

# THESIS |

Consumerism In Celebrity Culture

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Ideation and Process  
Hajra Ashraf



## Abstract

From the day we open our eyes in this world, our conditioning into becoming the 'Perfect human' begins. Society and its norms constantly shape us into the person we become, influencing not just our social choices but as well as personal choices. From the career path, we want to choose the kind of clothes we want to deck ourselves in, everything is affected by our surroundings. In my thesis, I am going to create a visualization of the whole system of consumerism that benefits from celebrity culture. My point is to show the people what goes on behind the scenes and how unconsciously, we all fall prey to capitalistic values brought to us by our favorite reality shows. My focus will be on the most prevalent and popular reality show watched worldwide; Keeping up with the Kardashians. It isn't about wrong or right, but it's about who benefits from all of this? And it's the capitalist. By manipulating into thinking that we need certain products in our life, they sell us useless luxury items that you can do perfectly fine without. And these capitalists put celebrities at the frontlines to promote and sell their products through a certain routine.

# Thesis Proposals / Ideas

## → Themes

### Politics

- Kashmir Issue
- feminism
- Wars
- Bengali War
- Economic / Taxes
- Education system
- Political Awareness
- Current Affairs
- Classism
- Minorities
- Corruption
- fundamental Rights
- freedom of speech
- United Nation
- Rights and Duties

### Philosophy

- Media Propoganda
- Lies?
- lifestyle
- toxic masculinity
- Social Medi
- MEMES
- Horoscope
- Senses
- smell - fragrance
- Palmistry
- Nostalgia
- fascinating things about skin
- Disturbing Images
- Hyper reality
- Artificial reality
- privacy
- over awareness/alerts
- losing morals
- Human Aura / Vibes / feelings
- Social Anxiety
- Why are we materialistic
- Appropriation
- Light Placement
- Questioning Everything
- Ignorance is bless
- catfish
- Communicat gap
- What is perfect? / Raw

### Art/Craft

- Renaissance Painting
- Everything starts from abstraction
- miniature Painting
- Candle making
- Minimalism
- Body Anatomy
- Expressions
- STROKES
- Lines
- Digital Drawing
- Manual Drawing
- Ceramic / pottery / Clay
- Stamps
- postcards
- colour psychology

### Culture

- Indus Valley Civilization
- Mughals
- What is Desi?
- Traditions
- Body Perfection
- Mindset
- Folk stories
- folk songs / qawwalis
- Myths / superstition
- polo / horses
- Identity?
- colonized
- Brown history
- powerful / inspiring women
- Tribal system
- patriarchy
- racism
- Board games
- festivals
- language / poetry
- Babuksha Dolls
- generation gap

### Environment

- Climate change
- Natural Disaster
- Organic living
- wild life
- Plastic
- Solarpunk
- noise pollution
- aroma / smell
- wanderer
- Nature is telling us
- Dust
- peaceful place

# Key Points

Communication

- media
- biasness
- direct communication
- gaps

Culture

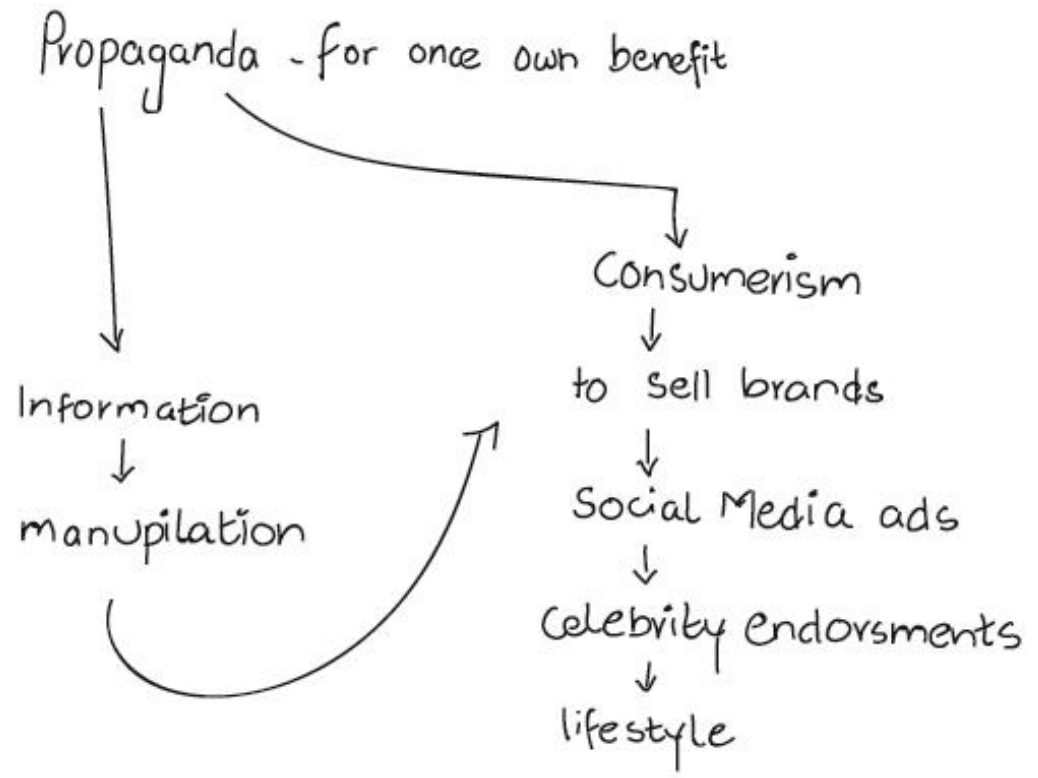
- festivals
- desi feels
- music
- politics

