The Use of Dead Celebrity Images in Advertising and Marketing—Review, Ethical Recommendations and Cautions for Practitioners

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Abstract

A practice that is increasing in frequency and scope is the use of images of dead celebrities in advertising and marketing. In this paper, we examine this practice and do the following. First, we examine the size and growth-rate of this market. Next, we look at the key role that two key technologies have played in this market, namely digital morphing and text-to-speech. These two technologies have allowed Dead Celebrities to be 'resurrected' and have a post-mortem life as product endorsers, paying rich dividends to their heirs and estates. Predictably, this practice has raised some ethical issues (e.g., the post-mortem exploitation of a Deleb's image) for Marketers and Advertisers, which we examine. Because dead Celebrities offer some key advantages over living celebrities (e.g., the absence of risk from scandal after death), we look at some of the major similarities and differences between living and dead celebrities in terms of what they practically can and cannot do for Advertisers and Marketers. Based on these practical similarities and differences, we offer marketing practitioners a set of ethical recommendations and cautions to follow (e.g., avoid 'Disingenuous Fakery'), in using Delebs as product endorsers.

Keywords: celebrities, dead celebrities, Delebs, necro-marketing, posthumous marketing, retro-marketing

1. Introduction

A practice that has increased in frequency and scope, especially recently, is that of the use of dead celebrities in various aspects of marketing. This interest in dead celebrities, is part of a larger trend that is taking place in America, namely an increasing interest by an ageing baby-boom generation in imagery and experiences from yesteryear (Lee and Kunz 2005). Many of these ageing baby-boomers drive the demand for Deleb imagery through their continuing emotional connection to the celebrity as fans, even long after the celebrity has passed away. But, for most ageing baby-boomers, their demand for Deleb imagery is generated by a different type of emotional connection to the celebrity, namely by being part of an adoring public that grew up with the Celebrity and who now crave the imagery and work of that Celebrity (now dead and gone), to remind themselves of a bygone, romanticized era, when they were young. According to one report (on the advertising industry), "Dead celebrities allow advertisers to tap into feelings of nostalgia about times spent gathered around the television watching classic shows - an emotion that reverberates with baby boomers in particular" (Gellene 1997, p. D4).

As a result, dead celebrities are increasingly finding their way into everything, ranging from advertisements, such as Marilyn Monroe in Ads for Mercedes Benz (Pomerantz 2010), to merchandise licensing, such as "low-end tchotchkes like trash cans and handbags" to high-end items such as furniture (Falcone 2002) and limited edition automobiles (Priddle 2007), to grave-site tourism (Bonisteel 2006). Perhaps the best example is Elvis, whose estate has spawned to date, "more than 5000 Elvis-related products" (Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009).

According to one recent estimate, the size of the market for dead celebrities is about $800 million annually (Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009). Further, this market is growing rapidly, thanks to the efforts of the heirs/estates of dead celebrities, aided by creative and aggressive licensing agents (Sanders 2007). The primary

reason that this is being done by both parties, is the significant royalty revenues and other profit-sharing deals that both parties reap (Cook 2005). In fact, this practice is so profitable (because of the higher margins agents charge for dead versus live celebrities), that some agents represent only dead celebrities, rather than live celebrities. For example, in the case of industry-leader *Corbis*, it has been reported that it,

"will receive more than 20% of the profits from any endorsement, while the celebrity's estate gets the rest. That's more than double the profit margin for creative agencies managing endorsements or appearances of living celebrities, a competitive business that Shenk (a senior VP at Corbis) said Corbis has no interest in pursuing" (Cook 2005, p. E1, parentheses inserted).

When the post-mortem marketing of celebrities is combined with the phenomenon of some celebrities (e.g., Aaliyah) becoming more popular after death (see Schiffman 2001), we often witness the curious situation of many celebrities becoming more profitable after death than when they were alive. A recent example is the passing away of Pop-music icon Michael Jackson, who according to one recent report, was nearly half a billion dollars in debt at the time of his death (Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009). But, shortly after his death, his estate's lawyers reported lining up "merchandising deals worth $100 million and surging record sales and other income" worth another $100 million (Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009).

