The outcry can be brief or drawn out but eventually, it will wear off, causing the individual involved and the accusers to wonder was all this drama worth it. The heart of the matter is that when you are famous you are expected to act in a certain way since the public adores you like mortals worshipping a god, they believe in you, they gain inspiration from you, they might even fancy you and one step wrong you become the spawn of hell.

"I know not what to call this...that hurries us on to be the instruments of our own destruction, even though it be before us, and that we rush upon it with our eyes open" (Defoe, 2014, p.14). The main character of Defoe book is Robinson Crusoe who becomes stranded on an island for 28 years after ignoring advice from his father

about his rashness to head out to sea to gain his own wealth. A famous person can be isolated from their peers and find difficulty fitting in like before making him/her act as if they were on a standard island. Ironically the peers morph into natives in which the famed person fails to communicate with on encounters that were once constant and now are rare, demonstrating how he/she becomes a castaway from previous social and personal relationships. What was just described is that if their goal was to gain their own wealth by becoming part of Hollywood, achieving a high following on social media or even being on a reality show then the island is an opportunity but still "Paradise is an island. So is hell" (Schalansky, 2012, preface). When the fanaticism dream of being renowned is not what you thought it was going to be the sublime emotions become sour causing you to feel neglected, finding solitude with objects instead.

Though past relations may perish the individual may "desire to remember the good times of the past and especially to preserve the relationships experienced with people very close to oneself" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p.87). This can be done by cherishing objects that hold significant meaning rather than just by the price they were brought for originally but if being proclaimed as being above any given person, could generate a focus of how to maintain public notability by placing your attention on material items. When you have achieved notability it's hard to maintain for some and others not so much, this affects the individual's self-importance therefore ego. Your ego is your whole image, your identity, your own cathedral that you've built and want to show/welcome others into. A cathedral (the notable person) needs a priest/bishop (the ego) to spread its religious will and if unable to the cathedral would still stand beautiful but reflects an image of "error in priorities" (Awake!, 2001). Meaning if the person has created an ego in which they've

grown tired of they may act differently which could draw in criticism, described as such by the *le Monde* (French newspaper) that the church/cathedral “should invest in people...rather than in stones and decoration” (Awake!, 2001). The investing is maintaining relationships or cherishing symbolic possessions and the stones and decorations are the luxurious entity’s that surround the notable in which they can only afford therefore a form of material consumption allowing them to still be publically renowned due to the image of their wealth.

Image of their wealth relates to terminal materialism this is where “they seek personal security...happiness through possessions” (Thompson, 2012). The opposite is instrumental materialism where ones self-wealth is used to accomplish a better environment or perspective for others, done by spreading and telling of a course you believe in and want others to understand. Realistically any person could use both attitudes together or separately without even knowing but more interesting is how such celebs use either/both to remain in the starlight.

To endure in the starlight does not only mean following through on sensible or explicit methods but by making sure your personal image is relevant. You could suggest the relevancy comes from buying/obtaining certain brands and items that are not just sole or couple in capacity but in mass due to be wanting to be acknowledged as important as the brand. The occupation that has settled in the conscious of this type of beholder is that instead of consuming items for actual needs you consume to show off. Dant explains it is “clear that much consumption is...designed to show off the capacity to consume” (1999, p.19). Implying that if you buy this garment it shows your wealth, proving that you are still relevant because the famous can only afford it even if there is no actual need for it. Which can be a somewhat of a prolific problem since the proliferation taking place is not needing an object for a genuine reason but

for the sake of it justifying that “Material culture is not, apparently, about engagement with the objects themselves but about uncritically accepting ideas and values about them” (Dant, 1999, p.25).

Inciting two explanations firstly if this brand is frequently worn or owned by a certain social class based on notability then the brand's identity labels itself for the privileged elite (see figures.18 & 19), giving off the vibe it's not meant for regular citizens.

Secondly, a brand might use a celeb for promotion on adverts, billboards etc. to gain the same equivalent impressiveness that this person already has. This dispenses the belief that whoever wears or owns this is already famous or could become famous, showing how the fascination with celebs can generate a noticeable effect. Both explanations refer to terminal, not instrumental materialism; instrumental would take when the celeb announces that the profits from their collaboration with this brand will be donated to a charitable course. Although this is an admirable act it certainly would keep the celeb in the starlight, indicating how they've used it their advantage knowingly or not.



Fig.18, *The Hermes Birkin bag was on sale for £45,000* (Pledger, 2015).



