

## Bleach it Don't preach it

On the contrary, the notion of a darker or tanned skin tone being desirable is commercialised in western societies by celebrities in the media in Australia. Public figures and celebrities such as Kim Kardashian are key figures within the western media who influence the construction of beauty and contribute to the idea that having a tanned complexion is inherently linked to beauty, wealth and success. According to Grace Jones, “Kim Kardashian is a basic commercial product” whose popularity can successfully engineer profits with any product. This is shown through the Kardashian Glow tanning products. Hence to achieve the success of their tanning product, the Kardashian body is shifted and “tugged into some kind of interracial fusion (Caucasian features but tanned skin)” is something Alexandra Sastre mentions in her report. Given that the Kardashian skin is white, and their features are coded equivocally ethnic, Kim Kardashian is afforded a range of racial mobility that black celebrities have due to having a tanned complexion. Since Kim Kardashian is known as a successful high-profile celebrity in the social nexus of Hollywood, it fosters the idea to the general demographic of Western society that a tanned or darker complexion is associated with a leisurely lifestyle and in turn beauty, success and wealth. With “toffee-coloured skin” artists such as Jessica Alba, Beyoncé, Halle Berry and tanning models such as Victoria Beckham being the forefront definitions of 21<sup>st</sup> century beauty<sup>1</sup>, the idea that tanned skin equates to beauty, wealth and success as a result of their high status as celebrities is garnered and spread amongst the demographic. Much like how Kim’s popularity provides the illusion to the audience of Australia, a content analysis of travel flights such as JetStar mirrored the aforementioned trend of tanned skin being associated with leisure, wealth and beauty. The JetStar advert showcased flight deals to exotic locations like Bali, with the predominant figure being a woman in her 20’s with golden, sun kissed skin tan and blonde hair, creating the idea that such features are indeed considered exotic and thus are related to beauty and wealth<sup>2</sup>. 100% of the (6/6) advertisements analysed as primary research presented these culturally constructed standards of beauty presenting no racial dubiety in what is considered to be desirable in Australia. Hence these media platforms helped articulate and spread the idea that the commodification of the tanned skin tone has been propagated in western society

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, S. (2018). *A short history of tanning* / Sophie Wilkinson. [online] The Guardian.

<sup>2</sup> Content Analysis - “JetStar advertisement pamphlets” - 6 different travel agencies

such as America due to these celebrities, and due to globalisation such attributes has infiltrated Australian societies as well. This when triangulated with an interview of a participant of Anglo Saxon ethnicity revealed that “the way in which the media represents this tanned skin now is absolutely derogatory, by showcasing tall, skinny girls with exuberant tanned skin it creates the image that this is what all Australians look like”.