However, apart from the trade literature, where this emerging market is gaining a lot of attention, it has been completely ignored by the academic marketing and advertising literatures, where there has been no prior (theoretical) study of the use of dead celebrities. Consequently, we did the next best thing, which is, we looked at the extensive literature on the use of living celebrities in Advertising and Marketing to understand how Delebs are used in these same fields.

We address these issues, as well as others pertaining to the marketing of dead celebrities in the rest of this paper, organized as follows. In the next section, we define this market and some key terms we will use in the rest of this paper. We then look at the key role that technology (e.g., digital image 'morphing') plays in making this market especially viable, along with some ethical issues it raises. Following this, we look at the major practical similarities and differences between the use of living and dead celebrities in Advertising and Marketing. Based on these practical similarities and differences, we offer practitioners a set of recommendations and cautions to follow, in using Delebs as product endorsers. We conclude with some suggested directions for future research in this nascent area of the marketing literature.

2. Background

2.1 Definitions

In this paper, we use the term celebrity, as defined by McCracken (1989, p. 310), to refer to "any individual who enjoys public recognition". For ease of discussion in the rest of this paper, we will use the term 'Celeb' to refer to a living celebrity and the term 'Deleb' to refer to dead celebrities, since they appear to be the emerging terms used by practitioners (Roberts 2008/2009; Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009).

2.2 Dead Celebrity Market

2.2.1 Size

According to the trade literature (e.g., Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009; Brott, Craig and Friedman 2004), the market for Deleb images is comprised on the supply-side by heirs/estates of dead celebrities who license the image and other likenesses (e.g., voice) of the Deleb to licensors (e.g., merchandisers) who cater to the demand arising from a target population (e.g., fans of the Deleb) for products (e.g., T-shirts) that feature the image of their favorite Deleb. Thus, when we say the 'market' for Deleb images, we mean the value of all the licensing revenue that is generated by Deleb images for the Delebs' heirs and estates and which is reported in the popular press (e.g., Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009). Of course, this reported market size could be much less than the actual market size, because of unreported licensing income and income lost to heirs/estates due to un-licensed image uses.

There are several, often-conflicting estimates of the size of the Deleb market. The reason for the divergence in these estimates is because there are many revenue streams for Delebs and there is no uniformity across studies/estimates as to which revenue streams are to be included and which are to be excluded in these market-size estimations. Thus according to one recent report, the size of the market for Delebs is estimated at about $800 million annually (Kroft, Devine and MacDonald 2009). However, according to another recent report (the 2008-2009 *Forbes* ranking, see Pomerantz, et al (2009)), just the top 10 Delebs alone earned a collective $864 million.

2.2.2 Growth-Rate

Further, this market is growing at a rapid rate, thanks in part to an ageing baby-boom population that is voraciously consuming images and experiences from its past (Lee and Kunz 2005). As one example of the rate of growth of this market, at *Corbis*, the second-largest company (Glaister 2005) in the Dead-celebrity-licensing Industry (DCLI) industry, "rights representation and rights clearances (of dead celebrities) has become the fastest-growing segment of Corbis' business. Though it represents less than 10 percent of sales, it is growing at an annual rate of more than 50 percent" (Cook 2005, p. E1, parentheses inserted).

2.3 The Unique Role of Technology in the Deleb Market

Certain kinds of technology have had almost magical effects on bringing Delebs back to life, at least on-screen. This is important, because for stakeholder groups with emotional connections to Delebs (e.g., fans), being able to see the Deleb re-animated and talking, on screen, is a close substitute to seeing them alive. In this section, we deal with two technologies that have had the most profound effects on the after-life of Delebs, namely, 'morphing' and 'text-to-speech'.

2.3.1 Morphing

'Morph', is the short-form of metamorphosis (Doyle 2000), which is the process whereby one object changes (often slowly and seemingly imperceptibly) into another, different object. 'Morphing' is the verb that conveys this changes process. In the realm of computers graphics (CG), the object is often a digital image (though voices can be morphed too, as we explain later), which is changed (through the use of complex software) into another digital image. *Avid*'s 'Elastic Reality' is one such, widely-used piece of software (Doyle 2000). Though the digital image being changed can be of any object, the one we focus on here is that of a Deleb.

