Representations of Colorism in the Jamaican Culture and the Practice of Skin Bleaching

by

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Abstract

REPRESENTATIONS OF COLORISM IN THE JAMAICAN CULTURE AND THE PRACTICE OF SKIN BLEACHING

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This study deconstructs the images that influence Jamaicans to bleach their skin. Social representation theory (SRT) is used to pinpoint the origins of *colorism* and then trace its entrenchment in the culture and communications. SRT theorems say (1) the social images have a history; (2) these images are diffused and become embedded in the culture; (3) people use these images to understand their environment and create identities; (4) over time, repeated social exchanges become institutionalized culture; and (5) the images in the culture can be easily triggered and overheard in conversations. History data was collected from colonial and contemporary newspapers; the diffusion data was collected from popular songs, poems, and a novel; identity data was collected from interviews; institutionalization data was captured from participant observation of skin bleaching vendor-customer transactions; dialogic data was collected from a focus group interview. The findings are that the complexion consensus is a historical continuum in old and new newspapers. Colorism is contested in reggae and dancehall songs and literary works. The repeated vendor-customer exchanges reveal that skin bleaching is an established cultural practice. Participants use *colorism* to define themselves which influences them to bleach

their skin. *Colorism* was heard in participants' conversations about race and skin bleaching. The results suggest that the complexion consensus is a hegemonic representation which influences the beliefs and behavior of the skin bleachers in Jamaica.

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Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the content and meaning of the representations that drive the practice of skin bleaching in the Jamaican culture. The reasons for the alteration of the black physicality with the use of cosmetic creams, dermatological creams, and home made products lie in the Jamaican culture. Therefore, this dissertation is a culture-bound study that facilitates the identification of some of the cultural triggers of the skin bleaching phenomenon.

The theory of social representation (SRT) is an organizing framework that facilitates the identification of the cultural pressures skin bleachers experience in Jamaica. SRT pulls together people, ideas, values and institutions in a cultural context. People create images of their cultural experiences that come from social interaction within and among institutions and the dialogical interaction within and among social groups. These cultural images are representations of reality in a consensual universe that people use to guide their behavior.

Representations have a history, which means they evolve over time. It is therefore important to track the evolution of the images that the skin bleachers use to shape their reality. Skin bleachers lighten their skin in response to the high status and prestige that light complexion has in the society. The social importance of light skin and the attendant images have their roots in British colonialism, including plantation slavery. These images have persisted into the post-emancipation and post-independence periods. The skin bleachers are influenced by *colorism*, which privileges light over dark skin in the Jamaican society because of the status and power-driven complexion continuum.

Skin bleaching is also a global phenomenon which highlights the coercive power and resilience of *colorism* that links people, ideas, values and institutions across international borders. The international cosmetic companies in the marketing of their skin bleaching products tap into the colorized culture in the countries of Europe, the Caribbean, the Americas, Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa. The global reach of skin bleaching provides an international context within which to understand the practice in Jamaica.

SRT as the organizing theoretical framework which argues that Jamaicans who alter their black physicality by bleaching their skin, talk and interact in groups within institutions and organizations in a culture with a history. This theoretical formulation means that an examination of the Jamaican culture requires the use of cultural products that reflect colorized images. These cultural artifacts that link and reflect the macro and micro processes and structures, generate representations in the Jamaican culture. The macro structure and processes are evident in the history of *colorism*. This history can be understood by examining newspaper content during the colonial and post-colonial periods. SRT assumes that the colorized images that inform skin bleaching are the macro processes of history and culture that are evident in newspapers, songs, poems, novels, and by way of micro processes like the social practices of Jamaicans and their daily conversations.

Representations, then, are the intersections of images at various macro and micro levels that guide people's behavior in their culture. The representations of *colorism* in Jamaica and the attendant ideas and values that influence the skin bleachers scaffold the various complexion milieus such as history, culture, routine behavior, identity, and

dialogic interaction. Situating the skin bleachers within these intersections provides a coherent cultural framework to understand their behavior. These intersectional influences (complexion milieus or levels of analysis) inform this dissertation. These complexion milieus are outlined separately in the service of data organization. However, for analytical clarity, these levels of analysis must be seen in terms of their linkages because the cultural images act in concert with each other to influence the skin bleachers.

The skin bleachers respond to the cultural values, ideas, norms, and institutions in Jamaica that send the message that light-skinned people have status, prestige, and sex appeal compared with dark skinned people. The skin bleachers are not necessarily pathological because they are responding to influential institutions in their cultural environment. However, not all Jamaicans respond to this Eurocentric socialization because there are contending values over race and skin color in Jamaica. The skin bleachers have opted not to embrace the Afro-centric, hegemonic representation of Blackness, but rather a malleable Blackness which sees light skin as a shade of Black. I now turn to the chapters which outline SRT and trace the evolution of race and skin color in Jamaica, outline the skin bleaching phenomenon and present data on the colorized intersections of history, culture, routine behavior, identity, and dialogic interactions that are used to explain the behavior of the skin bleachers in Jamaica. Chapters 1 and 2 have chapter conclusions unlike the other chapters. Chapter 1 is the theoretical chapter which is very abstract. Therefore, a summary at the end makes the main points of this chapter succinct for the reader. Chapter 2 which provides a historical background for the reader is a very long chapter so a summary of the key historical issues at the end reminds the reader of these important issues before they move on to the other chapters.

Chapter 1

Social Representations

This chapter outlines SRT which is the paradigm that organizes this study. I start with the rationale for SRT and its development. This genesis is followed by the definition of representation. Next, I outline the three types of representations. I then go on to present the key cognitive processes of SRT, *objectification*, *anchoring,* and the *central core*. From there, I proceed to discuss the conceptual strengths of SRT. I then outline the SRT theorems that will be applied to this study. Finally, I show the relevance of the theorems for the study, and end with the chapter conclusion.

SRT seeks to answer the question, "How is scientific knowledge transformed into common, ordinary or spontaneous knowledge?"(Moscovici & Markova, 1998, 375). Serge Moscovici posed the foregoing question as the precursor to the development of a psychology of knowledge which explains how new images and new ideas receive social acceptance by penetrating all areas of life (Moscovici, 2001). In France, Moscovici traced the diffusion of psychoanalysis from the office of clinicians to the wider society. During the diffusion process, the meaning of psychoanalysis changed from its original scientific meaning because the theory acquired layman and commonsensical meanings that were socially understood and shared by the average citizen (Moscovici, 1976). People construct reality with representations that make new, unfamiliar, and disturbing things common and well known. The reality of social objects is dependent on what people think and know about them. The utility of commonsense knowledge resides in the fact that it serves people in their culture because common sense is embedded in a reasoned, consensual universe (Moscovici, 1976; Moscovici & Markova, 1998).

Moscovici (1976, 1998, 2001) refuses to define social representation because he views it as an evolving paradigm toward a psychology of knowledge that makes an early definition restrictive. However, Wagner (1996, 247) defines social representation as "a socially constructed and organized set of beliefs, opinions, symbols, metaphors, and images of socially relevant objects, which play a vital role in constructing the immediate, everyday environment of the people by virtue of its consensuality and its practical implications." Milgram (1984) argues that there are two meanings of social representations: (a) the notion of socially shared meanings; and (b) how the social world is represented by people.

There are three basic types of representation: hegemonic, emancipated, and polemical representation. Hegemonic representation is a coercive and uniform representation that is widely and deeply held by a highly structured community or group. Emancipated representation is created when various subgroups interact within a community and share their own version of the representation. Polemical representation arises from social conflict in which there is controversy within a community or group, and the members of the community as a collective do not share these representations (Moscovici, 1988).

The socio-cultural environment influences people's perception of social objects. People use their cognitive systems to perceive and understand environmental stimuli, which they integrate into their value system based on the ideological and social domains in which they operate (Abric, 1970). Representations are created from interdependent cognitive elements (Abric, 1983). The concepts of *objectification*, *anchoring*, and the *central core* explain the interdependent cognitive elements and processes through which

representations reach the minds of people in their socio-cultural environments, and subsequently change (Abric, 2001).

Objectification is the process by which a new or unfamiliar object comes together as a symbolic core which facilitates the projection of images. The *objectification* process then turns the abstract object into a concrete one (that now exists) so that people talk about it (Abric, 1971; Philogene, 2000). The object is now a part of people's mental set because it moved from the realm of idea to the realm of existence or physical reality. *Anchoring* categorizes the new or unfamiliar object and places it into people's mental systems so that it becomes familiar. This categorization and placing of the object into an ordinary and familiar category allows individuals to classify and name the object (Philogene, 2000; Wagner, 1996).

There are imaginary cognitive elements in a representation that make the meaning of the representation stable compared with other elements. The major interdependent elements comprise the *central core*, which gives the image its meaning and stability embodied in the value system shared by the group. Around the *central core* are the *peripheral elements*, which vary based on the situation, and which play a crucial role in making concrete the meaning of the representation. The representation changes when the *core* splits into new representations with new meanings (Abric, 1971; Wagner, 1996). Representations are not only in the core of a society's collective memory, but they are also the building blocks for action because thoughts and feelings objectify through social action. Representations of previous behavior are internalized and expressed in subsequent behavior (Moscovici, 1988).

SRT is a useful paradigm for studying the Jamaican culture because SRT is concerned with the content and process of representations (Wagner, 1996). Without content, a phenomenon loses its meaning. The content allows social representation researchers to study varying cultures in all their richness (Potter & Wetherell, 1998). Content also links SRT with social cognition, and this opens connections between ideology, social cognition, and the sociology of knowledge, all of which makes SRT a multi-disciplinary conceptual tool (Farr, 1987).

SRT indicates a return of culture and is therefore the anthropology of modern life because people internalize socially produced knowledge. The test of any theory is whether it enlarges the discipline. SRT enlarges psychology by highlighting the importance of culture. Representation is also relevant for the study of social change because representations are by nature dynamic (Farr, 1993). The social domain is important to the social psychologist because the individual lives in a social context, and representation overcomes the false separation of the object and the subject within cultures (Farr, 1987). The theory also interrogates the social order because it explains the dominant behavior in the status quo (Ullman, 1995). I now turn to the theorems of SRT as this theory locates cognition and behavior within the larger domains of group, social interaction, context, culture, and history.

There are several theorems of SRT, but only five are relevant to this study. These are: (1) the theorem of *history* which says that images persist over time; (2) the theorem of *diffusion* which highlights the process of idea migration and cultural diffusion such that social phenomena become embedded in both traditional and popular culture; (3) the theorem of *identity* which links the role of identity in discourses centered on the social

phenomena in question; (4) the theorem of *institutionalization* which reveals the link between non-controversial and aberrant expressions of the social phenomena that occur repeatedly and become institutionalized social practices and beliefs within the culture; (5) the theorem of *dialogic interaction* that pinpoints the ease by which social phenomena deeply ingrained in the culture can be easily triggered and overheard in the everyday communications of the culture's inhabitants.

History. We should study representations developmentally over time because human knowledge has a history. The origin of ideas suggests that the knowledge and the belief systems that we experience daily are the outcomes of a long series of changes. The representations shared by people existed before the people were socialized into the culture. The images that persist over time are called *themata* and they influence the behavior of people in their socio-cultural milieu (Moscovici, 1998). The notion of *themata* suggests that existing representations are products of historical forces because they link the past and the present, which means that representations are intergenerational. The intergenerational transmission of representations means that the shared images have coercive influence in people's lives because the images are entrenched in the culture. The only way to comprehend these longitudinal changes is to re-encounter them in the "social laboratory" of the real world in which they are created, specifically the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded (Wagner, 1996). People create new representations in their socio-cultural context by accepting or rejecting old representations (Moscovici & Markova, 1998).

The values, imagination, patterns of thought, and societal crises that coalesce in a previous era can be found in artifacts. This coalescence of cultural artifacts is the history

of the mentalities of previous generations. The representations are in the artifacts (stone, parchments, documents, etc.) that might have been forgotten for thousands of years, but which captured the traces of people's minds in a given period. These traces are a repository of ancient beliefs, values, and cultural practices. The interpretation of the embedded cultural residues is not an objective reading of history, but a representation of the phenomena, and as such, is subjective (Moscovici & Markova, 1998). Historically, entire societies have embraced representations that were celebrated in sacrifices, rites, and rituals that were embodied in the social consciousness of the period. This rigid uniformity does not exist in complex modern societies because there are multiple sources of information. However, there is unanimous consensus on some issues which have links to the past. The persistence of images doesn't mean they are static because there is creative tension between old and new images. The extent to which the content of images and networks evolve over time is determined by the rapidity, sophistication, and availability of media communication (Moscovici, 1988).

Diffusion. Knowledge is diffused in the society through books, periodicals, newspapers, conversations, instructions, and technological innovations, and there is relative variance among people that creates some common points of reference in the trickling down of ideas (Clemence, 2001). The multiple themes and opinions are circulated by the media. The interpretation commences when the various groups start to organize a network of meanings based on their knowledge, values, and belief systems (Clemence, 2001; Moscovici, 1988). The diffusion of ideas which increases common knowledge and thinking also changes and enriches ideas. This change means that the

ideas, some of which are of scientific origin, have been diffused into common sense by a shared knowledge and language (Moscovici, 1988).

As earlier noted, the media are central to the diffusion and interpretation of representations. Mass communication influences and reflects social representation. Mass communication combines social practices in the public sphere. These combined social practices involve opinion leadership and the roles of daily decisions and conversations. These cultural practices are fundamental to social representation. The representation of social groups requires an analysis of their differentiation. The characteristics of mass communication at anytime must not be divorced from the structural properties of the representations that create a network of communication and reinvigorate society (Rouquette, 1996).

Identity. People come to know who they are through recognition of their loci within their symbolic cultural space and the content that defines the categories of identification through consensus. People know the meanings of the self that exist because of the circulation of representations in their culture. Identity is dual because it is constructed externally and elaborated internally. This internalization manifests itself in people's appearance. Identity provides an organizing framework which stabilizes the self. Identity is asymmetrical and multifaceted, with various social identities, which determine what can be communicated through the self (Duveen, 2001).

A logical concomitant to social identity is the link between personal and social representations. A personal representation is a representation at the individual level that is manifested in the person's behavior, emotions, and cognitions. The relationship of personal and social representations occurs through variations in awareness, understanding,

acceptance, assimilation, and salience. Individuals have varying awareness of social representations, which is partly determined by their personal experiences and their membership in different social groups. These persons will also differ in the extent to which they comprehend the representations in their consciousnesses. These people will also vary in the extent to which they accept or believe the representations, and will incorporate the new representations into their established system of personal representations. The salience of the representation will vary within individuals, vary among individuals, and also vary across time and contexts. Of critical importance, too, are the psychological processes of affect, thought, and action, in which identity resides and is expressed (Breakwell, 2001).

Identity is a meaning-making social process that uses representations to selectively incorporate the external into the self (representations from outside, in). People have multiple identities that are multiple representations of the self. Group identity is an extension of the self-concept to include others who share membership in a common group (representations from inside, out) (Brewer, 2001).

SRT locates identity in a socio-cultural context. Religious texts, stories of cultural significance, institutions, icons, everyday practices, and proverbs reflect a group's shared ideas of how to be. This reflection of identity means there are shared answers to the questions: (a) who am I? (b) Who are we? Representations provide culturally appropriate answers to these questions. These shared answers are socially represented selfhood because the self is socio-culturally situated. Socio-cultural niches influence interpersonal and collective achievements because they provide commonalities and structures of being for the people who live in the context. The socio-cultural context provides a yardstick by

which to evaluate one's personal and group identities. The social self is known and recognized through the representations of experience that allow people from the same group and context to comprehend interaction with each other (Oyserman & Marcus, 1998).

People are situated in multiple contexts such as gender, race, and class, among others. These contexts have representations that are a part of the larger overarching culture. A shift from one context to another requires a redefinition of self in terms of context, images, language, and ideas. Tension occurs in new contexts as people move across the life span because there are new and divergent representations of the self. Tensions driven by divergent and seemingly irreconcilable representations demand sophisticated self-construction and maintenance. For example, a person who simultaneously articulates Black power and alters their black physicality would have two divergent images of the self. This person would require complex ways of integrating the divergent images and their competing values in order to create a stable and psychologically adjusted self (Oyserman & Marcus, 1998).

Institutionalization. SRT fuses the individual and the social because the individual does not think in isolation. The individual's interactions with others create a structure of shared references that shape how the individual thinks about the world in which he or she lives. Representation is a function of social thinking because it organizes the beliefs and available information about the experiences that a community finds important. Representations construct reality for individuals because they structure how individuals talk and think about important issues. The creation of reality means that representations

are social constructions since they are grounded social elaborations that are shared by the homogenous collective (Moscovici, 1988; Philogene, 2000).

Representation deals with the substance of daily thinking and the collection of thoughts that give unity to ideas about politics, religion, and the networks created by social interactions. Routinization explains how subjective elements take on an objective character in the culture. Representation allows us to classify objects and people, and expound on and contrast behaviors that are objectified in the social setting. The exchanges between individuals eventually become routinized when they occur repeatedly. These repeated and ongoing exchanges and rituals that are carried out in common by people eventually take on an objective character. This objectification occurs because the repeated exchanges become concrete practices and beliefs that are institutionalized in the culture. If some people in the culture attach political significance to these objectified rituals they can become social movements to effect political change. The foregoing suggests that the goal-directed social exchanges among people as they relate to events become preserved in the culture over time (Moscovici, 1988).

Dialogic interaction. Most knowledge comes through communication and language in social interaction with others. This dialogic knowledge shapes thoughts and ways of thinking because there is a relationship between language and thought. Language guides the formation of representations with linguistic rules of constraints, category associations, and heuristics. People encounter social truth when new content is formed with new words that are a part of the linguistic milieu of representation (Moscovici, 1988). Reality is given its character through social representation in which cultural

practices and beliefs are integrated with semantic knowledge. Therefore, representation and communication are at the heart of social knowledge (Oyserman & Markus, 1998).

Non-experts assimilate expert knowledge through conversations and their proclivity to trust information. The content of representations is generated and expressed in gossip, talk and arguments, gestures, body rhythm, and tone of voice. Representations are found in the meaning of words that are circulated and reinforced in the flow of public discussion (Moscovici & Markova, 1998). Therefore, representations allow groups to gather information, have dialogue, and behave collectively. People talking about societal issues will take positions that have some commonalities that do not imply there is consensus, but that there is shared knowledge and points of divergence (Clemence, 2001). The flow of deliberation includes uncertainties, misunderstandings, and dynamic moods and opinions (Moscovici & Markova, 1998). The social positions or opinions that people take on behalf of their social groups in public discourses are a function of their socialization in which they learned the norms and values of the culture. Social groups are different because the group members do not share specific experiences and beliefs, and they do not necessarily have access to the same information in the society. These differences influence different representations (Potter & Wetherell, 1998).

The argument of authority (the arguments of those in public office) is replaced by the authority of arguments (the arguments of the average citizen) in the public sphere, because it is a place in which knowledge is socially produced through the contestation of value laden ideas (Jovchelovitch, 2001). In other words, the traditional arguments are contested by new arguments, and representations arise from the diversity, tension, and conflict among social groups. The clash of ideas influences fresh public domains in

which new forms of social knowledge are created. Representations are constructed from the *fizz of dialogue* emanating from the disagreements among social groups (Jovchelovitch, 2001; Moscovici & Markova, 1998).

The five SRT theorems dealing with *history*, *diffusion*, *identity*, *institutionalization*, and *dialogic interaction* are useful for understanding skin bleaching in Jamaica. Socially constructed images persist over time, which means that the *colorism* images that drive skin bleaching in Jamaica are products of the country's history. These images are diffused by the Jamaican media and the citizens who create networks of meanings with the *colorism* images. Jamaicans use the circulating images to create their identity. The repeated social exchanges between vendors of skin bleaching products and their customers are routinized and become institutionalized cultural practices and beliefs. These colorized cultural images are evident in the daily conversation of Jamaicans. The next chapter deals with the historical images of *colorism* that influence people globally to bleach their skin.

Chapter conclusion. The goal of SRT is to develop a social psychology of knowledge by explaining how new knowledge is diffused and takes on commonsensical meanings in society. This goal led Serge Moscovici to begin a program of research which commenced with a study of the diffusion of psychoanalysis in France. Moscovici identified three types of representations: hegemonic, emancipated, and polemical. People internalize representations in their socio-cultural environment through the cognitive process of *objectification* and *anchoring*. Representations change when their *central core* and peripheral elements become unstable. SRT is an effective conceptual tool because the content of cognitive images allows for the study of culture. The theory is useful for

studying social change. SRT also fuses the object and subject in a social context and highlights the power of the status quo. There are several theorems of SRT, but only five are relevant to this study. These theorems are: (1) *history*, which says the representations are persistent over time; (2) *diffusion*, which says social images are diffused into the culture; (3) *identity*, which says that people use cultural images to define themselves; (4) *institutionalization*, which says repeated social exchanges become cultural practices and beliefs; and (5) *dialogic interaction*, which says cultural images are found in daily conversations.

Chapter 2

The History of Colorism in Jamaica

This chapter deals with the evolution of race and skin color in Jamaica from slavery to the present that has led to *colorism*. I start with a definition of *colorism* which is followed by an outline of the features of plantation slavery and British colonialism. I then go on to discuss the continued evolution of race and skin color in the post-emancipation period. This discussion is followed by a discussion of the evolution of race and skin color from political independence to the present, which provides the contemporary socio-cultural context and the values and norms that influence skin bleaching in Jamaica. The historical sequencing of this chapter provides a temporal flow of how people in Jamaica understand and behave towards race and skin color as social constructs.

One of the legacies of European colonization of the new world has been what is called *colorism*—a function of racism and social stratification. *Colorism* is defined as "the process of discrimination that privileges light skin people of color over their dark skin counterparts. *Colorism* is concerned with actual skin tone, as opposed to racial and ethnic identity" (Hunter, 2007, 237). During European colonization, the peoples of Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean were conquered, subjugated and exploited. *Colorism* was a form of social control. European languages, values, norms, dress, food, music, education, and institutions were disseminated as the "epitome" of civilization, while the local culture, values, and institutions were debased. This elevation of European culture was buttressed by a rigid racial hierarchy with the Europeans at the apex and the local people at the base. In the rigid, dominant White- and non-White dichotomy there

were graded social distinctions within both groups guided by the complexion continuum or graded skin tone distinction from white to Black, especially in the slave societies of America and the Caribbean. In the colonial situation there is constant tension between the Eurocentric perspective that elevates White physicality, culture, and institutions, and the Afrocentric perspective that elevates Black physicality, culture, and institutions (Dubois, 1994; Hunter, 2007; Lindsay, 1976). This constant tension permeates this chapter.

During colonialism, the colonizer manufactured the colonized into the *dominated man*. The rights of the colonizers were not shared with the colonized, who were dehumanized and treated like animals. Racism was embedded in the market and colonial institutions. The "civilizing missions" took place through oppression and exploitation. The colonizers circulated the negative *cultural myths* of the "inferior," "lazy," "wicked," and "backward" subjects (Lindsay, 1976). Colonial socialization created the patriotic colonial subjects because the subjugated population strove to meet the standards of the colonizer in order to survive. The *dominated man* of the colonial era lingers as the *new citizen* in the post-colony, because from the time of political independence, the political elite have been serving the interest of the former colonial powers (Memi, 1965, 1968, 2006). *Colorism* is pervasive because it continues to influence social status, access to resources, jobs, schooling, housing, social relationships, and social mobility (Dubois, 1994; Hunter, 2007). I now turn to the discussion of colonialism and slavery in Jamaica, which form the origins of *colorism* in the country.

