

# **Hip-hop Fashion & Black Materialism and Conspicuous Consumption**

John Boncamper

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Professor Horowitz

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## Abstract

Hip-hop Fashion and Black Materialism are intertwined in fascinating ways. This style, rooted in the streets, has become a global phenomenon, influencing trends and dominating the fashion industry. It's a statement of identity, resistance and empowerment. Conspicuous Consumption, on the other hand, is a key element in hip-hop culture. It's about displaying wealth and status through material possessions. This trend can be tracked back to the societal pressures and historical context of black communities. Both elements create a unique dialogue within the fashion world. Challenging norms and pushing boundaries.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Hip-hop fashion started in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a distinctive style of clothing worn by participants in the hip-hop music and culture scene. Hip-hop fashion was heavily influenced by the African American and Latino communities in New York City and was characterized by bold, colorful clothing, oversized accessories, and athletic wear. However, hip-hop fashion is not just about style but the cultural and social identity. It reflects values, attitudes and aspirations of the community, and is often associated with black materialism and conspicuous consumption. Hip-hop Fashion, Black Materialism, and conspicuous consumption are prevalent in America because African Americans tend to spend the most money on materialistic items like designer clothes, fast food, luxury cars, and alcohol. Despite the significant wage gap between white people and black people in the United States.

White people are more financially stable than black people, but black people spend more money on materialistic items than white people. This Capstone will explore why African Americans spend more money on materialistic items than their white counterparts? Black People engage in conspicuous consumption under the pretense that by obtaining these luxury items they will be viewed to be of equal footing as whites. Black Materialism is the idea that material ownership leads to success, status, and identity for African Americans. In the circumstances of Hip-hop culture, it mentions the idea that ownership of luxury items like clothing, jewelry and expensive cars are a way to express someone's status and to show off to their fellow community.

Most African Americans may not understand the origin of materialistic consumption. They may not know it's rooted in their desire to be like everyone else, specifically their white counterparts. Conspicuous consumption by blacks can be traced back to slavery and the construct that Africans Americans were less than whites, i.e. the three fifths compromise. Equality is to be equal as everyone no matter what they look like, where they are from, or what class they are in. They are manipulated to believe that they have to wear or have valuable items to be equal to the ones they desire to be. Some people argue that this weight on material possessions reinforces negative stereotypes about Blacks as being obsessed with money and status. Like wearing outfits that are considered flashy and wearing large gold chains.

African Americans like to show off their materialistic items because they are trying to show that they can obtain it as well. Some believe that luxury items elevate their status. Some do but not all of them have it, especially rich white people. White people have their own way of showing off their designer clothes. For example, a white man can wear a white tee that cost \$200 but no one will know because it looks like a regular white tee. African Americans have been fooled to believe otherwise. Others argue that it is an expression of cultural identity and a response to historical oppression and discrimination. Some White Americans don't want to see black people being rich. As an example, when a white police officer pulls over a black man with a BMW, they wonder how did this black man get the money to afford this car? Society has condition most to view black people as poor and criminals. Regardless of one's perspective, it is clear that hip-hop fashion has had a significant impact on popular culture and continues to be an important aspect of modern fashion and style.

The method for this research study is to interview four individuals who like hip-hop fashion and ask them questions about hip-hop fashion and materialism. I will color code the interviews so I can take better notes and understand what each person shared. This Capstone will evaluate the responses generated by the participants and use research to support the thesis. This study is being conducted in order to explore the reason why African Americans indulge in mass consumption and materialistic items. In addition to revealing how hip-hop fashion changed from being an African American style of dress to being widely accepted in popular culture. This Capstone is looking to explore how Hip-hop Fashion has impacted society and African Americans are the leading group of materialism and consumption?

## Chapter 2: Historical and Theoretical Background

Hip-hop fashion is a fascinating subject. It originated in the Bronx in New York City during the 1970s, largely among African American and Latinx communities. The fashion was a visual representation of the hip-hop culture and mirrored the social and economic conditions of the time. It was about making a statement and expressing individuality. Early hip-hop fashion was characterized by tracksuits, bomber jackets, bucket hats, oversized gold jewelry, and sneakers, particularly Adidas Superstars without laces. This was influenced by the sportswear and streetwear popular in New York during that time. The graffiti art movement also had a significant impact, leading to colorful, graphic-heavy clothing and accessories. As hip-hop music gained mainstream popularity in the 80s and 90s, so did its fashion. Brands like Tommy Hilfiger, Polo Ralph Lauren, and Calvin Klein became associated with hip-hop fashion, while other labels like FUBU, Rocawear, and Sean John were created by hip-hop artists themselves. Today, hip-hop fashion is a major influence in the global fashion industry, with high-end designers and fast-fashion retailers alike drawing inspiration from its unique aesthetic. It's a testament to the creativity and influence of the hip-hop community.

