

PIGMENT

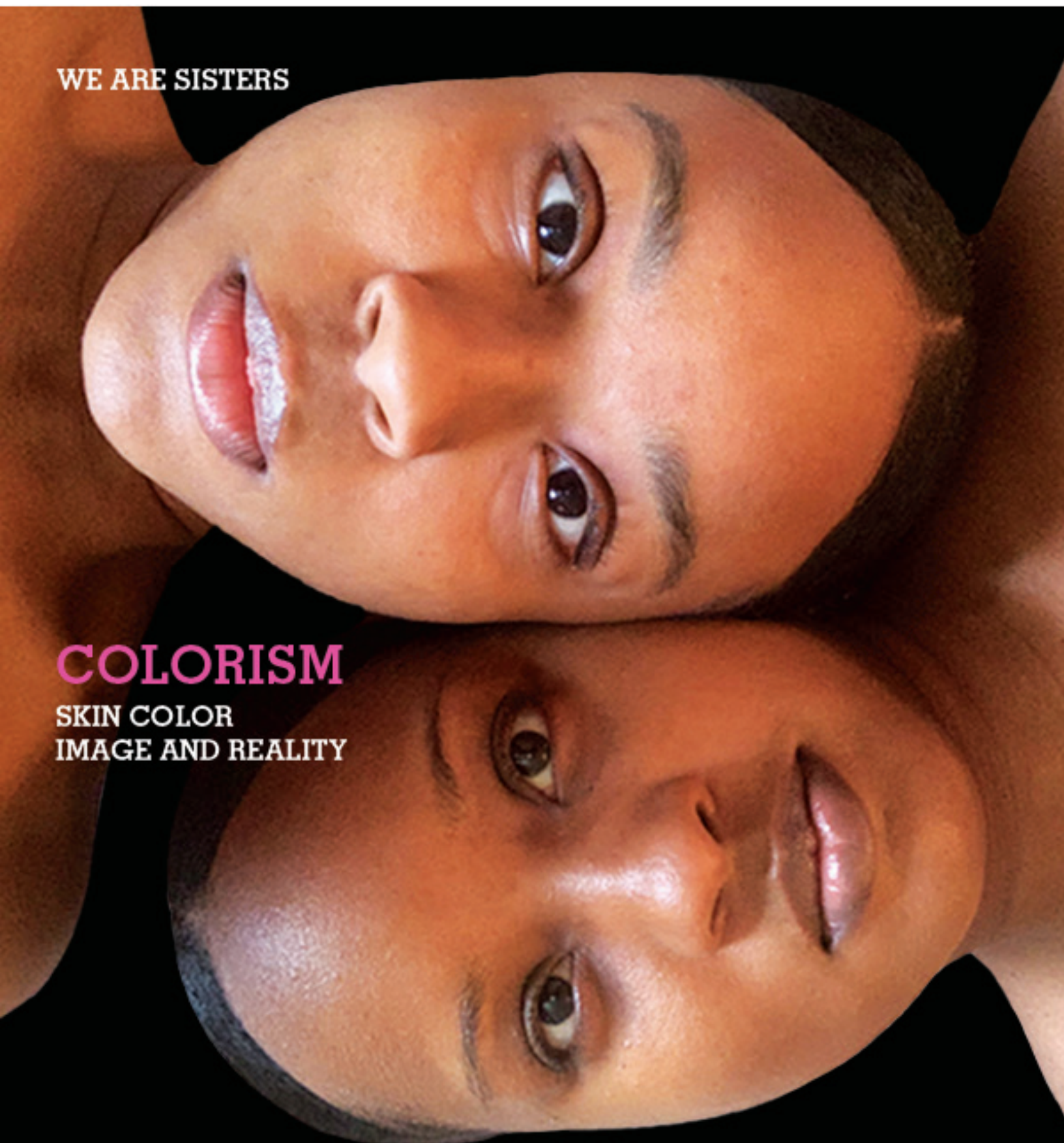
SEE BEYOND THE SKIN

SPRING 2020

WE ARE SISTERS

COLORISM

SKIN COLOR
IMAGE AND REALITY



DEFINITIONS

6

Colorism
Discrimination
Stigma
Perception
Image
Reality

FOREWORD

10

The Phenomenon of Colorism
Beyond the Color: I'm A Story

WHAT WE SEE

14

Skin Color in the Modern World
Encounters with Difference
Skin Colors and Their Variable Meanings

POLITICS OF PIGMENTATION

40

'Black-ish
Gold like 24k, okay
How do you Spot a Real Troll?
Instabrand

BIOGRAPHY

64

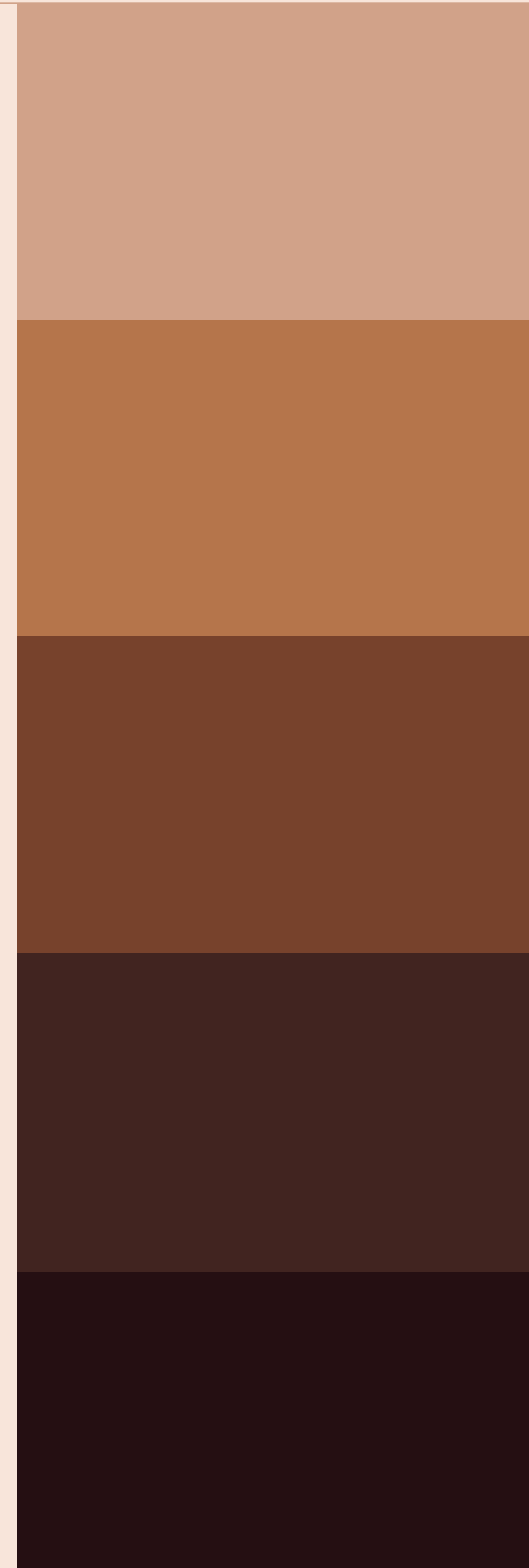
A Peek Into the News

BIBLIOGRAPHY

76

Concept & Design
Acknowledgments
Special thanks
Text sources
Image sources

Definitions



Colorism

col·or·ism

noun

prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.

Discrimination

dis·crim·i·na·tion

noun

the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

Stigma

stig·ma

noun

a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.

Perception

per·cep·tion

noun

the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.

Image

im·age

noun

a representation of the external form of a person or thing in art.

Reality

re·al·i·ty

noun

the world or the state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them.

FOREWORD

EDITOR'S NOTE

As a young African American female colorism, the discrimination of African Americans based on their skin color, is something that I have experienced.

When I was an infant, family members would say to my mom "You su re Robert is her dad, because she looks like she is the milk man baby." With that being said, my skin tone was like Cocoa butter. As I blossomed over the years, it was apparent that people mistakenly identified me as my older sister due to our facial characteristics. People are able to recognize the difference between us as sisters by our skin pigmentation; for example one is like peanut butter and the other is a mahogany skin tone which makes it visible.

My first experience with colorism shaped the way I present myself to the world based on how comfortable I am in my own skin. Now, I understand how colorism plays a major role in individuals' lives, how it affects the way we see ourselves, our communities, and in turn, it affects the way we relate to one another. Colorism causes others to categorize each other based on his or her race and be placed in a position where one's race is questioned. Some people can receive a false sense of what makes him or her worthy negatively from being mistakenly identified. But colorism does not stop in my hometown of Philadelphia. Colorism is a global issue. Discrimination based upon one's skin tone affects people around the world. For example, people constantly make judgments because one has a different skin color instead of seeing the beauty of what's in front of them. People's skin color affects

self-image, education, job opportunities and other issues in many parts of the world.

One might say that colorism is not only an issue for dark skinned people, but an issue for all people in America. Colorism exists within many races, but mainly for minorities, and in particular within the black community and its origins can be dated back to slavery. Colorism is used in countries where there are people of color, and most often used by African American communities. The presence within communities of color has created a division between those of a lighter skin tone and darker skin tone. Colorism has become an immense problem in America that still exists around the world. The movement of colorism in the black community along with the occurrence of colonialism has impacted the countries India, Nigeria and South Africa; it is becoming a more prevalent issue that degrades the self-esteem of darker-toned African Americans by praising the lighter-toned African Americans.

Colorism is a word not often used, but in action every day in many communities across the world. It is important that we become familiar with this term, because that familiarity is the first step toward eradicating this discrimination and bias. I can imagine a world filled with all people from different races embracing oneself, loving others and not getting caught up on what society thinks you should be as an individual. These communities can better relate to one another, by respecting each other for who they are as a person of color, if colorism did not exist.

"Colorism is not only an issue for dark skinned people, but an issue for all people in America."



