

Cultural Appropriation Frameworks: Comparative Analyses across Art Forms and Regions

Neema Amani U.

Faculty of Business and Management Kampala International University Uganda

ABSTRACT

This study examines cultural appropriation frameworks through a comparative analysis of visual arts, performing arts, music, and literature across diverse regional contexts. It interrogates the complex relationship between cultural hybridity and appropriation, emphasizing how power asymmetries, historical inequalities, and globalized cultural flows shape artistic production and interpretation. By situating appropriation within colonial and postcolonial dynamics, the study highlights how dominant cultures often extract, commodify, and recontextualize elements from marginalized communities without adequate recognition or reciprocity. The paper further evaluates how different art forms negotiate authorship, authenticity, and representation, revealing that appropriation is not a fixed category but a spectrum influenced by intent, context, and impact. Through interdisciplinary and comparative methodologies, the study underscores the importance of ethical engagement, community collaboration, and culturally sensitive frameworks in mitigating harm. It also identifies key limitations in existing models, including overreliance on binary power structures and insufficient attention to co-creative and digital practices. Ultimately, the study proposes a more nuanced, reflexive framework that balances creative exchange with accountability, contributing to ongoing debates on cultural ownership, equity, and the future of global cultural production.

Keywords: Cultural appropriation, hybridity, power representation, and ethics.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship across cultures suggests the mutually entwined topics of cultural hybridity and cultural appropriation. Hybridity, the mixing of diverse elements, offers a positive means of acknowledging diverse influences [1]. Greater awareness of conscious appropriation, stylistic-only borrowing, replication, or facsimile exposes inequitable power relations, exploitation, voicelessness, and widespread invisibility [2]. Appreciative cross-cultural borrowing, neither syncretism nor homage, remains, however, a legitimate act, as is conscious imitation or parody of another's culture [3]. Investigating approaches to these topics across the disciplines of visual art, performance art, music, and literature/media, this analysis reveals the pervasiveness of the issues involved. Even in European perfumery or American popular music, assemblage, carefully selected diverse elements appropriated from other cultural traditions remains central, precisely because it so often eludes attribution. Cultural appropriation itself is therefore invariably coupled with challenges to authenticity and ownership [4]. The analytical frameworks used in the examination of these cultural modes differ considerably. With painting and sculpture, engagement with the global north/global south dialectic prevails, exploring the legacies of colonialism and how they shape the avenues available to artists now [5]. In performance art including theatre, dance, and opera the notion of autochthonous, non-appropriative performance regularly emerges alongside the questioning, appropriation, and hybridization of the previously established. The illustrated narrative album has, in the regions studied, a distinctive lineage that of necessity includes the reception of derivative or imitative modes. In popular music emphasizing vernacular genres rather than the classical canon focus shifts instead to the perceived

legitimacy of the tacit intertextuality woven into homage, quotation, sampling, and adaptation. Here, too, the vernacular strains of the entire art form nevertheless serve as a critical backdrop [1].

Theoretical Foundations of Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation occurs when a dominant culture adopts elements of a marginalized culture without permission, often misrepresenting or commodifying the original meaning and context [1]. These appropriations carry different implications depending on the cultures involved. For example, a white artist appropriating an Indigenous style is likely to cause more damage than if the roles are reversed, as the former controls broader power structures and access to audiences; likewise, an artist of a non-Black ethnic background, such as Latina or Middle Eastern, borrowing from Black culture seems more socially complex than an artist who shares such ancestry [2]. Definitions of cultural appropriation often invoke a power dynamic, implicating appropriation as a harmful practice that ignores relations of systemic domination, hegemony, or exploitation. Many cultural appropriation definitions also invoke authenticity, claiming that genuine engagement requires sustained, authentic relationships and participation within certain forms of expression [3]. Outside such social boundary-markers, engagement instead represents appropriation, disqualification, or imitation. Flowers build on cross-cultural visual studies to interrogate power relations in art, leading to a matter of representation that links reception, reception theory, and appropriation [1, 2].

