

**THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA MINISTRY OF HIGHER
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UNIVERSITE
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis
MOSTAGANEM

***Colored Women Beauty Rebellion in the 21th century.
Celebrating Dark Skin Beauty in Maya Angelou's
"Phenomenal Woman"1995.***

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Master in Literature and
Interdisciplinary Approaches**

SUBMITTED BY

BENMAGHNIA KAMAR

Members of the Board:

Chair: MRS BENSTAALI LEILA

Supervisor: MRS GHERNOUT SOUMIA

Examiner: MR TEGUIA CHERIF

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I. Dedication

To my family, friends, and my passing grandmother who wished to see me graduate this year

But her candle melted too soon.

I dedicate this dissertation to my dear husband who stood by me and helped me a lot with my

Research.

To my mother in law who's an African American woman and experienced most of the events I mentioned in my research

To all women out there who wake up every morning with the idea of changing the world.

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Abstract

This research is a chronological order of all the events which marked all the huge steps of colored women in the beauty and fashion field. From being ignored due to their physical appearance and skin color in the fashion industry Their struggles in finding the right cosmetics as the perfect foundation shade for their skin tone or the right hair conditioner and how they rebelled and sparked a spot for their own in the beauty industry for their own cosmetics products. This dissertation holds a new term of “black face fishing” which determine a new phenomenal faced by black women in the beauty industry and how they react to it in social media. Social media plays a huge role in manipulating people’s minds on beauty standards and how some beauty experts use black women features to create a new version of mixed descent beauty the “ Black Barbie” which many colored women don’t appreciate and rebel against it .The rebellion of African American women in many domains including the beauty field has went beyond viral into creating real businesses and owning brands, which turned them into billionaires in the United States of America and sparked a whole flame in the feminist and right activists world in supporting black women movements and paths to success and being an inspiration to all women from different ethnic groups. I finally rely all my research point of views on a unique work of art, a masterpiece written by a famous right women movement activist, a poet, a true diva Maya Angelou whose poem “Phenomenal woman” celebrates female power.

Keywords: Colored Women, Female Power, Beauty, Cosmetics.

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General introduction

Amid the harsh repression of slavery, Americans of African descent, and particularly black women, managed sometimes at their own peril to preserve the culture of their ancestry and articulate both their struggles and hopes in their own words and images. My research focuses on the beauty field achievements made by African American women and their long path into discovering their identity which been trampled over the time, these women have put so much efforts in all domains in order to prove a point, which is that **THEY MATTER** despite their skin color, despite their shapes and looks they deserve a spot and a loud voice in the society.

For years, hair and makeup products tended to exclude women of color from the beauty world, it is both paramount and, sadly, infrequent that true inclusiveness used to exist in the fashion industry, but when women of color stood for themselves and started makeup lines and amazing cosmetics products, they have rose from the ashes of racism and segregation to set sparks in not only cosmetology and beauty products but also in business and management, the queen of this massive revolution, the pioneer Madame C.J Walker who encouraged African American women to step up and raise their voice and work hard to sell products and to be equal to European women.

There for the main objective of this research is to explore how these women managed to prosper and climb the ladder of achievements above all the issues they have faced. I put shade on a new phenomenon also faced by colored women which is the “Black fishing” what is meant by black fishing and why do European women use it? The purpose behind it and the status of colored women from this what so called “Trend”. “Black fishing” is the new born of “blackface” the only difference is that it is used more by women than men. It is when none black women use darker foundation shade and transform their physical features like plumping their lips to look black. The main question is why do these women want enormously to appear black? Simply because when u mix coffee and milk together you get a better taste, it is to manipulate their audience minds in their social media platforms and mislead them to something they are not and getting all the gratitude of social media beauty pages and influence young women to look like them while African American beauties are put aside the beauty world and these counterfeits are taking the lead. Black women don’t appreciate the black fishes because it is culturally appropriating their legacy.

First of all, in the first chapter I start by giving a notion on the background history of cosmetics, next I took as an example the pioneer Madame

C.J walker the first one who invented a line of hair care products in 1905 after suffering from hair loss. It was so successful that she was the first African-American woman to become a self-made millionaire, later I introduce colored women struggles in finding their foundation shades even the issues which these women faced by not finding their sport and feeling left out from the beauty and fashion industry, resulting psychological problems for these women, feeling like they are not good enough, not pretty enough to suit in a society built up on certain beauty standards created by white folks. Moreover, in the second chapter I shade a light on how media influences women on what is beautiful and what is not, there are many incredible black women who have changed the beauty industry for the better from makeup artists to entrepreneurs to scientists.

In addition the revolution and rebellion of these women made history and it is still making huge changes, taking some influencers as example Rihanna who made her own makeup line which changed the world of beauty, her makeup line includes 40 foundation shades and knew an extraordinary success because it provided black women what they were lacking.

Later on I introduce a new problematic faced by women of color, the dilemma appeared in the twenty one century which is the” black face fishing” the term looks familial because it holds the two words Black and face Which is a cultural appropriation made by white people to mock black people during the Jim Crow era of segregation, which marked the black people history in America and pained them psychologically and surprisingly recently white women on social media be using the black face to their profits, since blackness became the new fashion face in the runways thanks to hip hop and rap music. White women wanted to look black plumping their lips and injecting themselves with silicone so they appear black on social media and misinterpreting themselves to a race they do not belong too and this dilemma set fires of arguments on social media between colored women and these so called “Blackface fishing women” on Instagram and Twitter .

The last thing I spotted the light on is that the industry ought to acknowledge the effort done by women of color and celebrate their beauty without manipulating it, trying to whitening it, or creating figures of beauty of mixed descents and praising their fabricate-beauty in magazines embracing a whole race’s efforts because it would look racist.

Finally, the last chapter institutes a poem written by Maya Angelou about self-love and acceptance. Its concept is to cherish one body the way it is. It is perfect for me because it holds the point of view about my research which is to celebrate the beauty of women in general without separating them into ethnical groups, Caucasian, or mulatto we all are beautiful.

I Chapter One

African American Women in the Beauty Field (1923 – 2000)

I. Introduction

This chapter includes the most common reasons of colored women issues in the United States in the beauty field dealing with cosmetics and hair products.

Starting with introducing what is cosmetics and what is African American cosmetics in another term « nigro cosmetics » and the issues of some of the greatest colored women beauty influencers issues facing the beauty industry field in creating their own brand for nigro hair I took as an example Madame C.J Walker as a brief notion from the history of black women achievements in the beauty industry.

Finally I tackle the present issues for African American women dealing with cosmetics products.

I1-history of cosmetics

Definition of cosmetics

Preparations applied externally to change or enhance the beauty of skin, hair, nails, lips, and eyes. (Stylish Magazine 03)

Noted that “the history of cosmetics is an important part of how color is used to adorn the body in modern society” (Draelos 2001)

Draelos continued: The use of eyelid cosmetics was recorded as early as 4000 BC. Green powder made from malachite was heavily applied to both the upper and lower eyelids, accompanied by dark kohl eyeliner paste composed of powdered antimony, burnt almonds, black copper oxide, and brown clay ocher.

. In Japan, lipstick was made of crushed petals of safflower which was used to paint the eyebrows and edges of women’s eyes and lips (Chaudhri & Jain 03)

Rice powder was used for coloring of the face and back. In the traditional culture of Japan, women having whitened skin were common.

In the ancient Egyptian period, cosmetics such as face paints, oils, solids, and fats (ointments) all were considered as cosmetics for the skin (Lucas 02).