The style originated with bucket hats, track suits, gold chains, sneakers and gold chains. It has influenced music, dances of hip-hop, political and social issues. It became a trend that everyone enjoyed because they were able to express themselves through the colorful “swagger” clothes they wore. This was a way for young people to bring their imaginations to life. The clothes worn by artists in music videos brought forth trends that constantly are emulated by people. As an example, Aaliyah and Snoop-dog are artists, who are examples of this. They began wearing Tommy Hilfiger and the impact has fans and other celebrities wearing them. Jay Z

started the Yankee fitted cap. In Jay Z's song "The Empire State of Mind", he raps, "Shit, I made the Yankee hat more fitted than a Yankee can", further illustrating his impact of the hat constantly being his favorite fashion accessory. It wasn't just rappers who started trends. Dapper Dan, who is known as the King of Knockoffs, began the Gucci trend by designing his own clothes and putting designer logos on it. Dapper Dan was taking Hip-hop fashion and mixing it with luxury monograms and logos. These luxury brands were making clothing representative of white/ European culture and style. The clothing created by these luxury brands didn't represent black culture. Eventually celebrities were going to Dapper Dan for custom clothing that more represented their culture. New York drug dealers became synonymous with the Timberland boot trend. Timberland was mostly used for construction boots, but it turned into a style that everyone wanted to be a part of. In this generation the rising group of materialism and consumption are African Americans. We tend to buy designer clothes, bags, and basketball sneakers to look fly and "swagged out". African Americans and Blacks are the leading consumers of designer clothes. Wealthy Caucasians tend to buy regular clothes at reasonable prices. We all know there is a huge wage gap between black and white people. So why do African Americans buy designer clothes? This is important because as African Americans we aren't paid equally as white people but spend more money on fashion clothes than white people. With the focus of trying to fix the wage gap but spend tons of money on items that we think it's cool but will die down in the future. This is a topic that must be looked into.

## Chapter 3: Literature Review

### Introduction:

Looking for the scholarly literature review was easy. I found articles about Hip-hop fashion, a few on designer clothes and one on materialism and conspicuous consumption. The only thing that I was really in search for was an article that talked about black materialism. Black materialism is not often talked about in articles. The reason why I chose this topic is because on the media like Instagram it is sometimes talked about. Some people will comment about the situation and agree that materialism is a major problem in the black community but won't act on it. The reason why is because they still think about how others think. Another reason why I chose this topic was because I had experienced it myself in school. While reading the articles I saw that the authors will explain what materialism is but didn't explain how it is affecting the black community. One article will talk about the evolution of hip hop fashion and how it was looked like a fun style in the whole world. I agree with everything of what the authors were saying but I feel like they should have gone deeper in the topic on how it is also a problem in a group of people. Most of the authors who have write these articles are white men and women. Only one author is an African American and his name is Kareem R. Muhammad.

### Materialism, Conspicuous, Consumption, and American Hip-hop Subculture



“Materialism, Conspicuous, Consumption, and American Hip-hop Subculture” by Podoshen talks about the relationship between materialism, conspicuous consumption and the American Hip-hop subculture (Podoshen, 2014). In America, African Americans have the highest rate of materialism and consumption. They spend most of their money on designer clothes, luxury cars and other expensive items (Podoshen, 2014). In this article the method that was used to research materialism and conspicuous consumption was a Materialism Sub-scale. People were asked to take a survey on hip-hop and materialism. The Participants ranged from 18-99 years of age, most people had an income between \$25,000- \$50,000 and some were asked to identify their race (Podoshen, 2014). The scale showed us that when it comes to hip-hop, people find success, centrality and happiness when it comes to materialism. From the results, listeners of hip-hop have higher levels of materialism than those who don’t listen to hip-hop and also experience conspicuous consumption attitudes than those who don’t listen to hip-hop. Most of the people who listen to hip-hop, and experience high levels of materialism were African Americans (Podoshen, 2014). This relates to my topic because I’ve seen people, I know dress like their favorite rappers they see on tv. They wear the luxury clothes that the rappers talk about often and most of the people are Black/ African Americas. They see it as hip-hop fashion, but it is more than that. It’s the value that comes with the clothes that they wear. Materialism plays a big part in the African American Community (Podoshen, 2014).

### The Ghetto Fabulous Aesthetic in Contemporary Black Culture

In the article “The Ghetto Fabulous Aesthetic in Contemporary Black Culture,” author Mukherjee states that the ghetto-fabulous aesthetic took place in the 90s where it was all about black fashion (Mukherjee, 2006). African Americans took their creativity to a whole other level.