Colonialism and slavery: 1494-1838

I begin this section with a definition of race and its relationship to skin color.

> Race is a socially defined concept sometimes used to designate a portion or subdivision of the human population with common physical characteristics, ancestry, or language. The term is also loosely applied to geographic, cultural, religious, or national groups. The significance often accorded to racial categories might suggest that such groups are objectively defined and homogenous; however, there is much heterogeneity within categories, and the categories themselves differ across cultures. Moreover, self reported race frequently varies owing to changing social context and individuals' identification with more than one race (American Psychological Association, 2007, 765).

The above definition of race suggests that race is a social construction people use to define the self, which varies over time, based on the socio-cultural and historical context, and peoples' need for multiple identifications with social groups. One of the common physical characteristics that people use to construct their racial identity or place people into racial categories is skin color, as is evident in the quote below.

> When humans visualize a body, they see mostly skin. The skin is the body's direct interface with the physical environment, conveying the state of health and personal identity…. The skin also provides a forum for advertising. It provides information about a person's age, health, and some aspects of ancestry, and furnishes a placard upon which further information is placed through temporary and permanent decoration (Jablonski, 2004, 585).

I commence this discussion by locating the social importance of race and skin color in the genesis of plantation slavery and colonialism. During slavery and colonialism, skin color became a physical marker for racial oppression in Jamaica. Colonialism in Jamaica began with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1494. The Spanish occupation exterminated the indigenous Arawaks through disease, starvation, and forced labor. The Indians were replaced by captive Africans. Spanish rule continued until 1655 when the British captured Jamaica and established their "civilizing mission" (Hart, 1989; Lindsay, 1976; Patterson, 1969). The British continued to import captive Africans. Large scale sugar plantations based on mono-crop agriculture were established during the 1700s (Patterson, 1969). The development of commercial plantations fueled the growth of British industrial capitalism through the triangular trade. Slave traders left the British coast with supplies for the African coast where they purchased captured Africans. The Africans were transported across the Atlantic to the West Indies to work on plantations. Sugar and other plantation produce were sold in Britain where they were manufactured into consumer products and resold to the colonies (Williams, 1966). The cheap produce and super profits of the plantation system accelerated the development of British seaport towns and the industrial revolution (Brathwaite, 1978; Williams, 1966).

The socio-cultural, economic, political, and legal institutions of the colony influenced the lives of the people. The colonial government was headed by the governor who discharged royal prerogative and controlled the privileges and appointments to public offices. The governor presided over the assembly and the council. The assembly was perceived as the local House of Commons and the Council advised the Governor and functioned as the Upper House. The colony was divided into parishes run by a vestry.

There were the royal courts which established the British presence in Jamaica and dealt with policy matters on behalf of the British Crown, and there were also the civil courts (Brathwaite, 1978; Patterson, 1969). The plantation system was buttressed by the laws of the colony and the legal system. The captive Africans were legal non-persons or property. The slave laws prevented the captive Africans from formally assimilating the British Culture. These laws also instructed the planters to convert the captive Africans to Christianity so the Africans would be obedient, hence further entrenching White cultural hegemony (Brathwaite, 1978; Patterson, 1969; Williams, 1966).

White hegemony was reinforced with establishment of the militia in 1681 to put down slave rebellions and repel external attacks from France and Spain. The militia comprised Whites, Jews, Mulattoes, and free Africans from ages 16-60. The militia's officer rank was comprised of White males who were commissioned by the Governor. The militia was a cultural microcosm of the racial divide in the society, which had a hegemonic representation of the power and "superiority" of Whites that was widely shared, rigid, and coercive because it influenced the values and behavior of the oppressor and the oppressed (Brathwaite, 1978; Patterson, 1969; Williams, 1966).

The behavior of the newly arriving captive Africans were modified for plantation labor by seasoning in which they were assigned to an African with plantation experience. The experienced Africans taught the new captives the rules and tasks of the plantation system which, in effect, were the colonial norms, values, and behaviors. The majority of captive Africans were found on sugar plantations (Higman, 2008; Sheperd, 1991). The plantation was a total institution which dominated the lives of the Africans from the cradle to the grave. The nature plantation system even influenced the slaves' method of

cooking, meal time, what they ate and the utensils they used (Talburt, 2004). Whites on the plantation lived in the great house. Some distance from the great house was the African quarters. Plantation society had a devastating effect on the family structure of the Africans. The captive Africans were property, which fact gave them limited control over their lives, including contact with relatives. Family bonds were discouraged by the planters because the captive Africans were not legally related to family members. Moreover, *colorism* penetrated the families because captive children of the same parents were distinguished between those who had fair skin and "good hair," and those with pronounced African physicality. This distinction created petty privileges for the light skin children which revealed the internalization of *colorism* by some of the oppressed. All these factors among others made stable family units among the Africans a rarity (Higman, 1975, 2008; Vasconcellos, 2004).

Nevertheless, the captive Africans in general responded to their oppression with their own cultural institutions that they used to create a shared sense of community and protect the social self. The Africans had their own provision grounds and they sold the produce at the market. Africans on the plantation who broke group norms and values were ostracized and informal courts were held to settle disputes. The Africans had their own seasonal and non-seasonal recreation, which included singing, dancing, drumming, story telling, John Canoe festivals, and yam festivals, among others (Higman, 2008; Brathwaite, 1978).

Social stratification in the White community in the 17th and 18th centuries meant master and servant relationships, of which the latter were European indentured servants. The treatment of the indentured servants was in some cases similar to that of the captive

Africans. This treatment of White indentured servants gradually changed with the development and entrenchment of plantation slavery in the colony. Slavery was not a consequence of racism, but racism was a consequence of slavery because the British needed a political ideology to justify captivity of the Africans and the exploitation of the colonies. Circulating racist dogma guided the entrenchment of the plantation system and reinforced the establishment of the White social structure (Steel, 1993; Williams, 1966). There was a dichotomized elite system that comprised the absentee planters who were largely British and the plantation elite, which included rich planters and rich attorneys, civil servants, and members of the military. The middle group was comprised of the owners of middle-sized plantations, clerks, overseers, bookkeepers, professionals, merchants, and White servants. Poor Whites were at the bottom of this social hierarchy. However, the reality of slavery generated a consciousness of equality among Whites. The survival of the plantation system depended on the dichotomized social structure of masters and captive Africans, which meant a perpetuation of the rigid racial hierarchy as institutionalized social control (Sheperd, 1991).

The institutionalization of the racial and complexion hierarchy within the White social structure divided and oppressed the captive Africans. Skin complexion was a pervasive marker of social power among the oppressed in the plantation system. The social differentiation among plantation labor was tied to the economic functions the captives served in relation to Whites (Petley, 2005). The social status of the captives was a function of their biological and spatial closeness to Whites. The living quarters of the Head Africans were of better quality, and in some cases they were nearer to the great house, highlighting their status. The captive Mulattoes, a minority of whom did domestic

activities in the great house, and the majority who dominated the trades (sugar boilers, carpenters, blacksmiths and wheelwrights, etc.), all had higher status than the captive Africans, the majority of whom worked in the fields. Below the great house captives and the skilled Mulattoes were the field workers, the majority of whom were Africans with a very small minority working in the trades. Since the trades were reserved for men and the great house provided limited opportunities for work, a large group of the captive Mulatto women also worked in the field and lived side by side in the same huts with the captive Africans. Above the captive Mulattoes were a very small group of free and well-off Mulattoes, some of whom owned slaves. There was vertical differentiation and horizontal dichotomy within these groups, which determined the status of the Africans in these task and social groups. The free and captive Mulattoes formed a stratified middle group and acted as a non-threatening social buffer between the "superior" White masters and the "inferior" and stratified captive Africans. These distinctions within and between groups were demarcated by race, the gradations of skin color, and professional skills (Higman, 2008; Small, 1994).

As noted earlier, the overwhelming majority of the captives working in the great house and in the trades were Mulattoes, the offspring of White males, and captive African women. White women were scarce, therefore many White men sexually exploited the captive African women. The captive Mulattoes of the great house felt and acted superior to the captive Africans who worked in the field. The captive Mulattoes were afforded the means by the planters to dress better than the captive Africans (Sheperd, 1991). The plantation institutions socialized the captive Africans to behave deferentially to the captive Mulattoes and to address them formally. The captive Mulattoes on the plantations

were rarely punished, unlike the captive Africans. Skin color as a social marker did not negatively affect the captive Africans' sense of self because they rejected the negative message of the "savage African" in the racial hierarchy and exercised preference for their own racial group in the colonial culture (Brathwaite, 1978; Patterson, 1969).

Despite the preference of the captives for their own racial group, the rigidity of racial stratification influenced some Creole women to extract caustic oil from the cashew nut which they used to flay their face to get light complexions. White women also flayed their skin. "Whitening" lotions were used by White women to reverse the negative effects of the Creole environment such as the white physicality's adaptation to the tropical climate and interracial sex (Coleman, 2003). English women in the colony did all they could to protect their skin from the sun. The planters sent their children to England not only for a "superior" education, but also to reclaim their "superior" British complexion in the cold climate. There was also Negrophobia which was a fear of Negro customs. For example, there was the fear that white children would be culturally contaminated when they were raised by Mulatto or Negro nannies (Coleman, 2003).

The captive Africans rejected their oppressions-the plantation systems with its norms and values. There was passive resistance from the captive Africans such as satire, feigning sickness, strategic inefficiency, laziness, and refusing to work. The captives also engaged in active resistance such as running away, suicide, and poisoning of Whites, individual violence against Whites, and collective rebellions (Sheperd, 1991; Smith, 1965). Over a thousand Africans participated in each of the three most serious acts of collective resistance. These were the first Maroon war and the captives' rebellion in 1766 and 1832 respectively, because of the development of a Black ethnicity. These ongoing

acts of collective violence against the system marked the start of a long history of African resistance in Jamaica, which the planters tried to stymie from the time the captives arrived (Craton, 1979; Hart, 1989; Patterson, 1968; Picart, 1995; Robotham, 1988).

The captive Africans, on their arrival, were initially divided based on the previous relationship of ethnic conflict in Africa. The planters for their safety promoted intermingling of the different ethnic Africans to reduce the likelihood of a revolt. The economic system of the plantation led to a new ethnic group among the captives because they worked together. Some planters had more than one estate and distributed their slaves among estates. Various planters also encouraged inter-property linkages. The old ethnicities of the captives were also reduced by the influence of the institutions like the internal market system, the ground provision economy, and the work in pens that produced commodities for the estates (Robotham, 1988). Other factors generating the new Black identity were the methods of control such as White terror in response to rebellions, and reward payments to betray planned rebellions. The methods of White terror forged a sense of unity and consensus among the radical captive Africans, which led to more organized revolts. Sometimes there was the tendency for captive rebels to attack the system and "escape" with some members of the in-group and leave the system intact. However, the 1832 Christmas rebellion led by Sam Sharpe changed the status quo, because it was a much broader and more integrated collective resistance where free and captive Africans who had internalized the new Black social self, opposed slavery and were united by the Christian ideology which disseminated the ethos that all people are equal (Robotham, 1988).

The 1832 Christmas rebellion significantly increased White fear of the large African population and the realization that the old hegemonic, racialized system could not be maintained indefinitely because Whites were outnumbered. This fear was one of the factors that led to the demise of the slave system in Jamaica along with the increasing cost of slave labor, which made plantation slavery unprofitable. Another factor that contributed to the demise of slavery was the activism of the White abolitionists. The captive Africans were "emancipated" in 1834 with an apprenticeship period of four years, which meant full freedom was obtained in 1838. The British government paid the planters £ 20 million for the emancipation of the slaves. Some of this money went to the small group of rich free Mulattoes who were slave owners. The majority of the Africans left the plantations, which created a labor shortage. Emancipation freed the Africans but did not create a society because the persistent and consistent messages of "White superiority" in the racial hierarchy continued to marginalize the Africans (Hart, 1989; Patterson, 1969; Smith, 1965; Williams, 1966). I now turn to the post-emancipation period in the next section.

Post-emancipation to independence: 1838-1962

The Mulattoes took over the political and economic positions abandoned by Whites and accelerated *colorism* against the Africans. The ascendancy of the rich Mulattoes, the majority of whom were in the urban areas, modified the White racial hierarchy. The modified White social structure reduced the coercion and rigidity of the hegemonic representation of White "superiority." Despite the modification, there was a law which required that the rich Mulattoes who owned estates employ white supervisors.

Therefore, there were still two competing Jamaicas driven by the distinctions of race and skin color (Curtin, 1972; Heuman, 1981). The British government and the planters wanted the Africans to remain on the plantations, but the Africans left the plantations in droves and became small farmers in the hills by squatting or purchasing land. A White capitalist class emerged that exploited the few Africans who worked on the plantations. The planters did all they could to get the majority of the Africans involved in fulltime wage labor on the plantations. However, the Africans resisted and worked seasonally on the plantations as wage laborers to supplement their income. The Africans' refusal to work fulltime on the plantation had a negative economic impact on the plantation economy, coupled with the 1846 Sugar Duties Act which removed preferential treatment for Caribbean sugar in the British market. The colonial policy in response to the deteriorating economic situation, triggered by a labor shortage on the plantations, altered the racial and ethnic landscape (Alleyne, 2005; Curtin, 1972; Higman, 2008; Keith & Keith, 1979; Post, 1978).

In response to the labor shortage, the planters strategically recruited White laborers in the hope that this would increase the small White section in the colony and allay White fear of the large African population depicted as "liberated savages." The majority of the European indentured laborers came from Ireland, England, and Scotland between 1834 and 1843. Some 1,038 German laborers arrived in Jamaica between 1834 and 1836, the majority of whom settled in St. Elizabeth. The European laborers were a social group that was strategically settled in the interior hillsides to prevent the Africans from acquiring land and securing employment outside of the plantation. The strategy by Whites to regain control over the institution of work failed because freedom allowed

Blacks to mount peaceful challenges to White domination within the rule of law (Alleyne, 2005; Curtin, 1972; Higman, 2008).

By 1841, the plantocracy realized that their White importation policy had failed because of the small number of imported European laborers and because of miscegenation. The planters then turned to the importation of Indian and Chinese laborers. Some 37,000 Indian indentured laborers came to Jamaica between 1845 and 1916. There were 17,599 Indians in Jamaica when organized repatriation ended in 1930. The majority of the Indians chose not to return to India and they became the main source of plantation labor. In 1854 some 400 Chinese indentured laborers came to Jamaica, 696 arrived in 1884, and 2,111 arrived between 1891 and 1911. The Chinese came as agricultural laborers, but by the 1900s they had become a commercial group involved in trading, grocery retailing, and rural banking. The Chinese and Indians fell into the middle strata of the racial hierarchy with the Mulattoes. The social consensus of the middle strata based on their common interests was that they were "superior" to Blacks. The *colorism* of the Mulattoes and the racism of the Chinese and Indians led to racial and ethnic hostilities between the Africans and these competing groups. However, there was some degree of miscegenation between the newly imported laborers and the Black population because of the shortage of Chinese and Indian women (Alleyne, 2005; Jha, 1970).

In addition to the tension between the Africans and Asian laborers, there were socio-cultural and political tensions between the Africans who practiced African based religions and the members of the established churches that held a socially shared viewed that African religious retention was an evil that must be eliminated (Stewart, 1992). Religious tension notwithstanding, the education of Black children was undertaken by the

churches with the support of government subsidies that facilitated the continued diffusion of European ideas. The schools became feeders for the churches. The schools were gripped by the dominant Eurocentric worldview of the churches. The churches were constrained by the planters' demand that the schools meet their labor needs, the competition and debates among the churches, political instability, and the reduction in government subsidy, inequitable taxation, and the planters' limited vision of the value of Black education. In 1835, the non-denominational Mico Charity started to educate children irrespective of religious affiliation, which challenged the churches' influence over societal attitudes and perceptions. Opposition by the churches and the reduction in government subsidy made the Charity's operation difficult. The Mico Charity, out of expedience, collaborated with the hegemonic consensus of the church schools and subsequently started teacher training (Campbell, 1970, 1971; Brown, 1979).

The continued influence of the church was evident in the Baptist Missionary Society's development of free villages in 1839 which were designed to create a new society of "civilized" freehold townships of Blacks and Whites in the interior. Blacks were encouraged to purchase land, but the movement failed because of drought, a lack of support from the planters, and the government who viewed the free villages as a threat to the survival of the plantation system. The former captives struggled to survive economically along with the poor Mulattoes who did not benefit from the ascendency of their rich counterparts after emancipation. For example, some poor Mulatto women worked as struggling seamstresses and others resorted to prostitution in the towns (Besson, 1984; Curtin, 1972; Hall, 1993). Unlike the Mulatto women, the Afro-Jamaican women continued their struggle by being dominant in the market place, protested high

rents, served as communication channels for disgruntled workers, and protested against the oppressive conditions (Sheller, 1998). The Baptists, along with the other churches, responded to the plight of the poor. Although the Baptists had a more progressive worldview of the liberated Africans compared to the congregations of other churches, the Baptists, much like the other congregations, were a part of the socially shared understanding that the Africans were "uncivilized" and in need of tutelage (Besson, 1984; Curtin, 1972; Hall, 1993).

Although there were negative messages circulating about Blackness and there were obstacles of property qualifications in the political process, Blacks were determined in their struggle for civil equality and participation in the political system. Contesting an Assembly seat required the person to be male and have personal and real property valued at £3,000, own lands valued at £1, 800, or receive an annual income of £180 from the land. Electors were males who paid annual taxes of £3, received or paid an annual rent of £30, or received an annual income of £6 from a freehold. The laws permitted Mulattoes from the top echelon of the group to petition that they be granted all the privileges of a White person. Two Black politicians, Edward Vickars and Charles Price, who petitioned had strong support among the Black and Mulatto artisans and small farmers, some of whom purchased land in the early post-emancipation period. Vickars was elected to the Assembly in 1847 and Price was elected in 1849. The election of Vickers and Price and their political activism on behalf of their social group alarmed the colonial government, which created more stringent voter registration procedures and increased the voters' list to include clerks and overseers who supported the White elite. The new measures forced

Vickars not to seek reelection in 1860, and Price lost his seat in 1863 (Higman, 2008; Robotham, 1984; Wilmot, 1988).

The socio-economic situation deteriorated in the 1860s and was exacerbated by drought, unemployment, and rising prices. The colonial government ignored the people's petition for assistance. In 1865 the Baptist preacher and small farmer, Paul Bogle, led a group from St. Thomas to Kingston to petition the governor who refused to parley. On October 7, 1865, the persistent petitioners were accused of disrupting a trial at the Morant Bay Court in St. Thomas. Warrants were issued for the arrest of the petitioners. The militia sent to execute the warrants destroyed the village when the suspects could not be found. In response to the destruction of the village, Paul Bogle led an armed and angry group to the Morant Bay Courthouse, shouting "cleave to the Black," which contested the dominant image of White "superiority." The protestors were engaged in the ongoing African resistance to Brown and White hegemony and oppression in the country, and as such, they were attacked by the militia. In the ensuing violence, three planters and fifteen White officials were killed, and the courthouse was set ablaze. This riot was the first violent African challenge to the system since emancipation (Fullweiler, 2000; Post, 1978; Robotham, 1984; Zeidenfelt, 1952).

The insurrection was suppressed and the colonial authorities represented the Afrocentric challenge as a "notorious riot" with the negative connotations that the instigators were dangerous and posed a serious threat to the security of the colony. Paul Bogle and other leaders who were captured by maroon trackers were turned over to the authorities who executed them without trial. The British established Crown Colony Government to curb Black political activity after the Morant Bay rebellion. Crown

Colony Government curtailed the competing political ideas and values of representative government because it abolished the Assembly and concentrated power in the hands of the governor (Brown, 1979; Fullweiler, 2000; Post, 1978; Robotham, 1984; Zeidenfelt, 1952).

Members of the nonconformist missionary churches published the *Jamaica Jubilee* in 1888 to highlight the fact that the Africans had no desire for revenge against Whites, and the Africans had made significant strides since emancipation. There was an increase in number of elementary schools, which signaled the Africans' ability and desire for education. There were reading clubs, Christian Associations, and mutual improvement societies. There was also an increase in legal marriages, and there were many musical and social gatherings during the Christmas season. The Africans in Jamaica had made progress beyond what Blacks in similar situations had achieved. These achievements were due to the Africans' desire for freedom and the progress instilled in the Africans by the non-conformist missionaries to counter the laziness and apathy generated by slavery. The authors of *Jamaica Jubilee* criticized the British Government for not doing enough to guide the Africans toward civilization. The integrated social thinking that informed the *Jamaica Jubilee* suggests the Africans were viewed as "uncivilized imbeciles" with the underlying argument that the Africans had to be socialized for freedom and civilization. These negative public depictions of the Africans ignored their aspirations and ongoing struggle for socially meaningful freedom (Thomas, 2002, 2004).

Post (1978) argues that the ongoing struggle against racism and colonial oppression by the Africans found radical expression in the Jamaica Native Baptist Free

Church that was founded by H.E.S. Wood in August Town, St. Andrew, in 1889. Alexander Bedward was an elder of the church who is credited with transforming the organization from a church to a social movement. Blacks journeyed from across the country to bathe in the "healing stream" of the Mona River and cleanse their sins during religious services. The belief among some Bedwardites that Bedward was Christ was interpreted by colonial authority as a contestation of its belief system that God is White. Speaking to a crowd at Mona St. Andrew in 1895, Bedward further alarmed the colonial authorities by asking his followers to remember the 1865 Morant War. Bedward's request to his followers meant that Blacks had rejected the negative colonial characterization of the collective resistance at Morant Bay as a "notorious riot" and imbued it with positive meaning as a war against oppression that inspired the ongoing anti-colonial struggle.

According to the warrant for his arrest, Bedward declared:

> We (meaning thereby the Black subjects of our said lady the Queen in this island) are the true people; the White men are hypocrites, robbers and thieves; they are liars. Hell will be your portion if you do not rise up and crush the White men. The time is coming, I tell you the time is coming. There is a White wall and a Black wall, and the White wall has been closing around the Black wall; but now the Black wall has become bigger than the White wall, and they must knock the White wall down. The White wall has oppressed us for years and now we must oppress the White wall (cited in Post, 1978, 7).

Bedward reiterated the above statement at his trial in 1895, but pled not guilty by reason of "insanity," and was acquitted; but the Governor, on the Queen's pleasure,

committed Bedward to the mental asylum. However, Bedward was freed on a legal technicality by the intervention of his lawyer. The Bewardite movement grew rapidly between 1895 and 1921 because the positive images of the liberating healing stream became institutionalized practices and beliefs. Bedward had several confrontations with the colonial government in 1921. He declared that he would march with his followers to Kingston on April 27, 1921, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. The police and the Royal Sussex Regiment intercepted Bedward and his followers dressed in white robes, carrying palm trees and a white cross. Bedward and 685 of his followers were arrested and tried. Bedward was found to be "mentally ill" and his followers were convicted of "vagrancy." Bedward was sent to the asylum where he died in 1930. Blacks who challenged White racism and British domination in the early decades of the twentieth century were represented as mentally ill vagrants by the colonial authorities (Post, 1978).

Mecklin (1913), in a racist polemical article that trivialized the anti-colonial struggle, offered Jamaica as a model image for the Negroes in the Southern United States. The American Negroes' refusal to accept their subordinate status exacerbated the color line. There was minimal friction in Jamaica because the Negroes internalized segregation and their subordinate status, unlike the American Negroes. The Southern United States needed a paternalistic government similar to the one in Jamaica. Reconstruction imbued the American Negro with idle social and political ambitions. Slavery was worse in Jamaica than in the Southern United States, but the color line did not exist in Jamaica. The British ensured that the weaker social group fell under the tutelage of the dominant group through legislation. The responsible Negroes received political emoluments and

this created a stable hegemonic social order in Jamaica. The bumptious Negroes of the Southern United States did not exist in Jamaica.