The ancient Egyptians took great pride in their appearance and in cleanliness (Chaudhri & Jain 2009).

For centuries, cosmetics were applied as part of a variety of ceremonies and rituals. For instance, during the Middle Ages in Europe, economic status determined how much time a person had to spend outdoors. People in the lower classes had to work outdoors, whereas those in the upper classes had more leisure time and stayed indoors more, which kept their skin pale and unexposed to the sun (Chaudhri & Jain 02).

Thus, European American men and women used white powder on their body to appear more aristocratic (Chaudhri & Jain 04). According to Wells and Lubowe, the first true facial foundation was developed in 1936 by Max Factor as a cake makeup that was widely used by women. This product added facial color as well as a velvety look. Since that time, vast arrays of cosmetics lines have been expanded tremendously. Facial foundation is a popular facial cosmetic with the greatest impact on the health of the skin (Chaudhri 2009).

I2- African American women cosmetics

The Jim Crow era has known some African American female entrepreneurs and they were successful, despite racial segregation and economic discrimination (Willet 20). Around the beginning of the 20th century, the beauty pioneers Annie Turnbo and Madam C. J. Walker paved the way for companies like Avon and Mary Kay cosmetics (Willet 2010). Annie Turnbo and Madam C. J. Walker created hair supplies and creams so that African American women too can have supplies to make their hair and skin beautiful.

These women developed a hair product used to straighten African American hair without damaging the 10 hair. Annie Turnbo then created her own hair line of beauty products for African American women (Willet 50).

However, as a Black woman, Turnbo was denied access to regular distribution channels. Turnbo and her assistants decided to sell her products door to door (Lee22) to introduce consumers to her products. For effective promotion, advertisements were displayed in African America newspapers, and agents were hired and trained to serve as local sales associates (Willet 201).

During this period, Turnbo hair products sales grew successfully and expanded nationally (Willet 204). The Black-owned company did not include many cosmetics products but was able to successfully market face powder in darker shades Madam C. J. Walker created many beauty and hair care products for African American women. Walker developed her own scalp conditioner and healing treatment formula called “Madam Walker’s Wonderful Hair Grower” for African American women who were suffering from hair loss. Moreover, with the advertising knowledge of her husband Charles Joseph Walker, she was able to market her products through her home based business. Walker traveled throughout the South and Southeast demonstrating to African American women door-to-door (Willet, 2010).

In the 1920s Walker offered face powder and skin care products to drugstores for sale to African American women. During that time controversy was stimulated because many companies decided to sell skin bleachers to consumers to have lighter skin tones. Walker declined to market any skin bleaching products within her company. However, skin bleaching products became popular after her death in the 1930s (Willet 69)

By the early 20th century many Black-owned companies manufactured skin-bleaching creams, but hardly any advertised them. However, according to Willet, White-owned 11 manufacturing companies did display crude images of such products such as women’s faces split in half, one side black and one side white. Nevertheless, during the 1920s and 1930s more sophisticated African American beauty industry advertisements were evident in chain stores, improving perceptions of race and promoting positive self-images to encourage increased social mobility (Lee ,Willet 54).

Commercial hair and cosmetics products became more common in women’s lives. These sophisticated advertisements connected beauty products to female popularity, glamour, and romantic status throughout this process, the African American beauty industry continued to grow successfully and expand product lines (Willet 70).

13- Madame C.J Walker a pioneer in the black beauty industry

In 1982 Madame C.J Walker, was in the "Lost Women" category of a women's magazine that marked quite a comedown for Mrs. Walker, who founded a hair care business that made her the country's first self-made female millionaire "the world's

wealthiest colored woman, the foremost manufacturer and philanthropist of her race", as one newspaper described her when she died in 1919. To this day, Madam C.J Walker products can be purchased in stores an unlikely legacy for a woman who toiled in poverty for decades and whose parents had been enslaved. But for many years Madam Walker was just a little footnote in history. As a woman who made hair care products, she was really consigned to something trivial," says Ms Bundles, who published the first full-length biography of Mrs. Walker.

Now, however, Ms.Walker is "having a moment", as Ms Bundles put it in a recent blog post. Her story can be found in some 200 books, she's been featured in several recent museum exhibits, including at the Smithsonian in Washington DC, and New York named a street in her honor last year. In March, Netflix released Self-made, a four-part series starring Octavia Spencer about her life and business, inspiring another publicity blitz - and the re-issuing of Ms Bundles' biography.

Meanwhile, her brand has been revived by Unilever subsidiary Sundial Brands, known for its Shea Moisture hair products, which bought the rights in 2013. The foundation started by Sundial's founder, Richelieu Dennis, has also bought her 34-room New York mansion, Villa Lewaro, with plans to turn it into a think-tank for black women entrepreneurs.

So much of her story is unfortunately still timely," says Elle Johnson, one of the writers of the Netflix series, of the buzz. "When I look at her life and what she accomplished, I can't help but be amazed.

Born in Louisiana in 1867 as Sarah Breedlove, Mrs. Walker was orphaned at age seven and a widowed mother by 20. Her struggles with hair loss - a common problem at the time due to infrequent washing - inspired her to start her business, the Madam CJ Walker Manufacturing Co in 1906, which sold a "treatment" that included scalp massage and a special ointment.(Famous Figures 02)

By 1916, she employed more than 10,000 agents and ran a network of schools that trained women to enter the hair industry - one of the few ways outside of domestic work that black women could make money at that time. (Famous Figures 03)

I had little or no opportunity when I started out in life . . . I had to make my own living and my own opportunity," she later recounted, according to Ms Bundles' biography. "But I made it. That is why I want to say to every Negro woman present, don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come, but you have to get up and make them! (Angelou 20)

A frequent public speaker, Mrs. Walker also spoke out on political issues like lynching and described the mission of her company in terms of female empowerment. Her obituaries recognized her for her philanthropy as well as her riches. (Famous Figures 03)

"Today we talk a lot about social entrepreneurship and businesses having a double bottom line or triple bottom line, [maximizing social and environmental good as well as profits]," says Tyrone Freeman, a professor of philanthropic studies at Indiana University, whose book about Mrs. Walker's charitable work is due out this fall. "I see Walker doing these 100 years ago."

Ms Asher says Mrs. Walker's achievements made her a "folk hero" for generations of black women even if she was often associated, incorrectly, with inventing the hot comb, a hair straightener. But although her rags-to-riches tale seems made for the movies, until recently it was hard to get Hollywood to buy into stories focused on black stars, Ms Asher says, Now, at a time when America's economic divides are growing wider, racial and gender gaps are in the spotlight, and the power wielded by the country's business elite, through their companies and their philanthropy, is under scrutiny, the questions raised by her story resonate.

"This is a story about female entrepreneurship and the American dream and specifically the black American dream," she says.

"The more we learn about history, about this time period, will help us get through the time period we're currently struggling in right now."

But Mrs. Walker's story is compelling in her own right, she adds. "The example of that resilience and that determination and ambition really should be an inspiration to us all."

I4- African American women issues in the present day

On any given day of watching television or looking through magazines, African American women face countless commercials of cosmetics advertisements from different companies promoting a new line of make-up, banishing-creams that reduce appearance of dark spots, anti-wrinkle creams that minimize the appearance of wrinkles, skin firming lotions, hair spray, hair dyes, hair relaxers, and many more beauty products directed towards women (Swain12).