The way how black people in the ghetto dress became a popular style when it comes to hip-hop fashion. Black Women are more active when it comes to the ghetto fabulous aesthetic. The fashion black women wear was braided long hair, long colorful fingernails, colorful outfits, large accessories like earrings, nose rings, necklaces, rings and bracelets (Mukherjee, 2006). These outfits were not just thrown on, they were made from their imagination. It was a way for them to express their personality. Back in the 90s hip-hop fashion was about expressing yourself as an African American; now hip-hop fashion is about designer clothes that cost a lot that are created by white people (Mukherjee, 2006). In the article it says, “the ghetto fabulous aesthetic points to African Americans indulging in conspicuous consumption as their ticket to the American Dream, their way into the American polity” (Mukherjee, 2006). This article is conveying that African Americans believe that purchasing luxury clothes and other luxury items makes them rich. Partaking in this mindset leads to a continuous cycle of over consumption. They believe that if they have luxury clothes, then their status will change as well (Mukherjee, 2006).

### Cultural Meaning and Hip-hop Fashion in the African American male youth subculture of New Orleans

The African American male youth subculture of New Orleans written by Banter, & Marina, P is deeply rooted in hip-hop fashion and cultural significance. The way these young men dress is a reflection of their identity and social status within their community. They use clothing and accessories as a way to express themselves and stand out from the crowd. The style is characterized by baggy clothing, athletic wear, oversized t-shirts, and sneakers. This fashion trend is not just about looking good, it's about representing who they are and where they come from. It's a way to show pride in their heritage and to connect with others who share the same

values and experiences Banter, & Marina, P (2008). The culture of hip-hop fashion has evolved over time and has become a global phenomenon, but it remains deeply rooted in African American history and tradition. In New Orleans, this subculture is not just about fashion, it's also about music, dance, and community. These young men are part of a larger movement that celebrates black culture and identity. They are using fashion as a means of empowerment and self-expression in a society that often marginalizes them. Overall, this subculture represents a unique blend of fashion, music, and cultural significance that is deeply meaningful to the African American male youth of New Orleans Banter, & Marina, P (2008).

### Everyday people: public identities in contemporary hip-hop culture. Social Identities

In this article “Everyday people: public identities identities” written by Muhammad, Hip-hop culture has become a significant part of contemporary American society, with its music, fashion, and language influencing people from all walks of life. In this context, public identities have emerged as a crucial aspect of hip-hop culture. Everyday people are now creating their own public identities in the hip-hop community through different means such as social media, music production, and fashion choices (Muhammad 2015). Social media has played a significant role in shaping public identities in hip-hop culture. With platforms like Instagram and Twitter, individuals can showcase their personal style and connect with like-minded individuals. Moreover, social media has also provided a platform for emerging artists to showcase their music and build a following (Muhammad 2015).

## “I Like My Shit Sagged”: Fashion, “Black Musics” and Subcultures. Journal of Youth Studies

In this article “I Like My Shit Sagged”: Fashion, “Black Musics” and Subcultures. Journal of Youth Studies by BRIGGS & COBLEY, P, the intersection of fashion, Black music, and subculture is a complex and fascinating area of exploration. At the heart of this convergence is the concept of "sagging," which refers to the practice of wearing pants below the waistline. While this trend has been popularized and commodified by mainstream fashion and culture, it has deep roots in the Black community and serves as a form of resistance against oppressive norms (BRIGGS & COBLEY, P 1999). Sagging can be traced back to prison culture, where inmates were given ill-fitting uniforms and had to resort to wearing them low on the hips. This practice was later adopted by hip hop artists and other Black youth as a way to challenge societal expectations and assert their own identity. However, sagging has also been stigmatized as a symbol of criminality and indecency, leading to laws and dress codes that specifically target this style (BRIGGS & COBLEY, P 1999).

## “We Don’t Wear Tight Clothes”: Gay Panic and Queer Style in Contemporary Hip Hop. Popular Music and Society

The article "We Don't Wear Tight Clothes - Gay Panic and Queer Style in Contemporary hip Hop" by Penney, explores the intersection of queer style and hip-hop culture. The author argues that while hip hop has historically been associated with hypermasculinity and heteronormativity, there is a growing acceptance and even celebration of queer style within the genre. However, this acceptance is not without its challenges, as some artists and fans still react

with "gay panic" to non-traditional expressions of gender and sexuality (Penney 2012). The article delves into the history of queer style in hip hop, from the flamboyant fashion of icons like Little Richard and David Bowie to the more recent trend of rappers like Young Thug and Lil Uzi Vert wearing dresses and skirts. The author also explores the ways in which queer style has been appropriated by mainstream culture, often without giving credit to its origins in LGBTQ communities (Penney 2012).

### Conflicts of Interest, Culture Jamming and Subversive Significations: The High Fashion Logo as Locational Hip hop Artic.