Definitions and Boundaries

Cultural appropriation involves the unauthorised or unacknowledged use of cultural elements from a particular culture, often by members of another culture with greater power [3]. Cultural appropriation can be defined as a form of cultural exchange in which a substantial power imbalance or violation of intergroup trust is present [3]. Using cultural elements that are associated with a marginalised culture for novelty, fun, or aesthetic purposes may not constitute appropriation if the usage is characterised by a strong endorsement of that culture [4]. The elasticity of the concept leads to a suspicion that it is used inappropriately for other types of cultural exchange. Cases of substantial cultural similarity have at times gone without complaint. In protest movements, cultural observances, snatches of "ghetto" creativity, and usages that endorse marginal cultures may invite no objection at all [5].

Power, Representation, and Authorship

The nuanced power dynamics surrounding cultural appropriation mean that ownership and representation are not always straightforward and depend on context [3]. Representation often invokes questions of social authority [5]. Appropriation centred on marginalised groups may constitute resistance or solidarity [4]. For example, postcolonial artists may find a liberating potential in colonial images and symbols [6]. Appropriation or adaptation of minoritised cultural forms by those possessing dominant social status raises additional issues of social legitimacy [2]. Authorship and "the original" can also assume different significances. In some Indigenous and diasporic practices, the notion of a singular artist or work bears little or no relevance. Rather, creative use of artefacts may arise from shared knowledge of their distinctive histories and accompanying intertextual dimensions [5].

Ethics and Ownership in Cultural Exchange

Dominant cultures have appropriated ideas, inventions, and artefacts from non-dominant cultures as a continuum of exchange since antiquity. One traveller appropriated a foreign idea without having a grasp for its underlying concept [3]. A second appropriator performed a translation respecting the original conceptual framework; the idea was reintegrated into the first culture. A third traveller invented a local version employing the same conceptual approach and formal style without any stock of samples from the source culture [4]. The timeline draws attention to the notion of exchange both in time, through cultural transmission in diasporas or by archaeological means, and in space, as much between neighbouring cultures as those further afield [5]. Cultural appropriation occurs when a dominant group appropriates from a non-dominant group without permission. A monocultural settler minority appropriates from an indigenous minority yet both enacted steps of cultural exchange, but no predatory exchange was observed among previous groups [6]. In the past non-modern groups or non-Western societies "with low degrees of culture" did not visibly and clearly engage in stages of cultural exchange, précis of some broad-source written report based on known typologies of material culture, figurative or cosmological thought system. The same report claims that the indigenous New Orleans Creole French language merging classical French finding a common ground among three widely divergent abstracts that had nothing in common suggests a process of cultural exchange rather than one of simply appropriation [6]. Dominant cultures often harvest from non-dominant ones, yet a third dimension was photographed. In the world dominated by one civilization and capitalism some once-migratory groups settled down and became, together with indigenous minorities, economically and technologically stagnant. Cultural exchanges occurred as one ideology supplanted another from once the counterpart ideological array. Cultural appropriation is relativity and interconnected to many factors [7]. The foremost character is colonialism. Colonialism would surpass the preceding monopoly of ideological apparatus and mineralled circulation through and by control of raw material deposits among neighbouring and likewise

underdeveloped and decolonized regions around continents by capitalist-urbanised and third-world- country-label maneuvering, and laid down activity mechanisms [4].

Frameworks across Art Forms

The Western visual arts have been dominated by two competing traditions, namely the 'fine art' and 'commercial art' traditions [4]. Within both traditions, artists have exchanged images, ideas, and techniques for centuries. However, they have often reacted sharply to borrowing from outside particular artistic cultures or styles. Such reaction is often based upon the politics of racism and imperialism that is considered to nourish cultural appropriation [5]. Within the 'fine art' tradition, artistic avant-gardes have spontaneously borrowed from a wide variety of artistic styles regardless of culture, and consequently, several major works of the last two centuries have emerged from such artistic cross-fertilization [7]. The Western tradition of popular music arose during the mid-twentieth century. From its beginning, it has borrowed heavily from other musical idioms and traditions, especially Black idioms. During the 1980s, a political discourse of cultural appropriation arose concerning the position of Black people in society and the limits of White artistic expression [8]. During the 1990s, as hip-hop grew into the dominant style of popular music, a counter-discourse emerged asserting that a variety of genres of music, specifically including hip-hop, could not be appropriated. Instead, it insisted that hip-hop could be legitimately deployed in oppositional ways by Wedge Artists people whose lives, in their opinion, if not their material circumstance, conformed to the experience conveyed in hip-hop and rap [2].