In 2009, Essence magazine's Smart Beauty panel explored African American women's shopping experiences within the prestige beauty market (Smith 01).

One study by the Smart Beauty panel found that African American women spent \$7.5 billion on beauty products each year, but when it comes to cosmetics, 80% more money was spent than women felt they should due to the fact that African American women often need to try out products first to find the right color, undertones, and pigments to match their skin color appropriately (Smith 09).

The beauty products African American women looked for were brands they could trust featuring high quality ingredients and products that reflected their personality (Smith, 2009). In addition, African American women were more likely to purchase products from inspirational labels such as Chanel and Versace, rather than purchase brands that were linked with celebrities (Smith10).

Make-up artist Sam Fine discussed issues African Americans face when looking for the right cosmetics products: "African American women are looking for affirmations of their own beauty through seeing spokespersons or models of color in ad campaigns for beauty products. One area that was void of faces of color was anti-aging products" (Smith 6).

Also noted that older African American women are 5 "left out" by the beauty industry: "There's no face of aging in the African American community" (Smith 7).

An examination of African American women's use of style in general was found in a landmark study of adolescent girls by (Parker et al 01).

They found that African American girls' personal style involved making a statement and having a unique presence. Parker et al. Indicated that African American girls involved in style, regardless of body type, frequently received positive

compliments from African American boys, family members, and friends about “looking good” and “having a going on.” This local and direct personal support may enhance feelings about appearance and self-esteem and encourage adolescent African American girls to experiment with apparel and cosmetics. Extensive research has been done on how mainstream beauty standards have impact on White women (Swain 12).

However, Duke conducted a study of Black and White girl’s views of teen magazines. A total of sixteen African American and ten European American teen girls participated in interviews that traced their interpretations of the magazines. Duke found that the African American girls felt that mainstream teen magazines seemed to overlook their fundamentals concerns and interests and assumed that White dominance is normal and accepted throughout the mainstream media.

The African American girls did not feel that the clothing, cosmetics, and grooming products advertised or discussed in the mainstream magazines fit their preferences or needs.

Parker described that the ideal of beauty in mainstream U.S. society has been defined to a great extent as White, tall, thin, high cheek bones, and naturally pretty. The mainstream beauty ideal primarily fits White characteristics, which makes perceived beauty even more unachievable for Black women (“Beauty Redefined 11).

According to Swain, while many European American women have fallen short of those standards of beauty, African American women are often “left out” from the ideal beauty standard.

Hill found that African American men and African American women judged the attractiveness of women based on the lightness of their skin. Hill’s study indicated that photographs of African American women with fair skin were rated the highest in attractiveness and those who were darker were given low ratings on attractiveness. However, these standards of beauty were more strongly held by the African American women more than by the men.

Falconer and Neville surveyed African American women at a historically Black college and found that African American women who were content with their skin color had a more positive perception of their appearance than did African American women who are less content with their skin color.

Ironically, some women may feel offended by what Jones and Shorter-Gooden calls the lily complex: “the belief that the only way to be beautiful is to look as close to “white” as possible” (177). For example, Beyonce, Queen Latifah, and many more mainstream media representations of African American women have become overwhelmingly “whitewashed”—a transformation that results in lighter skin color, lighter makeup, straight long hair, and lighter eyes. Furthermore, when African American women are represented as a beauty icon in the media, most noticeably, they fit the White ideal, with lighter skin color and “ideal” White facial features as well as thinness (Beauty Redefined 20).

Finding images of dark African American women has become impossible in the mainstream media (Beauty Redefined 21).

I-Conclusion:

Despite the issues colored women have faced in order to find a clear spot in the beauty industry, they have managed to create brands to resemble their skin tone and hair products which suits their hair nature, eventhough it was a bit challenging, these women did not stop at the red lines and they stepped up into the industry fearlessly .

II Chapter two

Black Women Redefining the Beauty Industry

II.2 Introduction

This chapter includes a new dilemma faced by women of color in the beauty industry and it's the main concern of my dissertation, I want the readers to know that this problematic "blackface fishing" is not new as I thought it was when I first discovered it. This phenomenon has a huge relationship between Blackface some researchers in African American culture call it "the new born of Blackface". It's dedicated to women of color development in the fashion and beauty industry, from being neglected and put aside for not fitting the beauty standards to being copied and mimicked in order to fit the new fashion and beauty Ideals of the twenty one century "the BlackBarbie" creation.

II 1- Media and Ideal Beauty Socialization

In America, women continuously look for ways to change their appearance to fit the American ideal of beauty, images of which including clear skin, flushed cheeks, blue eyes and pouty red lipssaturate media advertisements (Poran 23). Idealized images portrayed in media are different from the way women view themselves and other real women. Beauty pageants are an example of the media using cultural ideals to socialize young women by showing them limited types of feminine beauty schemas presented as ideal beauty (Lynch 2).

In beauty pageants, young women are made to appear alluring with makeup, high heels, long flowing hair, and bathing suits as they walk around the stage to be judged by others (Freedman 86). Beauty pageants have been a part of American culture for many decades. The Miss America Pageant started in 1921 as a "bathing beauty" contest (Copeland & Cowen 03). Beauty pageant contestants are considered to be like Barbie dolls, with perfect proportions and flawless makeup. Indeed, the media increasingly manipulates the ideals for women's appearance (Lynch, 20). When women compare themselves with idealized media images, it can have a positive or negative effect on women's perception of their own female beauty (Jones & Buckingham, Monro & Huon 33).

The media can have positive effect on how some women perceive their own identity. For example, a woman who feels she is in control of herself and who is proud of her own body image and appearance may feel that the media exemplifies those

feelings within her (“Body Image”12). In research studies, African American women have been found to be comfortable with their own body types and self-images (Martin & Baugh 11).

However, there are 14 conflicting results. Since slavery, the African American community has been judged as not meeting physical appearance norms in the United States. This has created a dynamic where some African American women become dissatisfied with their physical appearance and choose to alter that appearance to reach what is considered society’s view of beauty (Martin & Baugh 20). For instance, Poran provided direct evidence of how African American women have been negatively influenced by the mainstream media’s standards of beauty. Some of these examples include pressuring African American women to become thinner, to fit the preferences imbedded in European American men’s standards for women’s attractiveness, and creating dissension among communities of African American women about what is appropriate and attractive. Because the mainstream media has promoted one standard of beauty, Poran suggested that African American women are not completely protected by the “Black Culture” from negative body images. While some research has found more positive body satisfaction among African American girls and women in comparison to European American girls and women, the reasons for satisfaction and extent that it shapes appearance concerns and behaviors are not well understood. (Parker10)

II 2-African American Women Rebellion in the Beauty Field

The beauty industry is changing and colored women are taking the lead this time. For decades the beauty industry has neglected women of color as consumers but Rihanna new makeup line which goes by Fenty Beauty has been an instant success and is not only popular because of the celebrity’s name Rihanna. Fenty beauty carries a wide range of foundations fourteen shades to be exact which has the beauty industry mind blown.