The article "Conflicts of Interest, Culture Jamming and Subversive Significations: The High Fashion Logos as Locational Hiphop Artic" by Halliday explores the relationship between high fashion logos and hip-hop culture, focusing on how the two intersect in terms of subversive messaging and cultural appropriation. The author argues that the use of high fashion logos in hip hop culture is a form of "locational hip hop articulation," which involves re-appropriating symbols of power and wealth to create new meanings and subvert dominant cultural narratives Halliday. (2014). However, this practice is not without its controversies, as it often raises questions about authenticity, ownership, and cultural appropriation. The article also examines the role of "culture jamming" in this process, which involves using subversive tactics to disrupt dominant cultural messages and challenge the status quo. Overall, the author suggests that the use of high fashion logos in hip hop culture serves as a powerful tool for subversion and resistance, but also highlights the complex nature of cultural appropriation and the need for ongoing dialogue about these issues Halliday. (2014).

## Swagger Like Us: Black Millennials' Perceptions, Knowledge, and Influence of 1980s and 1990s Urban Fashion Brands. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal

Swagger Like Us by Johnson, Reddy-Best, K. L., & Sanders, E. A. is a study that explores the perceptions, knowledge, and influence of 1980s and 1990s urban fashion brands among Black millennials. The study found that these brands, such as FUBU, Karl Kani, and Cross Colors, hold significant cultural value for this demographic. Participants in the study expressed a strong connection to these brands, citing their representation of Black culture and resistance against mainstream fashion. The study also delves into the impact of social media on the resurgence of these brands. Instagram, in particular, has played a significant role in popularizing these brands among younger generations Johnson, Reddy-Best, K. L., & Sanders, E. A. (2022). The visual nature of the platform allows for easy sharing and discovery of vintage styles, leading to increased demand for retro urban fashion.

## Made in Italy: Translating Cultures from Gucci to Dapper Dan and Back. Textile: the Journal of Cloth and Culture

“Made in Italy: Translating Cultures from Gucci to Dapper Dan and Back. Textile: the Journal of Cloth and Culture” written by Paulicelli explains that the fashion industry is known for its ability to blend cultures and styles, and Gucci has recently come under fire for appropriating the designs of Harlem-based fashion icon, Dapper Dan. However, the two have since formed a partnership that celebrates the influence of black culture on fashion. This collaboration highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting cultural heritage in the fashion industry. It also emphasizes the power of social media in shaping public opinion and holding brands accountable for their actions Paulicelli. (2022). Ultimately, the Gucci-Dapper

Dan partnership serves as a reminder that cultural exchange should be a two-way street, with both parties benefiting from the mutual exchange of ideas and inspiration Paulicelli. (2022).

“Keepin’ It Real”: White Hip-Hoppers’ Discourses of Language, Race, and Authenticity. Journal of Linguistic Anthropology

The article "Keepin' It Real": White Hip-Hoppers' Discourses of Language, Race, and Authenticity" written by Cutler explores the role of language and authenticity in white hip-hop culture. The author argues that white hip-hop artists often use language as a way to assert their authenticity and distance themselves from mainstream society. However, this can also lead to the appropriation of black culture and a lack of understanding of the historical and cultural context of hip-hop Cutler (2003). The article examines how white hip-hop artists navigate ideas of race and authenticity through their use of language, including the use of slang and profanity. The author also explores the tensions between white hip-hop artists and black hip-hop artists, who may view white artists as inauthentic and appropriative. Overall, the article highlights the complexity of language and authenticity in hip-hop culture and the need for greater understanding and respect for its historical roots Cutler (2003).

## Chapter 4: Methods

### Introduction: Research design

For my methods, I will conduct journalistic interviews of 4 people who are closely familiar with hip-hop and fashion and of African American culture. There will be eight questions about their knowledge of hip-hop fashion, designer clothes, what clothes they wear, and their thoughts about following trends.

### Selection criteria

The four participants were Khalil Nixon, Shelton Jones, Natassia Randall and Maholy Perreaux. Khalil is a wrestler in training, Shelton Jones is a future Journalist, Natassia works in film and Maholy is an artist. I chose these four because Khalil and Shelton are heavily influenced by Hip hop fashion, Natassia is familiar with the topic and Maholy is not really into dressing up in hip hop fashion, but she loves all type of fashion.



### Search terms

I used the search terms Hip-hop fashion, materialism, conspicuous consumption, designer, RunDMC, culture, comfortable, affordable. I used the Purchase Library's 'Search Everything' database search engine. All the sources used were found in this database search. Only one paper was focused on materialism and conspicuous consumption, and that was more general and not focused on Black fashion. I found a wide array of sources that talked about Hip-hop fashion in terms of history, styles etc. but not specifically an analysis of why conspicuous consumption in Black fashion was a topic worth studying. As a result of this search, I can say that social science-based studies of conspicuous consumption in Black fashion are rare, and a gap exists in the scholarly literature. Most of the useful sources came from the trade side of the industry, where those who analyze market trends and business opportunities were definitely interested in what Black Americans were buying and why.