Mecklin's arguments are not supported by historical evidence. The 1865 Morant Bay rebellion was a stark reminder that Emancipation had freed the Africans but did not create a society because of the oppressive divisions of the racial hierarchy. Recall that Whites exacerbated the schisms between Blacks and the Chinese and Indian populations because the settlement and labor power of the new immigrants were strategically deployed to force Blacks to work fulltime on the plantation. Moreover, the British government was oppressive rather than paternalistic because it ignored the petitions of the poor. Blacks in Jamaica struggled against racial discrimination. The government executed the leaders of the Morant Bay Rebellion without trial, and stymied Black political activity for civil equality with Crown Colony Government. There is also no evidence of Black acquiescence in Jamaica from the Post-emancipation era up to the early twentieth century. Furthermore, Blacks did not accept their subordinate status and were not complicit in their own oppression as the Morant rebellion, and the Bedwardite and Marcus Garvey movements reveal (Miller, 1973b; Robotham, 1984; Wilmot, 1988).

Marcus Garvey was active in Jamaica when Mecklin posited his ideas, so we can contrast their shared knowledge and variance about the Jamaican Negro. Garvey was concerned with the oppression and liberation of Blacks, globally. In 1914 Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a Pan-African movement in Jamaica. The UNIA took off in the United States in the 1920s, but by the 1930s it was in decline. The UNIA was the largest Pan-African movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Starting with Jamaica, Garvey bemoaned the absence of

Afrocentrism among Blacks, which was required to peacefully challenge White domination (Lewis, 1988, 1998a). Garvey, writing in 1916, declared:

> Jamaica is unlike the United States where the race question is concerned. We have no open race prejudice here, and we do not openly antagonize one another. The extremes here are not between White and Black hence we have never had a case of lynching or anything so desperate. The Black people here form the economic asset of the country, they number 6 to 1 of Coloreds and Whites combined and without them in labor or general industry the country would go bankrupt.
>
> The Black people have had seventy-eight years of emancipation but all during that time they have never produced a leader of their own, hence they have never been led to think racially but in common with the destinies of the other people with whom they mix as fellow citizens. After emancipation the Negro was unable to cope intellectually with his master and perforce he had to learn at the knees of his emancipator.
>
> He has, therefore, grown with his master's ideal and up to today you will find the Jamaican Negro unable to think apart from the customs and ideals of his old slave masters. Unlike the American Negro, the Jamaican never thought of race ideals much to his detriment, as instead of progressing generally, he has become a serf in the bulk and a gentleman in the few (cited in Lewis, 1988, 229).

A surface reading of Garvey's analysis of the Jamaican Negro suggests that Garvey and Mecklin were in the same consensual universe but this is not the case. Garvey delineated the social control of Blacks in Jamaica by the colonial institutions and articulated the absence of lynching as an extreme expression of racism in Jamaica. The

absence of lynching does not mean that White racism was absent. The difference Garvey alluded to was that the Jamaican Negroes were the numerical majority and the American Negroes were the numerical minority, so there were differences in the dynamics of oppression and collective consciousness that guided their behavior. However, both groups of Negroes were the oppressed sociological minority. Garvey was also concerned about the absence of a Negro leader who mobilized Jamaican Negroes around their racial identity, and not so much that there were no Negro leaders. Recall that the Negro politicians, Charles Price and Edward Vickars, were elected to the Assembly in the immediate post-emancipation period with the support of Negro artisans and small farmers, which meant that there was Black racial consciousness. However, Garvey believed that an effective challenge to White racism and *colorism* in Jamaica required increasing the Afrocentric consciousness of the Negroes (Lewis, 1988; Wilmot, 1988).

Some years later, Garvey, with his Pan-African vision which challenged the colonial ideology, congratulated His Majesty *Ras Tafari* in his ascension to the Ethiopian throne in 1930. On November 8, 1930, Garvey published his communiqué congratulating *Ras Tafari* in the New York Edition of the *Negro World,* and published an article in *The Blackman* in Jamaica. In the latter publication, Garvey refuted the Europeans' argument that Ethiopia was not a part of Africa. Garvey also noted the attendance of European royalties and political leaders at *Ras Tafari's* coronation and highlighted the impact of the coronation on Black racial pride and image, internationally. Garvey heralded the message that Ethiopia should become a central force in the Pan-African social movement. Garvey's earlier sociological analysis of Jamaica was anchored

in his Pan-African vision and movement of Black unity and liberation, which was influenced by Ethiopianism (Brown, 1979; Lewis, 1988).

Black Nationalism or Ethiopianism, which became diffused into the African Diaspora, had its origins in South Africa in the 1870s when the Africans started their own independent churches because of the virulent White racism of the Dutch Reform Church. Ethiopianism was further fueled by the fact that Europeans referred to all of Africa as Ethiopia. In addition, the country of Ethiopia defeated Italy in the 1896 battle of Adowa. Moreover, Ethiopia has never been conquered and the country was ruled by an African Christian King (Campbell, 1987). The country's importance is also highlighted in the biblical passage of Psalms 68:32 which reads, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." There is also Genesis 2:13, which says "And the name of he second river is Gishon: the same is it that encompasses the whole land of Ethiopia" (King James Version, 1989). The leaders of Ethiopianism argued that African redemption was at hand and echoed the rallying cry, "Africa for the Africans." Marcus Garvey internalized Ethiopianism, which he used to mobilize Blacks internationally, starting with the creation of positive Black images to challenge the "superior" White images of colonialism (Campbell, 1987). The "superior" White images which negatively influenced the behavior of some Jamaicans are evident in the studies below.

Honor Ford-Smith (2005) uses the conversations of two cousins, Kathleen and June, who were victims of *colorism* and institutional racism to show the evolving but persistent *colorism* and racist images in the early decades of the twentieth century. Kathleen was born in 1919. She was a brown-skinned woman of mixed ancestry who experienced *colorism* at home. She was treated less favorably by her mother because she

had the darkest complexion of the siblings. Kathleen's "abnormal" hair became a social problem in boarding school. The white racist teachers marginalized Kathleen despite her excellent academic performance. She became a medical doctor, but she was hospitalized for a major depressive episode because the colonial *miseducation* created self-doubt and the internal strivings to always prove herself.

June had dark skin and was poor. She became an orphan and went to live with an aunt. Relating her experience of *colorism* at home, June stated, "If you were not light skinned, you were not thought fit to be seen." And with regard to racism in the society, she said, "If you are a Black woman, you are not as good as other people" (Ford-Smith, 2005, 23). June struggled with the perceived "coarseness" of Blacks and became a teacher despite the low societal expectations of Black children. She became the headmistress of a successful preparatory school. Despite June's achievements and her contributions to the community, she was socially isolated and suffered bouts of depression (Ford-Smith, 2005).

The *colorism* and institutional racism experienced by Kathleen and June were supported by the White social scientists who used their research "findings" to justify the colonial consensus of White "superiority." White academics compared racial groups on mental and physical abilities. Davenport and Steggerda (1929) applied anthropometric, physiological, and psychological tests to groups of Blacks, Whites, and a mixed category. The research "findings" were influenced by the researchers' normative values and beliefs. Although the Blacks were "superior" to Whites in sensory tests and in tests dealing with intensity, pitch, rhythm, and time, the Whites were "found" to be superior in the tests that required mental adaptability and insights. There was little "evidence" of hybrid vigor in

the psychological tests, but not in the physical tests. The theory that genetic segregation would make the Browns more variable compared to the Whites and Blacks was found in the "results" of the physical tests, but not in the "results" of the mental tests. Out of 21 mental tests administered, the Brown participants were most variable in eight of the tests, the Black participants were variable in seven of the tests, and the White participants were variable in six of the tests.

These tests dealt with the variables of physical and mental capabilities, physical features, and body image among the racial and complexion groups. White physicality was the hegemonic norm used in the tests to evaluate Mulattoes and Blacks. Davenport and Steggerda (1928a, 1928b) compared pure blooded Whites, hybrids, and Negroes on nasal breadth. The researchers "found" that the mixed hybrids had more variability in their nasal breadth compared to the pure blooded Whites. The researchers also "found" that the average nasal breadth of the mixed hybrids was closer to the mean nasal breadth of the Negro than the mean for Whites. The studies above disseminated the "findings" on racial differences in the colony, which meant White "superiority," the dominant ideology that Marcus Garvey challenged consistently.

In the early 1930s, the ongoing African challenge to White racism perpetuated by the academy and supported by the political system, commercial interests, and social institutions also came from Afrocentric and Garvey-inspired Jamaicans. Blacks such as Leonard Howell, Robert Hinds, Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert, and Archibald Dunkley had the socially shared knowledge that *Ras Tafari* is God, which they preached in the public sphere, which meant *objectification* had occurred. The circulating ideas that *Ras Tafari* is God had moved from the abstract into concrete reality and were projected through public

preaching. Leonard Howell was the first to preach that *Ras Tafari* is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and sold *Ras Tafari's* picture to Jamaicans. Howell's doctrine was an anti-colonial authority of arguments because he preached that God is Black. This Afrocentric doctrine refuted the argument of the colonial authority that the Christian God of the establishment is White (Brown, 1979; Lewis, 1998a; Murrel & Williams, 1998; Smith, 1960).

The content of the social thought of these early believers in *Ras Tafari* was that Jamaicans' allegiance is to the true Black God and King Emperor *Haile Selassie* of Ethiopia rather than to the White British Monarch. The Rastafarians created a fresh public sphere of knowledge by socially fusing their Judeo-Christian-inspired spirituality with Garvey's socio-political worldview of African redemption, which meant *anchoring* had occurred. Garvey's African teaching was placed in the existing cognitive networks about the Christian religion, which categorized the ideas and made them familiar to believers. The Rastafarians developed Afrocentric hermeneutics to counter the established interpretations and Eurocentric images in the Bible. The early documents like *The Rastafari Manifesto*, *The Living Testament of Ras Tafari* and *The Promised Key* contain many positive Black images that reinterpret biblical texts (Brown, 1979; Lewis, 1998a; Smith, 1960; Murrel & Williams, 1998).

Rastafarianism arose out of the socio-cultural, economic, and political struggles of the descendants of the captive Africans. The Rastafarians' critique and contestation of colonialism, imperialism, and racial and class discrimination led to the development of a Black anti-systemic identity imbued with new and positive meanings of Blackness (Brown, 1979; Campbell, 1987; Price, 2002, 2003). Rastafarians use their Black religious

identity to affirm the self and critique the socio-economic and political systems. Existential questions and encounters with colonial racism triggered Black identity development through religious conversion. African ideas, symbols, and socio-cultural traditions circulating in Jamaica rejected the colonial consensus because they were emancipated Black representations incorporated into the self for affirmation and community (Price, 2002; Smith, 1960).

Black Jamaicans continued their quest and struggle for personhood, economic justice, and civil and political rights. The quests and struggle led to the 1938 riots because of the crises of social integration, economic distribution, and political participation. The Black majority was not integrated into the society because it was socially marginalized. Black workers received starvation wages under poor working conditions. Also, Blacks' hope of political participation was blocked by the White political hegemony of Crown Colony Government. These three crises were contested by Garvey's economic nationalism and Ethiopianism that increased the racial consciousness of the masses. The situation was made worse by the fall in wages caused by the economic depression of the international capitalist system. Hunger marches occurred in the early 1930s and in April 1933. Banana workers rioted in Oracabessa, St. Mary, in May 1935, when the planters imported labor from Port Maria to keep wages low. In the same month, dock workers rioted in Falmouth and the banana loaders of ships at Kingston's wharf went on strike. The Jamaica Development Convention created by Garvey became the Workers and Labor Association in June 1936. The Jamaica Workers and Tradesmen's Union was also formed in 1936 because the masses applying pressure from below wanted to resolve the

crisis of economic distribution by creating new institutions with positive meanings (Campbell, 1987; Hart, 1989; Post, 1978).

Two years later, in 1938, on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation, the Black Jamaican sufferers once more revolted against the White sugar barons and the colonial state. On January 5, 1938, some 1,400 workers of the Serge Island Sugar Estate in St. Thomas armed themselves with machetes and sticks, and went on strike against the starvation wages and the semi-slavery working conditions. The repressive colonial authorities unleashed the police on the workers and 60 were arrested and 34 injured. In Westmoreland, on April 28, 1938, workers on the Frome Sugar Estate challenged the conglomerate Tate and Lyle by rejecting the offered wage of 2 shillings and 6 pence per day and demanded 4 shillings per day. The police shot at the protesting sufferers, four of whom were killed including a pregnant worker; and 105 workers were arrested. In Kingston, the Mulatto leader Alexander Bustamante co-opted the striking dock workers and street protesters by articulating their grievances to the colonial authority. Bustamante's intervention restored calm to the Frome Sugar Estate. Bustamante was subsequently arrested along with labor leader St. William Grant (Campbell, 1987; Hart, 1989, 1999; Post, 1978).

Mulatto lawyer Norman Manley, a cousin of Bustamante, who built his legal career on the defense of the local and international capitalists, mediated between the workers and the colonial authorities. The workers refused to end their protest until their arrested leaders were released. The workers relented after the colonial authority established procedures for the inspection and enforcement of safety standards in the sugar factories, legalized trade unionism through labor legislation, and created the Workers'

Compensation Law and the Servants' Law. The Jamaican peasantry did not reach the level of class-consciousness required to effectively overthrow British rule. Mulatto middle class leaders, as the historical social buffer between Whites and Blacks, negotiated between capital and labor, thereby assuming leadership of the labor movement and blunting the radicalism of Black labor (Campbell, 1987; Hart, 1999; Post, 1978).

The colonialists thanked Manley for his intervention in which he articulated the grievances of the masses within the strictures of the "rule of law." Manley and Bustamante became leaders of the Black masses because of their involvement in the 1938 rebellion. Manley and Bustamante's co-optation of the nascent labor movement (and subsequently the nationalist movement) was a function of their intermediate social position in the society defined by their light complexion and their normative colonial socialization. This socialization led to the socially shared belief that the Mulatto social group was ordained at Emancipation to govern Blacks (Campbell, 1987; Hart, 1999; Post, 1978).

Riding on the momentum of the 1938 rebellion, Bustamante, in response to the crisis of distribution, used his personality and organizational skills to merge several trade unions to create the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union. Bustamante concentrated on unionism and left agitation for political participation to Manley. The People's National Party (PNP) led by Norman Manley was formed in September 1938, in response to the crisis of political participation. Alexander Bustamante became a member of the PNP. In April 1939, the PNP at its first convention demanded universal adult suffrage and full self-government. The British felt that pluralist electoral competition (in particular, the values of Westminster democracy) was best served by two competing political parties,

and encouraged Bustamante to form the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) which was launched on June 8, 1943 (Hart, 1999; Zeidenfelt, 1952).

The British government sought to further appease the agitation of the Black masses by further modifying the White social structure and the rigid hegemonic representation by constitutional changes. With increased agitation for self government, tension in the colony had to be kept to a minimum, at a time when Britain was involved in World War II. In 1944, the British granted constitutional changes under the aegis of the Moyne Commission. The constitutional changes went beyond what the Mulatto leaders anticipated because their limited expectations were constrained by their colonial worldview and socialization. There was universal adult suffrage and internal self-government in which the Mulatto leaders became Westminster apprentices under a diarchy. The constitutional changes created four organs of government. The main instrument of government was the Executive Council, and a lower and upper house, which were the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council, respectively. There was a small Privy Council that dealt with defense (Hart, 1999; Zeidenfelt, 1952). The White social structure and hegemony were further modified in the post-war period because of the growth in the plantation economy, massive rural urban migration, modest improvements in education, and media development, in addition to Black activism from below (Stone, 1973).

By the 1950s, the Chinese and Indians, among other ethnic groups who were not seen as members of the colored group upon their arrival in Jamaica after emancipation, were now considered members of the colored group. The modification of the White social structure continued into the 1950s during which the coalescence of race, skin color,

and class created three basic social groups. At the top was the upper class, comprised of Europeans and fair people. Following was the middle class which was colored, and then the lower class which was comprised of Blacks. Recall that a similar structure existed during slavery, but with more rigid social meanings because fair people were never a part of the social apex during slavery. In the 1950s, the poor peasants of Irish, German, and Scottish descent in Jamaica were scorned by Blacks for not living up to their "superior" image and social status. These poor White peasants were also scorned by middle and upper class Whites because they lived like the "inferior" Blacks. Within and among these social groups, physical features, complexion, skin and hair texture were all assessed in terms of their biological closeness to the European ideal, which meant biological distance from African physicality. Some Blacks straightened their hair to approximate the European ideal (Ellis, 1957; Henriques, 1951).

The potency of *colorism* was also evident in interpersonal relationships. There was the tendency for Black men to choose a fairer mate, and there was ambivalence among the Black men who didn't. Fair people accepted the cost of socially embracing a Black man who had married a White or fair woman. Many upper class men were socialized to believe that a fair wife brought socio-economic advantages. Fair men committed social suicide when they married educated Black women because the social mobility of these men was blocked. Many educated Black women were condemned to spinsterhood because successful Black men got married to "high colored" women and these Black women refused to marry lower class Black men because of the negative societal labels that defined the men in this social group (Henriques, 1951).

The institution of the family did not escape the negative influences of *colorism*. Dark-skinned family members suffered at the expense of the fair-skinned members. Children with light skin were favored by their parents. Dark-skinned family members were asked to remain invisible while the light-skinned members entertained friends at home. Some fair-skinned family members even severed ties with the dark-skinned members. Some dark-skinned family members encouraged their fair relatives to pass for White. Racism was persistent because White children did not play with Black children, even though they attended the same schools. White Jamaicans did not socially embrace the Black politicians who became isolated because they refused to fraternize with lower class Blacks (Ellis, 1957; Henriques, 1951).

Colorism and racism were also rampant in employment practices. Kingston businesses employed fair-skinned girls because Black customers preferred to be served by these girls even though Black customers themselves were treated disrespectfully. Hotel accommodations were also unavailable for Blacks during the tourism season when the majority of guests were Whites (Henriques, 1951). Johnson (1996) reviewed a sample of over 10,000 newspaper advertisements in the Daily Gleaner for domestic help from 1920-1970. White racist employers demanded subservience from their Black helpers and perpetuated *colorism* in their preference for light-skinned helpers. The job seekers who mentioned skin tone (brown, clear, and fair) in their advertisements applied for the higher status specialist jobs within the domestic sector. The lowest status jobs within the sector were done by generalists who were predominantly Black females. The presence of the complexion-driven images in advertisements diminished over time, but had residual influence in the domestic help sector in the early post-independence period.

Smith (1961) argues that the emphasis on *colorism* hides the underlying power of race to which *colorism* is related. Jamaica is a plural society in which the groups mix, but they do not combine. There are three separate and unique cultural sections: White, Brown, and Black, with their distinctive and socially shared institutions. The three sections reflect and are guided by their racial and cultural ancestry. Jamaica is a colorized society at the symbolic level because skin color is a heuristic that points to the potency of race. The racial hierarchy dictates the rules that govern the behavior within and among the people in the three unique cultural sections which continued into the period of political independence. I now turn to the discussion of *colorism* and racism in the post-independence period.

The post-independence era: 1962-present

This section is organized into four periods. These are the early independence or Black Power period (1962-1970) in which there was ethnic and political tension because of the continued ethnic minority economic control and unfulfilled expectations of political independence for the Black majority. This tension was influenced by the ideas of the Black Power Movement in the United States and the 1959 Cuban revolution. This period is followed by the Democratic Socialist period (1971-1980) where the PNP modified the status quo with democratic socialist policies, which led to class antagonisms that were actually ethnic antagonisms. The next period is the neo-liberal period (1980-1989) in which the JLP's structural adjustment policies favored the entrenched ethnic groups because of their historical economic advantage. The final period is the era of globalization (1990-present) in which there is negligible economic growth, the retreat of

Brown power in the ruling PNP, the emergence of modern Blackness and its antithesis—brown skin—which is a sought-after social commodity that is glamorized and challenged in popular culture.

The early post independent period: 1962-1970. Jamaica received its political independence from Britain on August 6, 1962. The political elite promised development which raised the hope and expectations of the people, but independence was a myth (Lindsay, 1975). Norris (1962), a radical British socialist, debunked this myth with a scathing attack on the official version of the Jamaican situation in the early 1960s which rankled the elite. She argued that while the old colonial order had been removed and the white population in the country was much smaller and multi-racialism was being promoted, a new privileged class of Whites and Coloreds had emerged in a socially stratified and class-conscious country that continued to practice covert discrimination against the Black majority. In other words, Jamaica was politically independent, but was colonial in nature.

Norris (1962) argues further that the country was searching for an identity but was trapped in the clutches of the imperialists. She notes that in terms of policies, the government was providing scholarships for students to attend secondary schools but the available school places for students constituted less than 5% of the required places. Also, Blacks and Coloreds had the political and civil service jobs, but the commanding heights of the economy such as the estates and business were owned by Whites and Coloreds. There were increasing profits from the mechanization of the sugar industry but this led to a redundancy of 20, 000 agricultural laborers. The large-scale redundancy spurred large-scale rural-urban migration. Although massive profits, taxes, and royalties were received

from the bauxite and tourism industries, the masses did not benefit from this accumulation of capital.

The foregoing highlights the economic, social, and political situation that Claudius Henry, a returnee from the United States in 1957, experienced on his arrival in Jamaica. Henry subsequently became impressed with the liberating ideas of the Rastafarians and joined the movement and established the Africa Reform Church. Henry dubbed himself the Repairer of the Breach, particularly in relation to the Rastafarian demand for repatriation to Africa. Some of Claudius Henry's supporters led by his son, Ronald Henry, believed that the oppressive conditions of the Black masses could only be solved by armed struggle like what occurred in the Cuban revolution. Ronald Henry called on Black Jamaicans to violently rise up against the divisive and manipulative political system led by the JLP and the PNP. The younger Henry and some supporters were killed in a confrontation with the Royal Hampshire Regiment in 1963. Claudius Henry was accused of supporting these militant activities and was convicted of treason in 1963. Henry was released from Prison in 1968 and the police targeted his New Creation Peacemakers Association (Campbell, 1987; Gray, 1991).

The challenge to the system continued with the Rastafarians' consistent affirmation of the spirituality of the Black self, their nonconformist aesthetic physicality, and their critique of the socio-economic inequalities of the Brown and White hegemony in "Babylon." A major demand of the Rastafarians was their repatriation to Africa which clashed with the Eurocentric values of the neo-colonial state. In 1963 some Rastafarians in the resort town of Montego Bay refused to stop walking across the Rose Hall property (which was later renamed Coral Gardens) that was being developed as a tourist attraction.

The Rastafarians argued that they had a right to walk across the property to get to their community, but the developers countered that the presence of the Rastafarians horrified the White tourists. The disagreement led to a violent confrontation in which a petrol station was set ablaze and a police officer who came to arrest the Rastafarians was attacked with a spear. The state unleashed the army and the police on the Rastafarian community; eight people were killed, and men, women, and children, the majority of whom were not involved in the initial incidents, were arrested. The power elite in the newly independent Jamaica were not prepared to accept any challenge to the status quo as the fledgling nation embarked on creating its national identity, which meant continued economic and cultural marginalization of the Black majority (Campbell, 1987).