Mindset

- conservatives
- controlled
- fear
- upbringing

freedom

Propaganda



Initial Idea:

**Propganda**

( information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.)

the best way to sell or to make people believe of something is through "Celebrity"  
Celebrity as ambassadors. this creates

**Celebrity Culture.**

Celebrities have a lot of power over the people

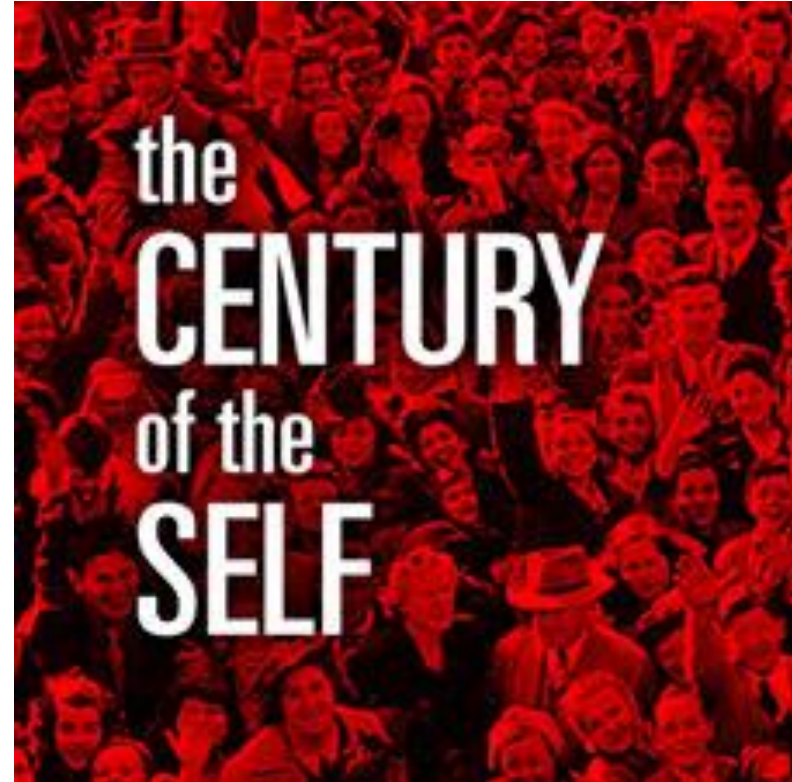
It is done by organization so that they can benefit from the cause, that leads to selling and buying  
Initially "Consumerism"

The biggest influencers of this celebrity culture are the **Kardashian Family.**

"This series is about how those in power have used Freud's theories to try and control the dangerous crowd in an age of mass democracy."

The business and political worlds use psychological techniques to read, create and fulfill the desires of the public, and to make their products and speeches as pleasing as possible to consumers and voters.

