



Keeping Up the Kardashian Brand: Celebrity, Materialism, and Sexuality

Amanda Scheiner McClain

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The Kardashian family is a contemporary cultural touchstone, recognizable throughout the world connoting warrantless celebrity, voluptuous beauty, and social media savviness. Amanda Scheiner McClain explores the Kardashians' brand and celebrity via narrative discourse analyses of their hit reality television series, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, social media utilization, and popular press coverage. This triangulated study allows insight into contemporaneous American culture: societal norms, values, and ideologies, as well as structural and cultural aspects of cross-platform brand creation. The television series examination finds intrinsic paradoxes of sexuality/conservatism, family/business, beauty/unhappiness, narcissism/celebrity, intimate/transgressiveness, and traditional/nontraditional gender roles, as well as materialism and public vs. private spheres themes. In addition, a study of the Kardashian blogs and Twitter use finds that their careful participation amplifies celebrity and unifies the overall brand into a single, sellable image across media. Through interactive media and just being themselves, the Kardashians renovate banal status updates and hackneyed reality television into character-constructing building blocks of brand, celebrity, and profits.

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