Fig.19, *Kim Kardashian collection of Hermes bags* (Rainey, 2015).

The Hermes bag (figure.18) is a prime example of how art aided the rise of materialism effect on celebrity culture, explained as such "Artworks and luxury goods are growing more similar, making it difficult to distinguish between them" and this gives the bag "an aura of mega-exclusivity, which seems to be inspired by the artwork's promise of originality" (Graw, 2009, p.136). You can see in figure.19 Kim Kardashian is suggested to be part of the mega –exclusive for owning this bag but since she is relevant, for nothing worth being relevant for (due to her reality show) suggest her relevancy is determined by her image and not her ability's. This implies the notion of how you are perceived is valued more than what you've done because if you can place and show such original artwork/ luxury goods around you in various promotional platforms makes an illusion that you are part of the credibility being presented. Explained by Gibson who states "the art gallery has become a showcase for fashion...the artworks on show are usually obscured by the fashionable faces around them" (2013, p.171). Meaning the change in cultural significance impacted by Warhol's creation of celeb silkscreens has once again changed with the sign of

the times. This is because the fashionable faces like Kim Kardashian most likely use social media if they were to attend an opening of an art exhibit for their interest or invite this would draw in media attention due to their presence on networks like Twitter or Instagram. Snapping a photo of their presence is the number one priority not the art on show. It can now be assumed the new pop art (a derivative from popular) is the personages that are renowned in the public domain.

Therefore their creditability has already been achieved, now the numerous photos taken of them are a catalogue of their acquired status. If someone wants to become renowned they can take their own photos and upload them online with the hope they gain some attention like the already famous. But in the endless web of social media this could never happen, you need the public to take note of you. To grab their attention requires something more since “whatever is exceptional, bizarre, or conspicuous, or whatever departs from the customary norm, exercises a peculiar charm” (Simmel quoted by Dant, 1999, p.88). Even so, this person is branching out on their own to acquire a status of fame by restyling a garment for example, but the floods of photos can drown this attempt. To make sure they can stay afloat (ever-present on device screens) they need a constant feed of photos to show their worth. But this worth has no actual value, it may have digital value (likes, upvotes) but its value of purpose is fig mental.

The constant feed of photos can't be the same it needs something new each time something fresh, unseen now revealed, charming, thought-provoking, attention-drawing etc. explained by S. Sontag with the following “To consume means to burn, to use up-and, therefore, to need to be replenished. As we make images and consume them, we need still more images; and still more” (Evans & Hall, 2010, p.93). The means of doing so needs additional items that can confirm the individual

transition into the new superstar/VIP they desire to be so much. But the items are just for the photos not for anything else. Meaning the purpose of consumption has no merit. They justify their participating in materialism as a form authorisation into the path of stardom.

Conclusion

The materialism of celebrity culture that transpires in modern times began with the use of celebrity/ persona with credibility on canvases that were praised enough to be exhibited. This enabled the change of what is regarded as important since art is a form of communion because it is "identified as the most persistent and indissoluble connections... between the past and present" (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013, p.129). Next, the celebs become more fascinating than their used imagery in pop art, they became living, breathing, moving art. When Keith Haring first used Grace Jones body as a canvas (commissioned by Warhol) in 1984 for a series of collaboration shows just how the obsession with fame started to happen since cultural significance and reality relevant started to merge (figure.20)



Fig.20, *Jones body painted by Haring*, taken by Robert Mapplethorpe, 1984 (Dib, 2017)

The art in galleries was now less impressive, the celebs themselves were becoming more fascinating. Yet a change happened again with reality TV since it more or less showed similar traits between these highly esteem folk and the not so rest of society. Which accumulated in using regular people with talent in competition reality shows which became as popular as the celeb reality shows. Alas, the popularity of these shows started to become dismal in the 2010s since the shows such as Love Island proved the point of how anyone can become famous in these days since the cultural significance and reality relevant are now blurred and it's not clear what is vice versa.

There now exists the same acceptance for people who are famous, who think they are famous and who want to be famous as actually being worth famous. What conspired this to happen is how the photos and images on social media portray a deceitful message of fraudulent attempts of becoming famous since you are showing a collection of luxury goods that may never be used. Yet "The Stars of consumption" (Debord, 2014, p.61) – celebs, do the same to remind themselves and others that they are actually still famous. Contributing or even inventing the materialistic link between the obsession with fame and celebrity culture, demonstration Francastel prediction of how "the goal of representation will be appearance, and no longer meaning" (Cited by Evans & Hall, 2010, p.25).

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