### Definitions

Materialism is the belief that material possessions and physical comfort are more important than spiritual or intellectual values (Podoshen). Conspicuous Consumption is the act of spending money on luxury goods and services in order to display one's wealth and social status to others (Podoshen).

### Data collection and analysis methods

In this capstone I had conducted journalistic interviews that didn't need to be IRB review. The participants were okay with their thoughts being shared in the capstone and will be available to the public. I did the interviews in person and used the otter.ai app on my phone to create transcripts.

I also created color codes so that I can number the results from these interviewees. The color codes I came up with were [Key Words- Blue, Feelings- yellow, Opinions- Purple, Thoughts on hip-hop fashion- Pink, Thoughts on designer clothes- Green, Examples- Orange and Experience- Red.] I chose these because according to my questions I know that my interviewees are going to talk about their thoughts on hip-hop fashions, trends, designer clothes. I'm looking to break down the results and to share what I had discovered when interviewing them. I can pull a lot of information from the people I chose and learn a lot from them. I chose these people because when I go out with them, I see a lot of colorful or fresh outfits they wear, and it fits into their personality.

#### Codes:

Key Words: Example: Hip-hop Fashion has impacted the world.

Feelings: Example: The clothes I wear made me feel cool on the outside and inside. It really connects with my personality.

Opinions: Example: Everyone would feel better about themselves if they wore hip-hop fashion.

Thoughts on Hip-hop Fashion: Example: Hip-hop fashion had tones of eras that influenced a lot of people and still today wear all types of hip hop fashion clothes.

Thoughts on Designer clothes: Example: Designer clothes are mostly worn for people who want to look nice, go out to fancy places, or to take part in a photo shoot.

Examples: Example: As an example, someone will wear designer clothes to look valuable and not a random shirt from a random store because it has less value

Experiences: Example: My friends and I grew up around the hip hop era where it was most popular, and we saw everyone wearing joggers, baggy pants and New York City fitted hats.

## Chapter 5: Findings

While asking the people that were chosen for the interviews, I am seeking the answers to the research questions in their responses. To see how Hip-hop Fashion has impacted society and African Americans are the leading group affected by materialism and consumption, the questions need to be based on their experiences on hip-hop fashion, explaining why African Americans are so affected by materialism and how hip-hop fashion make them feel. Data will be discussed not only in the interviews but also in the readings that were found. There are a total of eight questions for the four people. From this research, I was able to identify that getting attention from other people and feeling like they have more money are major factors in why conspicuous consumption in hip-hop fashion continues to affect the Black community.

### **Interview with Khalil**

JB: What do you know about Hip-hop Fashion?

KN: Hip-hop fashion they both go hand in hand. I feel like hip-hop has inspired a lot of fashion Hip-hop clothing, such brands like Timberlands, Jordans, you can even go back to the 80s with Run DMC by Adidas in that boom period. So, they both go hand in hand.

JB: Do you think that Hip-hop Culture is part of Black and Latino Culture?

KN: Most definitely. Especially starting in the Bronx in the late 70s. And pretty much being an outlet for people in inner cities to really express themselves I feel more so for Black Country. As time went on, you know, disco went out of style. Other genres went out of style and hip-hop was something new and fresh. That was, you know, talking about the situation that the people of those inner cities were going through.

JB: Why do hip-hop fans want to wear the same designer clothes as the rappers they see on tv?

KN: It's like the same thing with basketball, a lot of people look up to Michael Jordan because they're idols. Do you look up to these people? They represent who you are. I remember growing up The Diplomats was huge, and everybody was dressed in big giant jerseys and baggy pants.

Everybody looked like The Diplomats and everybody, it was just a whole big thing. Even to this day, I still look up to 50 cent like an idol of mine because just how like who he is.

JB: Has Hip-hop Fashion Played a big part in your life?

KN: Oh, yeah. I remember as far back I used to wear the G unit that Scotty said his clothing brand when I was like young at his video games, and I even provided them with it because he sponsored it. So, it's like our culture and fashion is still prevalent to this day. Like I'm wearing Air Force ones right now. Air Force ones was a huge hit by knowing like, way back when, and like just how I dress now. Like he's just heavily inspired by hip-hop culture.

JB: What do you wear to make you feel great inside and outside?

KN: What I wear? I wear what's comfortable and affordable. The difference between a lot of people I understand that hip-hop artists have a lot of money that I do not have. So, I found what's in my budget, maybe a cheap graphic T from like, Walmart or online. Or where some like the

most expensive things I'll speak on this like sneakers rather than be Jordans. Nikes whatever, whatever brand I've worked with makes me feel comfortable. I wear what is nice to me. Really.