Visual Arts

Cultural appropriation and cultural sharing have become contentious global debates, in which art plays a significant part. Cultural appropriation relates to power imbalances, stereotypes, discrimination, and inequitable use of cultural forms; it is exacerbated in cases of cultural exchange in a colonial context, and the presence of intermediary agents often complicates understanding [4]. Comparatively, cultural sharing maintains the creative achievements associated with cultural forms, promotes cross-cultural respect, and does not rely on privileged access to appreciate works that exhibit particular cultural lifestyles [5]. Cultural appropriation focuses on a specific sociocultural context at the intersection of art and other domains; it raises questions regarding the meaning of appropriation and the influence of artistic cross-fertilization on trends like outsider art and hybrid practice [4]. The recent emergence of art happening outside established cultural centers is a response to the persistence of Eurocentrism that continues to extend its influence over regions labelled peripheral or dominated within the global art discourse [5]. Now that transnational influences are hybridizing both art practice and artefacts, how cultural exchange is framed remains critical [6]. Cultural appropriation conventionally refers to the observation that when artistic mediation transgresses the boundaries of regions, peoples, and cultures, the underlying cultural forms often reciprocally undergo transformation through that very mediation [7]. Appropriation is the acquired cognition of diaphanous traces that intervene and alter the process of artistic production; it is not synonymous with quotation, citation, or other kinds of transference of pre-existing contents from one situation to another through acts of transcription, stylization, and imitation [8]. Non-white cultures have for centuries transformed, intermingled, and borrowed from outside influences; non-Eurocentric traditions often articulate and represent the colonizing cultures that displace them [8].

Performing Arts

"Popular cultures involve myriad global exchanges that occur between or within states, yet many aspiring practitioners remain unaware of this context [8]. Access to cultural resources is rarely equal, frequently becoming a battleground for power and intercultural dialogue. Exchanges constantly characterize the relationship between Afro-American and Asian music in North America, or between the Arab world and the West" [9].

Music

In music, one of the most discussed instances of cultural appropriation in commercial contexts is the introduction of popular R&B/ hip-hop acts to the Latin pop/urban mainstream. The emergence of reggaeton a Jamaican-style dancehall beat supported by hip-hop elements was in this sense an organic process. With major player Bad Bunny producing reggaeton remix collaborations with diverse non-Latin artists, the format's position in the vanguard of Latin urban music remains solid [10]. In relation to the discussion of margin-centre manifestations, there is the question of Black music culture in the wake of the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement, with particular ramifications in Europe pertaining to rap [11]. The recovery of respect for the shoulder-shrug role of artists like Stromae, albeit primarily in visual terms at once suffices and does not suffice [12]. The top-down Wiring-Graph approach tracks from the regional ensemble to the centre of capella; yet an attempt to bring middle English, polyphony, French, and Italian into the discussion remains presently beside the point [13]. A further line of argumentation addresses postcolonial-critical and hybrid-creative tendencies. Clearly, much Asian urban music is now to be seen influencing Spanish collaborative formats exiting British/German/French terrains [14].

Literature and Media

Cultural appropriation in literature and media is generally understood as the adoption of different scripts, discourses, genres, forms, practices, or materials from variety of sources [7]. In the 1900s, realist literature

attracted much from Asian culture. Then poetry shifted to spontaneous adaptation of haiku and Chinese forms. More recently and simultaneously, the rise of the cyber-world initiated the play with self-generated media, multiplicity, and fragmented sources [8]. Cultural Sustainability emerges in the midst of trans-historical and trans-geographical creative practices with the assumption that diversity fosters originality. For instance, both vocabulary and prosody of the sung poetry sung by poet-translator from culture A, are scrupulously retained in the recipient language [2, 9].