Nettleford (1965) deconstructed the cultural context of the search for national identity, which meant *colorism* and racism. The majority of Jamaicans preferred the Queen of England as the head of state over a Black president. The political leaders aped the "paternalistic" British government of the past. These leaders projected racial harmony or non-racialism in their nationalist project, despite the fact that racial discrimination against Blacks trumped the Jamaican national motto—"Out of Many, One People"—and the melting pot image. The neo-colonial stratification of Whites at the social apex followed by the Mulatto middle class and Blacks at the bottom persisted and stalled "Jamaicanization." Some Afro-Jamaican practices and cultural products were tolerated, but the Black cultural practices and belief system that were discouraged and stigmatized during slavery were shunned because they continued to be taboo in official circles and high society (Nettelford, 1965; Thomas, 2003).

Despite the growing Black middle class, the Brown middle class (the descendants of the captive and free Mulattoes) maintained its influence on public policies. The Brown middle class expressed *colorism,* and the small White class displayed racism that degraded the Black majority. It is important to remember that *colorism* is a preference for social objects which have been historically associated with British institutions, values, and culture. Many Brown and White Jamaicans boasted in the public sphere that they did not entertain Blacks in their homes (Nettleford, 1965; Smith, 1984). Miller (1969) found evidence of *colorism* and racism in the late 1960s, because there was a cultural preference for light skin among the adolescents of the various color groups he studied in Jamaica. The Caucasian ideal became the gold standard that determined the body image satisfaction of these adolescents, because the nearer their body image to Negroid features, the greater was their dissatisfaction. This Caucasian gold standard was attacked by Black Power spurred on by the continued economic marginalization faced by the Black majority.

The White and Brown cultural sections attacked Black Power in the societal debate over national identity. The groups argued vehemently that Marcus Garvey should not be made a national hero because he didn't contribute to national development. Black intellectuals influenced by Black Power countered that Garvey's work raised the dignity and the self-respect of the Black majority in Jamaica. This consciousness-raising meant that Garvey had contributed to national development. Despite Garvey's work, some Blacks still suffered from "self contempt." A young Black adult female destroyed a photograph of herself because she appeared too Black in the picture. The "self contempt" among some Jamaicans was a reflection of how the Brown and White Jamaicans treated Blacks. A Jamaican identity emerged slowly in the early years of independence because

of inequalities and the lack of opportunities for socio-economic and cultural advancement (Nettleford, 1965).

Colorism, racism, and increasing inequality, which were the simmering antecedents, led to increased Black consciousness and the anti-Chinese riots in downtown Kingston in 1965. Three Chinese brothers reportedly beat a Black female employee because of a disagreement about the payment installments on a radio. Blacks retaliated by looting and firebombing several Chinese stores because the representation embedded in the behavior of the Chinese brothers had a common meaning among Blacks that they would no longer tolerate the whipping started in slavery. This incident set the background for the Rodney Riots (Lacey, 1977; Lewis, 1998b).

The racial and ethnic tensions escalated when University lecturer Walter Rodney, a Guyanese guided by Black Power, started the "groundings" with his brothers, the Rastafarians, and the urban poor. Rodney taught that Black power was not Black supremacy, but a counter to White oppression, which was required for Black liberation. The people received lectures on Africa and the Diaspora. Rodney argued that Black power was against all those who were oppressing Blacks, including other Blacks (Campbell 1987; Lacey, 1977; Rodney, 1990a). Rodney's rhetoric, ideas, and activities created tension with the privileged ethnic groups and the supportive Black government which banned American Black Power activists from the country. Rodney (1990a, 13), speaking of the Hugh Shearer led JLP government's ban of American Black power activists from Jamaica in the 1960s, stated:

> More recently, and at a time when the Black liberation struggle taking place against White racist American society is fiercest, these same

> political bandits felt sufficiently threatened by the power of the example of struggle to carry through the banning of Brothers Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and James Forman. Even more damming has been their prohibition of the liberation literature of Carmichael, Malcolm X, and Elijah Mohammed, at a time when the world is celebrating International Human Rights Year, piously sponsored by the Jamaican government.

Rodney (1990a, 13) also criticized the police as state agents of Black oppression because of their activities in the 1960s. He said:

> Since independence, the Black police force of Jamaica have demonstrated that they can be as savage in their approach to Black brothers as the White police in New York, for ultimately they serve the same master. The Prime Minister has not concealed his determination that the police should be used to maintain the present system of social oppression, and he has given them full authority to utilize whatever brutal methods they think necessary to carry out their mandate.

On October 16, 1968, the government, in response to the perceived Black Power threat, banned Walter Rodney from returning to Jamaica after he attended the Congress of Black Writers in Canada. The Minister of Home Affairs, in defending the government's action, declared, "In terms of my office and reading the records of problems in this country, I never came across a man who offers a greater threat to the security of this land than does Walter Rodney" (cited in Campbell, 1987, 132). However, Rodney did not advocate violence in the national polemic because he was liberating minds as a "guerilla intellectual." The banning of Rodney triggered a protest march by

students of the University of the West Indies who were subsequently joined by urban malcontents. The protestors clashed with the police, and in the ensuing riot some public busses and stores were damaged (Campbell, 1987; Charles, 2005b; Lewis, 1998b; Rodney, 1990b). The opposition leader in parliament, Norman Manley, criticized the banning of Rodney. Manley, as he did in 1938, strategically co-opted the Black social movement with the declaration "I salute Black power," which conveniently critiqued the status quo (Lacey, 1977, 35). Manley's declaration gained support for the PNP among the Black radicals. However, Manley was deeply troubled by the ideas of Black power and the Rastafarians' ideology and their desire to repatriate to Africa (Manley, 1996).

Stone (1988) reminds us that the major political parties in the early post-independence period supported a multi-class and multi-racial alliance to counter the challenge of Black Nationalism. The Black middle class eschewed the values of the Rastafarians and Black Power social movements, and continued to elevate British values and institutions. The majority of Blacks harbored racial and class resentment because they did not benefit from the economic growth in the early post-independence period like the ethnic minorities. I now turn to the turbulent period of the 1970s.

The democratic socialist period: 1971-1980. The discontentment of unfulfilled expectations, *colorism*, and racism, set the stage for the racial and political turbulence of the 1970s. Therefore, the government sponsored a social survey to determine the needs of the poor during this period (Smith, 1989). Jamaica experienced negative growth in the 1970s alongside increasing political and racial militancy, and a democratic socialist demand for radical change. The PNP co-opted these militant tendencies, which

challenged racism and *colorism* when the Michael Manley-led government declared democratic socialism in 1974.

Racism and *colorism* were very much evident in the early 1970s, as the following study shows. Tidrick (1973) used the Thematic Apperception Test to assess the relationship between the need for achievement and skin color among university students in Jamaica. The findings revealed that based on the imagery produced in the White picture condition, the students had higher need for achievement scores than the students in the Brown picture condition. Miller (1973a) found that White students and persons with Caucasian physical features were deemed to be of greater significance, greater worth, and value, so they had higher status than the students of other racial groups. The White students felt that they were more significant and worthier than the Brown students, and the Brown students, in turn, felt that they were worthier and more significant than the Black students. Miller (1973b) reveals that *colorism* and racism were not left unchallenged because the Jamaican people created several positive social movements like Garveyism, the Nationalist Movement, the Development Movement, and the Black Power movement to protect Black identity and promote Black national aspirations.

Stone (1973) provides empirical data that unpacks the content of the negative representations about Black power and Rastafarianism based on occupational strata. Among blue collar workers, a significantly greater percentage of Blacks (12%) had a positive image of Black radicals compared to the 5% Browns who had a positive image. The difference between Black and Brown Jamaicans becomes more evident when the support of Brown Jamaicans for the social movements is examined further. Some 5% of the Brown white collar workers supported the social movements, which was not

significantly different from the 6% support among the Brown blue collar workers. This finding is in stark contrast to the 14% of the Black blue collar workers who supported the movements, which was not significantly different from the 12% support among the Black white collar workers. Black white collar workers compared to Brown white collar workers perceived the radical Black rhetoric to be less threatening, and *colorism* created status frustration for the Black white collar workers. Examination of the social attitudes of Whites revealed a similar difference between the Black and Brown occupational groups.

There was increasing crime and political tension in the 1970s because organized gangs affiliated with the JLP and PNP clashed. The privileged classes and ethnic groups were targeted and became victims of crime because urban youth had become politically militant by the late 1970s and settled scores with the privileged groups. The Black and Brown middle class intellectuals from the University of the West Indies led the Abeng and Black Power social movements (Stone, 1988). The intellectuals circulated radical ideas that challenged the status quo by accusing the Black political elite of conspiracy with the ethnic minorities to keep the Black masses poor and oppressed. Some of the reggae artistes and dub poets were sympathetic to the democratic socialist challenge to the neo-colonial order, which they expressed in their rebel music and poetry. The radicalism of the PNP fractured the multi-class and multiracial alliance. The ethnic minorities (except a few of the privileged families) switched political allegiance to the JLP because of the PNP's radicalism. The fear of Democratic Socialism and the ascendancy of the Black majority triggered Brown and White flight because some members of the privileged groups closed their businesses, exported their capital, and left

Jamaica for the United States. Brown and White flight created opportunities for the despised Blacks because by 1980 some 40-50 percent of the top managerial and technical jobs in the private sector were filled by Blacks. Other Blacks acquired firms sold by migrating owners and some started their own businesses. Some multinational corporations during the late 1970s hired Blacks to fill top jobs to blunt the accusations of racism in the controversial polemic about the role of the large private sector companies and the call of the radical left to nationalize these companies (Stone, 1988).

The Jamaican Marxists were not immune to the societal debates about class inequalities driven by *colorism* and racism in the 1970s. However, the Marxists were accused of ignoring the race issue in Jamaica. Some factors that contributed to the accusation are the Marxists' dogmatic interpretation of Marxism in which they ignored race in favor of class because classical Marxism largely ignored race as a unit of analysis. Moreover, the social mobility of Blacks in the 1970s downplayed the need to focus on race, and radical Blacks in the PNP were curbed by the multicultural ideology of the Brown hegemony in the party (Munroe, 1988).

However, the Communist Party's *Program of the Workers' Party of Jamaica* did recognize the oppression of slavery and the post-slavery racial oppression. The ideas in the program declared that Blacks were at the bottom of the social hierarchy and the ethnic minorities controlled the means of production. The program also recognized the struggles of Marcus Garvey, Paul Bogle, Alexander Bedward, and the influence of Rastafarians and the nationalist movement on the working class struggle against the privileged groups in Jamaica. The PNP's *Principles and Objectives* that guided the government policies from 1974-1980 also recognized the revolutionary struggle started by Maroon leaders

Nanny and Tacky and the slave rebel Sam Sharpe in 1832. The document also condemned fascist and racist regimes. Moreover, the leftist newspapers, *Abeng* and S*truggle*, which devoted 58% and 34% respectively of their articles to the race question, were distributed among Blacks (Munroe, 1988).

There appeared to be some positive benefits of these Black social movements because Miller (1980), in a study of young people, saw an emerging positive self-conception among this cohort. The attitudes these youth had toward developed countries was a function of their interrogation of these countries' benevolence towards Jamaica. However, these youth possessed some amount of ambivalence toward themselves, their friends, and Jamaica. The divergence and convergence that Miller found among this cohort was undergirded by contested values that influenced the youths' construction of cultural reality. Therefore, the defeat of the left in the 1980 General Election was also a cultural-racial defeat and a radical departure from the aspirations of the 1970s. This defeat was a triumph for the light skinned elite who despised everything Black. I now transition to the neo-liberal period of the 1980s.

The neo-liberal period: 1980-1989. Gordon (1988, 1989) compared the 1984 Mobility Survey with the 1944 census based on the wage earning populations. In 1943 65% of ethnic minority wage earners were in the middle class compared to 21% of colored wage earners, followed by 4% of the Indian wage earners with only 3% of Black wage earners in the middle class. By 1984 some 47% of Indian wage earners were in the middle class and 44 % of the colored wage earners were in the middle class compared to 25% of Black wage earners. All ethnic groups have been affected by the expansion of middle class occupations, but the socio-economic differential between the groups persists.

The ethnic minorities continued to be dominant because the issue of *colorism* is an ongoing struggle.

The Black middle class remained smaller than the middle class of the other ethnic groups in relative terms. Blacks were under-represented in the middle class in proportion to the size of the Black population, even though the majority of the middle class was Black. Moreover, Blacks were not the majority in the upper echelons of the middle class where there are higher professional and senior managerial jobs. Two of the largest changes occurred in the mass professions like teaching and nursing. Black presence in nursing moved from 43% in 1943 to 67% in 1984. In 1943 some 16 % of the secretarial and accounting clerks in the clerical professions were Black, and by 1984 Blacks accounted for 60% of this occupational group. The working class racial composition did not change significantly because Blacks continued to dominate the manual professions (Gordon, 1988, 1989).

The 1984 Mobility Survey also revealed that Brown people were more likely to acquire middle class status and remain in this social group compared to Blacks. Eighty-seven percent of light-skinned people were more likely to remain in the higher professional and managerial jobs of the upper middle class compared to three of every five Blacks with equivalent professional background. The trend was the same in the lower managerial and professional positions where 73% of light-skinned respondents with this qualification were more likely to move into the middle class compared to 48% of Blacks who had equivalent professional background. The working class also reveals the prominence of *colorism* because 37% of light-skinned members compared to 21% of the Blacks in the working class were likely to move into middle class occupations. These

data suggest that social mobility in Jamaica is influenced by the coercive power of *colorism* (Gordon, 1988, 1989).

Despite the resilient colorized social structures, some lower class Black women became hagglers in response to the foreign exchange shortage in the early 1980s. The women acquired foreign exchange overseas that they used to purchase scarce imports which they sold in Jamaica. The wealth generated by the higglers catapulted them into the middle class. Despite the material success of the higglers, domestic industries suffered because of the government's macro economic policy that emphasized export and import deregulation. The competition from imports, the high cost of money, and the accumulation of huge debts bankrupted and ruined some Black-owned businesses that had borrowed at low interest rates in the 1970s. These Black businesses were vulnerable because their owners had secured loans relatively recently compared to the established ethnic groups that benefited from the massive devaluations of the Jamaican dollar between1983 and 1985. High interest rates above 30% were used to stabilize the economy in the post-1983 period (Stone, 1988).

The experience of Black entrepreneurs in the 1980s led to a Black public discourse with an integrated, socially shared understanding and meaning that the JLP regime deliberately undermined Black businesses. The gains of Blacks in the 1970s largely remained intact but came under severe pressure because of the economic policies of the JLP. The return to power of the pro-business JLP in 1980 influenced some members of the privileged groups to return to Jamaica from the United States. Some Black business owners who rented or leased premises were displaced by the return flow of the privileged classes. The big merchants were able to re-establish themselves in the

economy, which was perceived by Blacks as a resurgence of Brown power in collusion with the government to stymie the Black gains of the 1970s. The government's implementation of a massive ganja eradication program reinforced the perception of Blacks that there was a Brown power-government conspiracy. The United States-backed ganja eradication program reduced capital that normally would have been available to Blacks. However, the rise of Black businesses in the 1970s and their decline in the 1980s were a result of the government's free market policies (Stone, 1988).

Headley (1984) argues that race relations and institutional racism in post-colonies like Jamaica are determined by the degree to which the social relations are embedded in the social structures of the colonial past. Race relations in Jamaica moved through the "plantation frontier," the "disintegration and reconstruction frontiers" after abolition, and finally, the "frontier of indigenization and nation building" with political independence. In the last frontier, there developed an uncomfortable balance between the culture of the masses and the "super culture" of the ruling elite. The social relations have evolved and are more predicated on social class rather than race. Nevertheless, the underlying race relations must be understood in terms of the relationship of the racial groups to the means of production because of the unequal distribution of resources.

Chevannes (1988) also used Marxist analysis to deconstruct race in contemporary Jamaica. Race is a political and cultural issue. The importance of race and *colorism* manifests itself in the national and artistic consciousness of Jamaicans in their liberation struggle for cultural emancipation. This emancipation is a process in which the Black oppressed reconstructs the spiritual and cultural self through its creative works. However, despite the cultural emancipation of Jamaicans, which inspired radical critiques of racial

privilege and highlighted the need for Black economic empowerment, black skin is still a social problem for some Jamaican children. Bagley and Young (1988) administered a color meaning test to a group of preschoolers in Jamaica and they report that Black children in rural Jamaica devalue their skin color and ethnic identity.

The power of race as a social object of categorization has waned somewhat, compared to the object of skin color which is the greater factor in determining the social and class relations in the post-independence period, income notwithstanding. It is not that race is unimportant; it will never be (Smith, 1990). However, the social history of Jamaica allows one to trace the struggle of Blacks to improve their social position. The slave rebellions and emancipation, the Morant Riot, Bewardism, Garveyism, Rastafarianism, the 1938 labor riots, the Nationalist and Black Power movements, the educational advancement of Blacks, and the independent Black-dominated governments have attacked the White racial structure in the society and have reduced its social power (Campbell, 1987; Miller, 1973b; Post, 1978). The negative colonial memes that gave Whites their hegemonic representation with rigid uniformity during slavery have not disappeared, but now find expression in the complexion continuum embedded in the minds of the large Black majority, and guide their social thinking and behavior (Barnes, 1997; Mohammed, 2000; Thomas, 2006). Brown skin has more status in contemporary Jamaica than White skin, because Whites are numerically invisible and members of the majority Black population operate daily among themselves on the complexion continuum, which revolves around brown skin (Charles, 2003). I now turn to the contemporary period in which the clash between Afrocentric and Eurocentric ideas and values continues in the period of globalization.

The globalization period: 1990-present. The Black bourgeoisie's capacity in the 1990s to change the system on behalf of the Black masses was constrained by globalization and the Brown elites' continued control over the core areas of the Jamaican economy such as banking, tourism, and manufacturing. Despite the efforts of Michael Manley, before his retirement in 1991, and the actions of the Drumblair Brown elite of the PNP to sideline Patterson and the Black professional class in the party, Patterson emerged as the first elected Black Prime Minister in Jamaica in 1993. The election of Patterson created a cultural political struggle between the Brown political elite who believe it is their divine right to rule, and the Black political class. Patterson strategically sidelined some members of the Brown elite in the PNP. He was politically marketed as the "young, gifted, and Black" in the PNP's 1993, 1997, and 2002 General Elections campaigns in order to appeal to the primordial loyalty of Blacks. The PNP could not appeal to Blackness in this way before Michael Manley's death because of his White physicality (Charles, 2005b, 2006; Robotham, 2000).

The PNP-affiliated Black bourgeoisie continued the Blackening of the nation by rerouting commercial and investment bank licenses and lucrative government contracts and largesse from the Brown elite to the Black elite without the socialist rhetoric and fanfare of the 1970s. The aim was to put the Black elite in a strong economic position. This silent policy was coupled with the popular cultural strategy of renaming national symbols. Emancipation Park was also built and the redemption song statute commemorating the freedom of the captive Africans was placed at the entrance to the park in 1997. The color black in the national flag was defined as hardship at political independence in 1962. The PNP successfully challenged this colonial *themata* by

redefining black in the flag as the strength and resilience of the Jamaican people, a new representation imbued with positive meanings. The Brown bias of *colorism* persists because in the public debate over the change in the flag, the counter argument of a newspaper columnist of the Brown class declared that the change demeaned the Jamaican flag (Cooper, 2004a; Robotham, 2000).

The quiet Black revolution occurred between 1992 and 1997 when the PNP won a third electoral term in government. The JLP did well mostly among the Brown elite and the wealthy ethnic minorities, and the Black unemployed in inner city communities. The quiet Black revolution that benefited the Black bourgeoisie rather than the Black masses came to a halt when the financial system crashed in 1996 with the government's high interest rate regime. The government bailed out the mostly Black small and medium sized depositors and investors, and established a depositors' insurance scheme (Robotham, 2000).

Despite the persistent *colorism* and lingering racism in Jamaica, the representation of race in Jamaica is still an emotional issue. The Redemption Song statue selected to commemorate Emancipation triggered a public debate. The statue that was created by the White sculptor Laura Facey-Copper comprises naked male and female Black figures without feet, and the statue appears trapped. The statue is enslaved in (racist) stereotypes about the naked African savage and the phallic gift of the Black male, and ignores the fact that the enslaved ancestors were always clothed because of the African adornment aesthetic. The panel of judges that selected the winning statue is out of touch with the positive and popular cultural sentiments that the Black majority holds of the Black self.

The panel of judges did not select an entry that reflected the accomplishments of the enslaved ancestors (Cooper, 2004a).

The Black Nationalists' critique coalesced with the hegemonic masculinity and sexuality in the racial representation of Redemption Song. The public debates about the statue had a masculine trajectory. The debates revealed the subordinate role of women in the Jamaican gender hierarchy. The socially common references about the positioning, posture, and gaze of the male and female figures reflected a shared understanding that Black Jamaicans were hypersexual in a coercive heterosexual social order. The normative sexual order defines manhood as possessing sexual prowess based on the societal values and expectations that the Jamaican female will be passive and accessible (Brown-Glaude, 2006).

The public's fixation on the nudity of the male figure in the discourse about Redemption Song reflected male control over the female body. This control of the female body was also evident in the proposal by two parliamentarians that unwed mothers with more than two children should be sterilized and high school girls under 16 years of age should undergo virginity testing. The clash of cultural narratives around the Redemption Song statue, female sterilization, and virginity testing arose from the social commonalities of Jamaican identity images. The people used the authority of their arguments to reject the arguments of the governmental authority on Redemption Song, female sterilization and virginity testing. The people projected Black racial respect that challenged the lingering colonial order. Black Jamaicans were now defining their cultural citizenship based on their own values, norms, and belief systems (Thomas, 2004, 2006).

The conversations of a young adult group on the government's decision to make Emancipation Day a national holiday highlight modern Blackness in their social elaborations shared by the community. The government's decision, despite receiving popular support, was criticized as empty symbolism, which swapped plantation slavery for Christian slavery and the slavery of political violence. The African heritage was disregarded because of the persistent structural inequalities, *colorism*, and racism since independence. Moreover, the social consensus of modern Blackness rejects the culture and music of high society and replaces it with reggae and dancehall music, which influence musical taste, language, and fashion, internationally. Modern Blackness is a new representation with positive meanings that incorporated "ghetto feminism" that defied the negative neo-colonial mores about the Black body. Dancehall women confidently wear skimpy clothing in consensus with the sexually explicit lyrics of dancehall DJs. These Blacks have developed a survivalist transnational worldview that benefits the Black self through cultural innovations and migration in the era of globalization (Cooper, 2004a, 2004b; Thomas, 2002, 2004, 2005).

Modern Blackness developed from the cultural practices and social interactions of the people on the margins of the urban and suburban milieu. This modern Blackness challenges the hegemonic multiracial nationalist project that commenced at political independence (Thomas, 2004, 2005). Barnes (1997) states that the non-racial ethos of the nationalist project masked the *colorism* in the Jamaican beauty contest that originated in colonialism. Afrocentric critics argue that these contests use the European standard of beauty to evaluate the participants, which disrespects African physicality. The behavioral outcome of the cultural clash between modern Blackness and *colorism* on Black identity

development is not lost on some mental health professionals. Hickling and Hutchinson (2000), echoing Dubois (1994) argue that the lives of the post-emancipation Jamaicans manifest double consciousness because they are socialized in the culture to reference the self through the eyes of the White other. European culture has been fused with civilization in the minds of Blacks. These Blacks have internalized a belief that they will gain social acceptance by attaining Whiteness.