The technology used today, had its humble origins in 1982, when digital images only in 2-dimensions (2D) could be morphed. By 1985 however, the technology had progressed to the point where crude 3D digital images of objects (including human beings) could be morphed. For example, in 1985, Industrial Light and Magic created "the first completely computer-generated character, the 'Stained Glass Man' in 'Young Sherlock Holmes'" (McBride 2009, p. R4).

Table 1. Examples of the re-animation of dead celebrity images for advertising purposes

# Dead Celebrity	Famous For/As	Action with Product	Product	Brand	Source of Example
1.Fred Astaire	Dancer	Shown gracefully dancing with the Product	Vacuum-Cleaner	Dirt Devil	Astaire (1998)
2.Cary Grant	Suave Sophistication	Pouring the product, in a nightclub, for Paula Abdul	Soda	Diet Coke	Miller (1993)
3.Lucille Ball	Pushy Housewife	Posing as a customer in the Jewelry Department	Diamond Rings	Service Merchandise Co.	Elliott (1996)
4.James Dean	Rebel without a cause	Broods over his drink	Beer	Coors	Rodkin (1989)
5.Clark Gable	Suave, Urbane Actor	Offers tips on dunking a basketball	Sneakers	Nike	Rodkin (1989)
6.Jackie Gleason	Comedian	Shown pitching the product	Hand-Mixer	Braun	Gellene (1997)
7.Fred Gwynne	'Herman Munster'	Looking at Toys in the Toy Department	Toys	Service Merchandise	Elliott (1996)
8.Audrey Hepburn	Petite, Hollywood Actress	Shown dancing, dressed in her "skinny black pants"	Clothing	Gap	Corliss (2007)
9. Steve McQueen	Action Hero/Cop	Shown driving the product	Muscle Car	2005 Ford Mustang	Dooley (2004)
10.Gene Kelly	Dancer	Dances with a Hershey Bar	Candy Bar	Hershey	Rodkin (1989)
11.Orville Redenbacher	Company Founder	Shown pitching the product	Microwave Popcorn	Orville Redenbacher	Garfield (2007)
12.Ed Sullivan	Announcer/Introducer	Shown unveiling product to the world	SUV	Mercedes-Benz M-Class	Gellene (1997)
13.John Wayne	Cowboy/Gun-Slinger	Shown drinking the product	Beer	Coors	Gellene (1997)
14.Jack Webb	Policeman 'Joe Friday'	Walking through the Electronics Dept. as a customer	TV Sets	Service Merchandise	Elliott (1996)

As Rodkin (1989) explains, advertisers were quick to spot new uses they could put this technology to, including bringing images of long-dead celebrities back to life on screen, where they could now pitch products. This job was made easier because in most instances, the same CG companies that created these special effects for films

and music videos, were also helping to bring Delebs back to life for Madison Avenue (Pomerantz 2010; Doyle 2000).

A case in point is *Digital Domain Inc.*, in Venice California, that created the elderly Benjamin Button in the recent film, 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button' (Pomerantz 2010; McBride 2009). This same CG company had earlier brought Ed Sullivan back to life and helped him pitch the *Mercedes Benz* M-Class sport utility vehicle, as Gellene (1997) explains, "Technicians at Digital Domain in Venice animated Sullivan's jaw so it appears that he is introducing the Mercedes M-Class sport utility vehicle. A voice impersonator actually said the words. In addition, graphic artists altered Sullivan's appearance slightly from the original television clips, removing side-burns and smoothing wrinkles so that images from different programs would look alike" (Gellene 1997, p. D4).

In table 1, we list a few more examples of the use of Delebs in Ads by other marketers.

The technology has progressed even further since that time. We are now at the point where a live person can interact 'virtually', in real time, with a Deleb in an on-screen performance, as was shown when Celine Dione sang a live duet with re-animated Deleb Elvis Presley, on a recent episode of 'American Idol' (Menon 2007). In other words, this technology is only increasing the possible use of Delebs, including by entertainers, advertisers and marketers.

