

# Nude is not a Color, it's a Concept.

A look into the pattern of nude products and white normativity

By: Matthew Broderick Adams

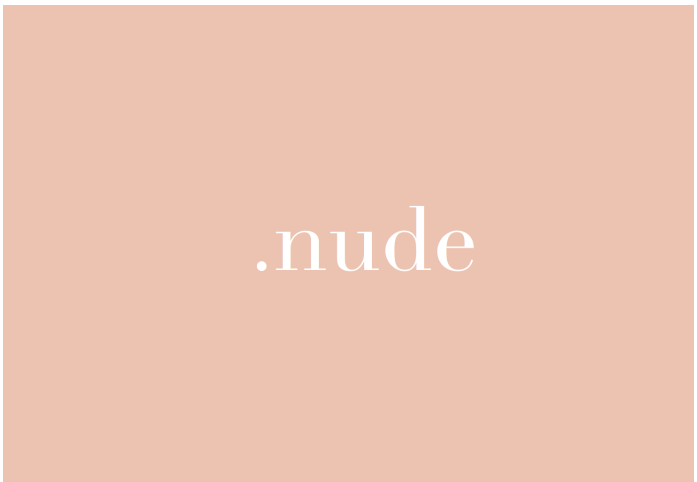


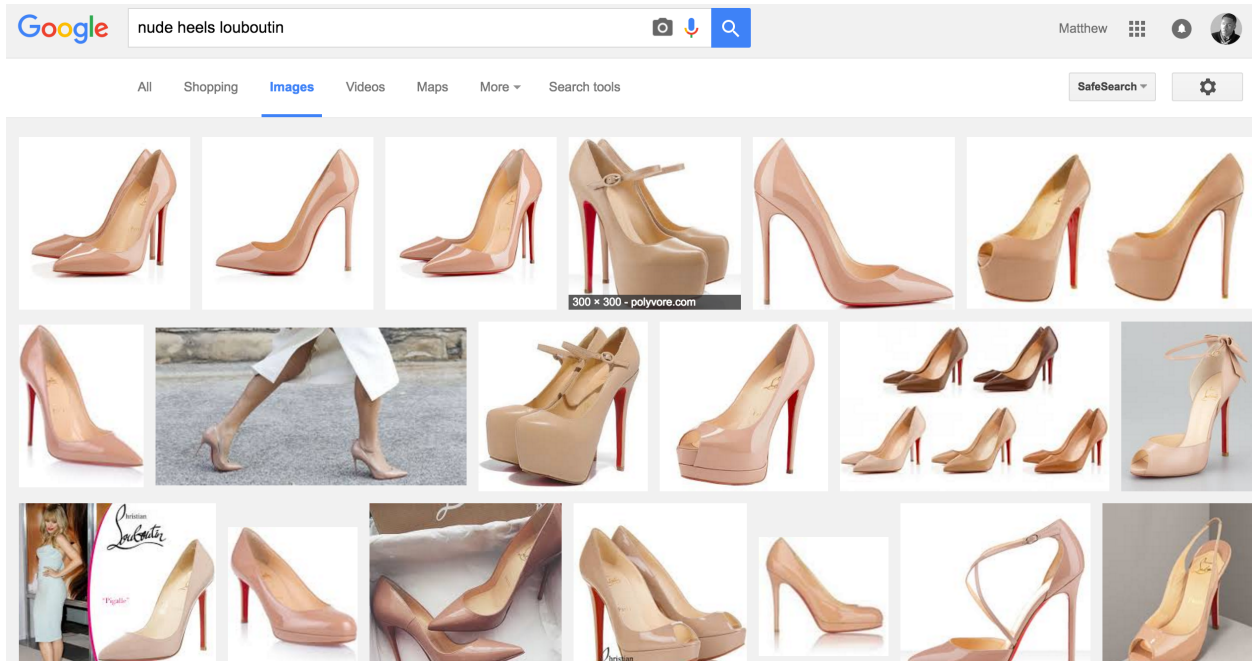
Photo credit - Humanae

There is an unfortunate pattern that I have realized. Nude being equated with caucasian skin. The Merriam Webster Dictionary currently defines nude as “having a color (as pale beige or tan) that matches the wearer's skin tones.” But, that was a recent definition. August of last year, the Merriam Webster Dictionary changed it's definition of nude from “having the color of a white person's skin.” to the definition stated above. The concept of nude as white is very old and it is an unfortunate pattern in our society. Products that are created to represent a person's skin-tone are usually made with just white people in mind. This mindset is called “White Normativity”.