Cosmetics and beauty industry as a whole, has a long history of creating products that did not match deeper-toned people of color. There are a number of factors that have lead many mainstream beauty companies to have a narrow selection for people of color and not all of those reasons are rooted in product development. With Fenty Beauty, Rihanna is showing the industry that it’s worth investing money and time into creating nuanced products beyond the ranges of ivory, beige, and tan. Many other

cosmetics brands as Makeup Forever, Loreal and Maybelline attempted to create darker shades in foundations playing with pigments but they created only medium colour shades not so deep to match darker skin colors and even the medium deep skin foundation colors didnt last in the markets due to the consumers. (L.A girl Magazine 20)

Fenty Beauty came to praise and help colored women in purshasing the right foundation shade without issues and helping them to gain their self-confidence and low down their insecurities in the beauty world which I find it amazing. Since the invetion of Fenty beauty brand colored women are stepping up to the world with more confidence and more hunger for success. People would think espacially men that makeup is just playing with cosmetic products and painting faces, which women don't really need but it is false. Makeup plays a huge role nowadays it became an art, a passion, a body language to veil negative emotions and vend positive ones.

Colored women have known many difficulties in finding themselves in the beauty spot and when they finally did they fired up in business and became famous in the beauty world, making their own African American beauty brands in cosmetics, hair products, makeup they became a fashion hit in the united states many modeling and fashion industries started emprazing black beauties without the need to fabricate their photos or air brush their figures. Black women as they are with their big lips glass hour body shapes and their afro hair which representes more than just a hair style , I have read in many articl,books written by African American writers or fiminists their journies in accepting their hair nature and their struggle in understanding it. And how they figured out that their hair holds a whole history and finally learning to make it a part of their legecy and personality which make them different from other races. Rihanna, Beyonce, Oprah Winfery and many powerful black women influencers stepped up in the media field as black women celebrities and helped to influence many women in America and even world wide. Success is a powerful weapon that skin color cannot defeat. After the appearance of the black beauty in the fashion industry many television celebrities as the Kardashians took colored women as their icons. Black women have attained their goal which was being respected and accepted by other races as lives which matters and which can make wonders.(Black LivesMatter 20)

II-4 Cultural Appropriation

Appropriation has been a tool of Western society since the age of colonization, and is comprised of the acts of taking land, bodies, resources, and cultures, and presenting them as one's own. This strategy has provided a distinct advantage to colonizers and their descendants, who continue to benefit to this day. The privileged group's experience is written into laws and institutions, all containing concealed obstacles that hinder the success of subordinated demographics. Written into the subtext of these laws and policies are methods that prevent minorities from thriving in school or work or receiving fair treatment in the criminal justice system. Despite the struggle of these groups to succeed in this stratified society, they are still able to create one thing that the majority population continues to try to take from them: culture. Minorities' cultures are repeatedly imitated by the majority population, but are rarely given any credit, or even acknowledgment for what was taken from them.¹ In fact, white people's treatment of, in this case, black women compared to their "appreciation" of black culture demonstrates why cultural appropriation is a form of oppression used to exert dominance over black women. (Danielle 01)

Cultural appropriation is described as the process of adopting an aspect of another culture and presenting it as one's own and is usually received by the public as more acceptable than its original use by its creators. This is increasingly common with many facets of black culture, including hairstyles, music, dancing, and clothing. One notorious example of cultural appropriation appears in the fashion industry's scouting practices for new 'trends', which frequently contributes to the detriment of black women. Unfortunately, the line between appreciation and appropriation becomes apparent when what is considered 'unprofessional' or 'unacceptable' on a black woman is celebrated when worn by a white person. This exclusion of black women from the culture that they cultivate, and from whatever profits it may yield, is a means of oppression exerted by the dominant class. The experience of black women at the hands of their oppressors is particularly harsh, due to the interlocking nature of oppression. Because of their gender, as well as their race, black women find themselves on the disadvantaged end of the social spectrum. They are neither white nor male, making it more difficult for them to find common ground and therefore earn favour with the prevailing white patriarchy. This lack of commonality makes black women the most significant opposition to modern patriarchy, which primarily benefits white men,

because they have the least to gain and the most to lose.² White men attempt to extinguish this threat by inventing negative stereotypes targeting black women in order to create and perpetuate a false public perception of them.³ Black women resist these stereotypes by using their culture for self-definition and self-valuation.⁴ For example, a common stereotype of black women is that they dance more provocatively than women of other races, implying sexual promiscuity. However, what is provocative is relative across cultures. What may appear provocative to some is considered wholesome in its culture of origin. This is demonstrated during Caribana, which is a Caribbean festival in Toronto which celebrates said ‘provocative’ dancing and other aspects of Caribbean culture. Nurturing their culture allows them to express and define their identities independently of what negative features are being attributed to them. This is why cultural appropriation is particularly destructive when perpetrated against black women; it belittles a means of empowerment which protects them from attempts to assign them a false and unsavoury identity. (Daniele 02). Appropriating black women’s culture relegates them to the status of outsider within because it seizes something they created, and alienates them from it, making them irrelevant to their surroundings. This is a symptom of oppression because it dehumanizes its victims and illegitimizes their experience, attempting to invalidate their oppression and quell any potential for social rebellion. Another reason why cultural appropriation is a form of oppression is because it is divisive and perpetuates unequal power dynamics. Audre Lorde refers to this as a “divide and conquer” approach, which is often employed by the colonizers to ensure their continued control.

II-3 Blackface

According to Newyork magazine many African American rappers, celebrities mulattos are accused of black face fishing, light skin and dark skin camera big shots fall into conflicts and sometimes fights about this issues which is not recent because the term black face is a dark mark in the history of black people history in the United States and it is still considered as a soft spot for many african american people due to the harsh circumstances their incestors lived back then.

Blackface definition

According to Urban dictionary Blackface is the practice of non-Black people darkening their skin in deliberate attempts to impersonate Black people.

Blackface has a history that is likely as old as transatlantic slavery; it exploded as a form of racist white entertainment in the United States in the 1820s with the first minstrel shows. Minstrel performers, pretending to be Black, engaged in borrowed and bastardized forms of Black music and dance to entertain their audiences. (Black Lives Matter 20)

By the 1850s, Black minstrel troupes emerged and Black performers performed in blackface in fraught attempts to re-appropriate their cultural forms and profit from them as their white counterparts did. (S. Howard 23)

Today's blackface wearers may claim they don't believe in the biological inferiority of Black people, but their insistence on dark makeup in these portrayals, especially since the makeup job is usually deliberately unrealistic, is evidence of their ongoing, racist over-assessment of the significance of skin colour differences. In this way, blackface is dehumanizing. Second, blackface reinscribes the relations of slavery in the ways that it involves the putting on and taking off of blackness. It makes the Black body property to be appropriated and discarded at will. (Black Lives Matter 23)

This is exactly what African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass meant when he said that Blackface minstrels were, in his opinion, "*the filthy scum of white society*, who have stolen from us a complexion denied them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow citizens."

Douglass's ideas also draw attention to the extractive capitalist relations that surround blackface. By impersonating Black people, their dress, their music and their dance (however bastardized), white performers were able to make money doing the things that Black people themselves were unable to make a living doing. Even when Black minstrel troupes emerged, they were not paid as well as white minstrels. (BLM 20)

Nowadays, this economic inequality is evident wherever production companies opt to use white characters in blackface to play Black people rather than hire Black actors. Historian Dale Cockrell once noted that poor and working-class whites who felt

“squeezed politically, economically, and socially from the top, but also from the bottom, invented minstrelsy” as a way of expressing the oppression that marked being members of the majority, but outside of the white norm. Minstrelsy, comedic performances of “blackness” by whites in exaggerated costumes and make-up, cannot be separated fully from the racial derision and stereotyping at its core. By distorting the features and culture of African Americans including their looks, language, dance, deportment, and character white Americans were able to codify *whiteness* across class and geopolitical lines as its antithesis.