Regional Perspectives and Case Studies

Artistic appropriation occurs in many regions and situations worldwide, in a wide variety of art forms. This section examines the cultural, geographical and contextual factors that underpin specific manifestations of this phenomenon, based both on conceptual projects and regional case studies [10]. Reinvigorated global debates on cultural appropriation often suggest an East-West parallel [11]. Postcolonial scholarship similarly notes the tensions generated amid global flows of transplanted vernacular informatics [1]. In contrast, categories derived from local vernacular understandings can map cross-border regional circuits, shifting attention towards cultural and economic inequities in global walks of life, as distinct from artistic métissage, hybridité or intercultural dialogue [12]. Such dialogues frame appropriation not only as a global North-South issue but also as a concern between Indigenous and other local communities dependent on multinational corporative systems [13]. Finally, case studies drawn from indigenous, Eastern and post-colonial interactions permit the tracing of appropriation's ethical patterns, variation modes, and cross-disciplinary correlations across the visual, performative and literary fields [14].

Global North and Global South Dialogues

Power dynamics among and within cultural institutions and creative industries, which reproduced colonial and postcolonial legacies of exclusion and exploitation, continue to shape contemporary cultural production, funding, redistribution, admission, visibility, and circulation [4]. Transnational cultural production and distribution networks such as the music and visual arts industries were dominated for decades by an increasingly oligopolistic set of multinational companies headquartered in the Global North [5]. These networks, which shaped global systems of knowledge production, were out of reach for most creators based in the Global South, both when creation took place in the Global North and when Global North appropriators took from Global South sources without involvement by the original creators [6]. Such one-way, exploitative extractive flows prompted the recognition, particularly from the Global South, of the appropriation of cultural resources by Global North creators from Global South sources initiated before colonialism and continuing afterwards. Significant cultural frameworks, movements, and genres recognized as originating in specific Global South locales were nevertheless designated as “world music,” “folklore,” “traditional music,” or “ethnic music” by Global North cultural authorities, further undermined agency in how cultural recounts were determined [7].

Indigenous and Local Livelihoods

Historically, many Indigenous peoples have been dispossessed of their lands, languages, cultural resources, and political autonomy by colonial regimes that viewed Indigenous livelihoods as a barrier to development and economic growth [6]. Despite the emergence of multiple international efforts to support the restoration and revitalization of lost Indigenous cultural heritage, many Indigenous artists still find their artworks are appropriated by non-Indigenous individuals without permission or negotiation, which undermines their efforts to restore and revitalize their culture [7, 12]. The ongoing, although often neglected, debate concerning the commodification of Indigenous culture continues to highlight the complexities of this issue [8]. In settler-colonial contexts, appropriation of Indigenous cultural heritage by the dominant culture has been documented for over a century [9]. For instance, the beads used in beadwork are often made in China; Indigenous fabric designs and other beadwork projects were profitably adopted by settler artisans and are often taught in settler-colonial arts programs as traditional Indigenous art forms without acknowledgment or compensation; and publications on Indigenous art often refer to “art” instead of “Indigenous art” when the original works have little connection to the original (traditional) cultures and further highlights the non-acknowledgment of the original creators and the Indigenous nature of those works [4,10].

Postcolonial and Globalized Contexts

The debate has broadened and deepened since the postcolonial moment in the wake of decolonization movements of the 1950–1970s [5]. Interrogation has shifted from whether such practices are inherently bad to gauging their benefit and advocating or contesting more widespread use [5]. Scholarship frames globalized contexts in varied ways, with lexicons ranging from “cultural appropriation” to “intercultural exchange,” “influence,” “hybridity,” and “remix” [6]. Such consideration finds prominent spaces in Black, Indigenous, and diaspora studies across disciplines. The field draws from sociohistorical and analytical frameworks, along with latent European and United States imperial architectures, to pair newly minted genres and artistic movements with settler-colonial and postimperial histories [6]. Canadian inquiry in a postcolonial network likewise resonates in discussions of migration and diasporas engendered by settler-colonial displacements [5].