JB: How does the clothes you wear fit into your personality?

KN: wherever it's comfortable and calming. Like I have a really calm personality. So yeah, I'm overdressed or underdressed, but I believe I dress perfect for my body type and appropriate being outside.

JB: Do you follow any clothing trends and how do you feel about it?

KN: Clothing trends? Yes. I'm a bit of a sneaker-head I like sneaker jobs. A new thing that is really high as in dunks and I've been buying dunks for a couple of years now. I just like to see for a good partner of Oman and stuff. Like sad new balances something out on my island right now. So, there's some trends. I remember wearing these pants. True legends like back in like 2014. When like every rapper and everybody was wearing them because it was the hottest thing. So, you can see it has been some trends I've been on.

JB: As an African American Do you need designer clothes to put value on yourself if yes or no explain?

KN: No. I have no issue with buying what's affordable. For me. I have no issue with it at all. And I assume nobody should have an issue with that because we're not here for a long time. I have no reason to impress anybody that's not doing anything for me paying my bills or putting me through school. So, I give them what somebody's opinion is on what I wear.

## Interview with Natassia

JB: What do you know about Hip-hop Fashion?

NR: Well, I know that a lot of the hip-hop fashion is stemmed from black people, especially music, maybe. Well, hip-hop, and it was used to speak upon the issues that we had were police brutality and was used to express ourselves because of the fact that we have so many systems in place to keep down black people and to keep us in these economic situations that hold us from succeeding and prospering the way we need to. And Hip-hop has been the way to speak the truth on those issues, and to express the art from black people, and has been a big way to impact fashion in the most amazing ways possible.

JB: Do you think that hip-hop culture is part of black and Latino culture?

NR: Yes, I do heavily. Especially if now if you go into black and brown communities. You notice that a lot of people are playing hip-hop and hip-hop is very big in helping us kind of stay connected with our roots and stay connected with our people and being able to express ourselves.

JB: Why do hip-hop fans want to wear the same designer clothes as the representation on TV?

NR: I think that we maybe strive to wear those same designer clothes or have those things out of bags because by having those things it makes us seem like we have equity and make us feel that we have power and it makes us feel that we are in a place that America doesn't want us to be and I feel like by us having those materialistic items it helped me in the white racist society, help them understand that we are able to obtain those things too despite the color of my skin. And despite all the systematic obstacles that have been put in place for me to not attain those things easily.

JB: How has Hip-hop Fashion played a big part in your life?

NR: I can see definitely yes. Um, I feel like hip-hop fashion helps me be as black as I want to be. And especially with me going to a PWI it. It is hard and I feel like it's hard for me to find ways to

express myself being black and being proud. I am black in a PWI. So, I feel that the best way to express myself and the best way for me to feel proud in my own skin and my own flesh is through fashion. And a lot of my inspirations do come from hip-hop. A lot of my inspirations do come from the fashion that is impacted by hip-hop.

JB: What do you wear to make you feel great inside of that?

NR: I can say that one of my favorite statement pieces is my adidas all stars. I've probably bought them at least 10 times in my life. Once they get busted, I always buy a new pair because I feel like it's a great staple in my collection of, I guess well my wardrobe or my fashion. And a lot of history is behind those shoes that a lot of people don't know about mainly the group that helped popularize the shoe is Run DMC and they help black people find the beauty in Adidas All Stars since that there were a lot of shoes that we couldn't obtain very easily during that time, which were like Jordans. A lot of Nike Air Forces a lot of high-end brands that we can obtain but Adidas All Stars was one of those sneakers that was not necessarily too expensive, but also was seen as a great piece that black people were able to claim as a fashion that they were proud to wear.

JB: How does the clothes you wear fit into your personality?

NR: I feel that the clothes that I wear, I feel like I have a lot of personalities. And I feel like I need to always have clothing or a statement. piece that matches every single one of my personalities in the best way possible. Some are lighter pieces, some are darker, some are rougher around the edges, some are more elegant, some are more camp, I feel like I need to have a lot of these pieces because I'm not necessarily just one individual in one body. I feel like I'm many individuals in one body and I need to express that.

JB: Do you follow any clothing trends and how do you feel about it?

NR: I feel like there are certain clothing trends that I follow but I don't follow all I feel like spalling all clothing trends. Not only does it get expensive, but it is very overrated because I feel like to be honest, not every trend is necessarily pretty or cute. I feel like people will think that it is cute, or they will convince themselves that it is something that they should wear because of people which mainly celebrities or public figures popularizing these things and either revamping them or bringing them back and saying how they love it. But that doesn't mean it's necessarily always nice, just because they're popularizing it. I feel like there are just certain trends build that are good statement pieces to have in my closet, but I don't necessarily follow all trends.