Needs and desires

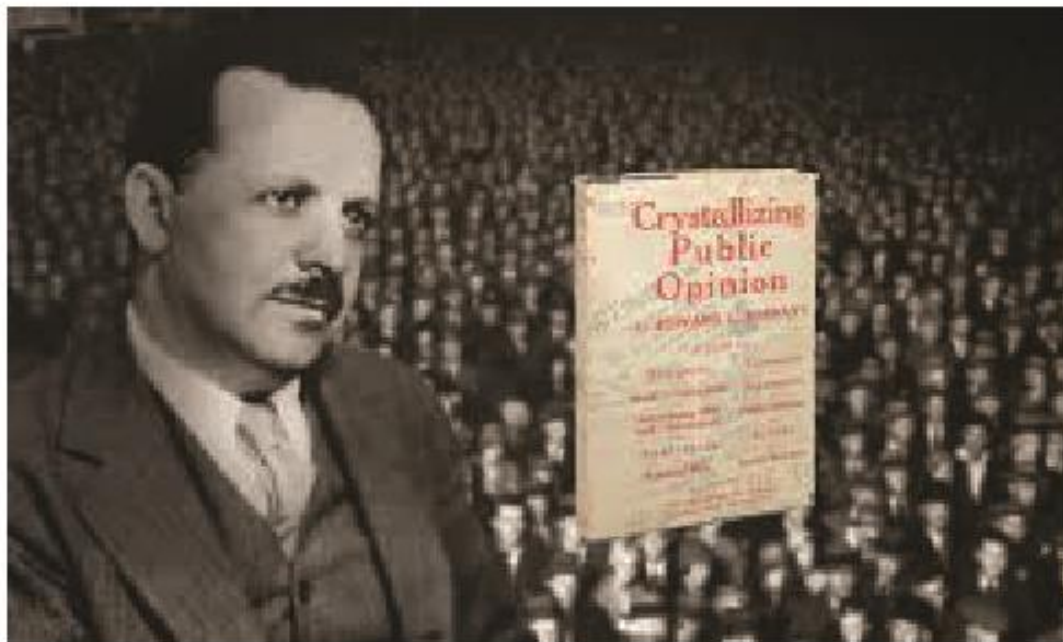




# Edward Bernays

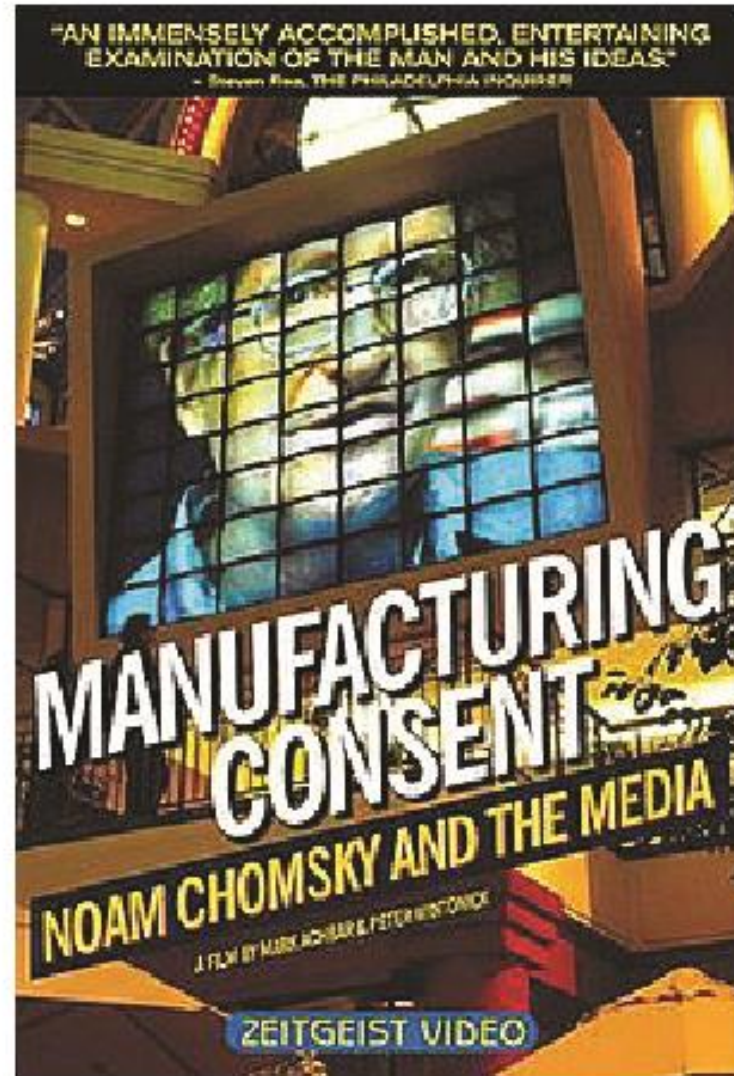
Edward Bernays recognized propaganda as a modern instrument to produce productive ends and "help bring order out of chaos"

- lucky cigarettes
- political campaigns
- celebrity endorsements



# Noam Chomsky

- news media is a business
- biased reporting for need of profit
- distort reality, attract the viewers
- making stories interesting to get the interest /of the viewer
- not airing stories that effect the sponsor



We're all consumers of Pop culture

# Pop culture

Popular culture is simply culture that is widely favored or well-liked by many people: it has no negative connotations.

Pop culture is negotiated: partly imposed on by the dominant classes, and partly resisted or changed by the subordinate classes. Dominants can create culture but the subordinates decide what they keep or discard.

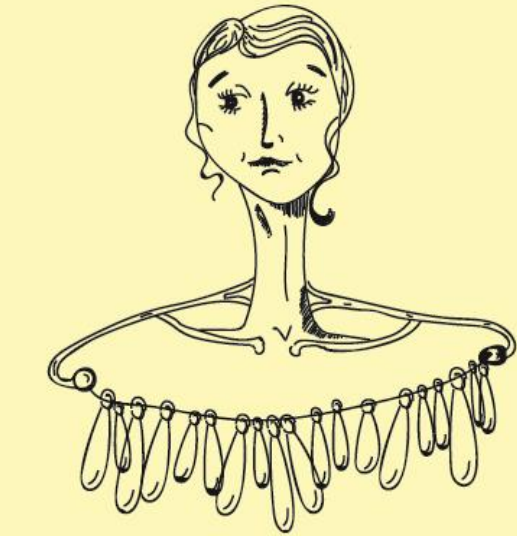
The last definition of pop culture discussed by Storey is that in the postmodern world, in today's world, the distinction between "authentic" versus "commercial" is blurred. In pop culture today, users are free to embrace some manufactured content, alter it for their own use, or reject it entirely and create their own.