The first minstrel shows were performed in 1830s New York by white performers with blackened faces (most used burnt cork or shoe polish) and tattered clothing that imitated and mimicked enslaved Africans on Southern plantations. These performances characterized blacks as lazy, ignorant, superstitious, hypersexual, and prone to thievery and cowardice. Thomas Dartmouth Rice, known as the “Father of Minstrelsy,” developed the first popularly known blackface character, “Jim Crow” in 1830. By 1845, the popularity of the minstrel had spawned an entertainment subindustry, manufacturing songs and sheet music, makeup, costumes, as well as a ready-set of stereotypes upon which to build new performances. (BLM 30)

Blackface performances grew particularly popular between the end of the Civil War and the turn-of-the century in Northern and Midwestern cities, where regular interaction with African Americans was limited. White racial animus grew following Emancipation when antebellum stereotypes collided with actual African Americans and their demands for full citizenship including the right to vote. The influence of minstrelsy and racial stereotyping on American society cannot be overstated. New media ushered minstrel performances from the stage, across radio and television airwaves, and into theaters. Popular American actors, including Shirley Temple, Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney donned blackface, bridging the minstrel performance across generations, and making blackface (racial parody, and stereotypes) a family amusement. (BLM 35)

Blackface and the codifying of Blackness language, movement, deportment, and character as caricature persist through mass media and in public performances today. In addition to the increased popularity of “Black” Halloween costumes, colleges and universities across the country continue to battle against student and professor Blackface

performances. In each instance, those facing scrutiny for blackface performances insist no malice or racial hatred was intended.

II-4 “BlackFishing” in the Beauty Industry

According to the Urban Dictionary “BlackFishing” is commonly perpetrated by females of European race (white) which involves artificial tanning (spray tanning and tanning booths) and using makeup to manipulate facial features in order to appear to have some type of Black African ancestry. The general point of blackfishing is for a female of European descent to appear of African. Some consider it to be equivalent to modern day “black face” because it capitalizes off the looks of historically oppressed groups of people by people who come from more privileged backgrounds. (Urban Dictionary)

“Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” But what happens when imitation appears to cross into cultural appropriation? (Deja 01). According to Vogue Magazine on Blackface. An article written by Deja a colored woman and a journalist recently. Many women on social media are Black Fishing. I took as an example a famous one Emma Hallberg . Emma is actually a white girl I follow on Social Media whom I thought is a lightskin black girl but it wasn’t the case. Emma is pure white European from Sweden.

Deja tells *Teen Vogue* she was stunned when she received an image from one of her followers of Emma looking significantly lighter and paler than she appears on Instagram. “I wasn't really mad, I was just kind of shocked because this girl genuinely looks like a mixed black person,” Deja told *Teen Vogue* over the phone. “It was just kind of annoying because she's gotten so Instagram famous off what black people have. Not even black people get the same amount of attention she's getting.” They put themselves out there and have all of these followers thinking they’re someone that they’re not,” Gaines said. “It’s so deeply rooted in white privilege because they can take up a space that an actual black woman could have had. Emma told *Teen Vogue* in an email. “My goal and intention is to look like myself and to share my makeup looks and outfits. My intentions have never been to look like a black woman.” But women of color don’t believe her.

According to “The Real Dayshow” Lara Johnson claims “The girl is white obviously, she is not taking any pictures in her white skin, and she is making money taking pictures in her tanned Blackface skin”.

“The products and promotions women like Hallberg receive from social media should be going to actual black women”Hart Laments. “People were able to contort their body landscapes into the way that black women look, and take what they think are the most beautiful parts and not respect the full black woman,” Gaines said. “The beauty aesthetic” seen with blackfishing is what Stanley calls the Barbie version of black identity. It doesn’t include dark skin, kinky hair or full waistlines, she commented.

II-5 Barbie Version of Black identity

Barbie definition

A brand of doll representing a slim, shapely young woman, especially one with blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin. Also called Barbie doll. A person, especially a young woman, perceived as blandly attractive and vacuous. (Oxford dictionary)

Barbie Version of Black Identity

Is a creation of white women when they darken their skin and use fillers to plumb their lips and change their bodies feature to look like an African American woman but lighter more beautiful . (Blogger 01). For generations, beauty required a slender build but with a generous bosom and a narrow waist. The jawline was to be defined the cheekbones high and sharp, the nose angular, the lips full but not distractingly and the eyes ideally blue or green, large and bright. Hair was to be long, thick, flowing and perfectly golden. Symmetry was desired. Youthfulness, that went without saying. (Anastasia 30)

This was the standard from the earliest days of women’s magazines, when beauty was codified and commercialized. The so-called great beauties and swans women such as actress Catherine Deneuve, socialite C.Z Guest, or Princess Grace came closest to this ideal. The further one diverged from this version of perfection, the more exotic a woman became. Diverge too much and a woman was simply considered

less attractive or desirable or valuable. And for some women black and brown or fat or old ones beauty seemed impossible in the broader culture. (Jeffrey Star 02)

In the early part of the 1990s, the definition of beauty as it applied to women began to loosen thanks to the arrival of Kate Moss, with her slight figure and vaguely ragamuffin aesthetic. Standing five feet seven inches, she was short for a runway walker. The British teenager was not particularly graceful, and she lacked the noble bearing that gave many other models their regal air. Moss's star turn in advertisements for Calvin Klein signified a major departure from the long-legged gazelles of years past. (Vogue Magazine 20)

Moss was disruptive to the beauty system, but she was still well within the industry's comfort zone of defining beauty as a white, European conceit. So too were the youthquake models of the 1960s such as Twiggy, who had the gangly, curveless physique of a 12-year-old boy. The 1970s brought Lauren Hutton, who stirred scandal simply because she had a gap between her teeth. (Vogue Magazine 22)

Even the early black models that broke barriers were relatively safe: women such as Beverly Johnson, the first African-American model to appear on the cover of American *Vogue*, the Somali-born Iman, Naomi Campbell, and Tyra Banks. They had keen features and flowing hair or wigs or weaves to give the illusion that they did. Iman had a luxuriously long neck that made legendary fashion editor Diana Vreeland gasps. Campbell was and is all va-va-voom legs and hips, and Banks rose to fame as the girl next door in a polka dot bikini on the cover of magazines (*Sports Illustrated* 20)

Wek was a revelation. Her beauty was something entirely different. Her tightly coiled hair was sheared close to her scalp. Her seemingly poreless skin was the color of dark chocolate. Her nose was broad; her lips were full. Her legs were impossibly long and incredibly thin. Indeed, her entire body had the stretched-out sinewiness of an African stick figure brought to life. To eyes that had been trained to understand beauty through the lens of Western culture, Wek was jarring to everyone, and black folks were no exception. Many of them did not consider her beautiful. Even women

who might have looked in the mirror and seen the same nearly coal black skin and tightly coiled hair reflected back had trouble reckoning with this (*Elle* cover girl15).