Amyria Wallace

RESEARCH

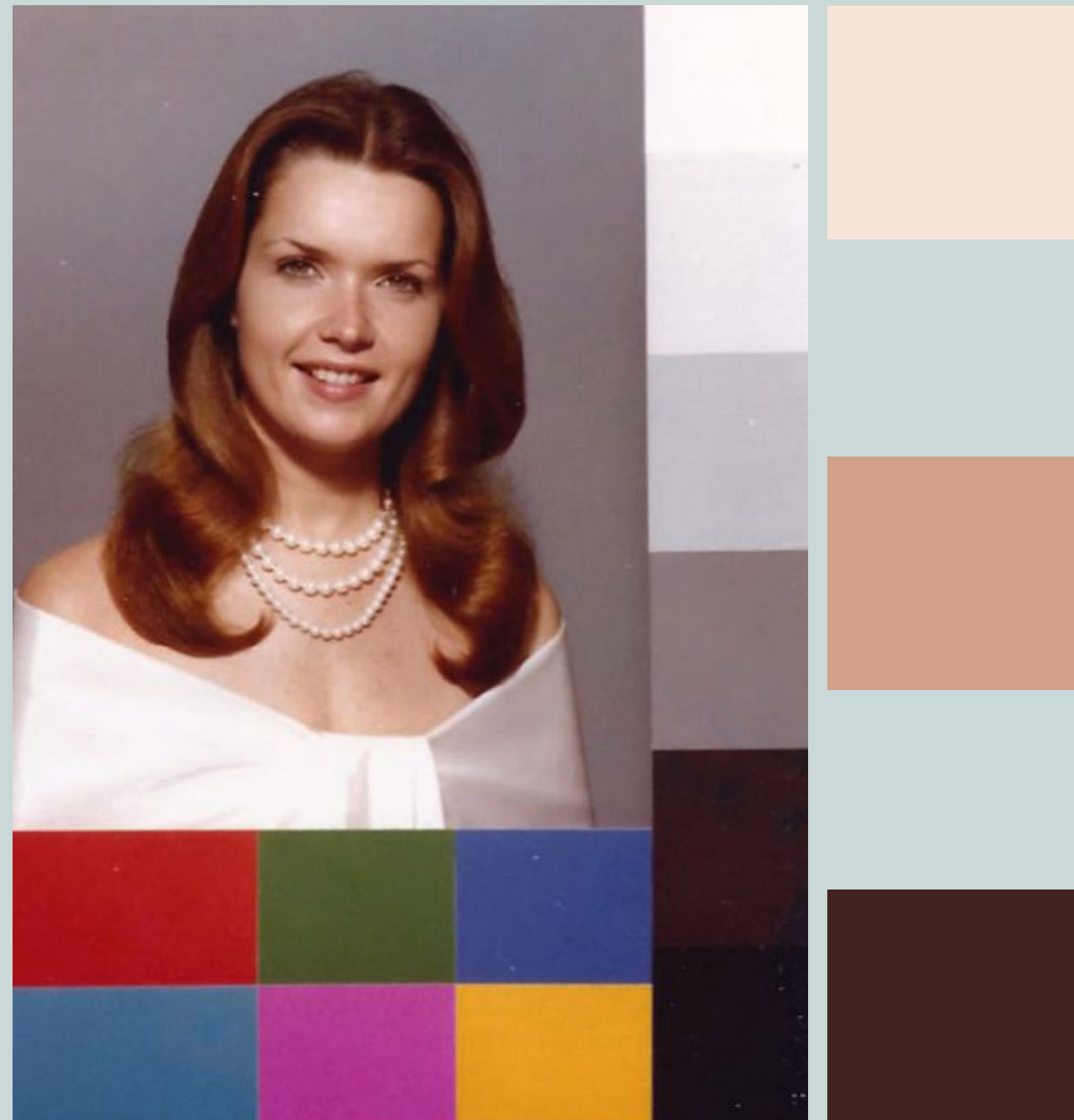
Fair Is Not the Default

Why building inclusive tech takes more than good intentions.

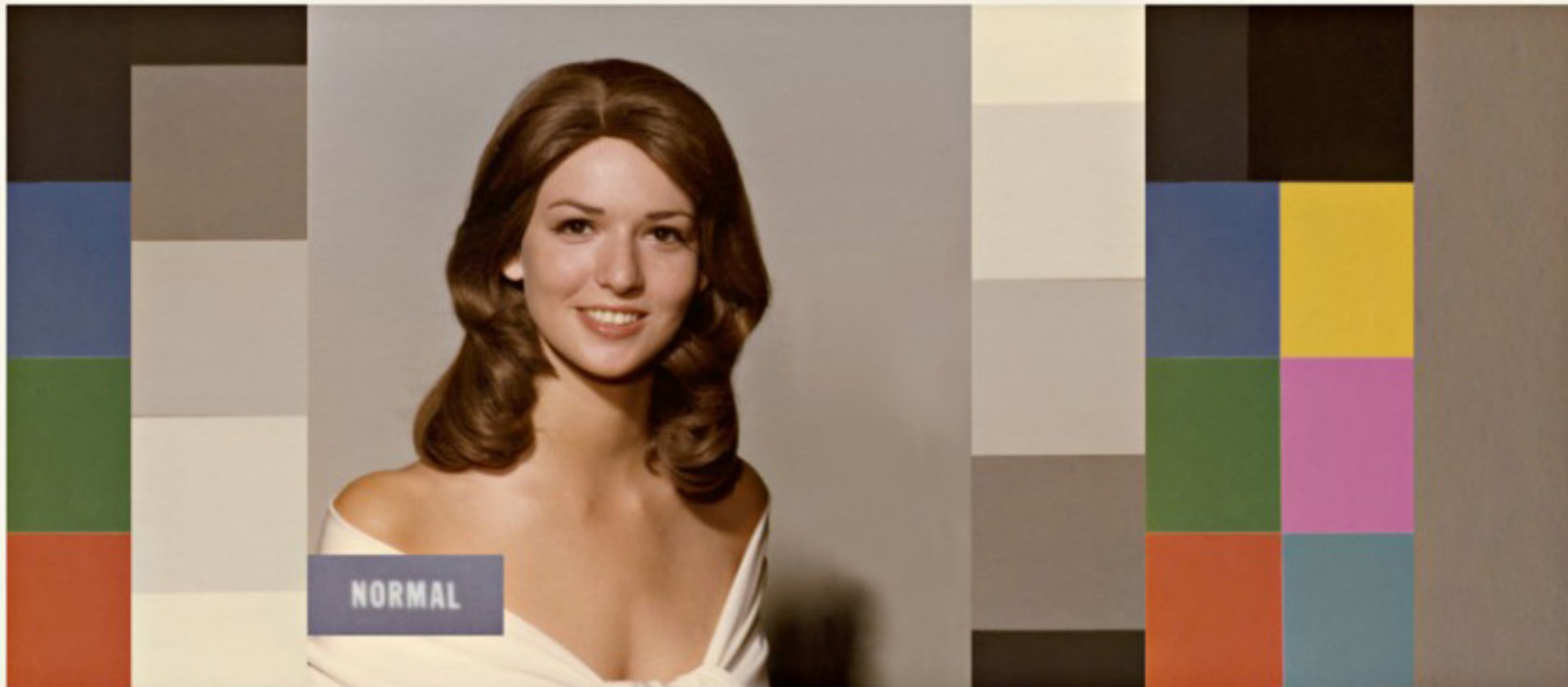
By Josh Lovejoy

In the 1960s and 1970s, "Shirley cards" were the standard for how photographers in the US performed color calibration. The idea is that when processing a photo you tried to get the colors in the provided swatch to render accurately without messing up Shirley's complexion, after which—in theory—future photos would also develop accurately. But you've probably spotted something amiss. Until relatively recently, Shirley cards only featured white women with long hair. But change didn't come because someone recognized how unrepresentative this process was, or by looking at the obvious disparity in white balance and exposure between people with pale and dark skin. Instead, change came to the consumer market with Kodak Gold in 1995, but only after chocolate companies and wood furniture manufacturers complained to Kodak about the limited spectrum of brown visible in print advertisements. In the film industry, we start to see how machine learning can help raise awareness about gaps in representation. Fellow Google employee Hartwig Adam worked in collaboration with the Geena Davis Institute for Gender in Media, to analyze every frame from the top 100 grossing films over each of the last three years. Using a technique called classification, they compared the frequency that women and men appeared. The result: men are seen and heard nearly twice as often as women.

As a result of this process, predictions can be made about things the model has never seen before, and those predictions can be used to sort, filter, rank, and even generate content. Machine learning isn't a pipeline, it's a feedback loop. As technologists, we're not immune to the effects of the very systems we've helped instrument. The media we get exposed to daily—including the way it's been ranked, sorted, filtered, or generated for us—affects the decisions we'll make, and the examples we'll draw from, the next time we set out to build a model. Considering the flaws in human perception, and the kinds of less-than-ideal product decisions like those detailed in this article, one of the conclusions people often jump to is that we need to remove human judgment from the process of machine learning. "If we could just get rid of these pesky human emotions," what a wonderfully efficient world it could be. In 2016, a company called Northpointe developed software to predict the likelihood that defendants would re-offend if granted parole. When all other criteria were equal, the singular difference of race dramatically boosted the risk score of blacks over whites, often by more than double. The company claimed that they didn't use race as a feature in training their model, but unfortunately this notion of data "blindness" actually makes the problem worse. Given the nature of deep learning, and the

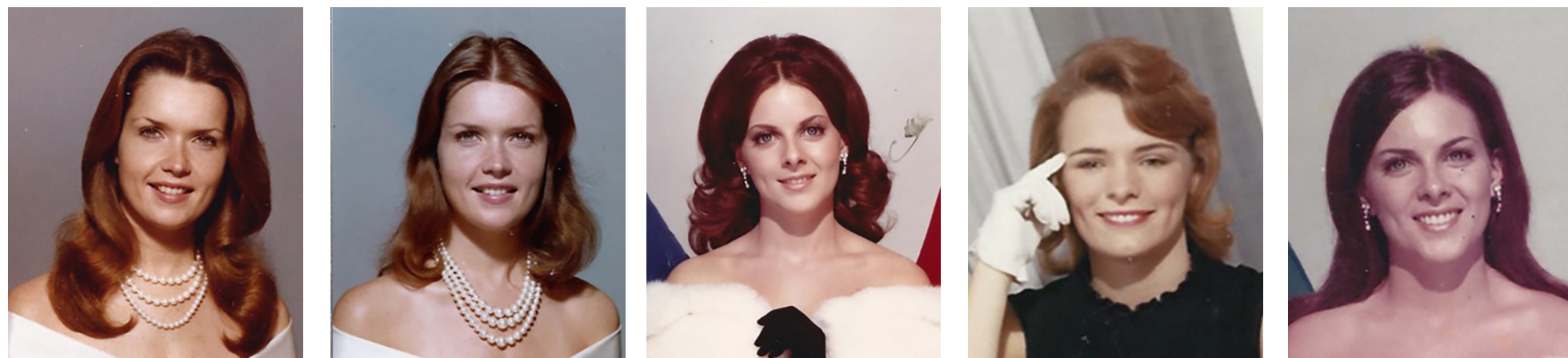


Josh Lovejoy is the Head of Design for Ethics & Society at Microsoft / Formerly People + AI Research at Google



sheer amount of information a model is exposed to, it's all but guaranteed that proxies for race (like income or zip code, attributes that are highly correlated to race in the United States) will be automatically discovered and learned.

A particularly awkward example came from FaceApp, an app that allowed users to take a selfie and turn on a "hoiness" filter. But it often just made people look whiter (it's since been disabled). This is an example of what can happen when a model is trained with skewed data—in this case, social media behavior—from predominantly white countries. Another example caused quite a stir in the research science community early last year. Two researchers from China claimed to have trained a model that—using only a headshot photo—could predict whether someone was a criminal with almost 90 percent accuracy. There were a number of methodological issues with their approach. For example, the number of examples in their data set was rather limited, and they had no way to know for sure whether the people they labeled as "non-criminals" had ever committed a crime and just never got caught. But on a deeper level, their approach assumes that there are people who are born criminals. If there are any patterns to discover in this case, they're not about the judgement of individuals, but rather those who're doing the judging. Designing for fairness means confronting inequality in the world while maintaining an open and curious mind. It starts with asking questions: Who am I? And how can I better understand the needs of everyone else? By taking the uncomfortable step to inventory our own traits—physical, social, cognitive, and otherwise—we can better connect with the experience of being made to feel like an outsider, when a default that doesn't match up with our identity is invoked in day-to-day life. We all share the desire to belong. To just be "us" without having to bear the burden of someone else's preconceptions. By taking stock in our assumptions about values and goals, we can start to make room for more voices in the discussion. And hopefully in the process, we can learn to see the world as less binary: people like me, and people not like me.



"Shirley wasn't really about variation. She was about, 'This is the standard.' And truthfully, in the real world, there is no standard."

Photographs courtesy of Bill Pyne, Richard Photo Lab general manager

And instead, see
where we celebra
opportunities for g
in so doing, to ha
its full potential as
patterns in the wo
A tool that can en
and aaugment hun
explorers; to help

Before

After

Image courtesy of Aundre Larrow

Barack Obama's Speech On Race



Image courtesy of Mark Lennihan

The following is the text as prepared for delivery of Senator Barack Obama's speech on race in Philadelphia, as provided by his presidential campaign in March 18, 2008.

By Barack Obama

"We the people, in order to form a more perfect union."

