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2015

http://hdl.handle.net/10539/21866

Magaisa, Tatenda (2016) The colour order: race and colour perception in South Africa, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, < http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/21866>

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The Colour Order: race and colour perception in South Africa

Synopsis:

This paper will be an analysis of the covers and contents of the South African editions of *Glamour* magazine from September 2014 to August 2015 and *True Love* magazine from September 2014 to August 2015. The analysis will consider the effects of: globalisation; globalised culture and consumption; and perceptions of race and skin colour, (specifically the notion of colourism) in South Africa.

Colourism is a prejudicial system that renders value and perpetuates social hierarchies along perceived tonal difference in skin colour. It has been asserted by writers like Deborah Gabriel and Nicole Fleetwood that this value system exists within communities of people of colour and is perpetuated by mainstream media, but maintains a somewhat obscure presence. I will consider the mechanisms that inform this colour system and will show how globalisation works to facilitate colourism. Finally, I aim to explain how skin colour extends beyond the body and define the effects of global cultural interaction, showing that colourism is not simply about skin colour and tone, but about economic, social, and political realities.