Wek was abruptly and urgently transformative. It was as though some great cultural mountain had been scaled by climbing straight up a steep slope, as if there were neither time nor patience for switchbacks. To see Wek celebrated was exhilarating and vertiginous. Everything about her was the opposite of what had come before. We are in a better place than we were a generation ago, but we have not arrived at utopia. Many of the clubbiest realms of beauty still don't include larger women, disabled ones, or senior citizens. (*Elle* cover girl 20)

improved plastic surgery, more personalized and effective nutrition, the flowering of the fitness industry, and the rise of selfie filters on smartphones, along with Botox, fillers, and the invention of Spanx, have all combined to help us look better—and get a little bit closer to looking exceptional. Therapists, bloggers, influencers, stylists, and well-meaning friends have raised their voices in a chorus of body-positivity mantras: You go, girl! You slay! Yasss, queen! They are not charged with speaking harsh truths and helping us see ourselves vividly and become better versions of ourselves. Their role is constant uplift, to tell us that we are perfect just as we are. Now adays the beauty stanadard shaped by social media is a combination of cultures black culture is the main one. (*Elle* cover girl 33)

Hip hop and rap music became trendy and we know that rap music is purely from Black culture, generations of Blacks and whites grow up listening to this music which influenced their styles and lives. White women and black women relationship is strange, some black women were jealous of white women because they had the privelge of the living right without being chained to a heavy history of slavey ,segregation and racism, they feel like white women had more chances to live the dream life they wanted too for so long, a better future for their children while white women are keen on black women in one of my interviews with Anna Bukler a white activist I met on a conference in Oran , Algeria claimed that black women are bold and courageous and always speak for themselves, they are selfish and sometimes bitter but only due to the psychological feelings they grow toward a race that did them

dirty for centuries .It is not wrong to be a fan of a race but it is indeed wrong to misinterpret it and use it for your own good. (Blogger20)

The Barbie black figure is a term given by social media users to the Kardashian family members who adopted new black physical features in order to look black in the goal to sell their products and to appear acceptable in both white and black races.

They created a combination between slim and thick , big lips and narrow nose , black hair yet straight instead of curly , to give a new image of this Black Barbie figure and created an army on Instagram of flawless women not even naturally looking but spending millions of dollars on plastic surgeries , which I witness everytime I scroll through my Instagram these looking like colored Barbies with fake tan and fake face features which their beauty is being celebrated in Colored women pages , many black women are furious with this new Black Barbie features because it takes the opportunity from real black women to celebrate their natural beauty . (Blogger 20)

II -6 from Blackface to Blackfishing

White people in the U.S. began blackening up their faces sometime in either the late 18th century or the early 19th century. And it was a way for white people to go out in public and act a fool in ways they felt were not proper for white folks. And then this practice moved to the stage. By the middle of the 1800s, blackface minstrelsy, this version of blackening up with singers and performers - was the most popular form of entertainment in the United States. And the characters they portrayed were often enslaved people who were lazy and scheming. (BlackLivesMatter66)

The style of blackface became a tentpole of vaudeville. In the early 20th century, the iconography of blackface was everywhere. It was in advertisements on product packaging. The most famous vaudeville entertainers in the country regularly deployed blackface as part of their acts. All of this overlapped - not coincidentally - with the failure of reconstruction. Lynchings of recently emancipated black folks were becoming regular occurrences. Jim Crow segregation was being codified into law. Those laws were named Jim Crow laws after a famous blackface character. (BlackLivesMatter63)

It all started when a US writer known on Twitter as WannasWorld started a Twitter thread, in which she drew attention to the number of white Instagram influencers “cosplaying” as black women. The most dramatic transformations were found online by various users and posted within the thread, with that of Emma Hallberg, a 19-year-old Instagram star gaining the most traction of all.

Hallberg should take comfort from the fact that she is not alone. As it’s exposed the fact that racial tourism is as big as ever. The thread exposed Jaiden Gumbayan, a beauty vlogger from Florida who was prone to posing in little more than boot polish and a curly wig then there was Mika Francis, a Bali-residing Brit whose transformation from a blonde white girl to a pink-haired brown one was pretty impressive. Or what about Hannah Winifred Titensor, whose perma-tan runs so deep, it’s possible that her own parents don’t even recognise her. Jaiah Fern, however, does at least have a white-black girl look that is based on someone real. After being told that she was a dead-ringer for NickiMinaj, Fern has gone out of her way nail the impression completely.

Every white to black outing on social media was, rightly, greeted with scorn and derision. But can we call it modern-day blackface? To me, blackface had always meant minstrelsy and mimicking grotesque caricatures for fun, but this felt different. Blackface 4.0 if you like: new, improved and monetised. For these girls, there was nothing funny about changing races; with their plumped up lips, perma-tans and braids, it’s quite clear blackness is something they coveted.

White women co-opting black culture or trends that are born of black communities are nothing new. But in the wake of Kim Kardashian’s second coming as the Queen of Cultural Appropriation, it’s somehow becoming normalised. Since 2010, we’ve watched Kim morph from a white, glossy-haired socialite, into the darker, curvier more racially ambiguous mega-celebrity she is today.

The Kardashian clan has managed to (partially) help re-establish the global beauty hegemony, from a fascination with the “heroin girl” look, which was focused on being blonde and thin, to a browner, curvier and more racially ambiguous standard. But this isn’t any more achievable for the average woman; we now need waspish waists,

huge posteriors, luscious lips, and a head of thick, full hair to be deemed attractive – at least that’s what social media tells us. The “slim thicc” aesthetic may be based around black ideals, but when white women are setting the standard – packaging up the most palatable forms of blackness to sell back to black women it’s nothing short of an insult.

The fact of the matter is that if people aren’t bothered about black people actually dying, they’re hardly likely to make a fuss about make-up, tanning and lip fillers. Black identity has always been up for grabs and this is just another piece of the puzzle. They came for the music, the cool, the hair and now the skin colour. When it is pointed out that real, bonafide black models struggle to get work, or that they had those facial and body features before they were fashionable (and suffered for them), or even that black lives matter, it makes them party poopers.

No one wants to hear that nonsense when they’re cherry-picking the best bits of our lives and having fun with our blackness like a costume. And therein lays the problem. I’m all for outing offenders and talking about why it upsets us so much, but things won’t really start to change until people start taking us and our history seriously. (Maya Hinner20)

II-7 Black Women Building Their Own Empire in the Beauty World

“They want our rhythm but not our blues” Arri Grewal. The beauty industry should give more chances to African American women in the beauty industry manifesting their beauty and natural features instead of blackfacing white models with dark foundation and afro hair. It is not fair, that the beauty industry is still failing women of color and make them feel less than their worth. White people think it is appropriate while it is not to mimic a race they abashed and dishonored for centuries for selfish reasons.

Black women suffered creating a brand to themselves and been through serious dilemmas, mental and physical abuse, building serious damages in their minds thinking they are not good enough for the society which belonged only to the supreme ones, for too long black women been ignored and been used therefore they rushed and shaped their own empire of beauty brands. Latest studies found that African American women entrepreneurs accounted for 20 percent of all women-owned businesses and had the highest rate of growth in new companies between 2017 and 2018. (Vogue Magazine

22). One of those entrepreneurs is 48-year-old Jamellah Ellis, who in April 2017 opened Curl Theory, an upscale salon for natural hair in Bowie, Maryland. When Ellis nixed her relaxer to embrace her coils in 2011, she found that she “had to buy things that really weren’t made for black women and try to make it work.” A corporate lawyer by trade, Ellis was comfortable with research, so she applied those skills and soaked up as much knowledge as she could about working with her textured hair. Shortly after she opened her salon, Ellis expanded to selling products, with her Curl Theory line debuting on Target shelves earlier this year. (Cover girl magazine 20)