Trends

Everyone looks the same

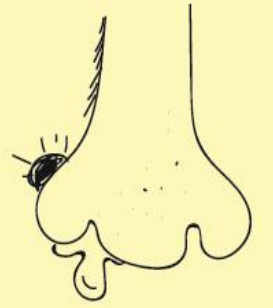
desires have become needs



I NEED That too



This is good for u



It's Cool

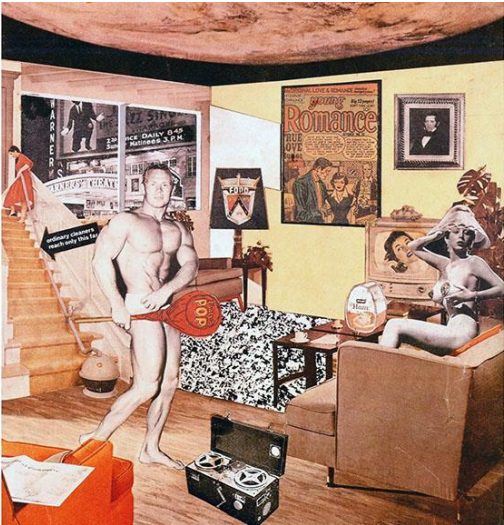


Part 1

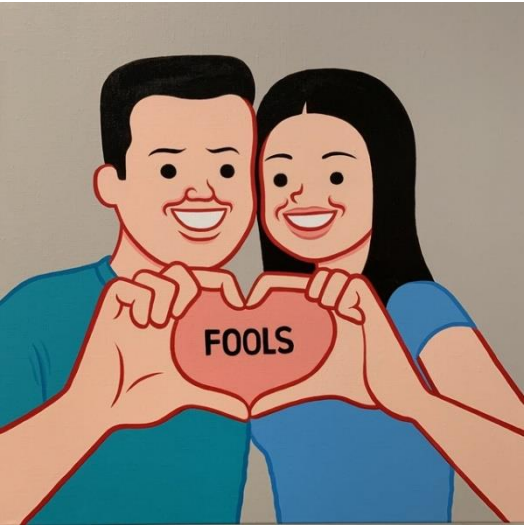
Inspiration Artist



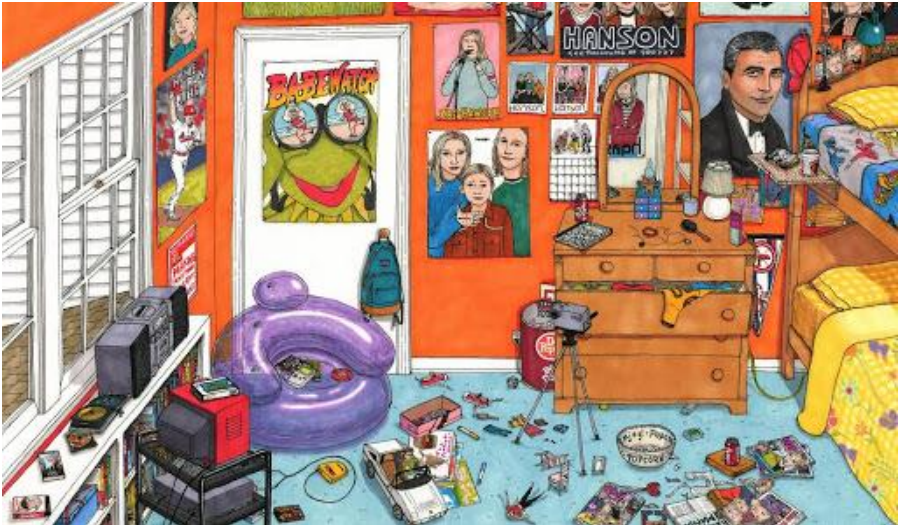
Andy Warhol



Richard Hamilton



Joan Cornella



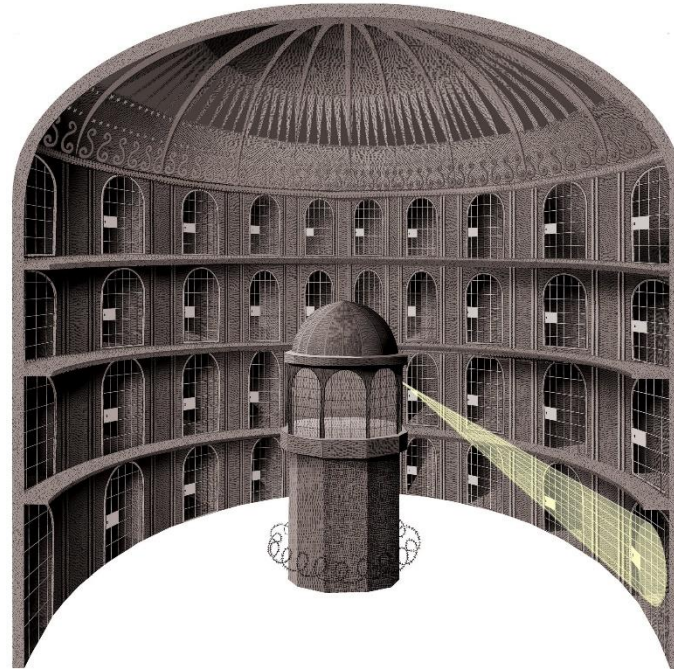
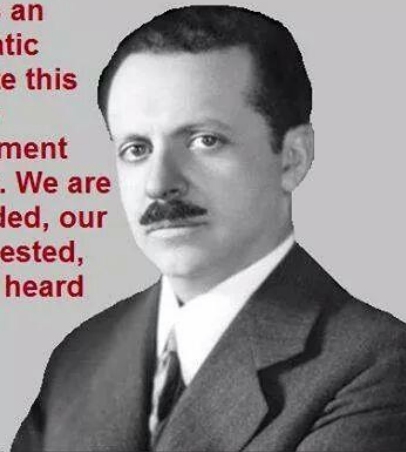
Sally Nixon