As William Faulkner once wrote, "The past isn't dead and buried. In fact, it isn't even past." We do not need to recite here the history of racial injustice in this country. But we do need to remind ourselves that so many of the disparities that exist in the African-American community today can be directly traced to inequalities passed on from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. Segregated schools were, and are, inferior schools; we still haven't fixed them, fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the inferior education they provided, then and now, helps explain the pervasive achievement gap between today's black and white students. Legalized discrimination—where blacks were prevented, often through violence, from owning property, or loans were not granted to

African-American business owners, or black homeowners could not access FHA mortgages, or blacks were excluded from unions, or the police force, or fire departments—meant that black families could not amass any meaningful wealth to bequeath to future generations. That history helps explain the wealth and income gap between black and white, and the concentrated pockets of poverty that persists in so many of today's urban and rural communities. A lack of economic opportunity among black men, and the shame and frustration that came from not being able to provide for one's family, contributed to the erosion of black families—a problem that welfare policies for many years may have worsened. And the lack of basic services in so many urban black neighborhoods—parks for kids to play in, police walking the beat, regular garbage pick-up and building code enforcement—all helped create a cycle of violence, blight and neglect that continue to haunt us. This is the reality in which Reverend Wright and other African-Americans of his generation grew up. They came of age in the late fifties and early sixties, a time when segregation was still the law of the land and opportunity was systematically constricted. What's remarkable is not how many failed in the face of discrimination, but rather how many men and women overcame the odds; how many were able to make a way out of no way for those like me who would come after them. But for all those who scratched and clawed their way to get a piece of the American Dream, there were many who didn't make it—those who were ultimately defeated, in one way or another, by discrimination. That legacy of defeat was passed onto future generations—those young men and increasingly young women who we see standing on street corners or languishing in our prisons, without hope or prospects for the future. Even for those blacks who did make it, questions of race, and racism, continue to define their worldview in fundamental ways. For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generation, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of those years. That anger may not get expressed in public, in front of white co-workers or white friends. But it does find voice in the barbershop or around the kitchen table. At times, that anger is exploited by politicians, to gin up votes along racial lines,

or to make up for a politician's own failings. And occasionally it finds voice in the church on Sunday morning, in the pulpit and in the pews. The fact that so many people are surprised to hear that anger in some of Reverend Wright's sermons simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour in American life occurs on Sunday morning. That anger is not always productive; indeed, all too often it distracts attention from solving real problems; it keeps us from squarely facing our own complicity in our condition, and prevents the African-American community from forging the alliances it needs to bring about real change. But the anger is real; it is powerful; and to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races.

In fact, a similar anger exists within segments of the white community. Most working—and middle-class white Americans don't feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race. Their experience is the immigrant experience—as far as they're concerned, no one's handed them anything, they've built it from scratch. They've worked hard all their lives, many times only to see their jobs shipped overseas or their pension dumped after a lifetime of labor. They are anxious about their futures, and feel their dreams slipping away; in an era of stagnant wages and global competition, opportunity comes to be seen as a zero sum game, in which your dreams come at my expense.

So when they are told to bus their children to a school across town; when they hear that an African American is getting an advantage in landing a good job or a spot in a good college because of an injustice that they themselves never committed; when they're told that their fears about crime in urban neighborhoods are somehow prejudiced, resentment builds over time. Like the anger within the black community, these resentments aren't always expressed in polite company. But they have helped shape the political landscape for at least a generation. Anger over welfare and affirmative action helped forge the Reagan Coalition. Politicians routinely exploited fears of crime for their own electoral ends. Talk show hosts and conservative commentators built entire careers unmasking

“For the African-American community, that path means embracing the burdens of our past without becoming victims of our past.”

bogus claims of racism while dismissing legitimate discussions of racial injustice and inequality as mere political correctness or reverse racism. Just as black anger often proved counterproductive, so have these white resentments distracted attention from the real culprits of the middle class squeeze—a corporate culture rife with inside dealing, questionable accounting practices, and short-term greed; a Washington dominated by lobbyists and special interests; economic policies that favor the few over the many. And yet, to wish away the resentments of white Americans, to label them as misguided or even racist, without recognizing they are grounded in legitimate concerns—this too widens the racial divide, and blocks the path to understanding. This is where we are right now. It’s a racial stalemate we’ve been stuck in for years. Contrary to the claims of some of my critics, black and white, I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy—particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own.

But I have asserted a firm conviction—a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people—that working together we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds, and that in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union. It means continuing to insist on a full measure of justice in every aspect of American life. But it also means binding our particular grievances—for better health care, and better schools, and better jobs—to the larger aspirations of all Americans—the white woman struggling to break the glass ceiling, the white man who’s been laid off, the immigrant trying to feed his family. And it means taking full responsibility for own lives—by demanding more from our fathers, and spending more time with our children, and reading to them, and teaching them that while they may face challenges and discrimination in their own lives, they must never succumb to despair or cynicism; they must always believe that they can write their own destiny. Ironically, this quintessentially American—and yes, conservative—notion of self-help found frequent expression in Reverend Wright’s sermons. But what my former pastor too often failed to understand is that embarking on a program of self-help also requires

a belief that society can change. The profound mistake of Reverend Wright’s sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society. It’s that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress has been made; as if this country—a country that has made it possible for one of his own members to run for the highest office in the land and build a coalition of white and black; Latino and Asian, rich and poor, young and old—is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past. But what we know—what we have seen — is that America can change. That is the true genius of this nation. What we have already achieved gives us hope — the audacity to hope—for what we can and must achieve tomorrow. In the white community, the path to a more perfect union means acknowledging that what ails the African-American community does not just exist in the minds of black people; that the legacy of discrimination — and current incidents of discrimination, while less overt than in the past—are real and must be addressed. Not just with words, but with deeds—by investing in our schools and our communities; by enforcing our civil rights laws and ensuring fairness in our criminal justice system; by providing this generation with ladders of opportunity that were unavailable for previous generations. It requires all Americans to realize that your dreams do not have to come at the expense of my dreams; that investing in the health, welfare, and education of black and brown and white children will ultimately help all of America prosper.

In the end, then, what is called for is nothing more, and nothing less, than what all the world’s great religions demand—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let us be our brother’s keeper, Scripture tells us. Let us be our sister’s keeper. Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well. For we have a choice in this country. We can accept a politics that breeds division, conflict, and cynicism. We can tackle race only as spectacle—as we did in the OJ trial—or in the wake of tragedy, as we did in the aftermath of Katrina—or as fodder for the nightly news.

We can play Reverend Wright’s sermons on every channel, every day and talk about them from now until the election, and make the only question in

this campaign whether or not the American people think that I somehow believe or sympathize with his most offensive words. We can pounce on some gaffe by a Hillary supporter as evidence that she’s playing the race card, or we can speculate on whether white men will all flock to John McCain in the general election regardless of his policies.

But if we do, I can tell you that in the next election, we’ll be talking about some other distraction. And then another one. And then another one. And nothing will change.

That is one option. Or, at this moment, in this election, we can come together and say, “Not this time.” This time, we want to talk about the crumbling schools that are stealing the future of black children and white children and Asian children and Hispanic children and Native American children. This time, we want to reject the cynicism that tells us that these kids can’t learn; that those kids who don’t look like us are



Image courtesy of Charles Rex Arbogast



Image courtesy of Oli Scarff/Getty Images

“This time we want to talk about the men and women of every color and creed who serve together, and fight together, and bleed together under the same proud flag.”

somebody else’s problem. The children of America are not those kids, they are our kids, and we will not let them fall behind in a 21st century economy. Not this time. This time we want to talk about how the lines in the emergency room are filled with whites and blacks and Hispanics who do not have health care, who don’t have the power on their own to overcome the special interests in Washington, but who can take them on if we do it together.

This time, we want to talk about the shuttered mills that once provided a decent life for men and women of every race, and the homes for sale that once belonged to Americans from every religion, every region, every walk of life. This time, we want to talk about the fact that the real problem is not that someone who doesn’t look like you might take your job; it’s that the corporation you work for will ship it overseas for nothing more than a profit. This time, we want to talk about the men and women of every color and creed who serve together and fight together and bleed together under the same proud flag. We want to talk about how to bring them home from a war that should have never been authorized and should have never been waged. And we want to talk about how we’ll show our patriotism by caring for them and their families, and giving them the benefits that they have earned.

I would not be running for President if I didn’t believe with all my heart that this is what the vast majority of Americans want for this country. This union may never be perfect, but generation after generation has shown that it can always be perfected. And today, whenever I find myself feeling doubtful or cynical about this possibility, what gives me the most hope is the next generation—the young people whose attitudes and beliefs and openness to change have already made history in this election.

There is one story in particular that I’d like to leave you with today—a story I told when I had the great honor of speaking on Dr. King’s birthday at his home church, Ebenezer Baptist, in Atlanta. There is a young, 23-year-old white woman named Ashley Baia who organized for our campaign in Florence, S.C. She had been working to organize a mostly African-American community since the beginning of this campaign, and one day she was at a roundtable discussion where everyone went

around telling their story and why they were there. And Ashley said that when she was 9 years old, her mother got cancer. And because she had to miss days of work, she was let go and lost her health care. They had to file for bankruptcy, and that’s when Ashley decided that she had to do something to help her mom.

She knew that food was one of their most expensive costs, and so Ashley convinced her mother that what she really liked and really wanted to eat more than anything else was mustard and relish sandwiches—because that was the cheapest way to eat. That’s the mind of a 9-year-old.

She did this for a year until her mom got better. So she told everyone at the roundtable that the reason she joined our campaign was so that she could help the millions of other children in the country who want and need to help their parents, too.

Now, Ashley might have made a different choice. Perhaps somebody told her along the way that the source of her mother’s problems were blacks who were on welfare and too lazy to work, or Hispanics who were coming into the country illegally. But she didn’t. She sought out allies in her fight against injustice.

Anyway, Ashley finishes her story and then goes around the room and asks everyone else why they’re supporting the campaign. They all have different stories and different reasons. Many bring up a specific issue. And finally they come to this elderly black man who’s been sitting there quietly the entire time. And Ashley asks him why he’s there. And he does not bring up a specific issue.

He does not say health care or the economy. He does not say education or the war. He does not say that he was there because of Barack Obama. He simply says to everyone in the room, “I am here because of Ashley.”

“I’m here because of Ashley.” By itself, that single moment of recognition between that young white girl and that old black man is not enough. It is not enough to give health care to the sick, or jobs to the jobless, or education to our children. But it is where we start. It is where our union grows stronger. And as so many generations have come to realize over the course of the 221 years since a band of patriots signed that document right here in Philadelphia, that is where the perfection begins.

Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color

Colors may be neutral, but our minds and culture give them meaning. Over time, color labels like white, black, and brown have become freighted with messages of social worth when applied to people. These meanings have varied according to place and time. Most of the concepts of race that people understand or identify with today are socially weighted skin-color labels. Races are described as socially constructed categories because they are composite categories of physical and cultural attributes, and because they have meaning only under highly specific conditions of time, space, and culture. As categories go, they are slippery and arbitrary; but they are no less real in people's minds for being so. There is no universal preference for a specific skin color. Our preferences develop on the basis of our early experiences and what we learn about other people from our parents and teachers. Because people in prehistory and early history never moved far from home, they generally preferred their own color. Anything noticeably different was viewed with suspicion or fear.

The single most powerful factor reinforcing the preference for lightness in the last 150 years has been the dissemination of images in the popular media. When positive social messages and elevated social status are associated with images of people with lighter skin (as in much advertising), the effects are swift and sure. Humans are ever imitative and suggestible and will work to transform themselves into a form or color associated with greater social acceptability and higher social status. Once established, attitudes toward skin color tend to be durable because they are reactions to known stereotypes and are faithfully transmitted by multiple cultural mechanisms. It is against this backdrop that we can look at how skin color has come to be viewed in different parts of the modern world. Many places could be discussed here, but I have chosen the examples of South Africa, Brazil, India, and Japan to illustrate common themes and salient differences. Each of these countries has a long and complex social history and history of attitudes toward skin color.