Rihanna’s Fenty Beauty also changed the game when it launched in 2017 with 40 foundation shades, many of them complementing darker skin tones. While 40 shades were considered generous at the time, other brands, including Dior and Revlon, have since announced their own 40-shade foundation lines, all in the wake of Fenty Beauty’s commercial success: The Company made more than \$72 million in earned media value (social media exposure gained from word of mouth and press buzz) the first month after launch. Other Black women entrepreneurs have staked out their place as major players in the industry. Melissa Butler, founder of The Lip Bar, had her idea of an inclusive makeup line shot down on Shark Tank, but she went on to find a following and commercial success. Forbes estimated the brand’s value at nearly half a million dollars. Meanwhile, breast cancer survivor Cashmere Nicole founded indie cosmetics brand Beauty Bakerie and scored a \$3 million investment from Unilever, and makeup artist Pat McGrath started Pat McGrath Labs, and then secured \$60 million in funding from venture capital firm Eurazeo Brands in 2018. (L.A Girl Magazine 11). For Lake Louise, the biggest focus was on clean, sustainable, healthy living, so she wanted makeup that wouldn’t clog her pores. But among natural organic products, “there were no brown shades,” she says. To meet the need, Louise founded Plain Jane Beauty in 2011. “We refer to ourselves as inclusive green beauty,” she says. “We’re working on our eighteenth shade, which will be a very dark, deep color close to the skin tone of Nykhor.” The days when Black women don’t have any products to choose from to accentuate our curls, our features and our skin tones are now mostly behind us, as we’ve continued to use our business savvy to forge a billion-dollar niche of our own. “The change has been tremendous in a positive way,” says Ellis. “But we still have a long way to go.” "I think the market for Black women was ignored because you would then have to acknowledge that Black women are beautiful..." -Melissa Butler

Now that black women are recognized as beauty majors and business women, they are taking over not only the beauty world but also the fashion industry, business and marketing in many domains. The revolution has already started.

II Conclusion

Finally women of color found their places and respect in the society after decades of suffering and struggling in finding who they are and what they are capable to achieve in any domains not only beauty and fashion .

“Black women can do anything. We have proven that time and time and time again” Tarana Burke. Black women have had to develop a larger vision of our society than perhaps any other group. They have had to understand white women, white women, and black men. And they have had to understand themselves. “When black women win victories. It is boost for virtually every segment of society” Angela Davis.

III Chapter three

Self love and Acceptance in Maya Angelou's Poem "Phenomenal Woman"

III Introduction

This chapter includes one of my favorite activist and feminist Maya Angelou's poem which I dedicate to all black women and women in general to celebrate their beauty and to embrace their defects, no matter how different we are, how heavy we look or slim we are, we all deserve a taste of happiness through acceptance of our identity and ethnics.

III.1 Phenomenal women

*Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.
I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.
Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch*

*My inner myster
When I try to show them,
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.
Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing,
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need for my care.
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me. (Angelou)*

III.2 who is Maya Angelou?

According to A&E Television network, Maya Angelou was an American author, actress, screenwriter, dancer, poet and civil rights activist best known for her 1969 memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which made literary history as the first nonfiction bestseller by an African American woman. Angelou received several honors throughout her career, including two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, in 2005 and 2009. Angelou was born on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. Angelou had a difficult childhood. Her parents split up when she was very young, and she and her older brother, Bailey, were sent to live with their father's mother, Anne Henderson, in Stamps, Arkansas. (2010)

As an African American, Angelou experienced firsthand racial prejudices and discrimination in Arkansas. She also suffered at the hands of a family associate around the age of 7: During a visit with her mother, Angelou was raped by her mother's boyfriend. As vengeance for the sexual assault, Angelou's uncles killed the boyfriend. So traumatized by the experience, Angelou stopped talking. She returned to Arkansas and spent years as a virtual mute.

During World War II, Angelou moved to San Francisco, California. There she won a scholarship to study dance and acting at the California Labor School. Also during this time, Angelou became the first black female cable car conductor, a job she held only briefly in San Francisco. In the mid-1950s, Angelou's career as a performer began to take off. She landed a role in a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*, later appearing in the off-Broadway production *Calypso Heat Wave* (1957) and releasing her first album, *Miss Calypso* (1957).

A member of the Harlem Writers Guild and a civil rights activist, Angelou organized and starred in the musical revue *Cabaret for Freedom* as a benefit for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, also serving as the SCLC's northern coordinator. In 1961, Angelou appeared in an off-Broadway production of Jean Genet's *The Blacks* with James Earl Jones, Lou Gossett Jr. and Cicely Tyson. Angelou went on to earn a Tony Award nomination for her role in the play *Look Away* (1973) and an Emmy Award nomination for her work on the television miniseries *Roots* (1977), among other honors. (BlackWomenBiography3)

Angelou's career has seen numerous accolades, including the Chicago International Film Festival's 1998 Audience Choice Award and a nod from the Acapulco Black Film Festival in 1999 for *Down in the Delta*. She also won two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, for her 2005 cookbook and 2008's *Letter to My Daughter*. Martin Luther King Jr., a close friend of Angelou's, was assassinated on her birthday (April 4) in 1968. Angelou stopped celebrating her birthday for years afterward, and sent flowers to King's widow, Coretta Scott King, for more than 30 years, until Coretta's death in 2006. (BlackWomenBiography20)

Angelou was also good friends with TV personality Oprah Winfrey, who organized several birthday celebrations for the award-winning author, including a week-long cruise for her 70th birthday in 1998. Angelou published several collections of poetry, but her most famous was 1971's collection *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die*, which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. (BlackWomenBiography22)

Other famous collections of Angelou's poetry include:

- *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* (1975), which includes Angelou's poem "Alone"
- *And Still I Rise* (1978), which features the beloved poem "Phenomenal Woman"
 - *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* (1983)
 - *I Shall Not Be Moved* (1990), featuring the poem "Human Family"; Apple famously used a video of Angelou reading this poem in an advertisement at the 2016 Olympics
 - *Even the Stars Look Lonesome* (1997)

'On the Pulse of Morning' (1993)

One of her most famous works, Angelou wrote this poem especially for and recited at President Bill Clinton's inaugural ceremony in January 1993. The occasion marked the first inaugural recitation since 1961, when Robert Frost delivered his poem "The Gift Outright" at John F. Kennedy's inauguration.

Angelou went on to win a Grammy Award (best spoken word album) for the audio version of the poem.

Other well-known poems by Angelou include:

"His Day Is Done" (1962), a tribute poem Angelou wrote for Nelson Mandela as he made his secret journey from Africa to London

“Amazing Peace” (2005), written by Angelou for the White House tree-lighting ceremony Other well-known poems by Angelou include:

- “His Day Is Done” (1962), a tribute poem Angelou wrote for Nelson Mandela as he made his secret journey from Africa to London
- “Amazing Peace” (2005), written by Angelou for the White House tree-lighting ceremony (BlackWomenBiography 20)

III.3 Maya Angelou: the inspiration of African American women in the United States

Maya Angelou, through her powerful writings, has inspired generations of women, African Americans and all people who struggle to overcome prejudice, discrimination and abuse. Throughout her life, Angelou has defied social norms. After being raped by her mother’s boyfriend, she withdrew and was mute for five years. However, encouraged by her grandmother, who introduced her to literature, she gradually emerged as a talented artist. (Hall of fame magazine 20)

Angelou occupied a unique place in the American firmament for someone who was best known as a poet and memoirist (although those were just some of her many talents). She was a public intellectual, and she made an indelible impression on American consciousness, a high point being the poem she read at President Bill Clinton’s first inauguration in 1993. (BlackWomenmagazine33)

Maya Angelou was the goddess of colored women in the United States and even their mentor, her beautiful writings encouraged women to go out there and be who they are without being ashamed of their legacy one of these women is Oprah Winfrey.