## Bernays propaganda techniques



**"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of."**

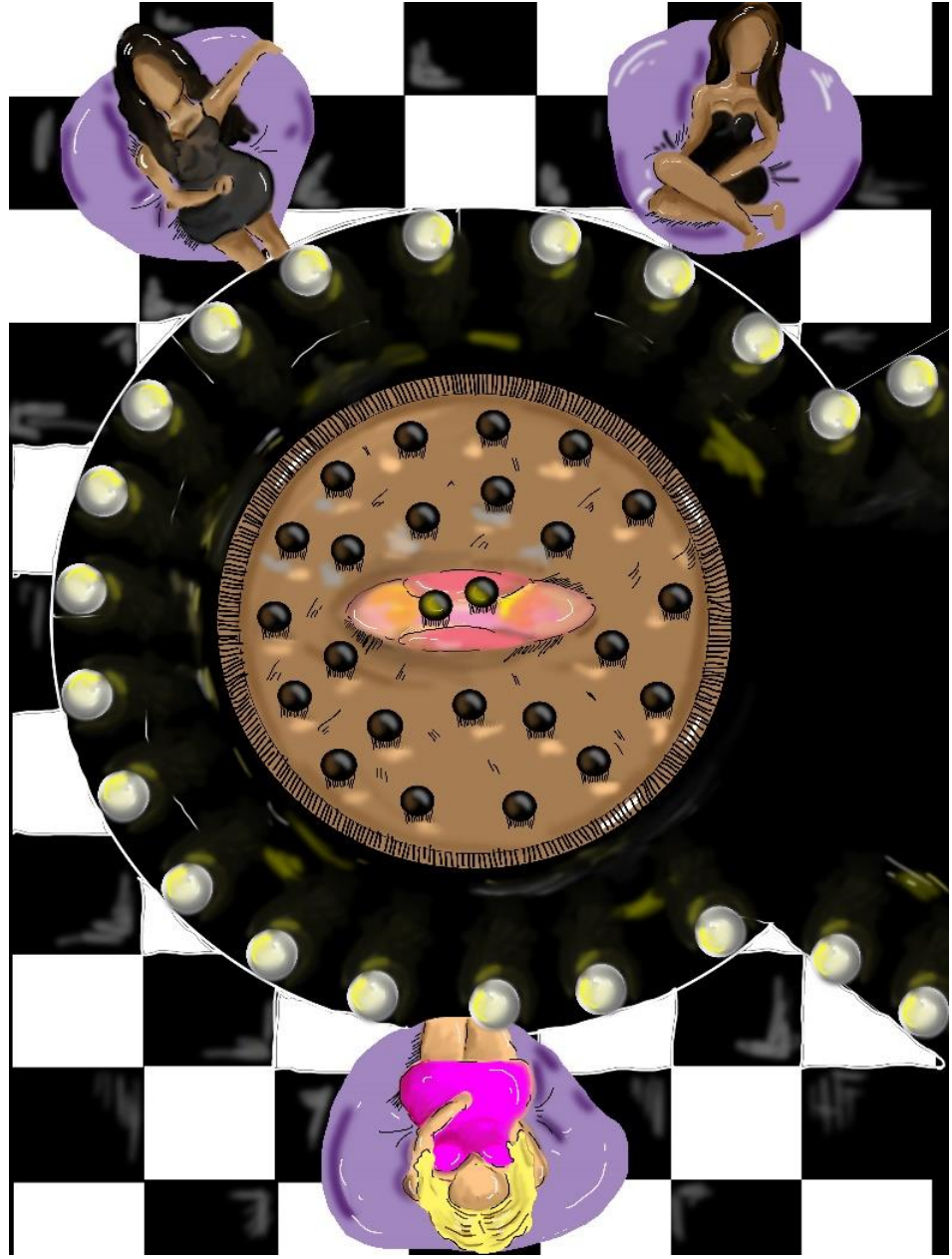
**Edward Bernays**  
Austrian born "father of PR"