Comparative Methodologies

Cross-cultural comparisons avoid regional biases that may misrepresent cultures as produced by or for specific ethnicities [5]. An interdisciplinary framework encompasses visual art, literature, music practice and advanced technologies. The impact and reception of works may also be assessed through the scope of appropriation and creativity, through analysis of power and mutual influences [6]. Narrative genres, expression modes, and authorship spectrums shape cross-regional cultural appropriation reception and support comparative research across geographic borders [7].

Interdisciplinary Approaches

Processes of exchange and hybridization are examined across disciplines. The notion of appropriation is examined through a series of lens, considering the interplay between personal identity and the social and collective network associated with cultural reference [8]. Social media documentation illustrates how standard across disciplines such as music, fashion and visual art, underscore how borrowed elements from other cultural references, often perceived, are visually recognized as an important formative stage within an appropriation process [9].

Metrics of Impact and Reception

Cultural organizations attempt to measure the impact and audiences for cultural investments, forming the basis for some cultural-appropriation research [10]. Arts access warrants consideration beyond spatial indicators of demand, as well as art types and environment [13]. Enriching the appropriation framework calls for exploratory studies of art encounter impact and consumer experience, drawing on the notion of the appropriation cycle [14]. Despite limited focus on broadly defined cultural exchange, the cycle posits that cultural elements pass through phases of appreciation, possession, and diffusion, creating implications for cultural-appropriation scenarios across artistic fields [15]. Elements from the appropriation cycle recognizing, valuing, and confessing to describe informing elements elucidate the consumer-art relationship, art in society, and social-art appreciation [16].

Narratives, Power, and Reception Studies

The concept of reception has evolved through a multitude of overlapping configurations, and approaches to reception are informed by narrative and the accompanied structures of power in a web of cross-cultural engagements [10]. Formidable thinkers such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel de Certeau, and Homi Bhabha theorize how narratives, genre, and representation mediate cultural encounters [11]. Bakhtin foregrounds the open-endedness of narrative as a critical response to authoritarian discourses establishing a philosophical foundation for the polemics between appropriation and collaboration [12]. Interrogating inter-relational power, Bhabha's notion of mimicry reveals how colonial subjectivity is articulated through the dissembling of authority: the master's shifting presence becomes a counternarrative of dislocation and displacement. Bhabha also elucidates postcolonial negotiation of the archive, emphasizing its open, contingent, and incomplete states that serve as counter-evidence to the master-narrative of colonial experience [6]. Approaches and methodologies for the reception of artistic works engage the 'social dimensions of art-making and art-works' rather than the self-referential focus on intrinsic, aesthetic qualities prevalent in avant-garde artistic practices [7]. Reception studies of art are also aligned with conceptions of 'intermediality'. Reception as an axiom, a programme, and a critical discourse, spans media art, sonic practices, performance, literature, exhibitions, theatre, television, and media culture [15].

Contested Practices: Boundaries, Hybridity, and Innovation

Artistic practice remains as hybrid as ever, and new cultural forms continually emerge at the intersections of cultural influences [15]. Indeed, many forms of artistic expression rely on remixing existing cultural material, drawing fluidly from diverse traditions. Hybrid practices such as these are celebrated in many contexts as signature characteristics of innovation and creativity [16], which might suggest a lower risk of cultural appropriation. At the same time, practitioners emphasize that cultural hybridity and cross-fertilization, although fundamentally creative, do not automatically shield works from appropriation concerns [17]. Many ongoing debates centre on the nature of innovative hybridization itself, and how it relates to wider appropriation concerns. Artists continue to pose fundamental questions about ownership, dignity, and respect, even at the heart of creative experimentation [18].