Mohammed (2000) finds *colorism* in male-female relationships. The Mulatto women, the product of miscegenation between Blacks and Whites in the colonial period, have been transformed by a long series of changes to the Browning in the contemporary culture. Brown-skinned women are the objects of desire for Black men. There is also a preference for light skin among children. Cramer and Anderson (2003) find that there is favoritism for white skin in older rural children (mean age 11.4 years) compared to younger rural children (mean age 5.6 years). However, the older Black children in the urban area (mean age 10.9 years) show favoritism for Black skin. The urban kindergarten children equally select the Black and White dolls when they are asked about their ideal self. The rural fifth/sixth grade children show favoritism for white skin compared to the rural kindergarten cohort. Rural and urban boys, compared to girls, see the White targets as nice. Goupal-McNicol (1995) also finds that the majority of a cohort of Black Jamaican preschool children prefers to play with White dolls. The preference for the White dolls was an indication of self-hate and rejection of Black racial identity. However, Rosenberg (1989) shows that the studies using dolls and puppets with small children are problematic because these children do not understand the biological and socially constructed meanings of race, and they have not yet developed global self-esteem.

The historical development of racism and *colorism* discussed above drives the alteration of the skin bleachers' physicality. The forgoing pinpoints the origin of *colorism* in slavery and traces its development to the present. Therefore, the Jamaicans who bleach their skin are responding to the intergenerational complexion *themata* which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter conclusion. *Colorism* has its roots in slavery and colonialism, in which the captive Africans and the Mulattoes were placed on a complexion continuum within the rigid White-Black dichotomy of the social structure. The White racist social structure weakened at Emancipation in 1838, and the Mulattoes started to take the place of Whites. Despite the struggle of Blacks for civil and political rights, the influence of the old institutions persisted in politics, religion, and education. The hegemonic colonial consensus was consistently challenged by the Morant Bay Rebellion, Bewardism, Garveyism, Rastafarianism, the 1938 labor riots, and the Black Power Movement in the 1960s with the unmet expectations of political independence. The clash of ideas in the socialist era of the 1970s saw a decline in the power of the privileged groups and their resurgence in the liberalization period of the 1980s. The period of the 1990s saw negligible economic growth and rising crime under globalization, *colorism*, and skin bleaching, alongside modern Blackness, the Blackening of national symbols, the silent strategic transfer of state resources to the Black political class, and the persistent and consistent attack on Brown power in the PNP. This chapter outlines the historical forces that explain the behavior of the Jamaican skin bleachers in chapter three.

Chapter 3

Skin Bleaching

Colorism is evident in a multiplicity of ways such as preference for light skinned children, partner and friends, hiring only light skin people and equating light skin people with beauty, intelligence, high culture and social graces among other positive things (Hunter 2007). One blatant manifestation of *colorism* is skin bleaching which is the process whereby people use cosmetic creams, dermatological creams, and homemade products to lighten their complexion (Charles, 2007). This alteration of the aesthetic physicality is an extreme form of *colorism* and is the major focus of this chapter. The modified complexion becomes a decoration of the skin, which people wear with pride (Jablonski, 2004).

I commence this chapter with the discussion of skin bleaching in Asia and Europe as exemplars of the global nature of this phenomenon. Second, I discuss the cosmetic companies' strategic marketing of skin bleaching products and how *colorism* links skin bleachers with dermatology patients driven by the international beauty industry. Third, I discuss the dermatological, medical, and neurological consequences of skin bleaching among Africans. Fourth, I critically review the studies that look at racism, *colorism*, and skin bleaching in the United States and Mexico, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, India, and Africa. Fifth, I explain the works in Jamaica framing skin bleaching as mental pathology. Sixth, I then review the studies in Jamaica that test the self hate thesis. Seventh, I end with the rationale for an overarching cultural study of skin bleaching in Jamaica and explain the nature of the present study. I now turn to the global practice of skin bleaching

The international practice of skin bleaching

Skin bleaching is a global phenomenon. I use Asia and Europe as two exemplars to describe this international practice. For example, in Taiwan a survey found that 40% of the women are using skin bleaching creams. Bleaching products are sold in supermarkets and pharmacies. Some women use the creams over a lifetime, despite the range of skin disorders that are associated with the practice. In 2001, the market for skin bleaching creams in China and Japan was estimated to be $1.3 billion and $5.6 billion, respectively (Mire, 2005). The high status of light skin in Asia makes a vacation tan a cultural taboo. Asians are divided by religion, ethnicity, and language, but they are united by the social preference for light skin (Easton, 1998). There are two explanations for the light skin preference among Asians. The first explanation is that dark skin has low status because laborers and farmers and others of low occupational status work in the sun which darkens the skin, while the high status, wealthy, and educated people have light skin and do not work in the sun. The second explanation suggests that the Asian standards of beauty were reshaped by the lighter skin Mongol conquerors of Central Asia and the European colonizers. Both explanations suggest that *colorism* is embedded in Asian culture (Fuller, 2006).

Colorism and the practice of skin bleaching are also popular in European countries like Switzerland, France, Germany, Britain, and Holland, among others, where there are large immigrant populations. The African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Caribbean women in Europe provide a booming market for the illegal creams with hydroquinone (Petit, et al, 2006). For example, in 2007 the British police raided outlets selling illegal skin bleaching creams in London and North Hampton. An African couple

in South East London was fined £100,000 for flouting medical safety regulations by selling toxic skin bleaching creams (BBC 2007a, 2007b; Van Marsh, 2007). Skin lightening is also popular among White women who use the cream to bleach "age spots" because of the medical pathologizing of aging. The White women from Eastern and Southern Europe use the creams to be like the whiter women of Northern Europe (Mire, 2005). The less toxic skin bleaching creams are also marketed for the high-end European markets as skin therapy. The skin bleaching by Southern and Eastern European women suggests that *colorism* is pervasive and complex, and transcends race, class, and the rigid Black-White dichotomy. This transcendence means that people from all races, complexion groups, and social classes practice skin bleaching (Mire, 2005). I now want to transition to the international cosmetic companies that strategically use *colorism* by tapping into the desire for light skin in the marketing of their products, globally.

Cosmetic companies, colorism, and skin bleaching

The international cosmetics companies are engaged in aggressive marketing and diffusion of skin bleaching products via global technology. The internet is used to market the products by tapping into the non-White and White markets. The marketing rhetoric of skin bleaching ads is informed by race, class, gender, and the need among some people to lighten their complexion. The content of the skin bleaching ads discursively equates Whites with youthfulness and racial superiority. The embedded racialized aesthetics promises to transform the pathology of aging and hyper-pigmentation of dark skin tone and dark spots by cleansing and purifying white skin. The less toxic skin bleaching creams are marketed in Asia, another high-end market. Skin bleaching is popular in

countries like Taiwan, China, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines, among other countries. The ads also promise to make the yellow skin of Asian women perfectly White. The ad content is reinforced by the before and after images of the unhappy, dark faces of Asian models juxtaposed with white, happy Asian faces. In general, the cosmetics industry is a big business. One of the largest cosmetic companies in the world, L'Oreal, reported sales of $14 billion in 2001. Some of L'Oreal's products on the internet have color-coded names like Blanc Expert, BI-White, and White Perfect. The BI-White ad has the picture of an Asian woman using a zipper to peel off the dark facial skin that reveals white skin (Mire, 2005).

The foregoing discussion suggests that the widespread availability and use of skin bleaching creams is related to the cosmetics industry and beauty enhancement in the era of globalization. There are also several formal topical treatments used by dermatologists to deal with hyper-pigmentation with varying results, and strong bleaching protocols have been tested in relation to conventional treatments (Yoshimura, Harii, Aoyama & Iga, 2000). The global popularity of skin bleaching and skin therapy are major parts of the international beauty industry where people get nips and tucks and a range of cosmetic surgery procedures to make use of the much-touted medical beauty enhancement techniques (Braun, 2005; Goldman, 2005; Holiday, 2005; Sarwer & Crerand, 2004; Vulnik & Denys, 2005). The skin bleachers and the people receiving skin therapies and cosmetic surgery are all engaged in body modification. For example, Moore (2002) reveals that once the United States Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved botulinum toxin (more popularly known as "botox"), which is used to treat glabellar

lines (the creases between the eyebrows), there was euphoria in beauty clinics, internationally. The same is true for skin bleaching products. Mire (2005) notes that 62 new skin bleaching products were marketed in Asia in 2005. Petit and Pierard (2003) argue that the international distribution of skin lightening products in the commercialized beauty industry connects people who desire flawless skin with those who desire lighter skin, because both have a desire to be beautiful. I now turn to a discussion of the dermatological, medical, and neurological consequences of skin bleaching (Ajose, 2005) that are reported in the literature.

The consequences of skin bleaching

The more toxic skin bleaching creams are advertised in the low-end markets for Blacks who want to bleach their skin. The majority of the research on the dermatological, medical, and neurological consequences of skin bleaching has been done with Africans in Senegal, Togo, The Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Mali, Ghana, Gambia, South Africa, and France, among other countries. Africans ranging in age from 15-50 years have indulged the practice of skin bleaching, which lasts from several months to 20 years (Ajose, 2005; Mira, 2005; Petit, Cohen-Ludmann, Clevenbergh, Bergman & Dubertret, 2006).

A sample of 35 skin bleaching creams tested in Saudi Arabia finds that 45% had mercury levels well above the 1ppm limit accepted by the United States' FDA. This finding has health, educational, and legal implications for women in developing countries in general, and Saudi women in particular. The controversy surrounding the safety of hydroquinone in skin bleaching products has led to the regulations of these products in Japan, Europe, and the United States. The regulatory framework has spurred research in

alternative skin bleaching agents for the market such as N-acetyl glucosamine, soy protein, ascorbic acid, kojic acid, aleosin, licorice extract, azelaic acid, arbutin, retinoids and mequinol (Al-Saleh & Al-Doush, 1997; Draelos, 2007).

The use of bleaching creams with hydroquinone and soaps that have mercury, and the use of traditional skin bleaching plants with corticosteroids can lead to dermatological consequences such as cutaneous atrophy, pitch black pigmentation, scabies, colloid milium ochronosis, and striae atrophicae (Lye, et al, 2007; Perret, Sane, Gning, Ba & Rohou, 2001; Scarpa, 1987). There is also skin bleaching-induced sun damage such as sunburn and elastosis. Other consequences of skin bleaching creams are body odor, fragile skin, of which telangiectasia and extensive striae are cases in point. African skin bleachers face other effects such as hypochromia, hyperchromia, melanoleucoderma, acne, eczema, dermatitis artefacta, and infectious bacterial and parasitic diseases, vibices and popular annular lesions. Furthermore, the diagnosis of leprosy can be delayed because of the use of skin bleaching products (Bongiorno & Arico, 2005; Faye et al, 2005; Findlay & de Beer, 1980; Findlay, Morrison & Simson, 1975; Long, 1996; Mahe et al, 2002; Pitche, Kombate & Tchangai-Walla, 2005; Skulz, 1982).

There are also medical consequences because of the systemic circulation within the body of the active constituents in the skin bleaching creams (Mahe, Lye & Perret, 2005). Renal damage that requires dialysis has been reported and there are some case reports that adrenal insufficiency and Cushing's syndrome occur with the sudden stopping of the practice (Petit, et al, 2006). Immuno-suppression has also been reported in which some long-term users of skin bleaching products developed vulval warts and tuberculosis. There are also reports of newborns with mercury intoxication, which leads

to cataracts, renal dysfunction, and anemia because the mothers used mercury-based creams during pregnancy and lactation. Pregnant women using the products are significantly more likely to have babies with low birth rate, have smaller placenta, and lower plasma cortisol levels than pregnant women who do not use the products. Persons who use skin bleaching creams for more than 10 years are also at risk for diabetes and hypertension (Bwomda, Sermijn, Lacor & Velkeniers, 2005; Mahe et al, 2007; Petit et al, 2006). There are other consequences such as poor healing of wounds and bad scarring which might require corrective surgery (Ajose, 2005). Neurological complications have been reported in the central and peripheral nervous systems, such as memory loss, irritability, insomnia, and neuropathies because of the use of mercury-based skin bleaching products (Ajose, 2005; Karamagi, Owino & Katabira, 2001).

The above negative consequences occur because frequent users of skin bleaching products tend to underestimate the risks of using the products (Kpanake, Sastre, Sorum & Mullet, 2008). The medical, dermatological, and neurological data cited above are alarming and point to the power and resilience of *colorism*, and the importance of unpacking the psycho-cultural reasons for the practice of skin bleaching, given the host of negative health outcomes (Scarpa & Guerici, 1987). In addition, the consumers of these products have enriched the pharmaceutical companies at the expense of their health. Therefore, the international medical community should lobby the international pharmaceutical companies to address the negative health outcomes of skin bleaching (de Souza, 2008). I now turn to the critical review of the findings of skin bleaching studies in the United States and Mexico, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and Africa

that have moved beyond the dermatological, medical, and neurological effects of the practice to its social context.

Skin bleaching, racism, and colorism

Mire (2001) argues that *colorism* universalizes Whiteness by encouraging skin bleaching. Racialized medicine, working in tandem with the poisonous chemistry of the beauty industry, targets non-White people who consume Whiteness via skin bleaching. Historically, the white body has been represented by Europeans as virtuous and appealing, while the black body has been represented as anathema. The politics of *colorism* drive skin bleaching in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa. However, in my view, Mire ignores the fact that non-Whites in postcolonial societies have agency and choice in constructing a range of non-White selves. Altering the Black physicality is not synonymous with embracing Whiteness. Moreover, the study does not explain why *colorism* as a form of social control does not influence Blacks who do not bleach their skin. I now turn to the practice of skin bleaching in the United States and Mexico.

Skin bleaching in the United States and Mexico

Hall, (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2006) argues that White racism generates low assimilation potential for American Blacks who want to assimilate. The desire to assimilate (or White cultural preference) leads to intra-psychic conflict among some Blacks. This internal dilemma influences the *bleaching syndrome*. The *bleaching syndrome* as defined by Hall (1994, 1995a, 1995b) is a pattern of related behaviors in which a person strives for the light skin because of the internalization of light skin values

and ideals. The problem I find with the *bleaching syndrome* is that it encompasses a very wide range of behaviors which has not been empirically verified, thereby reducing the construct's analytic efficacy and its purported influence.

Moreover, the *bleaching syndrome* as defined by Hall (1994, 1995a, 1995b) does not actually deal with the physical bleaching of the skin. The absence of the physical bleaching of the skin as one of the behaviors of the *bleaching syndrome* is erroneous and surprising because there is a long history of skin bleaching in the United States, where the bleaching products were supplied by White entrepreneurs (Phillips, 2004; Williams, 2006). For example, in 1935 there was the Fan Tan bleaching cream that was purported to make Black women beautiful by removing the blemishes and blotches of dark skin. The Fan Tan Company promised to refund customers if the bleaching cream did not turn Black skin light in one week (Phillips, 2004). In the 1940s there was also the Palmers Skin Success Ointment that promised to help Blacks get rid of their "unattractive complexion" (Williams, 2006).

The access to skin bleaching products and the preoccupation of some Blacks with light skin led to one of the most controversial moments about skin bleaching in the United States. In 1949 the Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Walter White, wrote an article in *Look Magazine* entitled, "How Science Conquered the Color Line" (Porter, 2006).White argued that hydroquinone could solve the problem of the color line if Blacks use it to bleach their skin. The biological demolition of the color line could be completed by using the hair straighteners that were available and plastic surgery to change the Negroid facial features. White's argument ignited controversy (Porter, 2006). From as early as 1904 there were

newspaper reports from Georgia to California to New York that Dr. Henry Pancoat and colleagues had used radium and X-ray to turn black skin white. None of the patients who underwent X-ray treatment with Dr. Pancoat for keloids, discoid lupus erythematosus and other ailments, had bleached more than a few burns. However, there was fear among the White press and society that X-ray and radium could allow Blacks to surpass Caucasians in terms of Whiteness (de la Pena, 2006). I now go on to discuss skin bleaching in contemporary Mexico where the complexion chromatic system influences infomercials about skin bleaching products.

Winders, Jones III, and Higgins (2005) find that the infomercial used to market the skin lightening product, "White Secret," in Mexico locates the practice of skin lightening within the construction of whiteness and the beauty technology in the society. Identities are also constructed within the infomercial, which points to the contemporary understanding of the power and privilege of whiteness within Latin-American and Anglo-American contexts. The power of whiteness, which is intertwined with class, gender, race, and sexuality leads to whiteness practices in Mexico—a reflection of Latin America's complexion chromatic system. The problem I find with this work is that the authors conflate skin bleaching with a desire for Whiteness as if all the Mexicans who bleach their skin do it for this single reason. Skin is a complex practice that has a range of influences which lies in the *colorism* of the complexion chromatic system in Mexico and not just Whiteness. The complexion continuum is also evident in Asia, which is discussed below.

Skin Bleaching in Asia

Ashikari (2005) argues that the use of skin "whitening" creams has been consistently high in Japan since the late 1980s. White skin has been appropriated in the culture and equated with Japanese identity, whereas black skin is represented as the other. Goon and Craven (2003) argue that skin "whitening" in Malaysia is a reflection of the high value placed on whiteness in post-colonial Asia. The high social value of whiteness is spurred on by globalization, which is evident in the skin bleaching ads. Glenn (2008) identifies *colorism* and its antecedent colonialism as impetus in the global marketing of skin lighteners because of the social capital of having light skin. Leong (2006) finds that one focus group's interpretation of the "UV White" whitening softener in Hong Kong viewed whiteness not in discriminatory terms but as a mechanism for social stratification. The other focus group equated the desirability for whiteness with the desirability for tanning, and did not see whiteness in terms of strict social stratification.

Social stratification based on skin color is also evident in India. Karnani (2007) argues that "Fair and Lovely" is doing well in India in terms of profits, but the product is not doing social good because it has a negative impact on social cohesion and public welfare. Shevde (2008) uses the marketing of the product "Fair and Lovely" in India over several decades to show that there is an obsession with fair skin in Indian culture, guided by a confluence of socio-cultural and religious stereotypes and stigmas. Karan's (2008) analysis of over thirty television ads in India reveals that preoccupation with fairness is dictated by the beliefs that fairness influences personal goals such as confidence, empowerment, marriage, and job opportunities. The focus group findings reveal that

although the women do not equate fairness with beauty, they believe fairness brings socio-culture benefits.

There are several criticisms that can be leveled against the studies above. Some of the studies (Ashikari, 2005; Glenn, 2008; Goon & Craven, 2003) erroneously equate skin lightening with a desire for Whiteness based on the *colorism* driven messages in the ads. However, the ads' promotion of whiteness does not necessarily mean that the consumers of the products desire whiteness. Moreover, other studies (Karani, 2007; Karans, 2008; Leong, 2006; Shevde, 2007) focus on the response of non-bleachers to skin bleaching products and textual analysis of the ads rather than on how skin bleachers view the ads, so we do not know the skin bleachers' views in relation to Whiteness. Since we do not know the views of the skin bleachers, we cannot assess their views within the context of the marketing blitz of the pharmaceutical companies. Therefore, we do no know if the skin bleachers desire Whiteness, or a lighter shade of Black. Moreover, some of these studies ignore the fact that men also bleach their skin which gives the impression that skin bleaching is only done by women.

Prasetyaningsih (2007) moves beyond the studies above by combining the discourse from skin "whitening" ads with the voice and emotions of Indonesian women anchored within the colorized Indonesian culture. The preoccupation with light skin in Indonesia is connected to the United States' imperialism, Arab, Chinese, and Indian migrations, and Japanese and Dutch colonization. Skin bleaching in Indonesia transcends age, gender, class, and sexuality. The light skin ideal which undergirds skin "whitening" denotes cleanliness. This purity-driven skin "whitening" image makes women feel and look good because they are beautiful. According to Prasetyaningsih (2007), the culture of

conformity makes women feel bad when they deviate physically from the light skin norm because dark skin is socially undesirable. This social embarrassment influences the women to use skin "whitening" creams to cover their shame. Some women started to bleach after they were insulted because of their dark skin.

I have identified several problems with the work above. The author conflates *colorism* with Whiteness, which is related, but different. Self-confidence is also conflated with self-esteem because the author discusses self-esteem when some of the 46 Indonesian women spoke of self-confidence during their in-depth interviews with the author. The author did not measure self-esteem as reported in her method section, but assumed that these women had low self-esteem. Although skin bleaching in Indonesia transcends gender, only women were interviewed. Moreover, skin bleaching is discussed in Indonesia without locating this practice within the global trend. The global trend of skin bleaching is also popular in Africa, which is dealt with next.

Skin Bleaching in Africa

Blay (2007) argues that understanding the persistence of skin bleaching in Ghana despite the negative health outcomes, requires an interrogation of Ghana's social history and culture. Skin bleaching is driven by the collective memory of the society. The privileges accorded hegemonic Whiteness during colonialism finds expression in the neo-colonial legacy of *colorism*. The legacy of light skin privileges creates clearly articulated symbols and functions in the society, which guide the skin bleachers in the modification of their physicality.

Ajose (2005) and Ly (2007) also find *colorism* in the cultural practice of skin bleaching in Africa. The skin bleachers state that they bleach their skin for cosmetic purposes, to improve the appearance of their skin for an upcoming event, because of female economic dependence on male partners, as a result of the desire for light skin, and in order to even out their skin tone. The various reasons suggest that there are perceived social benefits to having light skin. Some skin bleachers reported stopping the practice because of unacceptable side effects, disapproval of family and peers, pregnancy, and the financial cost. These social pressures reveal that there are structural constraints on skin bleaching and contending values and belief systems about the cultural practice.

The two foregoing studies mentioned *colorism,* which pushes the demand for skin bleaching. The skin bleachers receive support from relatives and friends (Ajose, 2005; Ly, 2007). However, we do not sufficiently understand the range of images, motivations, social groups, institutions, values, and belief systems that support the cultural practice of skin bleaching. The behavior of the skin bleachers cannot be fully understood outside of the socio-cultural context in which they operate, and the potent cognitive images which guide their behavior. Recall that SRT argues that it is important to study cultural images that influence peoples' behavior (Moscovici, 1988). I now turn to the skin bleaching practice in Jamaica where some Jamaicans, in response to the cultural pressures of *colorism,* also alter their Black physicality.

Skin bleaching in Jamaica

There are several works in Jamaica that explains skin bleaching in terms of mental pathology or the self hate thesis. Shepard (2000) argues that there is an identity crisis among Blacks, which is manifested in the *colorized* beauty contests based on White

standards and the occurrence of skin bleaching in Jamaica. Blacks therefore need to emancipate themselves from self hatred which is mental slavery. Hickling and Hutchinson (2000) posit that the attainment of Whiteness is a symbol of social acceptance. The evidence of *colorism* is the popularity of skin bleaching creams in the market place which illustrates that negative perceptions about Blackness are pervasive among Blacks. Racism and social exclusion can thwart optimal identity negotiation and construction, and lead to the "roast breadfruit psychosis" among Blacks who embrace European ideals as the epitome of civilization. The breadfruit is a popular Jamaican fruit, which, when roasted, is Black on the outside and white on the inside. Brown-Glaude (2007) finds that the public discourse on skin bleaching in Jamaica uses mental pathology or self hatred to frame the altered physicality. The discourse reveals hegemonic representations of Blackness, which argues that the Black body should not be modified. The goal of the guardians of hegemonic Blackness is to push the self hating skin bleachers towards Afrocentricity, thereby disciplining the rebellious Black bodies (Brown-Glaude, 2007).