Image courtesy of
Angelica Dass

Nina G. Jablonski is an American anthropologist and palaeobiologist. She explores the relationship between melanin pigment and sunlight, and examines the consequences of rapid migrations, vacations, and other lifestyle choices that can create mismatches between our skin color and our environment.

Beauty Can Not Be One Skin Color

After two nonprofits delivered 23,000 signatures to Amazon asking it to remove skin-bleaching products with high levels of mercury, the company listened.

By **Sandra E. Garcia**

Dark skin can be heavy to walk around in. It is not widely represented in movies or television. Black Americans with darker complexions are more likely to say they experience frequent racism. And dark-skinned women around the world are flooded with advertising telling them that white is beautiful. That weight can be so immense that it pushes some people to take radical steps to change their complexions. "People don't feel happy about their skin color," said Amira Adawe, the founder of the nonprofit The Beautywell Project, who for the last eight years has been working to root out biases against dark-skinned people and lift the self-esteem of those who have internalized the discrimination. Her efforts to confront the extreme and unhealthy methods that people turn to for lighter skin brought her to the Amazon offices in Shakopee, Minn., where she hand-delivered a petition with 23,000 signatures in late November. The petition asked Amazon to remove skin-bleaching products high in mercury from its online platform. The items—which violated the site's guidelines—were pulled a week after the delivery. While Amazon still offers skin-lightening creams without mercury, the move was a victory in Ms. Adawe's fight against a mentality

that has persisted in communities for generations. "A large retail company selling skin-lightening products sends the message to people that they should change their skin color," Ms. Adawe, said, adding, "We are dealing with years and years of trauma that these people are living with." That trauma is caused by colorism—prejudice that favors people with lighter skin over those with darker skin, especially within a racial or ethnic group. The term was coined by Alice Walker in 1982.

Colorism has serious mental and emotional effects that can be passed on through generations. It is not the same as racism, but the two are inherently connected. "It is not just that people within the same race are treating each other differently based on their skin color," said Ellis Monk, an assistant professor of sociology at Harvard who researches colorism. In the Americas, the importance of a person's skin tone originated in slavery, Professor Monk said. Black people with lighter skin received more privileges from white people, and were thought to be more aesthetically appealing and intellectually superior compared with darker-skinned black people. As the years passed,



Photographs
courtesy of
Marina Wildt

"It is that people in other racial groups are treating people differently based on their skin color."

these ideas persisted. "Having lighter skin is associated with higher earnings, more education, and sometimes better physical health," Professor Monk said. One 2017 study found that people with darker skin are more prone to arrests, and struggle more in the marriage market. Another study, from 2015, noted that colorism is often gendered. "Because of its unique relationship to who and what is beautiful, it has a tendency, although not exclusively, to affect and infect women more than men," the study said. In an effort to avoid the perceived pitfalls that come with being darker,

people around the world—in Asia, Africa and the Americas—bleach their skin, sometimes by coating it in toxic chemicals that are usually illegal but still widely available. Skin-bleaching products, like high-dose hydroquinone, creams high in mercury and steroids, are usually mixed and applied to the skin, Ms. Adawe said. "The person becomes discolored; they get skin conditions over time," Ms. Adawe said. "They are not even happy with the result, but there is that notion that they want to be white." People who use hydroquinone and creams that are high in mercury "tend to become very red,"

Sandra E. Garcia is a bilingual reporter at the Metro desk of *The New York Times*.



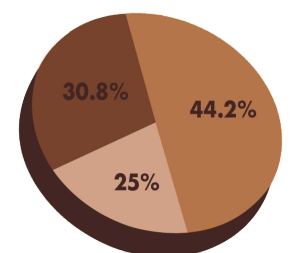
Ms. Adawe said. "Some of the women say that it's hard for them to be in the kitchen and cook because of the heat. Their skin becomes very sensitive." Dermatologists widely prescribe hydroquinone for patients dealing with scars, hyper-pigmentation and melasma, a condition that causes irregular brown patches on the skin, according to Dr. Michele S. Green, a New York-based dermatologist at Lenox Hill Hospital who has been practicing for 25 years. "Bleaching creams are really efficient and really useful, and I prescribe them all the time," Dr. Green said. But, she said, some people misuse them. "They should go under a doctor's care," she said, adding, "Not everyone can afford to go to a doctor, and that is the problem." Dr. Green said that she gets many patients looking for skin-lightening injections and other treatments. "Generally speaking, I don't treat those patients," she said. "That is a psychological issue and I'm not going to treat someone, for that it is a dangerous slope." Some who want to lighten their skin turn to whatever is available on the internet. The Beautywell Project partnered with the Sierra Club's Gender, Equity & Environment Program to make sure that the harmful products that people find online are not readily available. Last year, the organizations asked Amazon in a letter to stop selling skin-lightening creams that contain high levels of mercury. It was ignored, Ms. Adawe said. This year's campaign was more successful. An Amazon spokeswoman confirmed in an email last week that the products were no longer available. "All marketplace sellers must follow our selling guidelines and those who don't will be subject to action, including potential removal of their account," she said. Among other requirements, the marketplace guidelines do not allow skin creams containing mercury. The move was a major accomplishment for Ms. Adawe and her nonprofit group.

After years of research, she believes that places that have experienced colonization and widespread racism are susceptible to exhibiting colorism. Ms. Adawe hosts a one-hour radio show several times a week during which women call in and anonymously share why they lighten their skin. "Some women have shared with me that they don't feel like they are attractive enough to men," Ms.

Adawe said. "There have been some communities that told me that the reason that they lighten their skin is that they are not accepted," she said, adding that in many places around the world "your likelihood of getting a job depends on your skin color." For many people, the discrimination starts at home. Some family members may call only lighter-skinned relatives beautiful, or treat them better than darker-skinned relatives. In a recent interview, the actress Lupita Nyong'o shared with BBC that the discomfort she felt with her complexion began at an early age. "I definitely grew up feeling," she says, before pausing and cringing, "uncomfortable with my skin color because I felt like the world around me awarded lighter skin." Ms. Nyong'o, an Oscar-winning actress, wrote a children's book this year titled "Sulwe," about colorism and self-esteem. She said she wrote the book so that children with darker skin could see themselves reflected in stories.

Colorism is not hidden—it parades itself on magazine covers, in big-budget films, on television and on social media. In March, as Chris Rock presented an N.A.A.C.P. award, he made a joke about the actor Jussie Smollett, who at the time was embroiled in a controversy with the Chicago Police Department. "What a waste of light skin, you know?" Mr. Rock said to the audience. "You know what I could do with that light skin? That curly hair? My career would be out of here." Mr. Rock, who is dark-skinned, delivered the lines to an audience that burst into laughter. So how does the narrative change?

Women of Color



- Displeased with hair texture
- Desired smaller bodies
- Displeased with overall appearance

Before Fenty: Over 100 Years of Black Makeup Brands

African Americans have been loving, and buying, makeup for generations

By Nadra Nittle

When Rihanna launched Fenty Beauty in September, she turned the makeup industry on its head. With its 40 foundation shades—the darkest of which sold out first—Fenty proved that inclusivity in cosmetics is not just ethical but profitable. By serving the customers other mainstream brands have largely ignored, Fenty generated more than \$72 million in media value alone the month after its debut. “I don’t think there was ever such an exciting launch, where a brand received that much excitement and marketing,” says Kimberly Smith, CEO and founder of cosmetics retailer Marjani Beauty. “Now people see it. There’s money to be made by making nuanced shades for women of color.” But the enormous outpouring of support Fenty has received belies the fact that Rihanna is far from the first entrepreneur to meet the cosmetics needs of women of color. For more

than a century, makeup brands have courted the black community and prospered, making it all the more curious that it took 2017’s so-called Fenty effect to confirm the obvious: Women of color enjoy makeup and are eager to buy it. The first businessperson to successfully tap into this market wasn’t a black woman, but a black man named Anthony Overton. A lawyer who also had a chemistry degree, he opened the Overton Hygienic Manufacturing Co. in Kansas in 1898. The business initially sold baking powder and other products to drug and grocery stores, but Overton recognized that women of color lacked cosmetics that came in their skin tones. The observation prompted his historic foray into makeup. The Overton Hygienic Manufacturing Co.’s “high-brown” face powder was a hit with women of color in

Nadra Nittle is a reporter for *The Goods* by Vox.



Image courtesy of
Marina Wildt

the early 1900s. Photo: Courtesy of National Museum of American History Tim Samuelson, Chicago's official cultural historian, points out that access proved to be the major reason black women couldn't get the makeup they wanted. Samuelson is also writing a book about early black makeup brands. "Large department stores they're not going to stock for people of color," he says of the early 1900s. "You have to rely on a small network of companies and mail order, so Overton develops a network of salespeople who go out and visit small stores with samples, and also you could send for it by mail."

Overton's "high-brown" face powder created a sensation, with booming sales in the United States and countries like Egypt and Liberia. By the time Overton Hygienic relocated to Chicago's South State Street in 1911, the company's sales staff ballooned to 400 and the next year went on to manufacture more than 50 products, including hair creams and eye makeup. The face powder eventually expanded beyond "high brown" to include darker and lighter shades, such as "nut-brown," "olive-tone," "brunette," and "flesh-pink." In 1920, the company had a Dun & Bradstreet credit rating of \$1 million, Jet

"Overton Hygienic stayed in business until 1983, but during its eight-decade span, the company certainly wasn't the only one selling makeup to black women."



Photographs courtesy of Rihanna Fenty.

magazine reported. Ultimately, tapping into this underserved market allowed Overton, born during slavery, to join the elite. Samuelson credits Overton with transforming the cosmetics industry for black women in every way. Most importantly, his makeup was safe, the historian says. "A lot of formulations—some would have ground-up chalk and other things in them," Samuelson says. "In some cases they were actually even dangerous. Overton had strict standards for salespeople and also established a chemical laboratory to test materials out and see if they were safe." Overton

improved not only makeup formulas for black women, but also how cosmetics for them were packaged. According to Samuelson, he noticed that the few white companies that deigned to serve black customers put products for them in plain black-and-white packaging—inferior wrapping for patrons perceived as inferior. In response, Overton took care to send his products out in beautiful, multicolored containers. In addition to cosmetics, the entrepreneur entered fields like publishing, banking, and insurance. Flip through early editions of *The Crisis*, the

NAACP's quarterly magazine, and you'll see advertisements from Patti's Beauty Emporium for "Brazilian toilette luxuries." The mail-order business sold perfumes, creams, and Patti's "La Traviata" face powder for 68 cents. But who was Patti? The name of the face powder provides a clue. "La Traviata" is an 1853 opera by Giuseppe Verdi, and Patti was Anita Patti Brown, an African-American soprano known as the "Bronze Tetrizzini" to liken her to Italian soprano Luisa Tetrizzini. The black press also nicknamed her the "globe-trotting prima donna" due to



her nonstop touring schedule. Samuelson calls Brown the Rihanna of her day. "What Rihanna is doing is the same thing Anita Patti Brown was doing—using her fame to get these products made," he says. "She was a great operatic concert star, but due to matters of race, she

played small venues. She did have considerable name recognition and fame within the black community. She was well covered in the black newspapers." But her cosmetics venture fizzled out after a few years. At the time, black women entrepreneurs such as Madam C.J. Walker,

Sarah Spencer Washington, and Annie Turnbo Malone achieved success by focusing primarily on hair care and just dabbling in makeup. Another man, however, would enjoy immense success with a cosmetics company that courted African Americans. Morton Neumann, a Hungarian American who grew up in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, knew that cosmetics companies marginalized black clients. Like Overton, Neumann had a chemistry background, and in 1926 he established his own business, Valmor Products Co., which largely targeted black customers. They especially took to Valmor's Sweet Georgia Brown face powder, then available for 60 cents in colors like "tantalizing dark brown," "aristocratic brown," "suntan," and "teezum [tease 'em] red."