Hybridity as Creative Practice

Hybridisation, an inherently creative practice, is employed throughout the creation of artistic works utilising materials and ideas from multiple cultures [17]. Popularised by the arts disciplines, the term has entered common use in many settings. Hybridity overcomes boundaries: between the form of the work, between materials and techniques, and between cultural traditions, looking for valuable and useful interactions [18]. Opening to the unfamiliar brings a new dimension to the creative process, prompting interaction with uncertainties, miscommunications, and surprises. Hybridity addressing national cultural identities adds a reflexive layer, inviting examination of one's own position, localisation of modernity, and the interplay between national and global influences [19].

Appropriation, Adaptation, and Transformation

Cultural transformation involves taking an existing work and expanding upon it to create something new, a kind of authentic engagement. Activities informed by or directed at existing works can complement and extend rather than stifle [19]. Encounters with the works of others may propagate assumptions, preconceptions, or conventions that diminish the integrity of new creations. Authorities and sponsors impose preconditions, terminology, and categories that characterize, constrain, and commodify innovations across many cultural realms [20]. Even with the best of intentions, these practices retain vestiges that echo industrial era, modernist, imperial, and colonial distinctions of “high” versus “low,” “popular,” or “low” art; folk, craft, or “indigenous” production; reproducible or commodifiable work; an most egregiously value judgements based on the geographical or cultural origins of the artist [4]. Transformation describes significant or integrative engagements countering homogeneity, standardization, and alienation. Cross-cutting theoretical and practical frameworks reveal the agency and challenges motivating trans-cultural inter-change, and the complex interplay of global-local and national-international stimuli [21]. The trans-national reception and insertion of cultural materials and forms, concomitant national infonatures, and geopolitical reconfigurations prompting reciprocal migration and creative flows mitigate one-way transmission and exchange, diffusion, and other commonly-advocated modes of transfer [22].

Commercialization and Cultural Ownership

Cultural production and the resulting dissemination of ideas can be seen as vehicles toward cultural enrichment and emancipation [5]. However, a line exists between straightforward borrowing of ideas across cultures and appropriation; thus, appropriation implies the exploitation of human creativity for economic gain [4]. Depending on the context, assimilation into a new culture may be understood as appropriation of the originating culture [6]. When societies are unequal in power and resources, the acquisition of the cultural currency of the more powerful is emboldened, despite its distance from ownership in the conventional sense [7]. Examples of this appropriation-through-assimilation abound in popular culture, from the Beatles and Bossa Nova to Van Halen and Rock Mbalax, reflecting the pull of mainstream culture without ownership and resulting in the nullification of mainstream appeal 2. The cross-national material, metaphysical, and symbolic flows that characterize globalization can be viewed as the cultural substitute for economic neocolonialism, supplanted by marketing strategies for corporate profit [8].

Policy, Institutions, and Public Dialogue

Cultural appropriation takes place in a context of asymmetric power relations shaped by historical, social, economic, and political forces and where the right of self-representation, or the freedom to participate in the creation of one’s own story, stands at the center [8]. State policy remains a central reference point [9]. Specific national and institutional creative policies influence the sharing of cultural traits across artistic disciplines. The complexity of public policy objectives, schisms between policy fields, and the limited crystallization of popular cultural practices around cultural policy tend to limit the debate on cultural appropriation [19].

Museum and Gallery Practices

Cultural institutions, particularly museums and galleries, play a vital role in articulating cultural exchange and fostering intercultural dialogue [9]. Such institutions are simultaneously responsible for the procurement, exhibition, and mediation of artefacts that document the past while inspiring present-day creative agents [10]. Curation embodies an appropriation exercise pervaded with ideas regarding ownership, authority, and power that intersect with histories of colonisation and with contemporary public discourse regarding the transfer and display of culture and identity [11]. Specific issues arise when institutions encounter problems linked to the appropriated nature of their own collections. The circulation through cultural markets of materials and expressions resembling private languages of specific ethnic groups has been identified as appropriation; yet specific guidance remains elusive with respect to when and how such materials may circulate, mitigating potential harm [20, 14].