The self hate thesis discussed above has been tested in several skin bleaching studies in Jamaica. Charles (2003, 2004) administered the Rosenberg self-esteem scale on convenience samples by comparing a group of skin bleachers with a comparison group of non-bleachers. In both studies Charles (2003, 2004) finds that the skin bleachers have comparable average self-esteem scores to the comparison group of non-bleachers. Skin bleachers who are adherents of the dancehall culture integrate in their sense of self contending Afrocentric and Eurocentric values projected in dancehall songs. The findings in Charles (2005a) corroborate the earlier findings that the skin bleachers have a

comparable average self-esteem score to the comparison group of non-bleachers. Charles (2005a) also administered the Luhtanen and Crocker racial self-esteem scale and finds that the skin bleachers have higher racial self-esteem than the comparison group of non-bleachers.

Charles (2005b) also compared a convenience sample of skin bleachers with a comparison group of non-bleachers on political party affiliation and preference for a Black prime minister. The author finds that a majority of the skin bleachers argued that Jamaica should always have a Black prime minister, and integrated their Black racial identity with their political identity. Charles (2007) used social representation to do a textual analysis of the reasons skin bleachers report for altering their Black physicality. The author finds that *colorism* is a hegemonic representation that is embedded in the culture. This complexion consensus which influences the behavior of the skin bleachers is persistent because it has its genesis in the societal institutions of the colonial period.

In my view, there are several conceptual issues that need to be clarified about the studies above. The self-esteem studies evaluate just one trait within the matrix of traits in the skin bleachers' personal identity, and the racial self-esteem study evaluates just one identity within the matrix of social identities. Self-esteem is a one-dimensional psychological construct, but personal identity is a multidimensional construct which means self-esteem only captures the evaluative component of the personality (Cross, 1991). Likewise, racial identity does not capture the range of identities that the skin bleachers use to define the social self. Moreover, self-esteem and racial self-esteem in the studies are average scores that mask outliers (Cross, 1991). Also in terms of the objectives of this dissertation, the self-esteem studies do not explain the persistent

meaning-imbued images embedded in the Jamaican culture, which motivate the skin bleachers to alter their Black physicality. The research evidence in Jamaica suggests that skin bleaching is a complex practice intertwined with politics, racial identity, *colorism*, culture, and history. Therefore, we need to unpack the Jamaican culture as a coherent cultural whole in order to understand the colorized memes that drive skin bleaching. The findings of the self-esteem studies that refute the *self-hate* argument do not mean that Jamaica's colonial past does not influence the contemporary era. However, the historical linkage must be clearly delineated. The skin color memes have their grip on the cognition and behavior of the skin bleachers (Charles, 2007; Woodson, 2005).

We therefore have to do a Jamaican cultural dig framed by SRT to unearth the explanations for skin bleaching. The explanations for skin bleaching are best pursued by using: a nested qualitative inquiry of the historical origins of the images that influences the Jamaican skin bleachers; an examination of cultural artifacts in Jamaica for evidence of skin bleaching images; an examination of the repeated behavior of the skin bleachers in their interaction with skin bleaching vendors to understand skin bleaching as a cultural practice; conversations with Jamaicans about skin bleaching and an examine of their narratives for the images that influence skin bleachers. This nested cultural framework will allow us to get at the complexities of the skin bleachers' personal and social identities, and the range of reasons for skin bleaching that are guided by the colorized culture in which the skin bleachers live. The objective of this study is to identity the cultural factors that guide the behavior of the skin bleachers in Jamaica. I now go on to explain the nature of the study, which includes an explanation of how the data will be

analyzed so that we can understand the image-driven behavior of skin bleaching in the Jamaican culture.

The Nature of the Study

The rationale of the study is to understand the cultural factors in Jamaica that influence skin bleachers to modify their aesthetic physicality. This study is a multilayered exploration of how the representations of *colorism* in the Jamaican culture influence some Jamaicans to bleach their skin. By multilayered I mean that there are several parts to this study, each of which taps into a segment of the culture. My research questions will start with the overarching question: how and why do the images, their contents, and meanings influence the behavior of skin bleachers? There are fives parts to this study, and in each part the study tests a theorem of SRT that was outlined in chapter 1.

The first theorem is *history,* which says that cultural images persist over time, so they can be traced historically. This theorem will be tested using pre-independence and post-independence archival material from the newspapers. The second theorem is the *diffusion of ideas* which argues that the diffused images become embedded in the culture and are used by people to create a network of meanings. This theorem will be tested by an examination of traditional and popular cultural sources. The third theory is *identity,* which posits that people use the circulated cultural images to define themselves. This theorem will be explored from the transcripts of individual and focus group interviews. The fourth theorem is *institutionalization,* which says that the exchanges among people become routinized because they occur repeatedly and they eventually become institutionalized cultural practices and beliefs. This theorem will be tested by participant observation of the social exchange between skin bleaching vendors and their customers.

The fifth theorem is *dialogic interaction*, which posits that the social phenomenon becomes a part of everyday conversations. I will test the dialogic theorem by conducting focus group interviews with a social group about race and skin color. Table 1 gives a summary of the current study by outlining in the various columns the research questions, the theorems, the method, the data to be generated, and the plan of analysis. The summary in the table is a precursor for chapter 4, and as such I will expand on the information in the table in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Method

SRT suggests that the theorems of the study outlined are not so much a multilayered research design with several parts and each part reflecting a part of the Jamaican culture, but more so methodological eclecticism (Breakwell & Canter, 1993). This eclecticism provides an examination of the Jamaican culture by integrating *history*, *cultural diffusion*, *identity*, *institutionalization* of social practices, and *dialogic interaction* of Jamaicans. The five nested questions below are driven by SRT theorems. By nested I mean that the questions are interrelated.

The theorems assume that the contemporary representations of *colorism* and skin bleaching have a history, and they have entered popular cultural institutions in Jamaica. These images are diffused by the media and Jamaicans use these images to create networks of meanings. The skin bleachers use these culturally salient images to define the self and modify their physicality. The repeated exchanges among skin bleaching vendors and customers eventually become cultural practices and beliefs. These cultural practices and beliefs can be found in the everyday conversation of Jamaicans. The five parts of the study outlined below are designed to explore the underlying assumptions by answering the five nested questions, which, taken together, are representative of the Jamaican cultural milieu that influences skin bleaching. Below I restate the research questions and expand on the summary information in table 1 to explain the study in greater detail.

The first part of the study seeks to comprehend the history and content of the *colorism* and skin bleaching representations in Jamaica.

Research question: What is the history and content of the colorized images in Jamaica?

Sample and procedure: One hundred and fifty articles were selected from the *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer* data bases. I searched the online archives of the major newspapers and selected all the advertisements, news stories, columns, editorials, and letters to the editors that deal with skin bleaching in Jamaica from 1951-1961, and from 1999-2008. For both time periods the term skin bleaching was used. The *Jamaica Gleaner* granted me free access to its historical archive. The *Gleaner* and the *Observer* are the two major daily newspapers that are circulated nationally and hosted online. The daily readership is 280,000 and 300,000 for the *Gleaner* and *Observer*, respectively.

The newspaper articles were read several times, and the themes in the headlines and the content of the articles identified were guided by the history theorem and the research question. A recurring issue in each paragraph in the articles was coded as a theme or issue category about skin bleaching. For example, a recurring theme is "social status." The themes identified in the headlines and content of the articles were summed up. The frequency of the themes is used to determine the importance of the themes in the public discourse about skin bleaching. Exemplars of the identified themes were selected. An exemplar is a representative issue of an identified theme or issue category. For example, an exemplar of the theme social status is "lighter skin is a status symbol." A representation is the meaning-imbued content and images that arise from the shared references, social elaborations, commonalities, and shared understandings of dialogic interactions in society that people use to guide their behavior. For example, the

representation for the dialogic consensus about social status is "light skin has high social status." The information was organized and arranged into SRT-driven constellations. The above coding schemes were also used for the songs, poems, novel, participant observation notes, and the interview transcripts in the other four parts of the study outlined below. The coding schemes hereafter will not be repeated.

The second part of the study dealt with the manifestation of skin color images in Jamaican popular culture.

Research question: how are the *colorized* images and the practice of skin bleaching manifested in popular culture?

Sample and procedure: I conveniently selected four poems and one novel. I also asked a professional collector of Jamaican music to choose from his collection of songs about race and skin color from the old and new genres of Jamaican popular music. I conveniently selected four Reggae songs and four Dancehall songs from the collection of songs I received. I used these songs to trace the evolution of *colorism* in the songs over time. Three criteria were used to select the songs: (1) the songs deal with issues of Africa, race, skin color, or skin bleaching; (2) the songs are performed by locally and internationally renowned Reggae and Dancehall artists; and (3) the songs made the popular music charts and/or are regularly played on the radio and at parties so their contents are widely disseminated.

I chose poems and a novel of traditional and contemporary authors which were used to track the dynamism of the race and skin color objects, longitudinally. Three criteria were used to select the literary works: (1) the works deal in whole or in part with Africa, race, skin color, and/or skin bleaching; (2) the works were written by locally

and/or internationally renowned Caribbean or Jamaican authors; (3) the works were widely known and read internationally and/or locally, and they were used in the high school and college curricula, which suggested that the contents were widely circulated. The poems that were in Jamaican Creole were translated into English and then back into Creole. The translation was done by two different people who are competent in English and Creole. The songs, poems, and novel were read several times, and the themes in the content of the articles were identified. The themes were informed by the diffusion theorem and the research question outlined above.

The third part of the study sought to understand the individual skin bleachers use of the circulated images to define the self and to manipulate his or her skin color.

Research question: what are the contents and meanings of the representations in the mind of the skin bleachers that influence the definition of the self and the alteration of his or her Black physicality?

Sample and procedure: I conveniently selected eight residents who are bleaching their skins. I asked community leaders to explain the purpose of the research to residents. I circulated my contact information so that residents who wanted to participate in the study could contact me. The objectives of the study and the rights of the participants were explained and the informed consent of the participants was received before the interviews commenced. The information was organized and arranged into SRT-driven constellations.

The fourth part of the study examined the routinized and institutionalized cultural practices and beliefs that occur in the social exchange between vendors and their customers.

Research question: What are the routinized and institutionalized social practices that occur, and the beliefs that are expressed in the interaction between skin bleaching vendors and their customers?

Sample and procedure: I conveniently chose four skin bleaching vendors for participant observation in Kingston. The criterion I used to choose the vendors is that they have been selling skin bleaching products as a part of their businesses for at least one year. I approached the vendors and explained the objectives of the study and invited them to participate. I selected the four vendors who met the selection criterion. I spent one working day with each vendor. The reasons for the study and the rights of the participants were explained before the participant observation began. All the participants signed a consent form. I observed and documented the products sold, and the informal conversations and interactions between vendors and customers during the business day. I wrote down the names on the labels of the skin bleaching products they were selling. Repeated readings of the observation notes were done to recognize the themes about the product labels, the shared images, the vendor and customer motivations, the beliefs and practices that arise from their social exchanges, guided by the institutionalization theorem and the research question. The themes were classified and placed in cogent collectives that are embedded in SRT.

The fifth part of the study dealt with uncovering the images about race, skin color, and skin bleaching from the dialogical interaction within a social group.

Research question: what are the narrated images and meanings about race, skin color, and skin bleaching in everyday societal discourse and what are the reasons for these images?

Sample and procedure: I selected a convenience sample of ten participants for a focus group of adult participants. The focus group consisted of participants who are not bleaching their skin. In the selection of the participants, I approached some community leaders and explained the objective of the study to them. The leaders were asked to approach residents and tell the residents about the study. Subsequently, I circulated my contact information in the community so that the residents who were interested in participating in the study could contact me. I started the focus group interview after the participants agreed to participate and acknowledged that they understood the objectives of the study and knew their rights. A consent form was signed by all the participants.

I read the transcripts repeatedly to identity the emerging value-laden thematic images and meanings of the contested, gendered, and class-based arguments in the coalescence of dialogue and debates about skin bleaching and the routine institutional interactions that promote *colorism*. The identification of these themes was guided by the dialogic theorem and the research questions. I selected the dialogic themes and sorted the data by creating theoretically meaningful categories about the participants' verbal interaction. I now turn to chapter 5which is the results section where I briefly outline my plan of analysis and present extensive data that answers the five questions generated from the SRT theorems.

Chapter 5

Results

Data analysis plan. The data presented in this chapter was processed and analyzed using content analysis (Miles & Huberin, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Massy, Cameron, Ouellette & Fine, 1998). The various creative works, newspaper articles, participant observation notes, and interview transcripts are cultural objects that were read several times in an open-ended way, and I documented the themes as they emerged based on the theorems and research questions. The emerging themes were documented as data codes which are a theoretically organized grouping of the data. I further engaged the data in two ways. First, I looked for nested meanings and sub-codes (lower level theoretical groupings of the data) within the documented data codes. Second, I used the comprehensive themes to group the categories of the coded data. The comprehensive themes were then used as an organizing framework to recognize analytical patterns of convergence and divergence within the data that gives cultural meaning and social relevance to the practice of skin bleaching in relation to the theorems and research questions.

In this chapter each SRT theorem is followed by the central research question and the findings, and both are highlighted in bold. Next are the follow up questions or primes which are italicized. Themes and exemplars are then presented that answer the follow up questions. I now turn to the first theorem and the central research question below.

Theorem 1: The images which influence people in their cultural milieu have a history.

The central research question that arises from this theorem is: What is the history and content of the colorized images in Jamaica?

The colonial era. The search of the *Jamaica Gleaner* archive between 1951 and 1961 with the term *skin bleaching* yields 157 hits, but only 51 are relevant to this study. The *Jamaica Observer* was not used because the newspaper is only 15 years old. The 51 relevant pieces are all skin bleaching advertisements.

What are the colorism and skin bleaching images in the Jamaica Gleaner from1951-1961?

Table 2 shows the colorized images in skin bleaching advertisements in the *Jamaica Gleaner* from 1951-1961. The majority of the ads have the facial picture or sketch of a Caucasian female. The most popular advertisement is the Nadinola Bleaching Cream ad which accounts for 49% of the advertisements. The theme in these ads is *wooing men*. The exemplar is "Look how men flock around the girl with the clear, bright Nadinola complexion." The shared consensual image is that "light skin is sexy and attractive." See figure 1. Palmers' Skin Success Bleaching Cream and Soap account for 15.9% of the ads. The theme in these ads is *bleach for success*. The exemplar is "Don't let dark dull skin hold you back" with the socially shared consensual understanding that "light skin brings success." See figure 2. The third most frequent advertisement is the Lemon Bleach Pack (9.8%) with the theme *bleach for beauty*. The exemplar is "Take care of your beauty during the summer months." The related socially shared consensual reference is "protect the beautiful light skin from sun damage." See figure 3. The

bleaching cream sold by Valmor Products Company also accounts for 9.8% of the advertisements with the theme *bleach*. The exemplar is "made especially for dark skinned people." The consensual and shared social elaboration is that "Blacks provide a skin bleaching market." See figure 4.

Another cream is the Crème Extraordinaire which accounts for 5.8% of the advertisements. The theme is *miracle* with the exemplar "With a few applications, you can see for yourself what this miracle cream does for your skin." This exemplar is guided by the circulating image that "skin bleaching works wonders for dark skin." See figure 5. Next is Posner's Skintona which makes up 3.9% of the skin bleaching advertisements with the theme *toning*. The exemplar is "Lightens, brightens skin. Makes all skin bleaches old fashioned." The representation is that "light skin tone is beautiful." See figure 6.The Golden Peacock Bleaching Cream also makes up 3.9% of the advertisements. The theme is *golden skin* with the exemplar "Is not the birthright of every girl, but with the aid of Golden Peacock Bleach Cream you can acquire softer, smoother, clearer skin." This exemplar depicts the image that "light skin is beautiful." See figure 7. Rubenstein placed 1.9% of the advertisements in support of its products with the theme *beauty*. The exemplar is "Use famous Helena Rubenstein beauty preparations…Bleach Cream." The image is that "light skin is beautiful." See figure 8.

Where was the majority of the skin bleaching products sold during the colonial era?

The majority of the skin bleaching products was sold in the central business district of Downtown Kingston. The Nadinola products were distributed by E.W. Abrahams and Sons at 75a Barry Street and 72 Laws Street. The agent for Palmer's Skin

Success Cream and Soap was the Imperial Pharmacy at 7 Heywood Street. The agent for Nutrine Beauty Aids was Leslie L. Moodie at 32 Church Street. The advertisements for the Valmor Products asked prospective sales agents wanting a catalogue and additional information to write to the Valmor Company at 2452 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The Elizabeth Arden products were distributed by Issa's of King Street. The agent for the Skintona Cream was H. L. Moodie at Church Street. The advertisements for the Golden Peacock Bleaching Cream were placed by Albert Chang and Company at 115 King Street. The Helena Rubenstein beauty preparations were distributed by Issa's Kingston Smart Shop. Some of these family owned businesses are still operating today.

The contemporary era. The search of the *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer* newspaper archives with the term *skin bleaching* between the years 1999-2008 identifies 118 articles, but only 100 are relevant to the study. Table 3 shows the distribution of *Gleaner* and *Observer* newspaper articles about skin bleaching from 1999-2008, which does not include skin bleaching advertisements. Columns account for 51% of the total articles, news stories 33%, letters to the editor 11%, and editorials 4%.

What are the reasons given for skin bleaching in the Jamaica Gleaner and the Jamaica Observer from 1999-2008?

Table 4 shows the contemporary newspaper images about the causes of skin bleaching from 1999-2008. The colorized images in the newspaper articles are evident in the many reasons the critics of skin bleaching give for the occurrence of the practice. Twenty reasons are given in the news stories and opinion columns for the occurrence of skin bleaching, which ranges from low self-esteem as a form of *self-hate,* to the influence of Michael Jackson. The most frequent reason given is *self-hate,* which accounts for

22.2 % of the reported reasons. The exemplar is “dislike themselves so much” with the representation that “the skin bleachers suffer from mental slavery.” The second most popular reason is the skin bleachers’ desire for beauty, which accounts for 11% of the reported reasons. The exemplar is “lighter skin women are perceived as more attractive” with the image that “light skin is beautiful.” Next is the reason which says that men like women who bleach their skin, which accounts also for 11% of the reported reasons. The exemplar is “what they believe to be attractive to men” with the representation that “light skin is sexy and attractive.”

Another reported cause is Dancehall music, which accounts for 6.8% of the reasons reported. The exemplar is “dancehall artistes began elevating browning” with the representation that “the music promotes light skin” in Jamaica. Racism and *colorism* account for 6.3 % of the reasons reported, with the exemplar “anything too Black no good.” The image is that “black skin/blackness is inferior.” The social visibility of light skin in the society follows with 6.3% of the reasons reported. The exemplar is “Hollywood complexion is pride of place,” which means that the movies promote light skin with the shared consensual social thinking that “light skin is spotlighted.” These reasons are followed by identity (5.8%) with the exemplar “an identity crisis of major proportion” and the image that the “skin bleachers have identity confusion.” Next, is miseducation (5.2%), with the exemplar “how can we blame the bleacher without blaming the history teacher?” The socially shared amalgamated knowledge set is that “the education system elevates light skin” over dark skin. All these reasons account for 74% of the reported reasons. These reasons highlight the cultural importance of *colorism* in the lives of the skin bleachers. *Colorism* influences the skin bleachers to modify their

Black physicality in the contemporary period. The reasons for skin bleaching that are reported in the newspapers have a long history in the country.

History. The colorized images in the contemporary newspapers (1999-2008) about the causes of skin bleaching are the same images that are embedded in the skin bleaching advertisements in the *Jamaica Gleaner* newspaper between1951-1961, the last decade of the colonial period, which is the source of *colorism*. The newspaper findings highlight the persistent *colorism* images or *themata* that link the colonial past with the post-colonial present, thereby establishing a historical continuum. The historical images that are diffused and circulated by the media elevate light-skinned Jamaicans and denigrate dark-skinned Jamaicans, because the "superior" light skin is sexy and beautiful, has high social status, visibility, and prestige, all of which facilitate social mobility. I now transition to the second theorem and the central research question.

Theorem 2: The ideas diffused by the media and the people's network of meanings are embedded in the culture.

The central research question that arises from this theorem is: How are the colorized images and the practice of skin bleaching manifested in popular culture?

Table 5 shows the four reggae songs selected. These are *Black Cinderella* by Errol Dunkley; *African* by Peter Tosh; *Brown Girl in the Ring* by Bonie M; and *War* by Bob Marley.

What are the contents and meanings of the racial and colorism images in the reggae songs?

Errol Dunkley in the song *Black Cinderella* says:

They cannot find my Black Cinderella.

I have got to find my Black Cinderella.

She cannot be far away, my Black Cinderella.

Show up your face, for I got to find you

To give you happiness right away.

Errol Dunkley also declares that he would be a very happy man if he could only find his Black Cinderella. Dunkley articulates the Afrocentric theme "love Black Cinderella" with the representation "love Black woman."

Peter Tosh, in the song *African,* articulates the Afrocentric theme of Black identity by stating "all Blacks are Africans." Tosh further argues that it does not matter what your nationality, religion, or complexion are; as long as you are Black, you are an African. Tosh states, in part:

No min' your complexion

There is no rejection, you are an African

Cos if your 'plexion is high, high, high

If your 'plexion low, low, low

And if your 'plexion in between

You are an African.

The representation in this song is that "Blacks are Africans."

Bonie M, in the song *Brown Girl in the Ring,* highlights the importance of brown skin in Caribbean life, which is used to categorize people with this complexion. In the verses of the song, the Brown girl is asked to show her dancing skill: "show me your motion." Bonie M states in the chorus:

Brown girl in the ring

Tra la la la la

There's a brown girl in the ring

Tra la la la la la

Brown girl in the ring

Tra la la la la

She looks like a sugar in a plum.

The Brown girl who resembles the sweet sugar in a plum is the center of attention in the ring. The image is that "brown skin is sweet."

Bob Marley, in the song *War,* decries discrimination based on race and skin color, and argues that these acts of aggression lead to conflict. He states:

Until the philosophy which holds one race superior

And another

Inferior

Is finally

And permanently

Discredited

And abandoned—

Everywhere is war—

Me say war.

That until there no longer

First class and second class citizens of any nation

Until the color of a man's skin

Is of no more significance than the color of his eyes—

Me say war.

That until the basic human rights

Are equally guaranteed to all,

Without regard to race—

Dis a war.

Marley goes on to say that until the racist regimes in Africa are removed from power, there will be war, and ultimately, good will triumph over evil. The theme of this Afrocentric song is that racism and colorism lead to conflict with the representation that "equality brings peace."

Table 5 shows the four dancehall songs selected. These are *Black Roses* by Barrington Levy; *Bleach On* by Captain Barkey; *Brown Skin* by Richie Spice; and *Mi Nah Rub* (I am not rubbing) by Queen Ifrika.

What are the contents and meanings of the racial and colorism images in the dancehall songs?

Barrington Levy argues in the verses of *Black Roses* that he has Black roses in his garden, so he has to water his garden and take care of the roses. Levy states:

Black-Black roses in my garden

Sure, sure I got to stay and take good care of the roses

Because you-you see that's so special to me

My garden, my garden is so special

Black-Black roses is blooming in my garden.

Levy's theme is an Afrocentric one, which says "Black roses are special" with the representation "Black is special."

Captain Barkey, in *Bleach On,* encourages the Jamaican girls to bleach their skin. The chorus of "Bleach On" says:

> If you a bleach and bleaching fit you
>
> Bleach on, bleach on
>
> If you a bleach and bleaching fit you
>
> Bleach on, bleach on.

Captain Barkey tells the girls in one of the verses that they have his support, so they should ignore their critics. Barkey also tells the girls that they are beautiful: "them say you no look good [but this is a lie], that nah go stop you man from hug and kiss you…you prettier than a Mona Lisa." The theme is a Eurocentric one which says "bleaching makes you beautiful," with the representation "brown skin is beautiful."