However, this technology is not an automatic guarantor of success for advertisers and marketers. A case in point is the Ad by *Orville Redenbacher*, wherein they digitally resurrected the company's eponymous founder, for a posthumous stint as brand spokesperson. According to ad critics (Garfield 2007), this ad failed because of the 'zombie-like' look of this Deleb, which may have scared people away. In other words, this technology is not the only factor that can determine the success or failure of a Deleb. Another crucial factor that can determine the success or failure of a Deleb is the artistry with which this technology is used, to create an authentic re-animated image that the Deleb's fans/admirers can re-connect with unquestioningly. The Redenbacher example clearly illustrates the still daunting technological and artistic challenges that remain, when re-animating Delebs. To read more about these challenges, see Pomerantz (2010), McBride (2009) and Doyle (2000). There are also ethical problems raised by the use of these technologies, which we address in the final section of this paper.

2.3.2 Text-to-Speech

The Deleb re-animation business received a further boost, when in 1999, 'voice morphing' technology was developed at Los Alamos National Laboratory, for ostensible use by the military. This new technology was able for the first time, "to clone speech patterns and develop an accurate facsimile" of a person's recorded speech, in "near real time", without the "robotic intonations", characteristic of earlier technologies (Arkin 1999).

Further, in 2001, *AT&T* built on this technology and took it to the next step, by introducing its revolutionary, 'Text-to-speech' (TTS) software. This software worked by the following three-stage process. First, it created a voice database through a digital recording of a word/phrase/sentence uttered by a (target) person. Second, it de-constructs these digital voice-clips into their syllabic components. Third, it re-arranges these syllabic components into new patterns (as dictated by the new text that it reads) and generates an entirely new arrangement of sounds (i.e., words) that were never spoken by the original (target) person (Goldman 2001).

By using TTS, one now could put words in someone else's mouth - a gigantic technological leap that was hitherto impossible in the commercial realm, including in advertising. Thanks to TTS, we could now even "allow the dead to speak" (Goldman 2001, p. 14). Now, for the first time, Deleb re-animators would not have to use voice-impersonators, as they had done before with the Ed Sullivan *Mercedes-Benz* Ad. Suddenly, 'dead men could tell tales'.

In the next section, we compare and contrast the use of living celebrities with the use of dead celebrities in Advertising and Marketing.

3. Literature Review

We begin this section by first briefly reviewing (mostly) the trade literature for evidence pertaining to practical similarities and differences between the use of living Celebrities versus Delebs in Advertising and Marketing. We do this, to give the reader some idea as to how similar and how different Celebs and Deleb are in terms of their uses in Advertising and Marketing.

3.1 Practice

3.1.1 Similarities

There are many practical similarities between the use of Delebs and Celebs in Advertising and Marketing. Keys

among them are the following:

1) 'Q' Scores for evaluation of recognizability and likeability are now just as available for Delebs (which are called 'Dead Q' scores), as they are for Living Celebrities (Friedman 2005).

2) Just as Celebs are often 'shared' by advertisers because of cost (Sloan and Freeman 1988), so too are Delebs. For example, Lance Armstrong has had deals with 16 different endorsers at one point in his career (Horovitz 2000). Likewise, Marilyn Monroe has simultaneously been in Ads for Mercedes-Benz, Unilever and Sunsilk (Noer at al 2008).

3) Just as Celebs can generate 'free publicity' for the advertiser (Sherman and Langan 1985), so too can Delebs. For example, when Geraldine Ferraro was used in a Diet Pepsi Commercial she generated a lot of 'free' publicity for Pepsi (Sherman and Langan 1985). Likewise, when Deleb Steve McQueen was used in an Ad for the Ford Mustang, he generated a lot of 'free' publicity for Ford (Dooley 2004).

The point we wish to make in listing and discussing some of these similarities is to demonstrate that Delebs and Celebs have many practical qualities in common. It is thus possible, on some key attributes, such as Q scores, to be able to compare Delebs and Celebs, as well as to generalize some Celeb findings to Delebs and vice versa. The key of course is to know which practical attributes are similar between Delebs and Celebs and which can therefore be compared. We list some of these practical similarities between Delebs and Celebs, as well as examples for each of them in table 2. We encourage future researchers to verify and broaden this list.