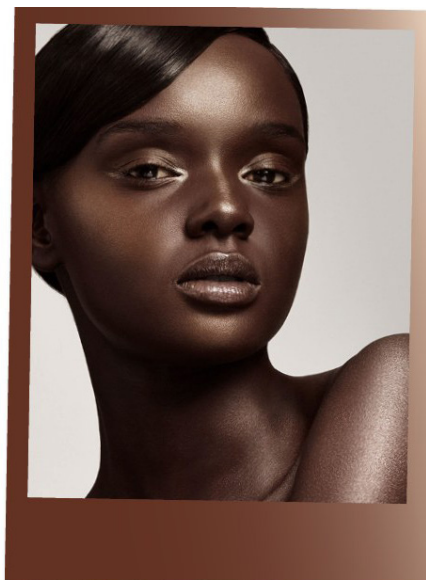
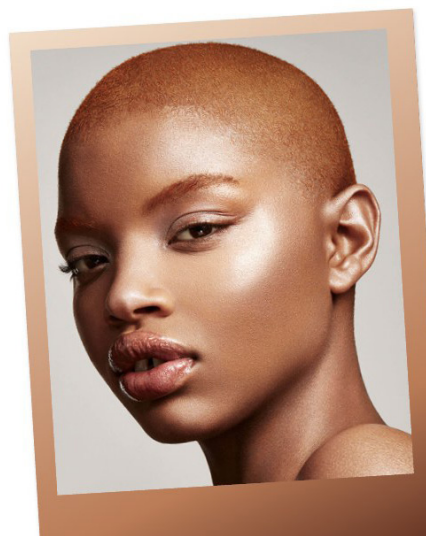
Note the colorism in one ad for the face powder. It promised a "lighter appearance in 10 seconds" and pointed out that the powder "is specially made to give tan and dark complexions the BRIGHTER attractive beauty that everybody admires." Today, women of color also have the option of wearing foundation from mainstream brands such as M.A.C., Bobbi Brown, Makeup Forever, Nars, and Lancôme. And, likely due to the Fenty effect, Kylie Cosmetics recently debuted a 30-shade foundation line. Smith, of Marjani Beauty, says that makeup manufacturers need to offer at least 20 shades to serve a diverse clientele. "Just adding five, six or seven shades, [customers] would have to make some compromises," she said. An attorney by trade, Smith started Marjani last year because she wanted to give women of color more makeup options than found at either drug stores or department stores. Marjani offers foundations from brands across the globe, including Omolewa Cosmetics,

Maréna Beauté, and AJ Crimson. She says that for far too long black women essentially "became chemists at home," mixing shades to make the right foundation for their skin.

Once they find a foundation that matches their skin tone, it may not be suitable for them, Washington says: "The brand might have too much oil or too much silicone." She adds that finding foundation with the right undertones can still be a tricky undertaking for women of color.

Moreover, as consumers have grown more cautious about the chemicals in their makeup, women of color want "green" makeup options. But emerging makeup brands in this sector, such as 100% Pure, Tarte, and Kjaer Weis, don't have many foundation options for women of color. B.L.A.C. Minerals do offer mineral foundation to such customers, but darker-skinned women looking for heavier coverage have been left wanting. "To find the full-coverage foundation coming from this natural and green space—we're not seeing ourselves reflected in it yet," Yursik says.

Social media may change that. Reid views it as the cosmetic industry's great equalizer. Had the technology existed decades ago, makeup manufacturers and department stores that claimed women of color don't wear makeup would have undoubtedly been proven wrong. "I've worn plenty of products that are not targeted to me," Reid says. "We've always been doing this by trial and error. Now companies are looking at social media, especially Instagram and Youtube, and looking at who's wearing their products and how much they're spending. They're asking, 'Why aren't we talking about them?'"



POLITICS OF PIGMENTATION



BIACKISH



B

"Blackish" has never shied away from serious topics, but Tuesday night's episode about colorism marked a particularly weighty moment for the ABC sitcom. Black Like Us" began with subtle nods to its uncomfortable subject. Kendrick Lamar's "Complexion" played as Dre (Anthony Anderson) and Bow (Tracee Ellis Ross) started their day. The couple passed each other coffee and half-and-half in the kitchen, and Dre called Bow, who is biracial, his "half-Nubian queen." It was business as usual for the Johnson family until their middle son, Jack (Miles Brown), brought them his school photos. Bow and Dre were horrified to discover that Jack's twin, Diane (Marsai Martin), could barely be seen because the photographer didn't use proper lighting for her brown skin. "Oh, my God, they O.J.'d my baby," Dre declared, referring to Time magazine's infamous 1994 cover featuring a darkened mug shot of O.J. Simpson. The picture debacle led to a heated family debate about colorism but not before Dre offered viewers historical context in a voice-over paired with animated images. "Black people come in many shades, from Mariah Carey to Wesley Snipes. Because we look different, we get discriminated against differently," he explained. "Sometimes we even discriminate against each other. It's

The Johnson family has a heated discussion about colorism in the episode "Black Like Us."

Bethonie Butler



Anthony Anderson
Starring as Dre



Tracee Ellis Ross
Starring as
Dr. Rainbow
"Bow" Johnson



Miles Brown
Starring as Jack



Marsai Martin
Starring as Diane

called colorism, the racist belief that light skin is good and dark skin is bad." Dre noted that colorism exists in Asian, Indian and Latin American communities but that it has been particularly harmful to African Americans, who were separated by complexion during slavery, leading to "deep-seated tension and resentment that continues to this day." Back in the Johnson family kitchen, Bow called the photo "thoughtless and hurtful" and suggested demanding the school retake it. Dre, on the other hand, wanted to confront the school on its "racism," requesting "free pictures for the rest of our lives" and Kanye West tickets to smooth things over. ("I really want to see him, but I will never ever give that man any more of my money!" Dre said of the increasingly controversial rapper.) Diane, meanwhile, dismissed the photo as no big deal, reasoning that everyone takes bad pictures. "I honestly think the photographer just messed up," she told her parents. But then Junior (Marcus Scribner) made an offhand reference to his family's "issues with complexion," stopping his relatives in their tracks. Bow and Junior, the lightest members of the Johnson family, called Dre and his mother, Ruby (Jennifer Lewis), out for making constant jokes at their expense, from calling them "team light skin" to proposing that they "come from Lightskinsylvania." Ruby declared that "light skins don't have problems." "Of course, fair-skinned people have problems," Bow interjected. "Yeah, but it's the same way rich people have problems," her mother-in-law told her. "Oh, no, I can't fit all my money in my pocket." "Good heavens, the butler is sick, who will apply my SPF 162 to my translucent fair skin?" Dre chimed in. The argument turned increasingly heated as Junior bluntly confronted his father for equating light skin with "being soft" (a larger issue that speaks to Dre's complicated view of masculinity). But tensions boiled over when Diane opened up to her family about why she didn't want to talk about the issue. "You say to me that you're better than me, that you're blacker than me, oh, and I have no struggle," an exasperated Bow said before declaring her mother-in-law "a monster." "I am not a monster," Ruby hit back. "I've been called that all my life. I'm not about to sit here and let you do it." "I guess you can see why we don't talk about colorism," Dre said in a voice-over. "Because after generations of pain and hurt feelings, talking about it never goes well." But the Johnsons continued to talk about it after Ruby opened up about her painful childhood and how she and her dark-skinned father were ostracized by her mother's lighter-skinned relatives. Bow and Ruby apologized to each other, with Ruby calling her daughter-in-law an "incredible black mother." Dre also offered a heartfelt apology to Junior and concluded that the family's tough discussion was cathartic — and necessary.



Colorism is a secret shame in the multicolored black family, I realized that because we talked about it, our wounds could finally start to heal as we learn to love ourselves out in the open. Because nothing gets better in the shadows."


"No one in this family is as dark as me," she said, before citing the many ways society reinforces the idea that lighter skin is somehow better, from being discouraged to wear red lipstick or being told — by a black woman — that she's "so pretty for a dark-skinned girl."

Gold like 24k, Okay



"Brown Skin Girl," a song from Beyoncé's album, *The Lion King: The Gift*, is unapologetically and fearlessly Black, hitting on a topic that society still hesitates to approach because of how, well, complicated the topic is. Colorism is a deeply rooted issue in the Black community that goes back to slavery, when plantation owners separated slaves by skin tone: "lighter skin tones in the house, darker skin tones in the fields." Fast forward more than 400 years, and colorism is still alive. We're living in an era where makeup companies are still releasing foundation lines with only two shades of brown and major fashion companies are allegedly only using darker skin girls after they get called out for not doing it.



A group of performers, including Beyoncé, are shown on stage. They are wearing bright pink blazers and green headwraps. Beyoncé is in the center, wearing a white and black headwrap. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

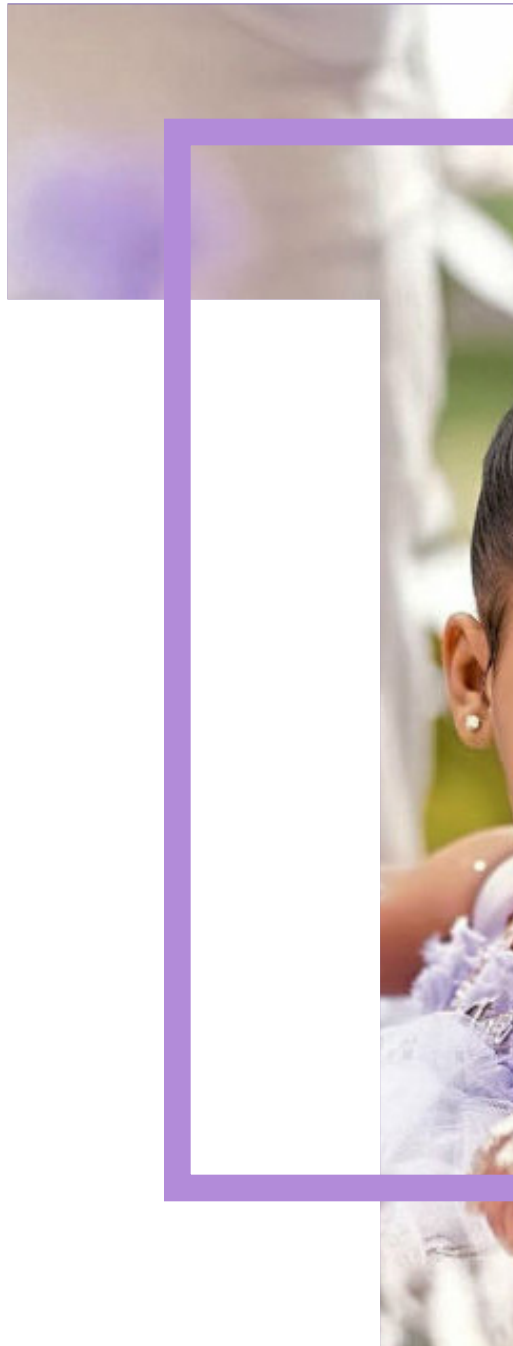
It's a relief to see that Beyoncé is not only encouraging her daughter to love the skin she's in, but also the rest of the world, with "Brown Skin Girl." Wizkid and Beyoncé sing about nappy curls and shout-out some of the most melaninated faces in Hollywood:

"Pose like a trophy when Naomis walk in
She need an Oscar for that pretty dark skin
Pretty like Lupita when the cameras close in
Drip broke the levee when my Kellys roll in"



“Brown Skin Girl,” is already having a huge impact on social media, inspiring the #BrownSkinGirlChallenge, where brown skin girls post selfies and pictures of themselves on Twitter and Instagram embracing that their skin is “the best thing in the world.”