Richie Spice is enthralled by the brown-skinned girl, and he tells her in the verses of *Brown Skin* that she is hot and pretty and they will have many children together because they are a perfect match. In the chorus, Spice says:

> Brown skin
>
> Girl I want to wrap you and lock you in my arms and thing
>
> Brown skin
>
> Woman I love the vibes, I love the spice and I love the passion you bring
>
> Brown skin.

Spice echoes a Eurocentric theme which is "love brown skin girl," with the representation "brown skin is nice."

Queen Ifrika, in the song *Mi Nah Rub*, declares in the verses that brown skin is not for everyone, so Jamaicans should stop bleaching their skin. She also states that black skin is perfect and warns of the dangers of skin bleaching such as cancer and neurological deficits. Queen Ifrika states, in part:

> From you a do that to you skin that mean say you no love you self
>
> Jah make you perfect……
>
> The persons who a tell you say black [skin] not wearing again [is] insecure with themselves, so no follow them
>
> Me nah bleach, me no care if a the trend
>
> Proud to be black as a matter of fact
>
> I have no white god so don't teach me anything wrong

In the chorus she states:

> A no everybody a rub
>
> A no everybody a rub
>
> Not because Grace and Jack and him granny a rub
>
> No mean say everybody a rub.

The theme in the song is that bleaching should be rejected with the representation that "skin bleaching is dangerous" to Jamaicans who engage in the practice.

The reggae and dancehall songs reveal contestation between Eurocentric values and Afrocentric values over race and skin color in Jamaica. See table 5. The contestation is seen in the Afrocentric representations such as "love Black woman," Blacks are Africans," "Black is special," "skin bleaching is dangerous," and "equality brings peace," versus the Eurocentric representations such as "brown skin is sweet," "brown skin is

beautiful," and "brown skin is nice." The societal contestations over race and skin color and the resultant images are reflected and circulated in reggae music and dancehall music over time. The contestations are also evident in the poems of Afrocentric poets that reject *colorism* and racism.

Table 6 shows the four poems selected, which are *Back to Africa* by Louise Bennett; *Skins* by Mutabaruka, *Dat Bumpy Head Gal* (That nappy haired girl) by Joan Andrea Hutchinson; and *Guinea Woman* by Lorna Goodison.

What are the contents and meanings of the racial and colorism images in the poems?

In *Back to Africa,* Louise Bennett articulates the Afrocentric theme of repatriation and argues that Miss Mattie knows herself because she thinks about going back to Africa. Miss Mattie has African, English, Jewish, and French ancestry, but she embraces the African heritage in Jamaica because of her Black physicality. Bennett says:

> Den (then) is wheh (where) you gwine (going), Miss Mattie?
> Oh, you view de (the) countenance
> An between you and de Africans
> Is great resemblance.

The representation is that "Black Jamaicans are Africans."

Mutabaruka in *Skins* challenges the oppressive colorized societal norms about black skin by arguing that there is more to the black skin than meets the eye. Therefore, society should stop playing skin tricks. Blood is the essence of life that flows through all people. Skin should therefore be free, because life continues after the skin dies. Mutabaruka shows the power of the skin when he declares:

Skin is black

Skin is white

We live through the day

We live through the night

Skin is black

Skin is white

The color of the skin… is not the right to might

…Stop playing the skin tricks on me.

The representation is that "skin politics is oppressive."

Joan Andrea Hutchinson continues the societal challenge in *Dat Bumpy Head Gal* by defending the Black physicality (nappy hair, broad face, and black skin) because it is not ugly. Despite the societal criticisms of Black physicality, the bumpy head girl feels right, sweet, and proud because God did not make a mistake in his creation. Hutchinson states, in part:

For ef (if) it kinky or straight, ef we black or white

Transparent or opaque

God meck (make) all a we fi (for) a special reason

An God doan (don't) meck mistake.

The articulated image is that "the Black physicality is perfect."

Lorna Goodison continues the Afrocentric theme in *Guinea Woman*. Goodison heralds the agility and royal quality of great grandmother's physicality. Great grandmother was taken from Africa and placed into slavery where she was stripped of her

essence. Great grandmother's blood is returning to its purity as the Guinea woman lingers in her descendants who get darker skin with each generation. Goodison says:

> But, great grandmother,
> I see your features blood dark
> Appearing
> In the children of each new
> breeding.
> The high yellow brown
> is darkening down.
> Listen, children
> it's great grandmother's turn

The representation is that "the intergenerational transmission of the Black physicality is good."

The four poems take Afrocentric positions which challenge the racial and colorized status quo in Jamaica with the representations that "Black Jamaicans are Africans," "skin politics is oppressive," "the Black physicality is perfect," and "the intergenerational transmission of the Black physicality is good."

The novel selected is *The Castle of My Skin* by the Nobel Laureate in Literature, George Lamming. The novel is part of the high school and university English Literature curriculum in Jamaica, which means the images in the book are widely circulated in Jamaica. The novel is set in the British colonial Caribbean of the 1930s in Creighton Village where the land is owned by the White landlord, Mr. Creighton. This is a poor village with the basic services of schools, a church, a friendly society, and a post office.

The colonial experience is told through the eyes of the chief protagonist, G, from his ninth to his nineteenth birthdays. The children are given a colonial education at school that ignores the local and African history and culture, and promulgates British history, culture, and values. At school, G and his friends (Boy Blue, Bob, and Trumper) are also exposed to the authoritarianism of the Black head teacher. The police and other low level Black civil servants also express authoritarianism when dealing with the villagers who oppose this authoritarianism.

The boys behave deferentially when the white inspector visits the school, which is indicative of the deference that Blacks show to Whites in the society. This deference is evident when G's mother who, because of her poverty, kneels down before the landlord and thanks him for his help after a hurricane damages the village. However, G's mother first had to get past the overseer who determines which villagers could see the landlord. The landlord views the villagers as dangerous, and the overseer sees them as "low down nigger people." The attitude and behavior of the landlord and overseer reveal the class tensions, and the complexion and racial hierarchy which determine social privileges and power in the village. The Whites are at the social apex, the brown-skinned people are in the middle, and the Black villagers are at the base. The poverty of the colonial situation triggers opposition. The former head teacher becomes a member of parliament and mobilizes the workers against the poor working conditions and poverty. Migration is one way out of the village beset by poverty, *colorism*, and racism. Trumper, G, and other villagers use migration to escape the village.

What are the contents and meanings of the racial and colorism images in the Castle of My Skin?

The themes in the novel. Table 7 shows the high order and low order themes of race and skin color in the novel. These are: (1) colonial ideology with the low order themes of racism, *colorism*, and miseducation; (2) social stratification with the low order themes of social distance, segregation, social deference, and social buffer; (3) the oppositional identity with the lower order themes of humor, verbal attack, physical violence, unionism, political action, local knowledge, and Black racial identity. The colonial ideologies are used to socially organize the society into racial strata, which the villagers challenge with their oppositional identity.

What is the content and meaning of the colonial ideology of racism and how was it expressed in the novel?

Table 8 shows the colonial ideologies in the novel, their exemplars, and their representations. The colonial ideology of racism in the novel is evident with references to how the British are civilized, unlike the local Black population who are animals. The exemplar from the protagonist G says "The White men couldn't understand how they did it they looked curiously as if, they were inspecting animals." The representation is that "the civilized English are racially superior."

What is the content and meaning of the colonial ideology of colorism and how is it expressed?

Colorism is evident in the societal attribution of beauty, with light skin and the opportunities for social mobility that are created for colonial subjects who have light complexion. The exemplars are "the best looking girls in the village and in the whole

Island were those whose mother consorted with white men," and "with my hair and her skin everything would be alright. I could get a permanent appointment at Barclays Bank." The image is that "light skin physicality is pretty and promotes social mobility." See table 8.

What is the content and meaning of the colonial ideology of miseducation and how was it expressed?

The Black colonial subjects are miseducated. They are taught to respect the British monarchy, and are educated about British history, values, institutions, culture, and achievements. However, the Blacks are not taught about Africa, slavery, Black culture, institutions, values, and achievements, or about Marcus Garvey. The exemplar is "they had read about the battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror…And slavery was a thousand years before that. It was too far back for anyone to worry about teaching it as history." The hegemonic social consensus is that "British history, culture, and achievements are important, unlike African history, culture, and achievements." See table 8.

What are the types of social stratification in the novel and how are they expressed?

Table 9 shows how racism and *colorism* socially stratifies the society into a racial and complexion hierarchy with the related exemplars and representations. The Black colonials experience social distance by how the British treat them. The exemplar is "the English officials had an almost inhuman sense of the right distance to keep in human relations. It was noticeable in how they listened." The representation is that "The British are socially aloof." Blacks also experience residential segregation. The exemplar is "we were now in Belleville where the white people lived, the streets bordered by palm trees

called avenues." The representation is that "Blacks are not equal to Whites." There is also social deference in the colonial society. The exemplar is "let the white gentl'man pass, someone says. The villagers move back, and the young man…make his way through…and give his order." The representation is that "Blacks are below Whites." There is also a representation dealing with social buffering because Whites often do not deal with Blacks directly. The exemplar is "Direct contact with the landlord might have helped towards some understanding of what the others, meaning whites, were like, but the overseer nominally was a mediator who had functioned like a bridge, but not for crossing from one end to the other." This British behavior generates the social consensus that "Blacks must stay in their place."

How do the villagers respond to colorism and why?

Table 10 shows the ways in which the villagers challenge racism and *colorsim* along with the exemplars and representations. The villagers respond to the *colorism* and the racism they experience by creating an oppositional identity to protect themselves and assert their dignity. The opposition takes several forms. One strategy is humor, with the exemplar "When the head[teacher] 'say bout the queen was a great queen'…[Boy Blue asked] if the queen's bloomers was red, white and blue." The image is that "the British are a joke." There are also verbal attacks against Mulattoes who are unfair and disrespectful. The exemplar is "send anybody you like to send, you Mulatto shit-smelling bastard." The image says "Mulattoes are traitors." Blacks also use physical violence to defend their rights against the colonial establishment. The exemplar is "even if fighting was carried out in the interest of the village, he didn't like the idea of outsider assaulting [the landlord]." The attendant image is that "violence must be used against the oppressor"

to secure human rights. Unionism is also a strategy that is used to defend the rights of workers through strikes. The exemplar is “but when the men refuse to go to work in the shippin company where he got business he say he see trouble coming.” The consensual social thought is “Black collective action is power.” Political action is also an oppositional strategy. The exemplar is “the year after [Mr. Slime] left the school he won his seat in the general election with a great majority.” The related image is that “local people have power.” This use of power is also related to the local knowledge. The exemplar is “the queen feed some of us but most of us are still slaves.” This shared social thinking says that “we must know African history and control our destiny.” Another form of opposition is Black racial identity with the exemplar “he had found something to cradle his deepest instincts and emotions. He was Negro and he was proud.” This racial identity image that is socially shared has the positive meaning that declares “I am proud to be Black.” I now go on to deal with the third theorem and the central research question that deals with the construction of identity.

Theorem 3: People use the images circulating in their culture to construct their identity.

The central research question that arises from this theorem is: What are the contents and meanings of the colorized images in the minds of the skin bleachers that influence the definition of the self and the alteration of his or her Black physicality?

The participants were interviewed on December 14, 19, and 20, 2008. There are eight participants, four males and four females. Table 11 shows the demographics of the skin bleachers such as gender, education, occupation, class, age, length of time bleaching,

and the money spent on bleaching. The participants range in age from 18 to 49, with the average age being 27.5 years. The 49-year-old female participant is a grandmother. Only two of the participants are employed, and they work as a vendor and a janitor. Six of the participants (four females and two males) were interviewed in the low income inner city community of Mathews Lane in Western Kingston. The other two male participants were interviewed in the low income inner city community of Severeight Gardens in South West St. Andrew. Each interview lasted one hour. The length of time the participants have been bleaching their skin ranges from 2 months to 13 years, with an average of 4.5 years. The money the participants spend on skin bleaching products per month ranged from $135 to $10,000, with an average of $1, 970.60.

Several themes are identified in the participants' narratives. These are race relations, racial status, racial power, intra-racial schism, and *colorism.* There are no gender differences in how the participants spoke about the themes.

What is the relationship like between Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and Whites in Jamaica?

Table 12 shows the themes of the skin bleachers' race and skin color images, the exemplars, and the representations. Some of the participants argued that there are schisms between Blacks and the other racial groups like the Chinese and Whites, because these racial groups are racist. The exemplar is "the Chinese and the white people them, some of them is racist." The articulated image is that there is a "racial divide" in Jamaica. One participant argued to the contrary that there are no problems among the races in Jamaica. The exemplar is "we don't have no problem" with the representation that "there is racial unity."

How are the racial groups (Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and Whites) viewed in Jamaica in terms of social status, and why?

The participants' views on racial status show that they believe that Whites and Chinese get preferential treatment in the society. These racial groups are respected because there are no intra-racial divisions among these groups, and members of these racial groups help each other. The exemplars are "well me know me respect the white them more…the Chinese them help them one another." According to the participants, the situation is different for Blacks who have the least respect in the society. The exemplar is "Black people have the least respect." The representations are that "Whites and Chinese are united and have high status," and "Blacks are divided and have low status." See table 12.

Which racial group (Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and/or White) run Jamaica and why?

The Whites and Chinese as the racial groups with highest racial status are viewed as having economic power in Jamaica, unlike Blacks. According to the participants, the power of Blacks in Jamaica is evident in the internationally renowned dancehall music, and the Blacks' control of the streets through hustling. Blacks have very little economic power because they have the least amount of money in the society. The participants also argue that the Chinese, who they believe have the most money, run Jamaica along with the Whites. The exemplars are "[Black people run Jamaica] in a the dancehall way, with the hustling and them way there on the street," "Jamaican Blacks have the least money," "Chinese have the most money" and "Whites run Jamaica." The representations are that

"Blacks have cultural power" and "Chinese and Whites have economic power." See table 12.

How are Blacks treated in Jamaica?

The participants' views of Blacks in Jamaica can be interpreted to mean that there is intra-racial schism among this group and this is evident in the fact that they treat each other like animals because they fight and kill each other. The exemplars are "Blacks killing them one another," and "Black deal with Black like animal." The representation is that "there is Black disunity." See table 12.

Colorism drives the skin color hierarchy and influences how blacks are treated, so they yearn for brown skin. This skin color hierarchy is articulated in the exemplar that says "some people have higher color… if we want to bleach and we feel say we love brown color skin we buy chemical and brown," and the view that some Afro-Jamaicans are too dark-skinned which makes bleaching difficult: "Some a them too Black fi (to) bleach" their skin. The narrated image is that "light skin has high social status and prestige." See table 12. There is a skin bleaching know-how that facilitates the acquiring of light skin and this is dealt with next.

Explain the process of skin bleaching—how do you actually do it?

The skin bleaching process outlined by the participants suggests that there is a well-established skin bleaching regimen driven by *colorism*. This skin bleaching know-how dictates when to bleach, and which products to use if one wants to bleach the face versus the face and body. The know-how also informs the participants about how to do light bleaching (toning) rather than heavy bleaching, which requires wearing protective clothing to block the sun. According to some of the participants, the sun will damage the

exposed skin to which skin bleaching products have been applied. The male participants engage in face bleaching and the female participants engage in face and body bleaching.

The skin bleachers' narratives that follow highlight the process of bleaching the face and the products used. "When you going to you bed a night you rub it on you face. In the morning you wash you face and then you rub it again. If you just a do you face you buy immediate clear, Nadinola and gel and face soap and nothing more." Some participants mix the products before applying it to their faces. "Me just mix it up and put it on mi face and make the fan blow on it."

One male participant who mixes the products is a seasonal bleacher who tones and has a daily regimen for his face, which involves washing it several times. He states, "Me squeeze the gel and the cream in a bottle and mix them up and rub it on mi face. When mi put on mine mi just wash it two, three times a day. Mi barely use it, just a little tip (toning). It is a season thing for me. Me no bleach straight, like how it a come on to Christmas, a that time mi sort out mi face."

The mixing process is mostly done by the female participants who are bleaching their face and body. The wearing of protective clothing not only protects the skin from the sun, but also makes the body perspire, which, it is believed, bleaches the skin quickly, as the following narratives of the 31-year-old female indicate: "I mix them together in one bottle. Me throw Body White from out the bottle in the cream and use it. Wake up in the morning and put on the cream then me put on me long sleeve ganzie. You have to cloak up to make you body sweat. It make me sweat and me skin bleach quick." The mixing process sometimes involves many products as is indicated by the 18-year-old female who says "me mix up a whole heap a things." However, not all the participants

mix the products as this 32-year-old female reveals: "I don't mix up my creams. If I buy a jar of Bioclear Cream I just rub it on and let it stay overnight and sleep in it."

The 32-year-old female participant also outlines the number of clothing she uses to protect her skin from the dangers of sun exposure. She says, "You have to cloak up, put on all three blouse, two pants and two stockings. If you have on the rubbings [bleaching cream] and the sun penetrate you body, it will burn you up, scorch up you face." Another participant reveals another effect of exposure to the sun: "Sometimes the sun burn you and give you a red look." However, not all the participants hide from the sun as one of the 19-year-old male face bleacher declares: "I don't need to hide from the sun, is just my face and neck I bleach."

The 31-year-old female participant indicates that she uses the stronger products on her body and the not too strong products she uses on her face. She states, "The Neoprosone and the Dermo Gel, Nadinola—just them [I use on my body] and on me face mi use Metosol and Ultra. Mi use different tings on mi face than me body. What mi use on mi body stronger."

Why do you bleach your skin?

Table 13 shows the reasons for skin bleaching, the exemplars and the representations. There is no gender difference in the various reasons the participants give for bleaching their skin. These reasons are: (1) because of facial pimples. The exemplar is "some little bumps come up on my skin so when I use the bleaching cream it take out the bumps and lighten out me face." The socially shared and consensual understanding is that "bleaching cures pimpled skin;" (2) the females want to look pretty. The exemplar is "me look good when me brown" with the consensual and socially shared knowledge that

"light skin is beautiful;" (3) they have dark complexion and the exemplar is "I don't like dark…When me Black nobody don't see me." The representation is that "dark skin is ugly;" (4) they want to woo a partner. The exemplars are "the one that bleach win the man" and "the girl them love it" with the image that "light skin is sexy and attractive;" (5) the social influence of friends. The exemplar is "me a bleach cause mi have a crew name fancy face crew and the whole a mi friend them face brown." The shared and consensual understanding is that "it is alright to bleach like others;" (6) the popularity of skin bleaching. The exemplar is "a the style now in a Jamaica-everybody a bleach." The depiction is that "bleaching is socially acceptable;" (7) Bleaching is a fashion trend. The exemplar is "it's all about the flavor and fashion" with the representation that "bleaching is fashionable;" (8) some men wanted by the police bleach their skin to change their appearance. The exemplar is that "men wanted by the police and change them appearance" with the image that "bleaching is a disguise for criminals."

Do you bleach your face or your entire body, and why?

The men only bleach their faces, unlike the women who bleach their faces and bodies. The men articulate the reason for this gender difference. The 19-year-old male participant argues "me no really like the body thing… nuff (a lot) man bleach them body and them no look too right, them look shrivel up and me no want to look so." Another male who is 25 years of age stated, "mi did bleach me body but I realize it no really make it." One declared "it take money" which means it is costly to bleach the body. There is also the view that it is not masculine to bleach the body. According to one of the 23-year-old males, "Christmas a come and man want fi bleach them face. You have certain dancers that dance and bleach them face, girls bleach them skin and get them beauty, is

not that way mi a bleach my face. A long time mi a bleach cause me have a crew name Fancy Face Crew."

Do you bleach your skin to become white? Explain your answer.

The Black identity of the participants, which involves shades of black, is expressed in how they explain the bleaching of their skin. "A just fi tone mi body, a no White me want White" and "No, mi no want bleach fi turn a White person, mi just want a little [brown] complexion." The participants see brown skin as a shade of Black and they maintain their black sense of self because all of the participants argue that they do not want to become a White person. They are creating a Black identity with a lighter shade of black.

What are the risks associated with skin bleaching?

The powerful influence of *colorism* is also evident in how the participants perceived the risks associated with skin bleaching. Table 14 shows the risks of skin bleaching, the exemplars, and the representations. The participants outline a range of risks posed by skin bleaching, but they are so caught up in the social benefits of having light skin that they ignore the risks of skin bleaching. All the participants feel they will not be affected by the perceived risks, but that other people are affected.

The perceived risks as outlined by the skin bleachers are: (1) death, with the exemplar "me have a friends who died from it…bleach out her cell them inside." The negative image is that "skin bleaching kills;" (2) pain, with the exemplar "You feel like somebody beat you up last night." The socially shared knowledge is that "skin bleaching hurts;" (3) stress, the exemplar is "it stressful still sometimes." The depiction is that "skin bleaching overwhelms;" (4) skin problems, and the exemplars are "it make you skin thin

out" and "cuts can't stitch." The connotation is that "skin bleaching damages the skin;" (5) weight loss, and the exemplar is "it suck you out. You know if you fat and you bleach you body you get mawga (meager) and crawny (frail)." The consensus is that "skin bleaching makes you slim;" (6) nausea, and the exemplar is "sometimes you bleach and you walk in the sun and you feel dizzy like you a go drop down." The shared consensual image is that "skin bleaching can make you dizzy;" (7) social rejection, and the exemplar is "some girls say them no want no man who bleach." The representation is "some people hate skin bleaching;" (8) none, and the exemplar is "it no do me nothing." The social image is that "skin bleaching is safe." The skin bleachers not only share knowledge with each other about skin bleaching, they also share knowledge with the vendors who sell skin bleaching products. I deal with this next.

Theorem 4: Repeated social exchanges between individuals become routinized, and eventually become institutionalized cultural practices.

The central research question that arises from this theorem is: What are the routinized and institutionalized social practices that occur and the beliefs that are expressed in the interaction between skin bleaching vendors and their customers?

There were four participant observations in downtown Kingston. The first observation was done on December 10, 2008, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM in a variety wholesale store; the second observation took place on December 12, 2008, from 12 noon to 6:30 PM with a vendor on the street. The third observation occurred on December 16, 2008, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM with a vendor on the street. The fourth observation took place on December 17, 2008, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM inside a variety store. The

total hours of observation are 28.5 hours with an average time of 7.1 hours. The store owners are males and the street vendors are females.

What are the characteristics of the skin bleaching customers and their social networks?

There are a total of 39 customers, 27 female customers, and 12 male customers ranging from children to adults who purchased 95 skin bleaching products from the vendors during the observation period. Some of the customers were accompanied to the store by other people. The female customers include two vendors and a police officer. One female customer entered one of the stores with her two children. Twelve female customers came by themselves to purchase products. There were 5 groups of females that came to buy products. These groups of females comprise one adult group, a young adult dyad, a group of adolescents, two groups of school girls, of which one was a dyad. Six males came by themselves to purchase products, which included a small boy to whom the street vendor refused to sell because the boy is her neighbor's son. There were two groups of males, one young adult group, and a late adolescent group. The older adult males came to the store alone. The foregoing shows that the majority of the skin bleachers had support and approval from some people in their social networks during the purchasing of the products.

What are the names of the skin bleaching products sold and how do the names express colorism?