JB: As an African American, do you need designer clothes to put value on yourself? If yes or no, explain.

NR: I say no. I feel that designer clothes is not the way to help me feel rich, or it's not the way to help me feel like buying valuable. I feel like it's not the clothes that makes you valuable. It's your it's your character or how you carry yourself in the clothes that you wear that makes you valuable because there's a difference between wearing 300 pairs of shoes, your pair of jeans and then a \$30 pair of jeans and when you really think about it. They're kind of they're kind of the same. Like honestly, there's nothing really special at the genes people seeing in the day. It's the quality is it's like no it's not. It's just a label that's on the genes that give it this high-end name and it gives this popularity that everybody feels that they must spend their whole paycheck on but it's like you really don't need to. And I feel like if you just decide to get the \$30 jeans to the \$300 jeans, and you put the swag in those jeans and you style it the way that you feel like it makes you feel valuable? Then the other day, it is valuable.



## Interview with Shelton

JB: What do you know about Hip-hop Fashion?

SJ: I know that it's a major part of how artists present themselves in present day and back in other eras of hip-hop. I also know that hip-hop Fashion has made its way into other areas regarding fashion.

JB: Do you think that Hip-hop Culture is part of Black and Latino Culture?

SJ: I think hip-hop is a huge part of black culture and Latino culture. I feel as tho that music was made for people of color by people of color and that's what makes it so different from any other musical genre. It is finally one that we can call our own.

JB: Why do you think hip-hop fans want to wear the same designer clothes as the rappers they see on tv?

SJ: Honestly, I feel as though it brings them closer to the artist. It kind of creates this sense of I can relate to them thru fashion even if we've never actually met. I also feel like in between that it allows fans to feel as tho they're one step closer to being in the shoes of the artist.

JB: Has Hip-hop Fashion Played a big part in your life?

SJ: Most def. I feel like as an artist and as a fan especially hip-hop fashion has proven to be an extremely large factor in how I present myself. Hip-hop fashion has been around since I was a toddler, with my mom first really introducing me to it, so I've been able to not just study and gain deeper appreciation for it, but I've also been able to take it and make it my own in a way. It definitely has changed the way that I see the world of fashion as a whole.

JB: What do you wear to make you feel great inside and outside?

SJ: Anything that truly embraces who I am as person along with what my brand represents feel me. I really like to wear stuff that is raw, sexy, and street. **My mom always taught me that it's important to keep a realness within your fashion and being able to look in the mirror day in and day out to see that I've stayed true to that is generally fulfilling.**

JB: How does the clothes you wear fit into your personality?

SJ: **The clothes I wear are very vibrant, very eccentric, and very out there. I think my clothes make a statement and make impact which I believe my personality does.** My outfits are also very flawed. I don't believe anyone is truly flawless and try to articulate that thru clothing.

JB: Do you follow any clothing trends and how do you feel about it?

SJ: Not really, I don't really follow what's trendy

JB: As an African American Do you need designer clothes to put value on yourself if yes or no explain?

SJ: I'd say no. I didn't grow up with much, I grew up having to watch other kids get **designer clothes while I was getting my shit from Cookies but after a while, I begin to notice how stereotypical and basic it was to drench yourself in designer drip.** **You're literally wearing the same thing as everyone else and trying to flex it at the same time, in my world that's not how that works.** **Don't get me wrong I think designer clothing is absolutely stunning, but I feel like if anything brings your value down, it makes you basic, it makes u fit the stereotype.** So, I vowed to never wear what other ppl were wearing and for that reason I only shop in places such as thrift shops, places that can get me rare clothing that embodies my character and my energy, not the character and energy of this generation.

## Interview with Maholy

1.JB: What do you know about Hip-hop Fashion?

MP: Hip-hop fashion nowadays is inspired by popular brands like GUCCI, Prada, Dior, etc.

Fancy heavy jewelry like gold chains and diamond rings are also essential to hip-hop fashion.

Sometimes, hip-hop artists nowadays also use inspiration from artists back in the 80s/90s. Take Tupac as an example. Notorious BIG, Jay Z, Snoop Dog, and many more. Many artists from back in the day had a special type of fashion that continues to shine to this day.

2.JB: Do you think that Hip-hop Culture is part of Black and Latino Culture?

MP: Yes, I believe hip-hop culture is a part of black and Latino culture. Reason is because of its roots and songs inspired by issues that occur in black and Latin communities.

3.JB: Why do you think hip-hop fans want to wear the same designer clothes as the rappers they see on tv?