Table 2. Practical similarities between the uses of living celebrities vs. 'Delebs'

# Living Celebrity		'Deleb' (Dead Celebrity)	
	Example &/or Cite		Example &/or Cite
1. Marketing Evaluations offers 'Q' Scores for evaluation of recognizability and likeability of Living Celebrities, since 1964 (Friedman 2005)	Bill Cosby has highest-ever score of 70 out of 100 (Friedman 2005)	Marketing Evaluations offers 'Dead Q' Scores for evaluation of recognizability and likeability of Delebs, since 2005	Being offered in response to demand from advertisers and cable networks, for a research tool to help with selection of Delebs for use in ads and Classic movies to offer (Friedman 2005)
2. The 'Good/Smart' ones reject products that don't fit with their image	Lance Armstrong rejected a $1 million deal to endorse a men's hair coloring, because he doesn't use hair color (Horovitz 2000)	'Good/Smart' Heirs/Estates/Agents of some Delebs reject products that don't fit with their image	Michael Wayne, son of John Wayne very carefully selects products that he thinks his father would have approved of, if he were alive (Patsuris 2002)
3. Need to constantly renew/refresh the Celebrity's Image/Franchise	Nike's 'Jordan' brand will incorporate older 'Air Jordan' products, plus newer products endorsed by 5 young Pro basketball players (Cleaver 1998).	Need to constantly renew/refresh the Deleb's Image/Franchise	Bob Marley's "estate has proved adept at releasing a steady stream of new product" (Rose et al 2006).
4. Celebs are often 'shared' by advertisers because of cost (Sloan and Freeman 1988)	Lance Armstrong has deals with 16 different endorsers (Horovitz 2000)	Delebs are often 'shared' by advertisers	Marilyn Monroe for Mercedes-Benz, Unilever and Sunsilk (Noer at al 2008)
5. Can generate 'free publicity' for the advertiser (Sherman and Langan 1985)	Use of Geraldine Ferraro, in a Diet Pepsi Commercial (Sherman and Langan 1985)	Can generate 'free publicity' for the advertiser	Steve McQueen for the Ford Mustang (Dooley 2004)
6. Demand sometimes for 'Bad boy/girl' Celebs	'No Excuses' Jeans' use of "celebs plucked out of the day's headlines" (e.g., Donna Rice & Marla Maples - Rae 1997)	Demand sometimes for 'Bad boy/girl' Delebs	James Dean ("Rebel without a cause", Gwinn et al 1997) & Monroe ("Body built for lust", Gwinn et al 1997)
7. Demand sometimes even for the Notorious	Benetton's aborted attempt to use masked Zapatista guerilla leader 'Sub-commander Marcos' in an ad (Rae 1997)	Demand sometimes even for the Notorious Dead	Hitler's Image on Sugar Packets in Croatia (Barkat 2007)
8. Celebrity can be picky about endorsements	Springsteen's no to Chrsyler's $12 million (Cocks, Bland & Dutka 1987)	Deleb heirs/estates can be picky about endorsements	Robin Astaire (Astaire 1998)
9. Possibility of computer-generated clones of a living celebrity.	An elderly-version of Brad Pitt as 'Benjamin Button' (McBride 2009)	Possibility of computer-generated clones of a Deleb.	Humphrey Bogart, Cary Grant et al in a Diet Coke ad (Goldman 1994)

3.1.2 Differences

There are however many more practical differences between the use of Delebs and Celebs in Advertising and Marketing. Keys among them are the following:

1) In general Celebs are expensive. For example, David Beckham earned £30,000,000 for his work with Gillette (Guthrie 2005). Deleb images on the other hand are generally cheaper. For example, it costs between $15,000 and $ 20,000, for a one-year license of James Dean's image (Rodkin 1989).

2) The day-to-day success of the Celebrity affects the Celebrity's effectiveness as an Endorser. For example, retailers partly blamed poor sales of Nike's Tiger Woods shoe on his relatively poor PGA Tour performance at the time (Associated Press 1998b). For Delebs on the other hand "the image they project doesn't deviate from one moment to the next" (Goldman, 1994, p. B1) and so this does not affect their effectiveness as endorsers.

3) A Celeb's positive image can quickly become negative, causing sponsors to withdraw ads with the offending Celebrity. For example, when nude photos of Vanessa Williams appeared in *Penthouse*, many of her Advertising sponsors withdrew or altered their ads with her (Sherman & Langan 1985). A Delebs qualities on the other hand are known up-front and unlikely to change (Gellene 1997). A good example is James Dean and his "forever-young photo" (Porter 2005).