When you search for nude apparel or accessories on the internet mostly all of the products that are mentioned are made to match lighter skin tones. Regardless of the fact that America is a melting pot companies decided to focus on caucasian skin. This pattern shows that white normativity is still a strong force, even in today's society. Miglena Sternadori said "I was reminded of how popular magazines, strategically positioned in the checkout aisle at stores, serve as cornerstones of our contemporary "normalcy." Sternadori was pointing out that everyone of these magazines featured white people of power.





Which enforces the idea that white is “normal” or “best”. Anything else is considered other.

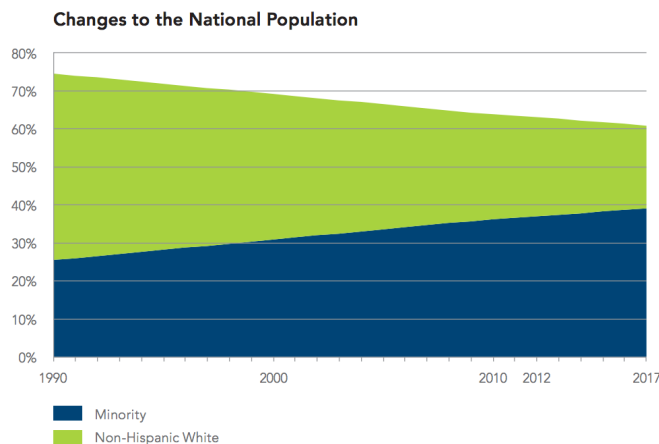
Thomas Burke, in his book *Language as Symbolic Action*, talks about the impact that terms have on our understanding of the world. We each view reality through terministic screens which are effected by our collective experiences as a human beings. When media constantly shows white people and uses terms that demean people of color. We are forcing white normativity down the throats of millions of Americans.

On the other hand, think about this subject on a purely economic level.



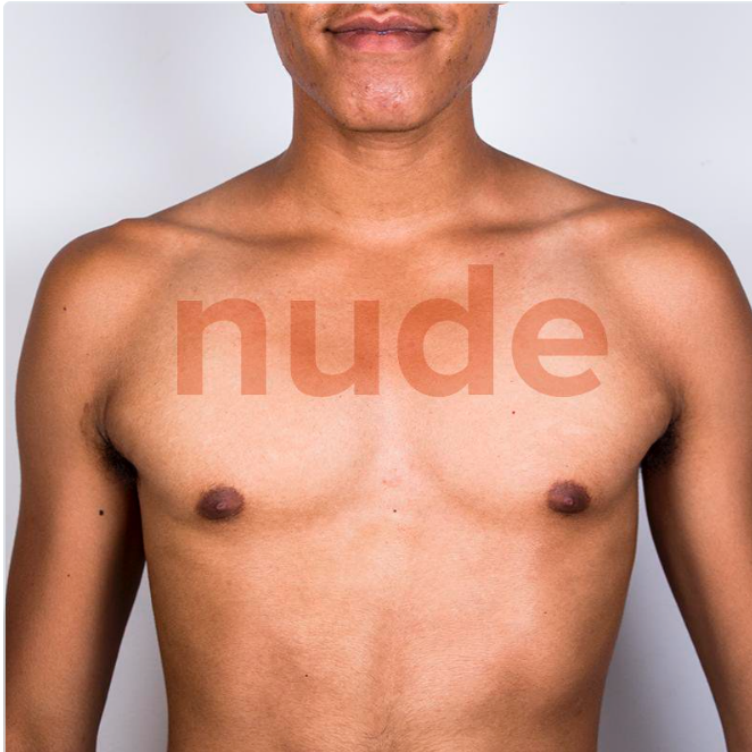
It doesn't make any sense why companies have not capitalized on the diversity that is within our country.

