

[FADE IN]

(fade in to images of Emmaatan shot, Teen Vogue shot, and Fashion Bomb Daily shot.)

[FADE OUT]

[FADE IN]

ASHLEY

Am I the only one that's pissed right now?

(Smiles sarcastically)

Let me not be rude. Hello hello hello to everyone watching. My name is Ashley and this will be my first YouTube video. There has been so much talk about cultural appropriation in the past few months and I am very ready to join the debate. In recent months, the African American community has been outraged by the many ways their culture and history have been shamed and mimicked in mainstream media. From Rachel Dolezal's portrayal of "Blackness", the creation of bantu knots being credited to Marc Jacobs as "twisted mini buns", cornrows going from unprofessional to edgy, and the twist out being coined as a "rope trick", many are taking to social media to express their absolute disgust at the colonization or appropriation of Black culture.

ASHLEY

(laughs) I'm trying so hard to not laugh. I can't believe this. Appropriation, as defined by teen actress Amandla Stenberg [QUOTE] occurs when a style leads to racist generalizations or stereotypes where it originated but is deemed as high fashion, cool or funny when the privileged take it for themselves. Appropriation occurs when the appropriator is not aware of the deep significance of the culture they are partaking in. [END QUOTE]

There is a fine line between appropriating and appreciating Black culture and that line is crossed and often ignored.

So I'm going to address the question that everyone is asking and that's

Why the Uproar?

To many this may seem like a trivial but to those that are on the receiving end of appropriation, this is disrespectful. A common claim is that appropriation pushes the unspoken feeling that as African Americans, the things that are a part of our culture are more acceptable when used by others.

When *Allure* magazine offered advice on how to achieve a [QUOTE] loose Afro [END QUOTE], it was not received well when two years before a 12-year-old Florida student faced expulsion for what was described as [QUOTE] distracting [END

QUOTE] hair. Why is it that what is natural to a group of people is penalized but acceptable when replicated?

On February 16, 2016, *Teen Vogue* posted an article to their site that eloquently summarized the basis of this issue on a platform that is widely respected.

[QUOTE] Which brings us back to Jenner's ponytail. Folks aren't upset about the style itself, but rather Jenner's use of Yaki, a type of synthetic hair used almost exclusively by black girls all over the globe for braiding, and her continual reliance on black style and culture without the burden (and responsibility) of actually being black. [END QUOTE],

To say there is an issue to cultural appropriation is to say that there is an end to cultural fusion. The community is not asking to have ownership over the many things that make them who they are. All that is being requested is the ability to have the pieces of their lifestyle appreciated. I'll end with the words of Stenberg because they summarize the situation perfectly,

[INSERT AMANDLA STENBERG CLIP]