Copyright, Law, and Community Rights

Cultural appropriation of cultural works can take different forms; it can involve the alteration, transformation, or combination of existing works, sometimes to the extent that the original is no longer recognisable [8]. In the context of cultural appropriation, other forms of art do not fall under the term of using a pre-existing work per se, but rather involve imitating, parodying, or “pastiche,” acts that often create controversy [9]. Copyright systems, particularly in the Global North, occasionally criminalise the extended usage of pre-existing work, while the art itself draws inspiration from a multitude of sources and continually adds to an ever-growing body of work [10]. A culturally sensitive copyright approach could counteract cultural appropriation by expanding existing legal frameworks to acknowledge cultural ownership and a broader view of transformation [11]. In some jurisdictions, legislation proposes right for sovereign nations, particularly Indigenous Peoples, to protect their heritage. Acts that are permissible today might be regarded as cultural appropriation in the eyes of the community [21]. A sample situation in the art of porcelain illustrates a continually growing body of work; a collector, when asking a well-known artist of porcelain to create a piece for an exhibition, received a refusal to work on resist or transfer decoration [12,13]. The particular collector at the time had purchased items from other artists that emphasised decoration on already established porcelain forms, covering up the execution. The implementation of a wider

viewpoint of protective rights sought and endorsed encourages growth of cultural appropriation, while arresting (or limiting) cultural appropriation also allows flourishing of creative activity [14, 15].

Education, Media Literacy, and Public Accountability

Culturally and politically charged identities traverse tensions between individual and collective ownership, legitimate and illegitimate use, wickedness and virtue, safeguarding immunities against harm, misappropriation, or inequity, and constructing surplus value and welfare [11]. As different as these scenarios are, all face the evolving composition of culture, the dissemination of representation and symbolism geographically across ever-extended communities, and the emergence of identity-first imaginaries regarding the meaning, character, and politics of culture [22]. They centre variously on ownership, representation and likeness, taste, rights, legitimacy, honour, risk, ethics, representation, publicity and accountability, and individual, institutional, community and group liabilities [12]. Questions concerning the claims and practices of political or ethical correctness and accountability increasingly gather urgency across the educational, informatics, media and technological spectrum [13]. Political correctness encompasses a broad array of terms, expressions, behaviours, representations and viewpoints, and allied activities, norms and practices that are subjected to surveillance, monitoring, control or guidance at institutional and ambient levels [14]. Such practices target what Stuart Hall termed the “regulatory possession of signs” and the question of who produces or controls representations of whom, representing claims, demands, and difficulties originating in social movements concerning race, nation, culture and of marginal or non-recognition where, and when, questions apply across a diverse array of colours, hues, stages and phases [15].

Methodological Reflections and Ethical Considerations

When approaching the cultural appropriation landscape, scholars must adopt a reflexive and ethically engaged posture [4]. For self-examination, the following questions can be posed: What is my positionality regarding culture, identity, and community? What are the limits of my knowledge concerning these aspects? Is it important to separate university and community identities? In what settings can my scholarship be presented? How will community members learn about undertakings, and how much knowledge do they desire beforehand? [14]. Scholars may co-develop frameworks and case studies with community members, fostering reciprocal intellectual enrichment (e.g., co-editing, soliciting input on research questions). To ensure understanding of sundry logics, uninvited appropriative endeavors should be avoided [14]. Community identification is not predetermined by demographic variables; outreach should consider shared creative practices and personal relations. As framing influences interpretation, community involvement in contouring the public presentation of material fosters a collective narrative [15, 16]. Lastly, where existing gatherings allow for sufficiently thorough community engagement to mitigate misappropriation, guidelines remain helpful. Guidelines varying in specificity and scope exist; many large-scale gatherings have devised their own. Overlap among applied guidelines is evident, yet discipline-based customization and adaptation for individual events remain beneficial [17].