MP: I feel like because of the many stereotypes labeled on POC teens, they want to look a certain way to avoid being labeled as “broke” or “lame”. For example, A young high school boy who works part time to earn money ends up spending all his savings on Nike shoes, Gucci belts and gold chains. These are thing hip-hop rappers wear because they have the money. The teen on the other hand does not and is only spending to look cool and seek validation.

4.JB: Has hip-hop Fashion Played a big part in your life?

MP: Hip-hop fashion played a part of my life as a teen because I wanted nice shoes and cool clothes. But once I became an adult, that changed.

5.JB: What do you wear to make you feel great inside and outside?

MP: Inside, I like to wear comfy clothes like hoodies and sweats. Outside, I like to wear fitted tops and baggy pants. I also like body con outfits when I feel extra good about myself.

6.JB: How does the clothes you wear fit into your personality?

MP: As a person with an enthusiastic and calm personality, I tend to do many things at once. So I need clothes that help me move around and give off a vibe that shows I'm comfortable with what I have. If that makes sense.

7.JB: Do you follow any clothing trends and how do you feel about it?

MP: At the moment, I like the flare pants and tube top trend. I feel really good about it

8.JB: As an African American or Latino American Do you need designer clothes to put value on yourself if yes or no explain?

MP: I absolutely don't need designer clothes to express myself. And it's not even cuz of the money. I believe that as long as I stick to my beliefs and have pride in my identity, I don't need expensive clothes to prove to society.

### Analysis

After I interviewed the people I chose, I read each response and color coded them. Each one of them had shared their experiences with hip-hop and hip-hop fashion and shared what they wear on a regular basis. Each one of them had hip-hop fashion play a big part in their life. They shared experiences like being inspired by hip-hop artists, the clothes people around them wear during the time, and more.

When I asked what clothes, they wear that makes them feel good on the inside and out, three out of four (75%), Khalil, Na'tassia and Maholy, talked about the type of shoes they wore when they talked about hip-hop fashion across all the questions.

Two out of four (50%), Khalil and Shelton, talked about how the clothes they wear embraces who they are when I asked them to do the clothes, they wear fit into their personality.

When the question was asked about designer clothes making people feel valuable, 25% which was only Shelton talked about how designer clothes are stunning but wearing too much designer clothes can bring your value down because you can fit into the stereotype.

This answer was from the same question about wearing designer clothes to make someone feel value as a person of color, 25% which was Na'tassia talked about how a \$30 pair of pants and a \$300 pair of pants can be the same exact pants, but the \$300 pants have a label on it. This proves that people are not buying the pants, they are buying the brand or logo that is on the pants.

From reading all of these responses I can say that all 100% shared the same thoughts on wearing designer clothes. They talked about African Americans or Latin Americans saying that they don't need designer clothes to feel valuable.

They all talked about how most African Americans tend to wear designer clothes to get attention from other people and to feel like they have more money than them.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

Now the evidence is put together from sources and the interviews, African Americans are the leading group of materialism and conspicuous consumption because they want to feel validated from obtaining luxury items. They are pushing themselves from the stereotypes of black people being poor. Hip-hop Fashion has impacted society by being globally accepted. Hip-hop fashion is a way to express yourself, your creativity and to speak on political views. Hip-hop fashion was created by black people, and it became a style everyone can obtain worldwide. It helped people become creative and build self-confidence.

People are buying them from brands, and they are generating significant amounts of revenue off of a style that was originally shunned. Adidas, Jimmy Jazz, Footlocker, Nike and etc is where everyone shops to buy hip-hop based clothes. Clothes like sneakers, fitted caps, bucket hats, graphic T shirts, ripped jeans, sweatpants and other flashy accessories. Collectively these brands make billions of dollars. Outside, you will see ads on billboards of models wearing the latest hip-hop fashion and it makes people want to buy them. Specifically, when you walk around New York City you will see the youth especially the black youth wear the latest hip-hop clothes. When they wear it they feel comfortable.

Hip-hop Fashion became something that all people of color can wear and express who they are inside. All the participants said no the question, “As an African American do you need designer clothes to put value on yourself?” Some felt the clothing either lowers their own “value” and made them fit into stereotypes. They all said that what makes you valuable is your

confidence in yourself, self-belief and your character. The participants of this Capstone know how popular designer clothes are, but they don't want to fit into the group of buying them because they will be just like everyone else. In this generation the youth want designer clothes to feel self-value and validated but when they don't have it, they feel left out. It is all about fitting in and the participants don't want to fit in to that because they already have value in themselves. In conclusion, this research proposal sheds light to the fact "hip-hop fashion", African Americans being the number one consumers of conspicuous consumption and the idea of materialism requires a new age of thinking and understanding. Furthermore, the way in which Blacks purchase material items is more of a cultural expression of who they are. Regardless of if it is rooted escaping the idea of wanting to be validated by their white counterparts.

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