## Foucaults Panopticon system

## Kardashian branding technique



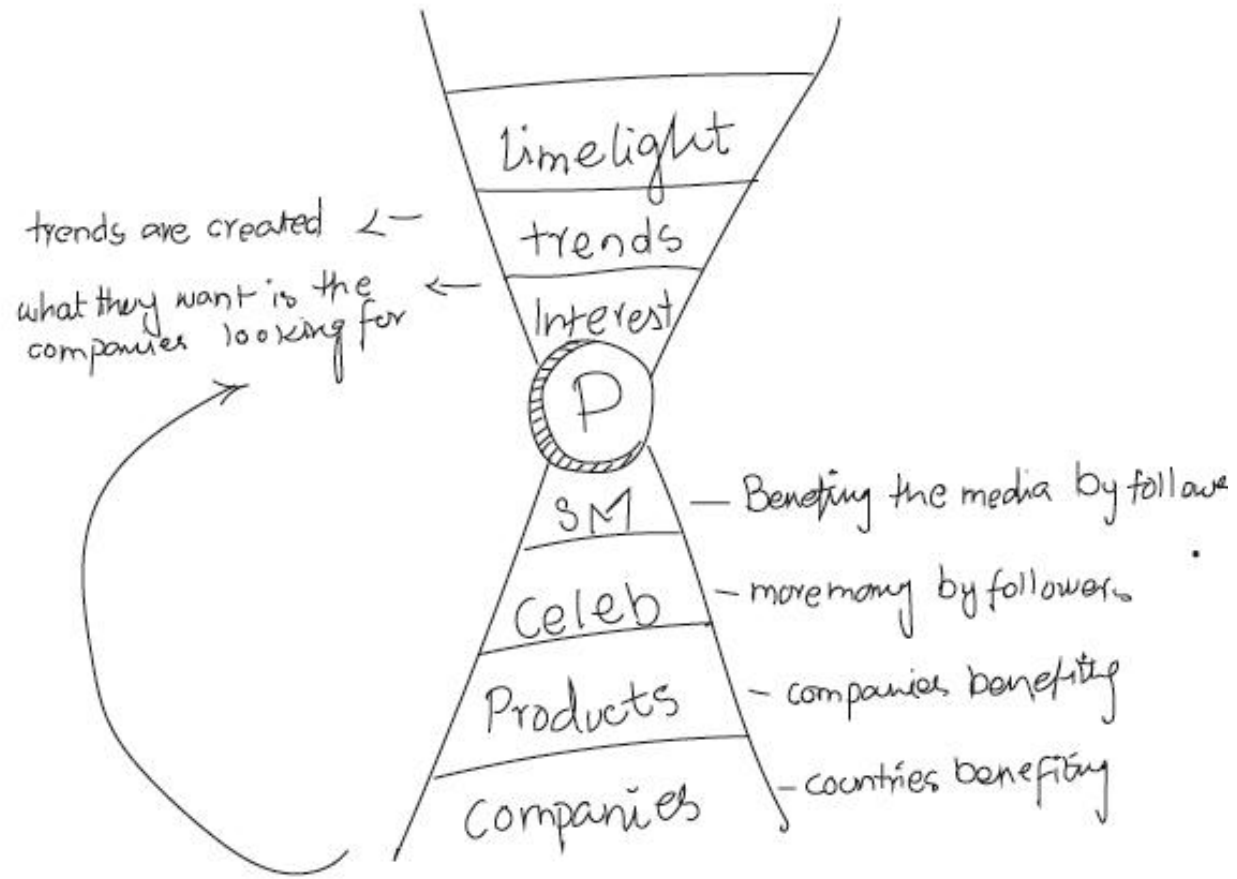


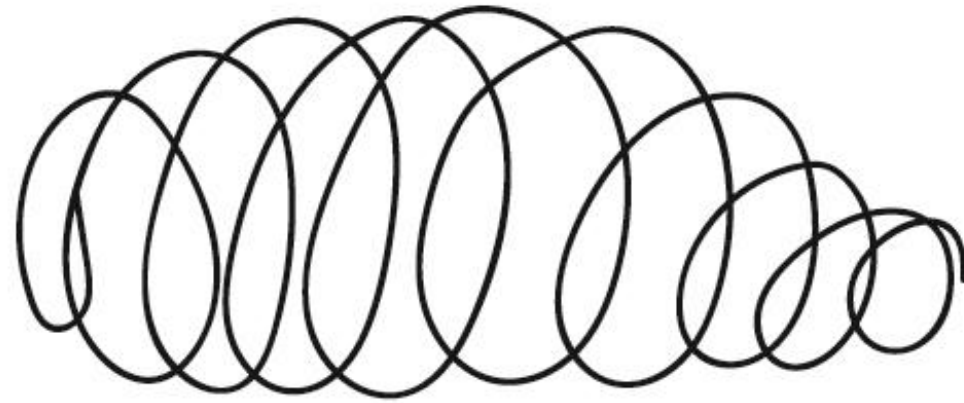
# Feedback

- techniques of Propaganda
- Look into other aspect in your work
- dig deeper

Process

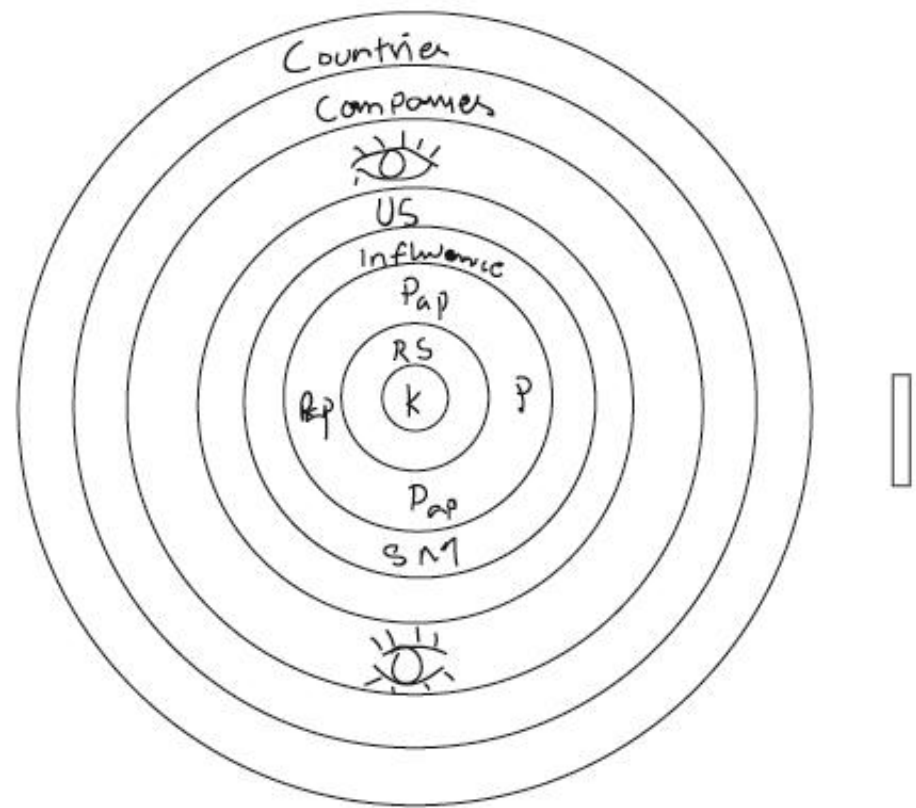
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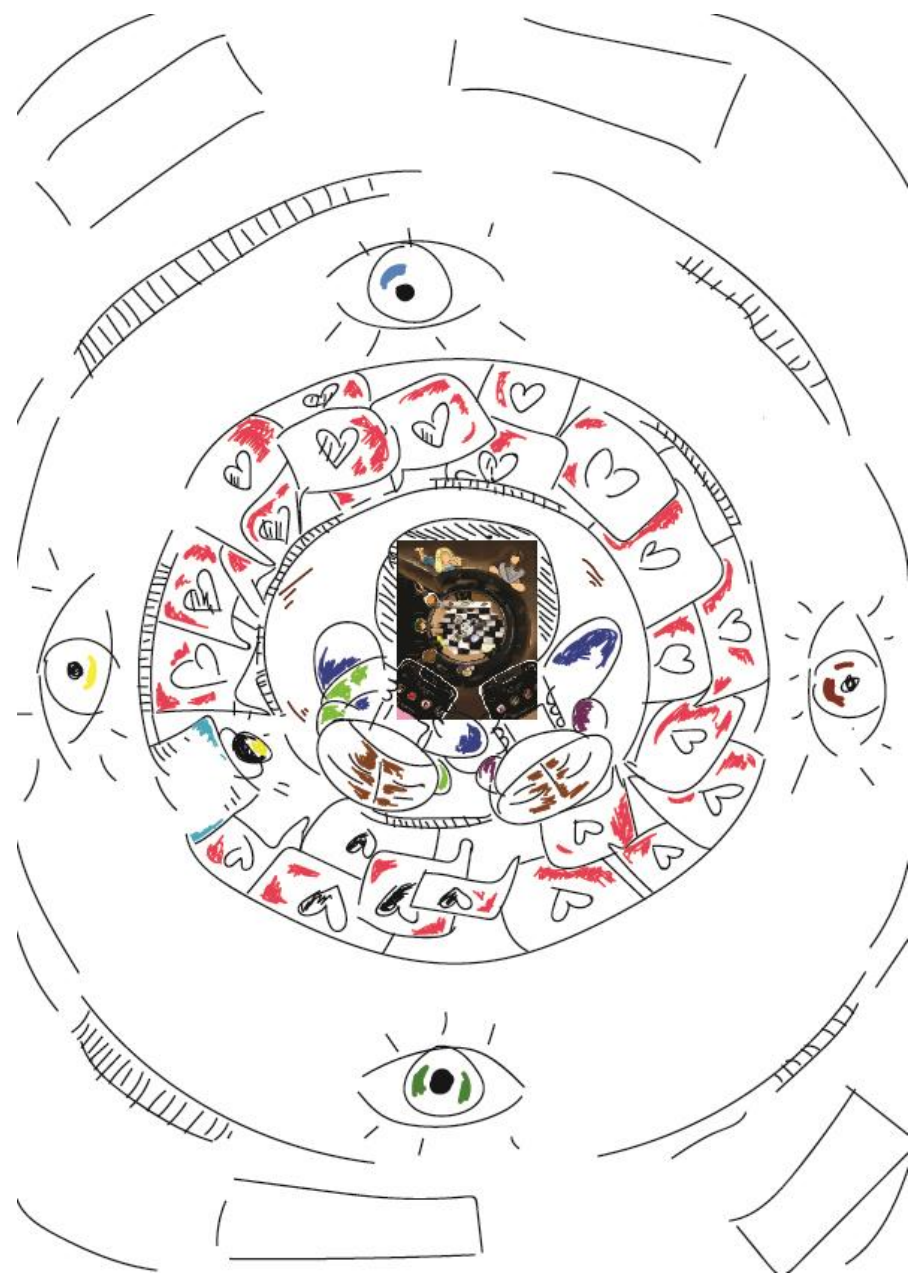