How a Rec



In March 2019, Kim Kardashian shared a photo on Twitter and Instagram of her daughter Chicago and her two nieces, Stormi and True—with the caption “The Triplets.” No one could have imagined the social media firestorm it would cause. The photo instantly received thousands of responses on social media, many of which criticized True Thompson, the child of Khloe Kardashian and NBA player, Tristan Thompson, for her darker skin complexion.

One Twitter user responded to the pic stressing her disappointment in True's skin color:

"I hate that True is so dark, the other two are a nice mix.... she's a cute kid just too dark."



Another user ranked the children according to the best looking, with the list ending with the darkest:

"Chicago is first cutest kid of the bunch..Stormi is second and True is third BUT they are ALL beautiful."

H

Hundreds of other comments under the picture took direct aim at True's appearance. In the case of the Kardashian-Jenner clan, who in the past has continuously dismissed and ignored comments of cultural appropriation and black exploitation, growing up as a black girl in that family, as Jamilah said, could be complicated. By choosing to ignore color, Kim and other white women who share similar sentiments, are also choosing to ignore the unique experiences, both positive and negative, that will surely impact their black kids. In the case of True, without a black woman or mixed race women in her life properly explaining the backhanded attacks prompted by colorism, she may experience these negative feelings in isolation without the comfort of knowing other women are experiencing these same issues, and without absorbing the knowledge and solutions they could provide.

The colorblind "we don't see color" approach to parenting, which Kim Kardashian has championed on media when defending accusations of racism or cultural appropriation, could be extremely dangerous and toxic for black children.



ENCOUNTERS WITH DIFFERENCE

Author and journalist Sandra Guzmán was one of five children in a mixed Puerto Rican family; her father was black, and her mother had a Spanish heritage and a light complexion. "Guzmán described herself as having 'African features, a flat nose, and curlier hair,'" Tharps writes. One of her sisters had blond hair, European features and their mother's coloring, and that sister was favored by both of their parents. Guzmán admitted to Tharps: "I always felt like if I were just a little blonder, if I just looked a little lighter skinned, maybe [my father] would love me more." Her nose became her chief focus, and finally, just before she finished college, she saved up her money and got a nose job. Even with her new nose and straightened hair, Guzmán carried the wounds of her skin and her upbringing. She understands that her parents are responding to social pressures that favor lighter skin; those demands affected her family's life and ironically pushed her relatives to discriminate in ways they would condemn in others.

Meet Maria and Lucy, the bi-racial twins who have often been mistaken for friends instead of sisters because of their skin tones.

By Chris Perez

Instabrand



How can you spend so much money marketing to Black women, but you can't even put Black women of different skin tones on your website or social media pages?

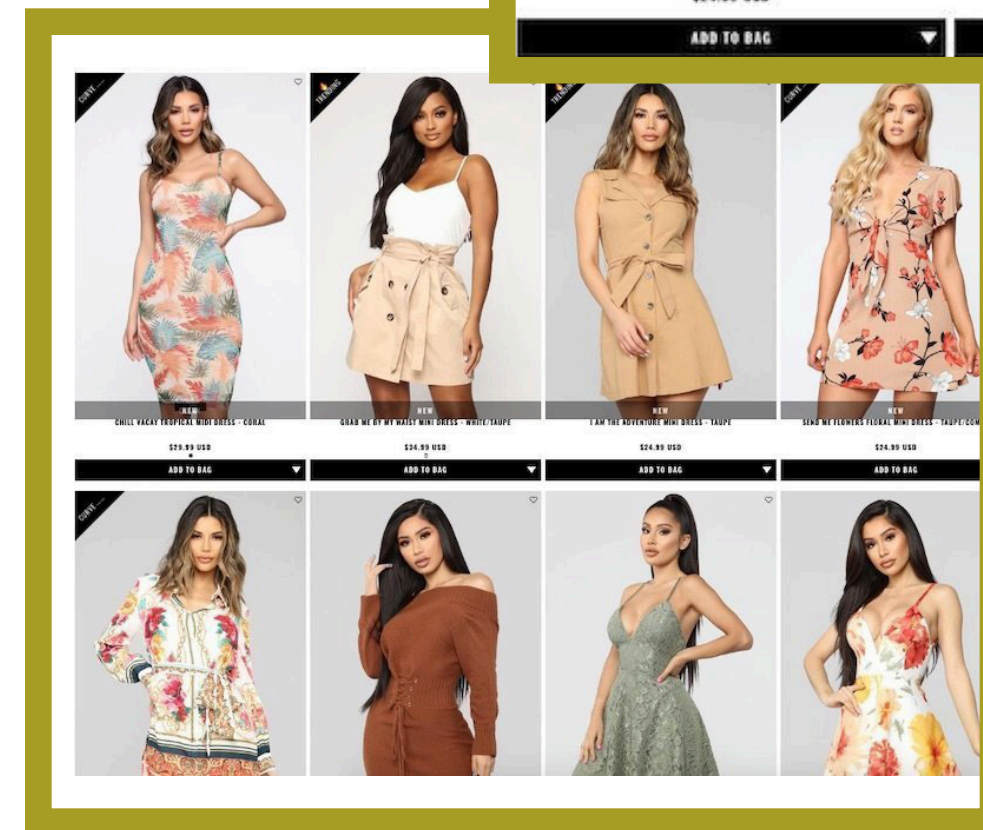
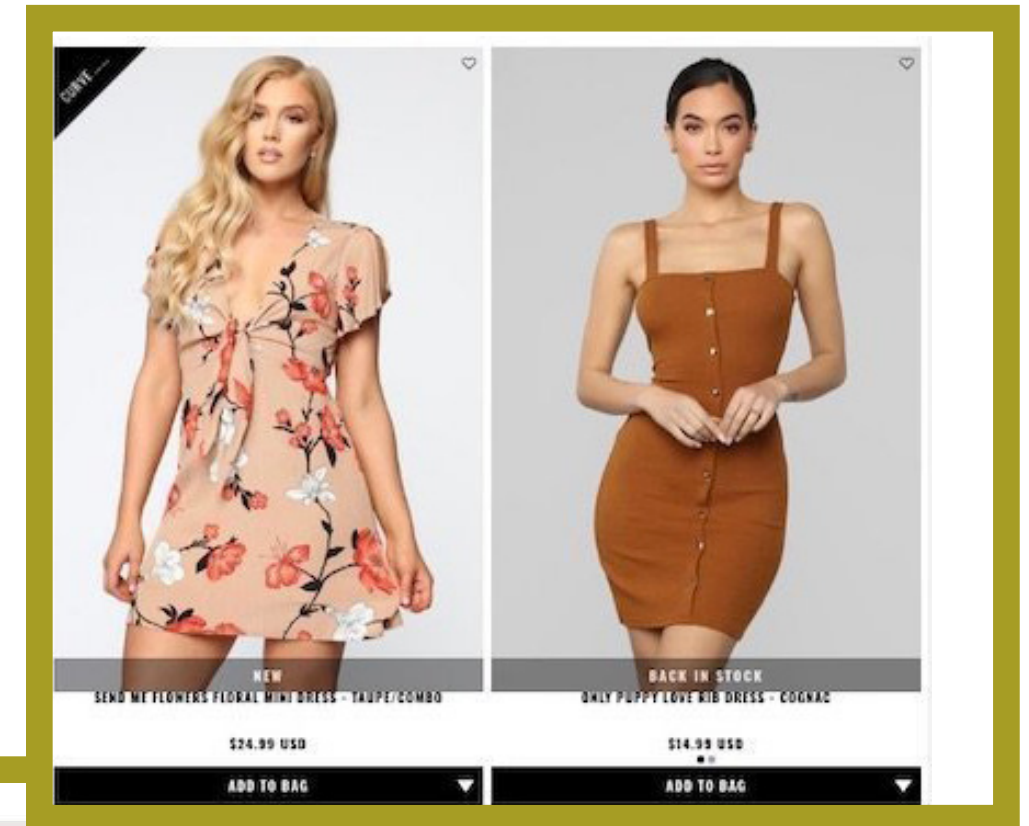


Image courtesy of Alysia Stevenson. Screenshot of Fashion Nova's dress section.

You probably know the name Fashion Nova. These days, you can't scroll through your Instagram feed without seeing at least one sponsored post from a reality TV star or celebrity. With the help of social media marketing combined with its affordability, the brand has asserted itself as a clothing powerhouse. But I noticed something quite interesting when I was looking at dresses over the weekend. Around three pages in, I realized there were barely any dark-skinned Black women or just Black women in general. I'm not over-exaggerating when I say I went through the whole website and their Instagram. I wanted to make sure I wasn't jumping to conclusions. However, 61 pages and 3,038 dresses later, I counted one dark model. It was literally 50 shades of beige, with a few models in the tan-deep category thrown in. Most of the models are either Hispanic, white, light-skinned, or racially ambiguous. It's almost like Fashion Nova does the brown paper bag test before the models can work for them.



While I love that they're giving plus-size women the limelight, why are they only putting models of a deeper complexion on the plus-size page?

If we're going just by skin tone alone, the models look like me. So I have one question for the brand: How can you spend so much money marketing to Black women, but you can't even put Black women of different skin tones on your website or social media pages? Yes, I understand that women of all races shop at Fashion Nova. But, if you look closely at Fashion Nova's marketing tactics, you'll realize that they actively target Black women. They pay Black blogs like *The Shade Room*, whose main demographic are Black people, millions to promote their latest urban styles. Reality TV vixens from predominately Black shows like *Love and Hip Hop* and *Black Ink Crew* show off their "fashion nova fit" on their own

Instagram pages, which then get reposted to the Fashion Nova page. This is the only time you see darker black women on their main Instagram. Fashion Nova also has a second Instagram page, Fashion Nova Curve. The plus-size page has 2.6 million followers—13 million less than the brand's main page. Unlike the website and the company's main Instagram, the plus-size page showcases a diverse range of models and influencers.

For those of you not well-versed in racial stereotypes, plus-size dark Black women have been stigmatized in America for centuries. Black women who were bigger and darker were deemed less attractive. I honestly think that Fashion Nova is using this kind of tactic. If they weren't, why are they keeping the plus-size page, the one that doesn't gain as much traffic, separate from the main one? On top of that, why not include all of the models on the main Fashion Nova page? They're basically putting out the message that they only want a certain type of model on their main account. Their blatant colorism doesn't need to be verbalized, we can see it plain as day on our screens. They're happy to take our money but actually including us? That's another story. Fashion Nova has some work to do. And until they fix the issue, I can't see myself giving my hard-earned money to a company that doesn't see the beauty of all Black women.

Alysia Stevenson is a 26 year old born and bred New Yorker with a passion for Shakespeare, British and African-American literature.

BIOGRAPHY

Skintone Band Aid: First Time

Dominique Apollon said he is happy that he started an online conversation about diversity and representation.