Reflexivity and Positionality

Collaborating on research exploring frameworks for negotiating cultural appropriation across art forms, regions, and engagements, my contributions have included articulating theoretical foundations and comparative methodologies [4] and delivering a framework analysis for visual arts [18]. Attention has also been devoted to methodological reflections and ethical considerations surrounding positionality, co-creation, collaboration, and the limitations of cultural appropriation frameworks [19]. Theoretical engagement across the various publications has encompassed lensing reflexivity and positionality through perspectives provided on these themes by colleagues [20].

Co-creation and Community Collaboration

Collaborative approaches to creativity may open up opportunities for a more nuanced understanding of cultural appropriation in artistic practices [18]. Together with the growing number of frameworks analysing cultural appropriation in artistic its frameworks analyse cultural appropriation perspective of collaboration and co-creation emerges, notably in the fields of literature and music [19]. Practices of spontaneity, playfulness, and pleasure in reading, with artistic and social affinities the subjects of attention, address a growing interest in collaborative creative processes and co-creative conviviality [4]. Media and art forms facilitate this when creating, sharing, building, remixing, and sampling across different cultural contexts [18]. Remixed modes of co-creation have emerged within the music, literature, and visual art networks and proliferate via internet and mobile communication, often defying categorisation as appropriation [19]. Analysis of texting conversations, poetry, and drawings that circulate on social media indicates a growing body of creative work that co-creates and appropriates across cultural forms and materials, raising questions of when and why the boundary of appropriation is crossed. Empirical evidence and examples supporting the global conclusion about appropriation are scarce and no systematic comparisons integrating both the form of collaboration and the art form across co-creation [20].

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite advances in the establishment of cultural appropriation frameworks, significant limitations persist across represented art forms and regions, and much ground remains to be covered whether for the current frameworks to

reach a more comprehensive state, or for entirely new frameworks to emerge [20]. Cultural appropriation remains underexplored in the scholarship associated with visual art, and frameworks that have been developed exhibit a residual reliance on the power-based axes of access and exposure when addressing visual art [14]. A more thorough engagement with the bases of power, representation, and authorship associated with cultural appropriation is needed within the visual art domain [4]. Furthermore, there remains potential for the development of a music-focused cultural appropriation framework that transcends the mere examination of genres or stylistic elements [20]. Each art form further raises distinct challenges. The performing arts, literature, and media occupy intermediate positions, requiring better articulation of the appropriative relationship among individuals, communities, and cultures [21]. Sounding a further note of caution, several cultural appropriation frameworks circulate without acknowledgment of their own limitations. The ramifications of commercialization, community-based “ownership,” and collaborative creative processes are worthy of additional consideration alongside those addressed in the current frameworks, and collaborative bodies merit greater emphasis in analyses of national and transnational appropriative relationships [22].

CONCLUSION

Cultural appropriation remains a deeply contested and evolving concept shaped by historical, social, and economic inequalities across regions and artistic disciplines. This study demonstrates that while cultural exchange and hybridity are central to creative innovation, they do not inherently eliminate the risks of appropriation. Instead, the distinction lies in the presence or absence of equitable power relations, meaningful engagement, and respect for cultural origins. Across visual arts, performance, music, and literature, appropriation manifests differently but consistently raises questions of authorship, legitimacy, and representation. The analysis further reveals that global cultural systems, particularly those structured along Global North and Global South divides, continue to reproduce asymmetrical flows of influence, visibility, and profit. Indigenous and marginalized communities remain especially vulnerable to cultural extraction that undermines their agency and cultural sovereignty. At the same time, emerging practices of hybridity, remix, and co-creation complicate rigid definitions, calling for more flexible and context-sensitive frameworks. To address these challenges, scholars, practitioners, and institutions must adopt reflexive and ethically grounded approaches that prioritize consent, attribution, and collaboration. Legal and policy frameworks must also evolve to recognize collective cultural ownership and protect vulnerable cultural expressions. Ultimately, a sustainable approach to cultural production requires balancing openness to cross-cultural exchange with accountability to the communities from which cultural forms originate. By advancing more inclusive and nuanced frameworks, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural practices can evolve responsibly in an increasingly interconnected world.

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