Many people have started to oppose this white normalcy by creating videos and posting to social media. For example, the picture below is a screen shot of a BuzzFeed video named 'Black Women try "Nude" Fashion'. In this video, four black women from BuzzFeed try on products that are colored "nude". Even though the video was funny, it was critiquing society. It shows that most companies don't really care about the minorities. According to esri, a mapping software, it projects that by the year 2020 "the term minority will no longer make sense." This is because the number of minorities is rising while non-hispanic white's are on the decline. Even though minorities are on their way up, media is still controlled by white normativity. We still even have white people taking the parts of asian people in movies. For example, the movie Dr.Strange. Director, Scott Derrickson, casted Tilda Swinton as The Ancient One who is an Asian male in the comics. We still don't have accurate



representations of minorities in television shows. Television shows depict stereotypes of minorities instead of giving them valuable plots.





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It's [#NationalNudeDay!](#) Tell [@merriamwebster](#) how YOU define nude. [dsorg.us/1gxzVVJ](https://dsorg.us/1gxzVVJ)  
[#NudeAwakening](#)

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On top of asking for more representation in the media, minorities are simply asking for respect in the media. People who look different from those considered white are considered exotic and are portrayed in stereotypical way. Thus furthering white normativity.

While reflecting on the current situation of black lives in America, I came up with this quote “Black is not an anomaly. It is another shade of beautiful that is equally as beautiful.” Since the

civil rights movement, people think that we live in a “post-racial” society: which is wrong. People may not be overtly racist anymore but there are policies in america that inherently disadvantage people of color.

A perfect example of would be the War on Drugs which directly targets black communities. The media portrays black weed smokers as thugs and criminals that deserve to get shot and killed. While white crack users get their own television show on Bravo and are seen as vulnerable.



# ESSENCE EBONY

White people are cared for by the law where as black people are problems in the eyes of the law.

This pattern of white normativity has gone on for for centuries. Black companies and media outlets were formed in an effort to promote diversity in every sphere of life. These companies are breaking the pattern and creating a better future. A future where the default is not white but the default is human. Media outlets like Blavity, Essence Magazine and Ebony Magazine have focused on promoting the minority voice. Promoting minority voices is the only way to break the pattern.



Furthermore, there is an organization called Brown Girls Do ballet is focused on promoting diversity in Ballet by increasing awareness of minority Ballerinas and providing a space where minority ballerinas can find products that are just for them. Their social media strategy has sparked a huge interest in their organization because the post stunning photos of ballerinas that are underrepresented in the field.

Mahogany Blues Dance Wear, a company partnered with Brown Girls Do Ballet, makes leotards for darker skin tones since it's hard to find ones that match.





# Louboutin

It's incredible to think that Black ballerinas in the past did not have any products that tailored to their skin color and now many companies are fitting the bill. Even Christian Louboutin came out with their first nude pumps and ballet flats in darker shades. Showing that the issue of diversity is finally being addressed. Breaking this pattern of white normativity means more people love the skin that they are in!





Even in the world of makeup, women with darker skin tones could not find a match. Before more shades of makeup were released, some black YouTube stars recorded videos of themselves mixing different shades of powder to get the color that was just right for them. Now we have technology that scans your skin to find your match. All of these products are very important when it comes to beauty yet for so long women of darker skin tones were not represented in the product.







Also, in the world of bandages there were no bandages that matched darker skin tones. Band-aid would market their product as skin-tone matching but, only for caucasian skin. Now Tru-Colour Bandages is here and kids can have bandages that matches their skin tone!

In conclusion, the pattern of nude as a color was hurtful because it excluded many people and promoted white normativity. We are progressing as a society and breaking this pattern one day at a time. Soon diversity of products will become a standard and a lack of representation will be a thing of the past.