By Ali Gostanian

A man's tweet about a bandage has gone viral and prompted conversations online about race and representation. On April 19, Dominique Apollon, 45, of Oakland, California, shared his thoughts about wearing a bandage that matched his skin tone for the first time. "It's taken me 45 trips around the sun, but for the first time in my life I know what it feels like to have a band-aid in my own skin tone. You can barely even spot it in the first image. For real I'm holding back tears," he wrote in his post. Apollon, who works as a vice president of research at the racial justice organization Race Forward, said he first purchased the skin-tone-matching bandages a few months ago after having money left over in his health savings account. In an interview with NBC News, Apollon said he had never actively sought out these kinds of bandages but decided to buy them from Tru-Colour Bandages because he "wanted to support people of color-centered products." "When I saw the brown bandage, it was just beautiful," Apollon said. The feelings of elation however quickly turned somber. Apollon said he felt a sense of "sadness that I had never seen that kind of bandage on my body as a kid," he added. Tru-Colour Bandages was founded in 2013 by Toby Meisenheimer, who is white, after he

was unable to find a bandage that matched his adopted African American son's skin tone. This lack of options for people of color inspired him start the company soon after, Meisenheimer told the Huffington Post in a 2015 interview. "In our existence as a small business, it's been an honor to provide skin-tone options focused toward people of color in an industry that hadn't seen a lot of change in nearly a century," Tru-Colour Bandages posted in a statement on Facebook in response to Apollon's viral tweets. "As our name states, Tru-Colour," we hope to release more products and shades in the near future." Johnson & Johnson, which distributes the Band-Aid brand of adhesive bandages, told NBC News in a statement that it applauds "the work of Tru-Colour on this inclusive product." Johnson & Johnson discontinued its skin-tone-matching bandages due to lack of consumer interest at the time, the statement said. The company also stated that it would evaluate and provide solutions for its diverse consumer base. People on social media also responded to Apollon's tweets, reflecting on the lack of representation for people of color within all areas of society.



Image courtesy of Bryna Zumer



Beauty, Art, History & Solidarity—Me

As the song says, it is so great to be young, gifted and black. **By Latoya Peterson**

I can still remember the first time I felt like I needed to defend my blackness. In high school, our heavily ambitious theater teacher launched a multiracial production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Based on Fats Waller's 1929 hit song, the production was a beautiful tribute to the mood and attitude of the *Harlem*

Renaissance. It was a celebration of black life in varying keys – and the lowest point is represented by a song called (What Did I Do to Be So) Black and Blue. In the twilight of the roaring twenties, Waller's plaintive refrain made total sense: What did I do to be so black and blue? To be marked as



white was to be free. And many people now classified as white didn't make the cut then, so you can imagine what it felt like to be black in that era. But in 1999? Singing in a racially integrated suburb to an audience of mostly wealthy white parents? I felt the sort of conflict that I couldn't quite articulate as a teenager. And the lyrics, each time I had to open my mouth to sing them, caused a minicrisis around one line:

I'm white inside but that don't
help my case/ 'Cause I can't
hide what is in my face

I'm not white inside, I kept thinking to myself, why do I have to want to be white? Every time I sang the lines, I felt like a traitor to my race. But the idea that black is beautiful, the Black Power movement, the revolution of the color line would fully blossom three decades after the song was written. Yet, it still filled me with a sense of unease. Even back then, as I carefully pieced together my identity, I would realize my blackness is far more than just the color of my paper-bag-test-failing skin. The word represents a political affiliation shared by millions of people in the diaspora. Paul Gilroy pioneered the idea of the Black Atlantic, a framework designed to unite the various cultures and

**But once we learn
to see ourselves as
part of this amazing
resistance in
progress, how can
we feel anything
but pride to be
associated with
our blackness?**

histories of Americans (North and South), Brits, the Caribbean, and Africa through the sea and not land. Our experiences are different. But our blackness is the same. We drift toward each other's beautiful darkness, creating those moments that lead the world to realize that darkness is to be embraced, not feared, loved, not loathed. We claim ourselves as black in defiance of borders, in defiance of history, a spit in the eye of those who would posit that blackness is anything but a compliment. The calls for a thought revolution away from black and toward less impactful terms like melanated is ultimately a fool's errand. The reason for the struggle isn't an elementary school-level misunderstanding of skin colors. The issue is racism, prejudice, and the kind of internal and external bias that promises that anything, any term, any name is better than black. To fail to embrace our blackness is to leave so much beauty, so much art, so much history, and so much solidarity behind. We would have no need for Phyllis Wheatley, Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, Janelle Monae or Kendrick Lamar. Our experiences are shaped by our birthright. We know that we contain multitudes. And we all know any simplistic racial framework can't encapsulate all of the nuances of blackness. The concept of race, as we know it, is a social construct—one only needs to check Racebox.org to see how blackness and whiteness (and all of states of being in between) change depending on the era. And yet, we continue to find each other under this banner of blackness, this known cultural shorthand that makes space for the Ivy League and historically black colleges, works on July Fourth and Juneteenth, that wears church hats and kufis, that hears jazz and hip-hop and rock. Black is the color of the galaxy. And we've always looked to the stars (be it the drinking gourd or Sun-Ra's space ship or Octavia's Patternmasters), the kind darkness providing cover on our way to freedom. Embracing the term black, loving something you are taught to fear, is the most powerful form of resistance there is. Articulating your blackness is a powerful statement of self into an environment that prefers to push everything that isn't white out of the frame. To embrace oneself, and one's own negritude, is a key part of growing up. But once we learn to see ourselves as part of this amazing resistance in progress, how can we feel anything but pride to be associated with our blackness? And I love feeling so blessedly whole, so five-fifths of a person. And to paraphrase the great Nina Simone, it is so great to be young, gifted, and black.

“Too dark” for makeup in store

“In a store full of people who didn’t look like me I felt sad and upset,” the woman wrote on social media. She said later that a manager who is biracial contacted her.

By Janelle Griffith

A black woman said an employee at an Ulta Beauty store in New Jersey told her that her “skin was too dark” for most colors in the store.” The woman, Ebony Kankam London, wrote in Instagram and Facebook posts that the incident happened Saturday at an Ulta store in Holmdel, near the Jersey Shore. London, who lives in Houston, said she was visiting New Jersey to attend her baby shower and went to Ulta to get her makeup done for the occasion. Afterward, London said, the employee asked her whether she had ever gotten her makeup done professionally. London said the experience made her feel as though she was in 1990, when makeup “was made for one type of skin.” “In a store full of people who didn’t look like me I felt sad and upset,” London said. “Like my skin tone was a problem.” London said in an interview Thursday that when she told the makeup artist that she was displeased with the results, “she got really upset, and said she had done makeup for 20 years and never had anyone be unhappy.” Ulta said in a statement Thursday that it was in contact with London. “Guest satisfaction with our services is a top priority,” a spokeswoman said. “We never want to hear that a guest has had anything less than a great in-store experience. This is our responsibility and we take it seriously.” Ulta provides “ongoing artistry education, and diversity and inclusion trainings across the organization, which is an important commitment that we recognize requires daily action and accountability,” the spokeswoman said. “We remain committed to provide a welcoming, inclusive environment where our guests can feel their best.” London’s

Facebook post had been shared more than 2,500 times and had drawn almost 300 comments by Thursday morning, the vast majority expressing support. She said she was contacted by a manager at the Holmdel store “who is apparently biracial and witnessed the entire situation.” She and a corporate manager were in the store, according to London. London said that the managers didn’t step in because they “didn’t want to make a big scene” and that the store manager told her that she felt “comfortable doing black makeup” and offered to do her makeup over. London told NBC News that she declined because she no longer needed her makeup done and was returning to Houston. She said she was also offered a bag of sample lotions as compensation. “If she felt comfortable doing my skin tone, I’d much rather she have come over,” London said. The availability of makeup appropriate for black women and of stylists trained in applying it has long been an issue of concern for some in the beauty industry. Sam Fine, who has been in the industry for decades, told The New York Times in 2018 that makeup lines were offering diverse shades but that more needed to be done. “It’s not just about putting a black model next to Gigi Hadid,” Fine said. “The stock needs to be there, and not only 40 shades at your Times Square store. The people at the counter need training.” Last summer, some of Ulta’s current and former employees accused the company of encouraging racial profiling at its stores. Ulta responded: “These accounts are disappointing and contrary to our training and policies. We stand for



equality, inclusivity and acceptance and strive to create a space that is welcoming to all.” London said she believed Ulta should issue an apology and educate its staff on different skin tones and textures.

In a store full of people who didn't look like me I felt sad and upset," the woman wrote on social media. She said later that a manager who is biracial contacted her."



"I brought in a picture for reference and was told that my skin tone was too dark for most colors in the store," she said in the posts, which featured side-by-side images of her desired look and how she said her makeup ultimately was done by a makeup artist at the store. "So this was the best she could do," London wrote.

What I would like to see happen is for there to be more training on working with women of color so that we don't feel like we don't belong," she said.



Photographs courtesy
of Deborah Roberts

Deborah Roberts

By Ashia Miller

The idea of colorism, similar to racism, creates a hierarchy solely hinged on the hue of someone's skin, which we all know is largely determined by genetics and the amount of melanin coursing through a person's body. While the colorism debate and epidemic affects nearly every single country with people of color or brown skinned people, the debate is most often discussed amongst the African American community in the United States.

The idea of "light-skinned" and "dark-skinned" became a phenomenon back in the days of American slavery where lighter skinned slaves were promoted to be overseers or in the house to stick close to the "massa" and keep a watch over the other, darker skinned slaves. The slave-master, either knowingly or unknowingly, created this chasm between African Americans that is so wide and so pervasive that it persists even to this day. Disdain and resentment must have quickly set in once "field slaves" began to notice how the "house slaves" were treated differently than they were by not only the slave-master but everyone. Today's beauty standards, and even those of antiquity, have always favored the lighter skinned hue. One need only to take a look at TV for a few minutes before taking note of the subtle ways that we are conditioned to believe that certain attributes, including hair, eye color, height, level of attractiveness, and skin color can effectively determine your value and worth in the eyes of the world. Bringing this heavy topic to the mainstream, Deborah Roberts, unashamedly tackled it in her #EvolutionOfMimi artwork which recently exhibited in the Spelman College and Museum of Fine Art. The exhibition featured a series of think-pieces that nudge the viewer to think

deeply about their own preconceived notions, misguided thoughts, and implicit bias. The exhibition includes collages, hand-painted serigraphs of names that sound stereotypically "black," and other fine pieces. Interestingly enough, the idea behind her newest exhibit is one that has been in the works since 2011 and is a beautiful blend of *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* and *The Emancipation of Mimi*. Roberts marveled at how even though the ladies were able to portray themselves as such strong figures of female empowerment, it was also juxtaposed against a certain level of femininity and vulnerability. While none of Roberts' work find a singular meaning, which is one of the most interesting things about art in general, her exhibit is one that every person, no matter their hue, race or socioeconomic background should go visit to test their own thoughts surrounding the topic of colorism.



Deborah Roberts is a mixed media artist whose work challenges the notion of ideal beauty. Her work has been exhibited internationally across the USA and Europe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Concept & Design

by Shymia Wallace

Acknowledgements

This project was produced as partial fulfillment of the requirements of DESN 402, Senior Studio II, in the Graphic Design Program at The University of the Arts, Spring 2020.

Faculty advisors: Angela Riechers

Critics: Douglas Riccardi and Bryn Smith

Editorial Instructor: Chelsea

Cover Models: Shakila Higgins and Shymia Wallace

Interviewers: Qaadir Ray, Shakila Higgins, Brenda

Lawson, Joyce Wallace and Shymia Wallace

Special Thanks

Thanks to my parents and sister for their continued support and guiding me throughout my life. I really appreciate your consistent love, care, and advice it means the world to me. You have been there for me throughout my entire life and have watched me grown into an amazing young woman.

Thanks to my amazing peers in the Graphic Design department for being very supportive, helpful, comforting and uplifting. I really appreciate all the good times and positive vibes we shared together.