kim Rs Pap Influr SM+US Pro Companies Compie Celeb Dedic rela  
with ppl people  
intera





goes back into a loop



## Visualizing The System

### Part 1:

in the first part of my thesis I compiled all the seven layers in one visual. Each layer had different steps and parts of the system. These layer show how everyone is benefiting from the system and in order to get to sell something.

these seven layers are divided as:

- layer1: The Kardashians
- Layer 2: The Paparazzi
- Layer 3: The Influencers
- Layer 4: Us
- Layer 5: The Likes
- Layer6: The Cooperates
- Layer 7: The Countries

The feedback i got was that the layers were missing the details. The layers didnt have the exxageration element to it.



Post Mini

Thesis

## Layers

layer 1: starting point the Kardashians/ reality show

layer 2: the paparazzi capturing them in the streets

layer 3: the social media blog/ pr / influencers talking and posting about them.

layer 4: which create trends

layer 5: these trends and celebrity post are followed and looked up by the social media users and followers.

layer 6: the interest and likes of these followers or consumers

layer 7: corporates looking at the interest to design a product

layer 8: the products are design and made according to the trends with the companies interest, in which it benefit the countries from where its getting manufactured.

layer 9: to promote these products the famous and celebrity with most social media following is given the contract.

## Moving on..

The goal for the 2 part of my thesis was to make sure each layer was very detailed. Each layer should represent the given stage so well, it should have each and every element to it. Also i wanted my layers to be direct and clear so that the viewer understand the complex system of consumerism and capitolism by just viewing it. At the end i my to convey the message through animation because to experience each layer its important to go into it. in my animation im showing a 'move out animation'. Each layer will fade away to bring the other layer, also with my layers i wanted to give an optical illustion effect so that it plays with your mind.

The layers are now divided as;

- The Fame: celebrity in their enviornment
- The capturer: The street pap
- The Manager: The PR/blogger/media pages
- The Viewer: Us interacting with the celebrity post
- The Interest: The surveys and likes
- The Planners: The ones who make and plan these products and market then
- The work: The factory enviornment which will manufacture the products.
- The Ambassador: The celebrity promoting the products.

# The Fame

In the first layer I've shown the famous reality show stars, The Kardashians in their own environment, their Reality show doing their daily routine stuff. Just an ordinary reality show scene. The scene shows a lot of clothing brands, their own products and cameramen that we see on their show. The purpose of showing their own product on the show is to do its marketing and to show that its authentic by using it and talking about it.

The purpose of this layer was to show that while being recorded in their 'Reality Show' there are so many product placement and product endorsement being done, that are being observed by the viewer and something that attracts the viewer.