4) Celebs can often be very demanding (Glaister 2005) and tough to work with (Gabor, Thornton and Wiener 1987). For example, Magician Doug Henning while shooting ads for Chrysler, negotiated for the right to spend one of every four hours in meditation (Sherman and Langan 1985). Delebs on the other hand, by definition, cannot be demanding (Hyman 1997).

5) The point we wish to make in listing and discussing some of these differences is to show the reader that Delebs and Celebs have many unique and non-comparable practical qualities. It thus may not be possible, on some key attributes, such as image stability, to be able to compare Delebs and Celebs, as well as to generalize some Celeb findings to Delebs and vice versa. The key of course is to know which practical attributes are typically different between Delebs and Celebs and which therefore should not be compared. We list some of these practical differences between Delebs and Celebs, as well as examples for each of them in table 3. We encourage future researchers to verify and broaden this list. In the next section, based on the similarities and differences we just discussed, we suggest a few ethical recommendations and cautions for marketing practitioners to follow, if they intend to use Deleb imagery in their marketing practice.

Table 3. Practical differences between the use of living celebrities vs. 'Delebs'

#	Living Celebrity		'Deleb' (Dead Celebrity)	
	Characteristic	Example &/or Cite	Characteristic	Example &/or Cite
1.	Celebs are expensive	David Beckham earns £30,000,000 from Gillette (Guthrie 2005)	Deleb images are cheaper	$15K to $ 20K for a 1 year license of James Dean's image (Rodkin 1989)
2.	Celeb's positive image can quickly become negative	Nude photos of Vanessa Williams appear in *Penthouse*, causing Sponsors to pull/alter their ads with her (Sherman & Langan 1985)	A Delebs qualities are known up-front and unlikely to change (Gellene 1997)	James Dean and his "forever-young photo" (Porter 2005)
3.	Celebs can cause anxiety for sponsors	Kobe Bryant (Isidore 2003)	Deleb's sponsors usually have "peace of mind"	"Babe Ruth isn't going to kill anybody" (Hyman 1997)
4.	Celebs can cause unexpected crisis for the sponsor	Kellogg stuck with 000's of unwanted Cereal boxes after Phelps' Bong incident (Castillo & Cuevas 2009)	"The image they project doesn't deviate from one moment to the next" (Goldman 1994, p. B1)	
5.	There is the possibility of product-related Gaffes/Embarrassment	Cybil Shepherd, then L'Oreal spokesmodel, admitting she doesn't color her hair (Rae 1997)	Low Possibility of Product-related Gaffes	Gap Ad campaign (Goldman 1994)
6.	There is the possibility of other types of Gaffes/PR Crises	2% of the time, Charles Barkley is off the wall (Smith, Press and Boeth 1993)	Low Possibility of other types of Gaffes	
7.	There is the possibility of scandal (negatively affecting the company's sales/image)	Burt Reynolds' messy divorce from Loni Anderson, while starring in ads for Florida Citrus (Goldman 1994)	Low Possibility of any type of Scandal after the death of a Deleb (Guthrie 2005)	

8. Day-to-day success of the Celebrity affects the public's awareness of the Celebrity	Awareness of Tiger Woods quadrupled after his Masters win (Murphy 1997)	"The image they project doesn't deviate from one moment to the next"	Goldman (1994, p. B1)
9. Day-to-day success of the Celebrity affects the Celebrity's effectiveness as an Endorser	Retailers partly blame poor sales of Nike's Tiger Woods shoe on his relatively poor PGA Tour performance at the time (Associated Press 1998b)	"The image they project doesn't deviate from one moment to the next"	Goldman (1994, p. B1)
10. Celebs can be demanding (Glaister 2005) and tough to work with (Gabor, Thornton and Wiener 1987)	Doug Henning while shooting ads for Chrysler, gets the right to spend 1 of every four hours in meditation (Sherman and Langan 1985)	The issue does not arise here	Hyman (1997)

4. Ethical Recommendations and Cautions for Marketing Practitioners

4.1 Recommendations

4.1.1 Capitalize on the Unique Advantages of Delebs

Delebs have a lot going for them. They offer key stakeholders (such as advertisers and merchandise licensors) several advantages over Celebs including, being devoid of scandal after death, as opposed to living celebrities who often find themselves on the wrong side of the law (CNN 2009) and being less demanding to work with than live celebrities (Hyman 1997), among other issues.