Thanks to all the UArts Graphic Design faculty for your time, patience, dedication, and support. Thank you so much for being so encouraging and challenging me to push further in many areas throughout our department. Thank you for all the hard work put into the courses and providing a comfortable learning space for everyone.

Text Sources

Butler, Bethonie. "Analysis | 'Blackish' Tackles 'Light-Skinned Privilege' in an Emotional Episode about Colorism." The Washington Post, WP Company, 16 Jan. 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/01/16/blackish-tackles-light-skinned-privilege-an-emotional-episode-about-colorism/.

Garcia, Sandra E. "Fight Against Colorism Takes On Amazon: Beauty 'Cannot Be One Skin Color'." The New York Times, The New York Times, 5 Dec. 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/12/05/us/colorism-amazon-skin-lightning-bleaching.html.

Gostanian, Ali. "Black Man's Reaction to Matching Skin-Tone Bandage Strikes a Chord." NBCNews.com, NBCUniversal News Group, 25 Apr. 2019, www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/black-man-s-reaction-matching-skin-tone-bandage-strikes-chord-n998671.

Jablonski, Nina G. Living Color : The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color. University of California Press, 2012. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=466629&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Lovejoy, Josh. "Fair Is Not the Default - Library." Google Design, 2018, design.google/library/fair-not-default/.

Mitchell, Amanda. "Why Oprah Is Rejoicing Thanks to Beyonce and Blue Ivy's Song 'Brown Skin Girl.'" Oprah Magazine, Oprah Magazine, 26 Aug. 2019, www.oprahmag.com/entertainment/tv-movies/a28485287/beyonce-blue-ivy-brown-skin-girl-lyrics-meaning/.

Nittle, Nadra. "Before Fenty: Over 100 Years of Black Makeup Brands." Racked, Racked, 23 Jan. 2018, www.racked.com/2018/1/23/16901594/black-makeup-brands-history.

Obama, Barack. "Barack Obama's Speech on Race." The New York Times, The New York Times, 18 Mar. 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/us/politics/18text-obama.html.

Rasool, Amira. "I Was Bullied for Having Dark Skin Just Like Khloe Kardashian's Baby True." Teen Vogue, Teen Vogue, 19 Sept. 2018, www.teenvogue.com/story/khloe-kardashian-true-thompson-dark-skin-colorism-racism.

Stevenson, Alysia StevensonAlysia. "Fashion Nova Loves Marketing to Black Women - So Why Won't They Hire Dark Skin Models?" Femestella, 4 Apr. 2019, www.femestella.com/fashion-nova-colorism/.

The Washington Post. "Opinion | When One Sibling Has Darker Skin than the Other." The Washington Post, WP Company, 27 Jan. 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/when-one-sibling-has-darker-skin-than-the-other/2017/01/27/b43c102e-adc2-11e6-8b45-f8e493f06fcd_story.html.

Image Sources

Al, Ayo, and Ayo Al. "Importance Of Wearing Lipstick: Beauty." FabWoman, 23 Feb. 2018, fabwoman.ng/importance-of-wearing-lipstick-beauty-fabwoman/.

Baptiste, Daoud, et al. "Colorism." The Undeclared, 2016, theundefeated.com/tag/colorism/.

Barco, Mandalit del. "How Kodak's Shirley Cards Set Photography's Skin-Tone Standard." NPR, NPR, 13 Nov. 2014, www.npr.org/2014/11/13/363517842/for-decades-kodak-s-shirley-cards-set-photography-s-skin-tone-standard.

Barris, Kenya. "Black-Ish Season 5 2018." NABILNET, 2020, nabilnet.net/products/black-ish-season-5-2018.

Brown, Sarah. "Unpacking the Fenty Frenzy." The Business of Fashion, The Business of Fashion, 9 Oct. 2017, www.businessoffashion.com/articles/professional/beauty-diversity-problem.

Dailymail.com, Erica Tempesta For. "Black Woman Says Ulta Beauty Employee Said Her Skin Was 'Too Dark'." Daily Mail Online, Associated Newspapers, 2 Jan. 2020, www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-7846909/Black-woman-says-Ulta-Beauty-employee-said-skin-dark.html.

Davids, Lester M. "Why It's Time All African Countries Took a Stand on Skin Lightening Creams." The Conversation, 29 Jan. 2020, theconversation.com/why-its-time-all-african-countries-took-a-stand-on-skin-lightening-creams-49780.

Fenty, Rihanna, and Kendo Holdings. "Fenty Beauty Foundation Shade Finder: Fenty Beauty by Rihanna." Fenty Beauty, 2020, www.fentybeauty.com/fenty-face-shade-finder.

Fisher, Dylan. "Khloé Kardashian And Tristan Thompson's Daughter Looks Beyond Stunning In New Photos." Breaking Celebrity News, Entertainment News, and Celebrity Gossip - Celebrity Insider, Celebrity Insider, 31 Jan. 2020, celebrityinsider.org/khloe-kardashian-and-tristan-thompsons-daughter-looks-beyond-stunning-in-new-photos-365117/.

Knowles-Carter, Beyoncé. "SPIRIT." Beyoncé, 2019, www.beyonce.com.

Gallay, Charley. "Tracee Ellis Ross Denies Threatening to Leave 'Black-Ish' Over Reported Pay Disparity." ...:That Grape Juice.net:... - Thirsty?, 21 Jan. 2018, thatgrapejuice.net.

net/entertainment/2018/01/tracee-ellis-ross-denies-threatening-leave-black-ish-reported-pay-disparity/.
Hayes, Shanya. Colorism Shaping the Lives of Black Women in America . 2016, insightcced.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Shanya-Hayes_Colorism-Shaping-the-Lives-of-Black-Women-in-America.pdf.

Larrow, Aundre. "10 Tips for Photographing Darker Skin Tones." Create, 2018, create.adobe.com/2017/11/28/_10_tips_for_photographing_darker_skin_tones.html.

Lennihan, Mark. "2008: A Look Back at President Barack Obama's Historic Election." NBCNews.com, NBCUniversal News Group, 2016, www.nbcnews.com/slideshow/2008-look-back-president-barack-obama-s-historic-election-n678256.

Lovejoy, Josh. "Fair Is Not the Default - Library." Google Design, 2018, design.google/library/fair-not-default/.

McCarthy, Kelly. "How Marsai Martin Manifested Becoming 'a Legend' at Just 15." Good Morning America, 2020, www.goodmorningamerica.com/culture/story/black-ish-star-executive-producer-marsai-martin-shares-68046631.

Minton, Melissa. "Beyoncé's 'Spirit' Video for 'The Lion King' Includes 11 Outfit Changes." Page Six, Page Six, 17 July 2019, pagesix.com/2019/07/17/beyonces-spirit-video-for-the-lion-king-includes-11-outfit-changes/.

Negra, Guilherme Della. "Kim Kardashian Posta Foto Fofa De Chicago West, True Thompson e Stormi Webster." E! Online, E! News, 15 Sept. 2018, www.eonline.com/br/news/968677/kim-kardashian-posta-foto-fofa-de-chicago-west-true-thompson-e-stormi-webster.

Perez, Chris. "Meet the Biracial Twins No One Believes Are Sisters." New York Post, New York Post, 2 Mar. 2015, nypost.com/2015/03/02/meet-the-bi-racial-twins-no-one-believes-are-sisters/.

Proyen, Mark. "Deborah Roberts @ Jenkins Johnson." Squarecylinder.com Art Reviews Art Museums Art Gallery Listings Northern California, 19 Feb. 2018, www.squarecylinder.com/2018/02/deborah-roberts-jenkins-johnson/.

Regna, Michelle. "Anthony Anderson Will Make a Guest Appearance on 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition'." HGTV, 2019, www.hgtv.com/shows/extreme-makeover-home-edition/articles/anthony-anderson-extreme-makeover-home-edition-

Regan, Sheila. "Minneapolis Model Queen Kim Breaks Barriers as a Dark-Skinned Beauty." City Pages, City Pages, 21 June 2017, www.citypages.com/arts/minneapolis-model-queen-kim-breaks-barriers-as-a-dark-skinned-beauty/429467573.

Reddy, Shivani, et al. "The Unfortunate History of Racial Bias In Photography." SLR Lounge, 23 Aug. 2016, www.slrlounge.com/unfortunate-history-racial-bias-photography/.

Roberts, Deborah. "The Front Lines." Art+Culture Projects, 17 Dec. 2018, artandculture.com/art/print/the-frontlines/.

Schallon, Lindsay, et al. "One Year Later, This Is the Real Effect Fenty Has Had on the Beauty Industry." Glamour, 2018, www.glamour.com/story/fenty-beauty-rihanna-legacy.

"So Pretty in Pink! True Thompson Daughter of Khloe Kardashian. Pink Unreal Fur Mini Me Jacket. Love Th...: Celebrity Kids Fashion, Kids Fashion Online, Kids Fashion." Pinterest, 28 Mar. 2020, www.pinterest.com/pin/174936766763635877/.

Travae, Marques, et al. "The Extinction of Black, Brown, Yellow and Beige." Black Women Of Brazil, 6 Mar. 2020, blackwomenofbrazil.co/the-extinction-of-black-brown-yellow-and-beige/.

Ukoha, Ezinne. "Why A Computer-Generated Dark Skin Model Is Better Than The Real Thing." Medium, Medium, 28 Feb. 2018, medium.com/@nilegirl/why-a-computer-generated-dark-skin-model-is-better-than-the-real-thing-fc7453dce63b.

Venable, Malcolm. "How Black-Ish's Powerful Colorism Episode Nearly Tore the Johnsons Apart: TV Guide." TVGuide.com, TV Guide, 16 Jan. 2019, www.tvguide.com/news/blackish-colorism-episode/.

VictorValley News Follow on Twitter Send an email, et al. "Beyoncé Visits Apple Valley Park and Films Music Video 'Spirit' for Disney's The Lion King." WNG.com, 25 Dec. 2019, www.vng.com/beyonce-visits-apple-valley-to-film-music-video-spirit-for-disneys-the-lion-king/.

Vulpo, Mike. "True Thompson and Psalm West's Impromptu Photo Shoot Is Too Cute." E! Online, E! News, 17 Oct. 2019, www.eonline.com/ap/news/1083867/true-thompson-and-psalm-west-s-impromptu-photo-shoot-will-melt-your-heart.

Waller, Fats, et al. "Colorism: 'Black' Defines Our Beauty, Art, History, Solidarity - Me." The Undeclared, The

Undeclared, 16 Mar. 2018, theundefeated.com/features/colorism-black-defines-our-beauty-art-history-solidarity-me/.

Waller, Fats, et al. "Colorism: 'Black' Defines Our Beauty, Art, History, Solidarity - Me." The Undeclared, The Undeclared, 16 Mar. 2018, theundefeated.com/features/colorism-black-defines-our-beauty-art-history-solidarity-me/.

Wambui, Lily. "Lupita3." African Warrior Magazine, 7 May 2019, www.awmagazine.org/photos-lupita-nyongo-stuns-yet-2019-met-gala/lupita3/.

Welch, Alex. "'Black-Ish' and 'The Voice' Adjust up, 'New Amsterdam' Adjusts down: Tuesday Final Ratings." TV By The Numbers by zap2it.Com, 25 Sept. 2019, tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/daily-ratings/tuesday-final-ratings-sept-24-2019/.

Wildt, Marina, et al. "Skin Lightening Controversies: Light Or Bright?" Longevity LIVE, 10 Mar. 2017, www.longevitylive.com/anti-aging-beauty/skin-lightening-controversies-light/.

Zumer, Bryna. "'HOLDING BACK TEARS': Black Man's Bandage Tweet Goes Viral." WBFF, WBFF, 29 Apr. 2019, foxbaltimore.com/news/offbeat/holding-back-tears-black-mans-bandage-tweet-goes-viral.