# The Capturers

In this layer i've shown the paperrazzi in the street that captures the The kardashian when they step out. These pictures are heavily edited and sometimes even paid.



digital drawing  
30"/30", coloured print



## The Managers

The pictures taken by the photographer are sent to the respected organization who pay those photographers. After that they are edited to look perfect and glamorous. These pictures are uploaded on the social media pages. These pages are also given different PR packages by the celebrities or companies to promote and write nice reviews about the products.



# The Viewers

This layer is about us, the followers and viewers. those social media pages upload the pictures / ads and we enjoys it, we get attracted to it, maybe want it too.

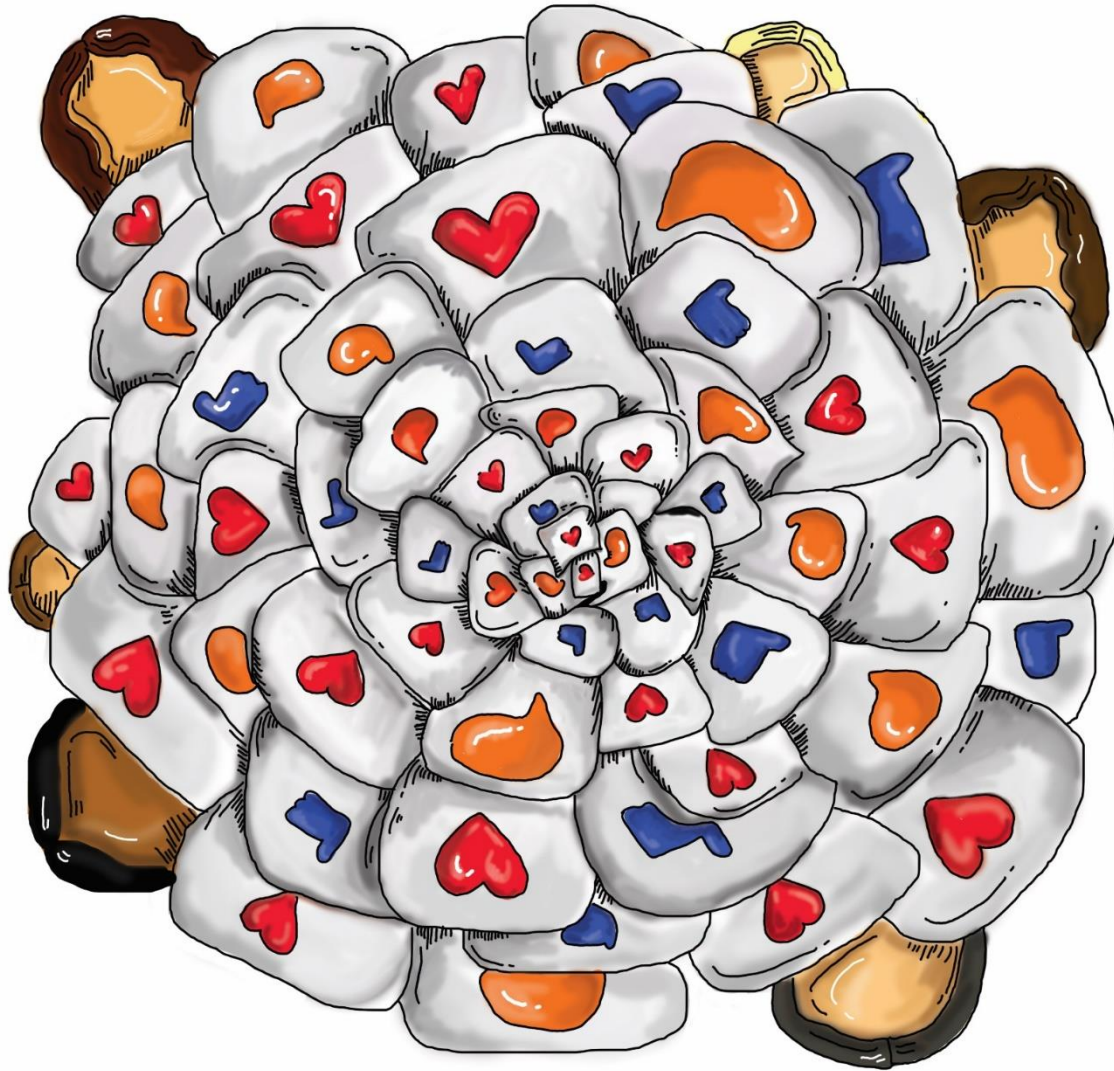
In this layer if've shown the viewer in their own comfort space watching the reality show, imitating the celebrity lifestyle and liking their post.



## The Interest

The likes and dislikes and even the comments of the viewers are constantly being observed, because why not you have to know what the audience wants. These interests are collected and surveys are done.

This layer is the interest layer, a cauliflower of likes, comment and dislikes.



## The Planners

After the likes are collected , the corporate world starts working, they design the product according to the interest of people. Different countries are involved in this process because you have to get the raw material and manufacturing from them. This helps with the economy of these countries.

In this layer ive shown the corporate heads designing a product that will get them a lot of money, even if the product is aver-ag-ish they will market it so well that the money flow wont stop.



## The Work

This layer talks about the factory environment. After the cooperates are done designing the products they are sent to different factories, in different parts of the world. In this the country where the product is manufactured has an increase in their economy. These factories are more like sweatshops, the workers are paid less and the company gains triple the profit than the workers.



## The Ambassador

After the product is made, the company decides whos the best candidate for the endorsement of the product. Companies look at the influencers who have the most public following and an important impact on the publics decision making power.

The ambassador makes sure he uses that product and makes it look like an authentic product.

This layer shows that the companies bring money to the influencers, celebrities and try to buy them to sell the products.