4.1.2 Make Sure There Is 'Fit'

A product should be licensed only when there is a 'fit' (Till and Busler 2000) between the image of the Deleb and that of the product, because the Deleb's image is preserved and often enhanced as a result (Hass 2003). When there is no 'fit', damage can be done to the Deleb's image (Brott, et al 2004) and credibility (Goldman 2001).

4.2 Cautions

4.2.1 Do Not Cheapen the Deleb's Image

The issue of 'cheapening' of a Deleb's image pertains to those cases where heirs/estates are not careful enough with the issue of 'fit', discussed earlier, when signing up potential licensing clients. The end result might be an Ad or licensed product that has little or no connection with who the Deleb was and instead might appear to have been done solely for a profit motive (by the Deleb's heirs/estate), as Goldman (2001, p.14) states,

"While technology multiplies the ways in which public persons can exploit themselves and be exploited, and could even extend roles and endorsement contracts to the dead, it also chips away at the aura that makes their images valuable in the first place. How much is, say, a commercial endorsement worth when anyone, living or dead, can be made to do or say just about anything?"

4.2.2 Do Not Dilute the Deleb's Image

The issue of 'dilution' pertains to those cases where the Deleb's image is used to license too many products/ads. Whereas 'cheapening' may result from a single use, 'dilution' results from too many uses. The end result in both instances is a loss of credibility for the Deleb. An example is when Jack Webb was dropped from a Service Merchandise Ad after his image appeared in an Ad for Lotus at the same time (Gellene 1997).

4.2.3 Watch Out for Conflicting Deleb Images

Dying young is a good thing for the value of the Deleb's image (Poniewozik 1999) because when a person dies young, his/her image is "frozen in time" (Hass 2003) and "isn't going to change" (Friedman 2005). On the other hand, "growing old dilutes the brand" and Marlon Brando is a good example of this because, he "got fat and scary" and left "too many competing images out there" in the public domain before he died Hass (2003).

4.2.4 Avoid 'Disingenuous Fakery' of Deleb Images

'Obvious' fakery of Delebs may be tolerated, whereas 'disingenuous' fakery will be spurned by fans and consumers of the Deleb's products. In 1994, KFC dressed up an actor to look and talk like the Colonel and "was roundly criticized for defaming the dead" (Naughton and Vlasic 1998, p. 63). However, a later ad, wherein an animated character based on the Colonel was used, did not face such criticism (Associated Press 1998a). Thus, it appears that whereas fans and consumers might accept 'obvious' Deleb fakery (e.g., animation), they reject 'disingenuous' attempts (e.g., dressed-up actors) at Deleb fakery.

4.2.5 Be Aware of the Cost and Limitations of New Image-Manipulation Technology

Even with all the advanced technology being used to bring Delebs back to life on-screen, things can go wrong. The Orville Redenbacher Ad (Garfield 2007) is a perfect example. It failed because the unconvincing, 'zombie-like' look of the digitally re-animated company founder did not cross the 'uncanny valley' (of realism) with viewers (see Pomerantz 2010, McBride 2009, Doyle 2000).

4.2.6 Stretching a Deleb's Image with Posthumous Work Can Create Problems for Marketers

In an era of Avatars and Clones (McBride 2009), a fundamental marketing question one must ask is: How much can one stretch the image of a Deleb (in a posthumous role) before that Deleb's fans walk away? The marketing literature (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990) suggests that when brands are extended into new, incongruent areas, such extensions fail. Can Delebs be any different?

4.2.7 Stretching a Deleb's Image with Posthumous Work Can Leave Old Fans Out in the Cold

In this same unfolding era of Virtual Actors (Pomerantz 2010), a fundamental ethical question one must ask is: Is it ethical for future Deleb-morphers (e.g., movie studios) to kill the original, Virtual Deleb, just because a greedy few (see Pomerantz 2010) want to make more money with a 'Clombie' (a Cloned Zombie)? What then must existing fans of the original Deleb do?

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