

How a society based  
on discrimination  
managed creating an  
individual's defense  
me...

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Skin bleaching is nowhere close to a new “ phase” but, this is something that has seemed to come to the forefront and made itself known. This is something that started as bruises caused from being told that you are ugly for the first time to the poison of those words being soaked into your skin telling you that because you are dark skinned you are not beautiful. The problem of self-hate is something that is caused by years of being insulted, criticized, belittled, ignored, and unloved. Skin bleaching is done all over the world but, where it is prominent is in different countries in Africa such as Jamaica, Mali, Togo, South Africa and Nigeria (having an astounding 77% of their women bleaching their skin). Christopher Charles, a senior lecturer in political psychology at University of the West Indies who has conducted extensive research on the subject described it best when he said, “ It’s about following standards that are dictated by Eurocentrism, as a response to hundreds of years of colonial indoctrination that has been passed down through socialization since independence.” These women have been told by the media, strangers, guys, and scientific studies that they are the least attractive race/ethnicity in the world. Black women have been told that they are not enough and it has gotten so bad that the generations after me to come up have already labeled white as “ pure” and “ right” while black is labeled as “ dirty” and “ wrong”. In class, we watched the doll experiment where positive words were used for white people and negative words were used for black people. It was heart breaking to see a young black girl despise her skin and not even understand why, too young and innocent to see this lack of love for her skin is toxic. It leaves little to no hope for us to ever teach black girls to love their skin.

One of the most disheartening things is that most of my own black brothers don't even respect my black sisters, for anyone else to respect us we must earn the respect of our own kind. Last year, two clubs on campus (L. E. A. D and G. O. A. L) did a collaboration that ended in yelling, tears, hurt feelings, head and heartaches. Black women were pleading, crying, screaming, for them to be respected and loved and cared for. We were okay with guys liking women of other races but we weren't okay with them belittling us to make their interest feel better about themselves. A lot of them had negative things to say about black women and you could see the anger in their eyes with us, they thought that we were telling them they had to date black women when all we wanted was respect. If we could at least get black men support, then that would be a start.

The negative outcome of bleaching is not just the fact that it is perpetuating self-hate but the chemicals in these products are so harsh it causes lifelong effects that you can never come back from. Two of the most harmful chemicals in these skin bleaching creams is mercury and hydroquinone. When applied to the skin hydroquinone not only causes immediate skin damage, but can over time make your skin less able to protect against harmful UVA and UVB rays from the sun, meaning a greater likelihood of sunburn and skin cancer. Now when Mercury is applied onto the skin, mercury can cause skin rashes, discoloration, and scarring, as well as reduce your skin's ability to resist infection. When ingested, or when used onto the skin so many times that it seeps into your internal system, mercury can cause problems to the brain, nervous system, and kidneys. There really are no positive outcomes from skin bleaching, the simple fact of the matter is <https://assignbuster.com/how-a-society-based-on-discrimination-managed-creating-an-individuals-defense-mechanism-as-skin-bleaching/>

that we are damaging our black women so they are killing themselves unknowingly just to fit the European standards of beauty.

This impacts all people of color with even remotely dark skin, Indians, Africans, African Americans, etc. Although this paper focused on women men are also affected by this because men bleach their skin too. Men such as Pele Okiemute, Vybz Kartel, Sammy Sosa, Alkaline, and so many others have bleached their skin and see nothing wrong with it. They seem to feel with confident with lighter skin because that gets people attention more. We are in a world where our blackness is disapproved of but our culture and everything that makes us who we are is adored. A lot of people are okay being, pretending, “ acting” black because apparently, it is okay for everyone to be black except black people. My skin is not a body suit you can put on to reap the benefits of and then when things get hard you get to take it off. You either love my blackness or you leave it alone.