This affinity shone through the pages of *O Magazine* whenever the spotlight shone on Angelou — which happened early, and often. In a lengthy interview from 2010, Oprah called her a “mentor, mother, sister, friend,” and Angelou got real with her about numerous topics, including where her confidence came from:

There are so many gifts, so many blessings, so many sources that I can’t say any one thing unless that one thing is love. By love I don’t mean indulgence. I do not mean

sentimentality. And in this instance, I don't even mean romance. I mean that condition that allowed humans to dream of God. To make it. To imagine golden roads. That condition that allowed the "dumb" to write spirituals and Russian songs and Irish lilt. That is love, and it's so much larger than anything I can conceive. It may be the element that keeps the stars in the firmament. And that love, and its many ways of coming into my life, has given me a great deal of confidence about life.

In an interview from 2013, Oprah asked Angelou what she would say to a younger version of herself, and Angelou replied, "I would encourage her to forgive. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself, to forgive. Forgive everybody." This year, when Angelou's portrait was unveiled at the Smithsonian gallery, Oprah shared some of what she learned from Angelou: "to age gracefully, with acceptance and assurance..." and the life-changing, "When people show you or tell you who they are, believe them the first time."

But the greatest lesson was a simple three words from Angelou: "You are enough!" It's a heady and rich idea, the sort that takes a lifetime to master. The friendship between Angelou and Oprah was one for the ages; it's been a pleasure seeing the depth of their connection throughout their work, and with Angelou's death, it will be missed.

Oprah gave an official statement:

I've been blessed to have Maya Angelou as my mentor, mother/sister, and friend since my 20's. She was there for me always, guiding me through some of the most important years of my life. The world knows her as a poet but at the heart of her, she was a teacher. 'When you learn, teach. When you get, give' is one of my best lessons from her. She won three Grammys, spoke six languages and was the second poet in history to recite a poem at a presidential inauguration. But what stands out to me most about Maya Angelou is not what she has done or written or spoken, it's how she lived her life. She moved through the world with unshakeable calm, confidence and a fierce grace. I loved her and I know she loved me. I will profoundly miss her. She will always be the rainbow in my clouds.

III4-self love and acceptance in phenomenal woman

The poem rejects narrow societal expectations of women and proposes an alternative perspective on what defines real beauty. Confidence and comfort in one's own skin, the speaker insists, are the markers of true beauty, and the poem thus offers an empowering message for all women.

The speaker opens the poem by referencing the “secret” to her appeal. She explains that though she is “not cute or built to suit a fashion model’s size,” she still possesses a unique, mysterious allure. She calls this “her inner mystery” something that no one can precisely define or identify, but that everyone can perceive on some level.

On the one hand, the speaker explicitly rejects narrow physical ideals of feminine beauty. For instance, she says her beauty lies in things like “the reach of my arms, the span of my hips.” She's not a tiny, wispy fashion model, but that doesn't mean she's not attractive.

Even more importantly, the speaker repeatedly insists that her beauty lies in the way she carries herself in her self-assured "stride," her bright smile, her grace, and her bold posture. All these things make her a "phenomenal woman" that is, an extraordinary, spectacular woman. The speaker thus argues that true beauty stems from loving yourself, rather than trying to meet a certain standard and then feeling bad about yourself when you can't. (MayaAngelouBiography20)

Indeed, the speaker declares that such self-acceptance is exactly what makes her so irresistible. Whenever she enters a room, she says men “swarm around” her like a “hive of honey bees,” drawn to her passion for life and unconditional self-love. She describes the “fire in her eyes” and the “joy in her feet” as being part of her allure, further supporting the idea that her attractiveness comes from her refusal to let society fill her with any sort of shame about who she is or what she looks like.

Whereas society may expect women to be meek, demure, and apologetic about their supposed imperfections, the speaker refuses to belittle herself. As she says in the final stanza, “Now you understand why my head’s not bowed,” concluding that beauty is born out of radical self-acceptance and the self-confidence that results from it.

What's more, she says that her example out to make her audience "proud." In other words, other women should find inspiration in the speaker's confidence. Though the poem never addresses race specifically, the fact that Angelou was a black woman writing when societal standards of beauty were often inextricable from whiteness adds another powerful angle to this message.

Ultimately, the poem says that instead of conforming to the standards set by society, women should reconnect with their own value and find validation from within. All women are capable of being "phenomenal," the poem implies, if they embrace who they are instead of trying to fit in with arbitrary social standards. In fact, the poem suggests that accepting and loving yourself is, in itself, an extraordinary act within a society that promotes insecurity and self-loathing in women. It is this step towards unconditional self-love that makes a woman truly phenomenal. (BlackWomenBiography33)

III-Conclusion

Beauty comes within acceptance and Angelou was an Afro-American and because of her nationality she experienced discrimination and was aware of the way the society looked at people like her. But Angelou was very proud of her and wanted the world to see it. She was not afraid of speaking in public; she used to do so to help others that were the victims of discrimination. She was also fighting for the women; she wanted women to have the same rights as men. In her poem „Phenomenal woman” Angelou speaks as a self-confident woman, she wants to show the world what makes her beautiful and she expresses it in a various way.

“I am grateful to be a woman. I must have done something great in another life.”(Maya Angelou).

General conclusion:

Women of color have a standout, multi dimensional beauty that is all their own. However, it has not always been acknowledged in the mainstream. But thanks to a select group of melanin beautiful colored ladies who broke through the mirrored glass ceiling, the beauty industry has made giant strides in celebrating the diversity of beauty in all its various hues, textures and forms.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to cherish the efforts done by these colored women despite the ruthless confronts they have faced in their paths toward success, by challenging the status quo, these blazing dames went to change the game in the beauty industry and emboldened others to do the same.

As a case of study, I present a new theoretical dilemma faced by African American women which is called “Black Fishing” it is recent but yet familial, when none black performs use dark foundation and other cosmetics products in order to look black especially women on social media, the main question in this research is, is it only a trend or for commercial reasons? While analyzing the content of this issue I’ve discovered certain points of views from both black and white women, each point of view is different and controversial, but I’ve discovered that the major reason behind this “Black fishing” phenomenon is for white women to get fame and acknowledgment in the beauty industry, because they appear mullatos while they are pure white. These counterfeits blacks gained a huge population, rejoicing their fake beauty on “African American beauty websites” which made colored women furious and uncomfortable because these women so called “Black Barbies” as the Kardashians, Emma Helberg and many other “Blackfishes” were taking advantage of their physical tendencies for selfish reasons.

Finally, the one hundred dollar concept in this research is self-embracing and self-accepting. I reinforced my research with a poem which is a true work of art to prove my points of view written by Maya Angelou “Phenomenal woman”. Society, media and fashion industries surrounding us are constantly suffocating women to change their appearances to fit into what is known as the perfect woman. Girls are no longer their genuine selves but rather living in the skin of what the world has created for them. What Maya Angelou is trying to portray in her poem Phenomenal Woman is that

we should take pride in all the amazing features we have by accepting and loving our self-image as being a female alone, is an amazing thing. Through her use of positive direction, imagery and self-example, she is letting women know that they do not have to change themselves and to be the phenomenal women they truly are.

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