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WHITENING PEOPLE OF COLOR: THE RACIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BEAUTY FOR THE (MARKET) BEAST

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While thousands of images are beamed through myriad visual channels, most women of Bangladesh are still attached to a fixed definition of beauty, predominantly that of a white skin. The pale-skin fetish may have its roots in the histories of domination by white-skinned people; however it has been reinforced and perpetuated by the expanding cosmetics industry and omnipresent media commercials. Unfortunately, Bangladesh is not the only country where this craze persists. A 2011 report of the World Health Organization reveals that women (and some men) of quite a few countries of the world use the fairness products on a regular basis. Due to the far-reaching effects of this drift on an individual and on society, this paper will explore different dimensions involved in skin whitening product commercials. Based on textual analysis of relevant TV commercials available on internet, secondary data, and author’s experience of campaigning against whiteness products in Bangladesh, this presentation will reveal the complexities of advertisements’ narratives in a globalized cultural context.