Table 15 shows the type of products, examples of product names, the themes, and the representations. The vendors sell a very wide range of skin bleaching products such as creams, gels, soaps, lotions, and cleansers. Some exemplars of the creams are "Facial

Fade Lightening Cream," "Lemon Skin Toning Cream," and "Hand and Body Lightening Cream," with the themes lightens, fades, and tones. The image is that "Skin bleaching makes the face, skin, and body better." Some exemplars of soaps are "Metasol Medicated Soap," and "Ultra Glow Cleansing Bar." The themes are medicate and cleanse with the representation that "skin bleaching heals and purifies the skin." The exemplar of the stick is "Knee and Elbow Lightening Stick," with the theme lightens. The representation is "Skin bleaching lightens dark knees and elbows." The exemplar of the gel is "Facial Fading Gel," with the theme fades. The social image is that "skin bleaching fades dark faces." The exemplar of the lotion is "Cocoa Butter Skin Lightening Lotion" with the theme lightens. The consensual social understanding is that "Skin bleaching lightens the skin." The exemplar of the cleanser is "Ambi Even Foaming Cleanser," with the theme cleanses. The amalgamated social thinking is "skin bleaching cleanses the skin."

The products bought during the observation by the males were Nadinola Cream and Nadinola Face Wash, Symba Cream, Crusade Cream, and Crusade Soap, Black and White Bleaching Cream, Ultra Glow Cleansing Bar, and Ultra Skin Toning Cream. The females purchased a wider range of products such as Mud Skin Bleaching Soaps, Ambi Skin Toning Cream and Ambi Face Wash, Nadinola Bleaching Cream, Mud Bleaching Soap, Miki Skin Tone/Lightening Cream, Crusade Bleaching Cream, Germicida Creams, Prosane Skin Tone Soap, Lemon Skin Lightening Cream, Knee and Elbow Skin Lightening Cream, Skin Success Cream, and Skin Success Soap. Some products are retailed and sold in bags like Nadinola Cream and Mud Soap. Some of the customers bought products in combinations like creams and washes, creams and soaps of the same brands. Unlike the other customers who bought one or a few products, one female

customer who appeared to be a vendor elsewhere ordered a half dozen Crusade creams, one dozen Nadinola creams, and three dozen mud soaps. The vendors sell a very wide range of skin bleaching products which are manufactured overseas. See appendix 1. The large number of products available means that the skin bleachers have a wide choice of products to choose from.

What do the vendor-customer interactions reveal about skin bleaching as a cultural practice?

The vendor-customer interaction reveals that the customers enter the stores or approach the street vendors confidently and order the products which are openly displayed. The vendors and the customers do not fear arrest for having illegal bleaching creams in their possession. The majority of customers pay cash. However, some of the street vendors' regular customers are given discounts upon request, and others are allowed to take products and pay later. Some wholesale store customers shout their orders from the street while others enter the stores and ask for the products they want. The variety store customers take the products they want from the shelves. Some of the customers pay the correct price for the goods without asking the vendors about the price of the products.

Some store customers peruse the products before purchase and some deliberate with friends about which products to buy. Customers who are concerned about the safety of the products consult the staff and they are told how to use the products. Some staff members examine the face and skin of customers before recommending a product. On one occasion, a customer was told to consult a dermatologist if rash develops. Miki Cream, Ultra Cream, Crusade Cream and other skin tone products are recommended to

customers who want to do “light bleaching.” According to one street vendor, Mud Soap and Cream, Nadinola Cream and Soap, and Germicide Cream are recommended to customers who want to engage in “heavy bleaching.” The use of the Mud Soap and a mixture of any three skin bleaching creams in a bottle of lotion will make you “look really brown in one week.” Two female customers (who were other street side vendors) purchased a bag of water with the products and immediately started to wash their faces, after which they applied the creams to their faces while standing on the sidewalk.

On occasion, quarrels develop between the store vendors and customers who feel the staff is working slowly, when customers feel they are being ignored, or they believe that a staff member is looking at them in a condescending way because they are bleaching their skin. Sometimes quarrels develop between the street vendors and the customers if the customers complain about the high cost of the products. On one occasion a street vendor told a school girl who was complaining about the high cost of the product to go and find a man to take care of her financial needs if she can’t afford the product. The girl responded tersely and paid for the product. During the observation period, the street vendor ran with her products and hid them when she saw a police patrol.

Theorem 5: The social phenomenon becomes a part of everyday conversations.

The central research question that arises from this theorem is: What are the narrated images and meanings about race and skin color in everyday societal discourse, and what are the reasons for these images?

A focus group of non-bleachers was conducted on December 18, 2008 at the Ministry of Health in Downtown Kingston. Table 16 shows the demographics of the

focus group participants in terms of gender, education, occupation, social class and age. There were three female and six male participants. The participants ranged in age from 24-45 years with a mean age of 33.2 years. Two of the participants' highest level of education was high school and other participants' highest level of education was college and university. Occupations included civil servant, librarian, auditor, clerk, teacher, and one unemployed participant. The majority of the participants come from middle class backgrounds.

Which racial group (Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and/or White) run Jamaica, and why?

Table 17 shows the racial images of the participants, the themes, the exemplars, and the representations. The conversations of the participants project several images about race. The participants argue that Whites are the most powerful group in the country. The exemplar is "Whites—they own the majority of the resources of the country—them run the country." The representation is that "Whites control Jamaica" because they are powerful.

The next image deals with the effects of slavery. There is no social consensus on the effects of slavery today because the participants disagreed about this. The exemplars are that "there are some things that are lingering from slavery like the supremacy of White skin color," and "a modern time now—slavery no affect me—it affect my grandparents but me no know nothing 'bout slavery." These exemplars give rise to polemical representations that argue that "the supremacy of white skin is a legacy of slavery" and "slavery does not affect us now."

What is the relationship like between Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and Whites in Jamaica?

Another theme is race relations. All the participants agreed that there is racial harmony. The exemplar is "the few friends who are not of my race—things are cordial." There is the consensual and socially shared image that "the racial groups live in peace" in Jamaica.

How are the racial groups (Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and Whites) viewed in Jamaica in terms of social status, and why?

The participants argue that Blacks have low status in the society. The exemplar is "the white man comes first, Syrian, Indian, and Chinese almost equal in terms of economic and racial status. The fourth—he majority of the Black people are at the bottom." The representation is that "Blacks have the least social status." There is the contrary argument that race doesn't matter. The exemplar is "a no Black man time now or red man time—a just people time." This exemplar gives rise to the competing polemical representation that "people matter, not race," so race is not a determining factor of success in Jamaica. This argument led to the image dealing with social mobility. The exemplars are "we have more Blacks who are gaining influence," and "we are not excelling as Blacks because of ourselves and the system." These exemplars depict the image that "Blacks are moving up, but there are individual and systemic obstacles" to their progress. These obstacles are related to the Black problem. The exemplar is "Black people—we tend not to look out for our own," and "we are just not united." The integrated social knowledge is that "Blacks are divided," unlike the other races. Therefore, Black solidarity is required. The exemplars are "it is about helping people that you share

certain things with and I am saying Black skin color," and "if we do something to help the Black man, why apologize for it?" The representation is that "Blacks must unite" and help each other. I now turn to participants' views of the complexion continuum which is dealt with below.

How do Jamaicans treat people who have dark skin/light skin, and why?

Table 18 shows the skin color images the focus group participants talked about, the themes, the exemplars, and the representations. The conversations of the participants project several images about skin color in Jamaica. The colorized images are found in institutions like families, schools, relationships, and the police. The exemplars for the family are "My mother use to say anything too Black no good," and "I got darker as I got older and my grandmother said 'when you did born you did brown and pretty.' " These exemplars that express how families deal with skin color articulate that "families prefer light-skinned relatives" over dark-skinned relatives. The exemplar for the school is "in the classroom the lighter skinned children get the push ahead." The shared and consensual social reference about schools reveals that "light-skinned students are treated better in schools." The exemplar for relationships is "some people are influenced by their parents as to the type of mate they should go with—someone with lighter skin to compliment their dark skin." The skin color image that guides relationships says that "light-skinned partners are better." Some police officers are influenced by the skin color images in their police-citizen encounters. The exemplar is "the police stop me several times and them aggressive because of my [dark] skin color and my low economic background" with the connotation that the "police discriminate against poor, dark-skinned citizens." Despite these representations which reveal the coercive influence of

skin color in several social institutions, there is a counter argument. The exemplar is “it is what the person is—if they are loving—if they have the qualities you are looking for. Is not about black, brown, or white. Police stop you base on how you dress.” This exemplar connotes a polemical representation, which says “people’s personal qualities, their abilities, and the amount of money they have matters” in Jamaica, and not the color of their skin.

Why do people bleach their skin?

Table 19 shows the reasons the non-bleaching focus group participants give for the occurrence of skin bleaching in Jamaica, the exemplars, and the related representations. Participants’ conversations reveal various reasons and images for skin bleaching, all embedded in *colorism*. The narratives suggest that the skin bleachers have a mental problem. The exemplars are “them sick in a them head” and “I think it is low self esteem” with the consensual and socially shared understanding that “the skin bleachers hate themselves.” It is argued by some of the participants that the skin bleachers are influenced by how they see dark-skinned people being treated in the society. The exemplar is “Them bleach to get brown and hence treated better.” The consensual and socially shared knowledge is that “light-skinned people are treated better than dark-skinned people.” This is because light skin is better. The exemplar is “Being light skin is better.” The depiction is that “light skin is better than dark skin.” Some participants argue that the skin bleachers engage in changing their Black physicality to tone their skin. The exemplar is “some use it to tone the skin.” The representation is that “toning lightens the skin.” See table 19.

The toning image above is reinforced by the belief that skin bleaching makes one pretty. The exemplar is “to appear more beautiful” and the representation is that “light skin is beautiful.” The beauty image is supported by the social institution of dancehall music. The exemplar is “Buju Banton have the song that him want a browning” with the social consensus that “dancehall music promotes light skin.” The conversation also reveals that the skin bleaching practice is popular. The exemplars are “It is something that is easily accessible” and “Bleaching has become the ghetto norm.” The consensual social commonality is that “skin bleaching is socially accepted.” This social acceptance is linked to social mobility. The exemplar is “they think this will get them ahead” and the shared social knowledge is that “light skin facilitates social access.” People also bleach to find a partner. The exemplars are “they bleach in order to get a man; young guys bleach because they want a girl.” The representation is that “light skin is sexy and attractive.” It is also argued by some participants that some people bleach to survive. The exemplar is “it’s wanting to get by, it is survival” with the representation that “bleaching is survival.”

Chapter 6

Discussion

The purpose of this multilayered study is to deconstruct the representations of colorism in the Jamaican culture and the influence of these representations on the practice of skin bleaching. The research design of the study is shown in figure 9. This design shows that colorism in Jamaica is moderated by the country's history and culture. The representations of colorism have a *history* which is evident in colonial and post-colonial newspapers. The representations of colorism are *diffused in cultural products* such as songs, poems, and novels, and used in *identity construction,* which is seen in the skin bleachers' alteration of their black physicality. The images of colorism are also evident in the *routine behavior* of the skin bleaching vendors and their customers, and in the *daily conversations* of Jamaicans. The findings for each theorem of the study (italicized above) are discussed below.

The history theorem. The first part of the study dealt with the historical development of *colorism*. This history is evident in the *Jamaica Gleaner* of the colonial period. The *Gleaner* is an important cultural artifact because the values and ideas about the social importance of light skin in the colonial situation are found in the newspaper's skin bleaching advertisements from 1951-1961. The images in the *Gleaner's* advertisements provide a history of the mentality of Jamaicans concerning skin bleaching because the newspaper captures the mental traces of the people in the colonial era. These mind traces are a repository of the colonial beliefs, ideas, values, and cultural practices which reveal the social consciousness of Jamaicans about the complexion continuum.

The content of the *colorism* and skin bleaching images in the *Gleaner* advertisements during colonialism suggests that light skin is sexy, attractive, and beautiful, so women used the skin bleaching creams to achieve these qualities and attract male partners. Some of the advertisements instructed the women to take charge of their beauty in the summer months by bleaching their skin. Light skin is golden, so it is important to protect the precious light skin from sun damage during the hot summers. The encouragement to bleach the skin is linked to the fact that light skin in colonial Jamaica was associated with success. Advertisements articulated the image that the skin bleaching products worked miracles on the skin with extraordinary results of lighter, younger, and softer skin from one night to a few days. The images of Caucasian women in the ads served as the standard of beauty that Jamaicans should emulate. These circulating positive images of light-skinned people create negative images of dark-skinned people. These negative images of Blacks created a vibrant market for skin bleaching products in colonial society.

The market for skin bleaching products was driven by the demand for light skin, which was influenced by the negative stereotypes circulating about Blackness in the society. Jamaican merchants responded to this demand for light skin by supplying skin bleaching products such as Nadinola Bleaching Cream, Skin Success Bleaching Cream, Skin Success Soap, and Golden Peacock Bleaching Cream, among others. The advertisements and sale of these products mean that skin bleaching was an established social practice in the decade before political independence. At least one foreign cosmetic company, The Valcor Products Company in the United States, responded to the demand in the local culture for light skin by advertising for local sales representatives to distribute the company's beauty products.

In the contemporary era (1999-2008), the two largest categories of articles in the *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer* newspapers are opinion columns followed by news stories. SRT argues that the columnists, as representatives of their social group, are opinion leaders who use information from the news to debate the issue of skin bleaching based on their values and belief systems (Moscovici, 1988). The circulation of the skin bleaching news is the diffusion phase of knowledge production about *colorism* and skin bleaching. According to Clemence (2001), the network of meaning phase starts when the columnists begin to debate the issue and the average Jamaicans subsequently use the information from the media and their own experiences about skin bleaching to create a network of meanings about the practice. The newspapers combine information about skin bleaching, opinion leadership about the issue, and daily conversations, which are evident in the letters to the editors. The contemporary newspapers not only reflect the representations of skin bleaching, but they also influence these images (Rouquette, 1996).

The various rationales reported as explanations for skin bleaching by the news stories, columnists, editors, and letter writers in the newspapers reflect the societal debate about skin bleaching. The newspapers are important public sites of contestations over ideas and cultural values in the social production of knowledge. There is the Afrocentric perspective that argues that the skin bleachers alter their Black physicality because they hate themselves and they hate their race. This perspective locates the origins of the skin bleaching in the internalization of the complexion continuum of plantation slavery. Jamaicans bleach their skin because they suffer from mental slavery (Sheperd, 2000). The Afrocentric perspective articulates a hegemonic conceptualization of Blackness that rejects *colorism* and the modification of the African physicality. There is also the

miseducation perspective in the societal debate that argues that Jamaicans have been miseducated about the culture, history, and achievements of Blacks in favor of European ideas and values so they prefer light skin over dark skin. There is also a social institution perspective arguing that institutions like dancehall music, the political system, the church, and the educational system project light skin values. The perspectives all mention *colorism* in their explanation of skin bleaching, which means there is social commonality surrounding the role of *colorism* in influencing the skin bleachers as expressed in the contemporary newspapers.

The *colorism* and skin bleaching images that coalesce in the contemporary newspapers claim that light skin is pretty, sexy, attractive because lighter-skinned women are perceived as more attractive and more beautiful than dark-skinned women who are ugly and inferior. The newspaper images are cultural images of *colorism*. The light skin consensus structures the reality of skin bleachers who are no longer satisfied with their appearance because of the negative hegemonic images of Blackness. These skin bleachers alter their Black physicality with the skin bleaching products to access the social spotlight, which is accorded to light-skinned Jamaicans. The socially visible and the socially accepted light skin Hollywood complexion is popular and fashionable, and facilitates social mobility of light-skinned Jamaicans in the society. *Colorism* tells Jamaicans that there are social benefits and advantages in having brown skin, so the skin bleachers modify their complexion.

The contemporary complexion and skin bleaching images in the *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer* newspapers from 1999-2008 are the same colorized images seen in the skin bleaching advertisements in the *Jamaica Gleaner* newspaper from 1951-

1961. These light skin images are *themata*, which are the overarching cultural images that persist and coalesce over time because they are the products of historical forces. *Themata* link the ideas, values, practices, and behaviors of Jamaicans on a historical continuum from the colonial period to the present. Therefore, the images that drive skin bleaching today in Jamaica are the outcome of a long series of changes. These images are diffused and circulated by the media. The light skin representations that are now socially shared by the skin bleachers existed long before they were socialized into the culture. The coalesced colorized images are intergenerational representations that suggest they are entrenched in the culture. The entrenchment of the light skin *themata* suggests that it is a hegemonic representation, which is a widely and deeply held image in the society that is uniform and coercive in its cultural influence.

The skin bleachers create new representations in the contemporary socio-cultural environment by accepting rather than rejecting the persistent colorized images of the colonial period because these images influence their behavior. The colorized representations are a part of the collective memory of Jamaicans, which the skin bleachers have used as the building blocks for contemporary action. The previous behavior of the colonials is internalized and expressed in the contemporary behavior of the skin bleachers. The *themata* guide the behavior of the skin bleachers whose thoughts and feelings about light complexion are *objectified* through the modification of their skin color. I now turn to the diffusion of the historical images in the Jamaican culture.

The diffusion theorem. The central research question of this theorem addressed the penetration of the popular culture by *colorism* and skin bleaching. Cultural products such as popular songs and literary works like poems and popular novels are repositories and

purveyors of societal ideas and values. The songs and literary works all reflect *colorism*. I discuss the findings of the songs first, which is followed by a discussion of the images in the poems and the novel.

Colorism is diffused in the Eurocentric reggae song *Brown Girl in the Ring* by Bonie M because the brown-skinned girl in the ring is the center of attention because of her complexion. The girl is depicted as the sweet sugar in the plum because she has brown skin. The high status and many privileges that are accorded to light-skinned people in the culture are challenged by the Afrocentric reggae songs that diffuse African-centered relationships, African identity, and the liberation of Africans, which are all emancipatory representations. These songs reflect the fact that Afrocentric Jamaicans interact with Eurocentric Jamaicans, but create their own representations of the Black self. Errol Dunkley, in *Black Cinderella,* yearns for his Black Cinderella. This positive image of Blackness is also diffused by Peter Tosh in the song *African,* in which Tosh argues for a Pan-African racial identity because all Blacks are Africans. While Tosh argues for a Pan-African identity, Bob Marley, in the song *War,* also creates a positive polemical representation, but yearns for radical action guided by an Afro-centric representation that wants to overthrow the colorized and racist status quo. These reggae songs that challenge the *colorism* and racism in the society are diffused and circulated by the electronic media and the sound system operators in the society.

The contestation between the Eurocentric and the Afrocentric values and ideas persist in the contemporary popular genre of dancehall music. Some of the songs that view light skin as attractive diffuse ideas supporting skin bleaching, while others support Blackness and vehemently criticize skin bleaching. Barrington Levy disseminates a

positive image of Blackness in the song *Black Roses* because Blackness is special. However, the positive depiction of Blackness that is articulated by Levy is challenged by Richie Spice in the song *Brown Skin,* which reveals the light skin *themata* that brown skin is nice. In other words, brown skin is an important quality in intimate partner relationships.

Captain Barkey, in *Bleach On,* also diffuses the idea that women should bleach their skin because bleaching fits them. The *central core* of the representation that gives it meaning and stability is that the skin bleachers are prettier than Mona Lisa—the European iconic image of beauty. The behavioral response (skin bleaching) to the complexion consensus is rebuffed by Queen Ifrika in the song *Mi Nah Rub* (I am not rubbing my skin with skin bleaching products). Ifrika spreads the strict Afrocentric idea that brown skin is not for everyone and the skin bleachers hate themselves because they are not proud to be Black.

The foregoing suggests that the consensus of the Afro-centric songs is a polemical representation that conflicts with the status quo and has a separate understanding and meaning of Blackness that is anathema to *colorism*. The circulating Afrocentric values attack *colorism* and enrich Blackness with positive meanings and reject skin bleaching in dancehall songs. These songs circulate and diffuse multiple themes and opinions about race and skin color into common sense knowledge. The Jamaicans hearing these songs on the radio, on the dancehall sound systems, or at various social engagements will organize varied constellations of shared consensual meanings based on their value-laden common sense knowledge, which they use to structure reality. I now turn to a discussion about the

diffusion of *colorism* that is rejected in the poems as the poets debate the light skin hegemonic consensus.

Literary works are also one of the popular outlets for the diffusion of knowledge in the Jamaican society. Several Jamaican poets have addressed *colorism* and racism in their works by criticizing these oppressive social vices and affirming their Blackness. In the poem *Back to Africa,* Louis Bennett reflects the repatriation image that Black Jamaicans are Africans by enquiring of Miss Mattie her destination. Mutabaruka similarly debates *colorism* and racism in the poem *Skins* by diffusing the idea that there are people of different skin hues, but these people are equal because the blood which flows through people connects all racial groups. Therefore, while Bennett promotes the liberation of the Black self, Mutabaruka demands an end to the colorized and racist social structures that are used to play skin tricks because the right to might is not derived from the color of the skin. Joan Andrea Hutchinson also makes a strong defense for the African physicality in the poem *Dat Bumpy Head Gal* (that nappy-haired girl) by projecting the image that the Black physicality is perfect. Hutchinson liberates Blackness from the clutches of *colorism* by invoking the importance of the Black physicality, which is reframed as divine creation.

Lorna Goodison continues the radical attack on *colorism* in the Poem *Guinea Woman* in which she highlights the biological strategy of darkening the high yellow skin in successive generations. Goodison moves beyond the other poets who deal with racial identity, the dismantling of the racist structures, and Blackness as a divine creation, to the reclamation of the Black bloodline. I now transition to the Afrocentric challenge to *colorism* in the novel.

The Castle of My Skin published in 1953 is a classic Caribbean novel that is used in the high school and university curricula in Jamaica. The use of the novel in the school curricula indicates that the colorized images embedded in the novel are widely circulated and diffused into the consciousness of those who read it. Like the poems, the novel is a cultural product that is a repository and purveyor of Jamaican cultural values. The circulation of the colonial ideologies of racism, *colorism,* and miseducation in the novel create a rigid, socially stratified colonial society based on race and skin color. The oppressive, stratified society creates oppositional identities in the Black villagers, which they use to challenge their oppression and the colorized hegemonic representations.

The novel depicts the English as a superior and civilized people who work effectively, unlike the villagers. C*olorism* is circulated in the social institutions of the village. The best looking people are deemed to be offspring of a Black mother and a White father. These offspring have the prized physicality and fall in the middle of the complexion continuum. One way in which the high status of the light-skinned physicality is diffused in the colony is through the miseducation of the villagers. The children are taught in school about British history and achievements, while African history, the injustice of plantation slavery, and the works of great Black men like Marcus Garvey and others are ignored.

The rigid social stratification in the colony that is the outcome of racism, *colorism,* and miseducation take several forms. There is social distance among Whites, Mulattoes, and Blacks, residential segregation and the social deference of Blacks to Whites, all of which operate together and reflect the uniformity and rigidity of the coercive power of racism and *colorism* in the lives of the villagers. The British are continually guided by

the hegemonic colonial consensus. The images demand that Blacks who want to see Whites in positions of authority must do so through a mediator. This mediation is provided by the Mulattoes in their historically social role as buffers between the oppressed and the oppressor. This social bridge, which is required to keep the dangerous Blacks in their place, reinforces the hegemonic colorized status quo that denigrates Blacks.

The oppressive colonial situation of White superiority triggers resistance in the oppressed villagers. The villagers create oppositional identities (Cross, 1995) that take several forms such as the ridicule of Whites, unionism, and electoral participation. The opposition to the operating ideologies is not always peaceful. The aggression against British oppression ranges from verbal attacks to physical violence such as riots and beatings. The oppositional identities of the villagers, which show their agency and personal autonomy, are emancipatory representations that create fresh public spheres with new and positive meanings of Blackness. I now go on to discuss the identity theorem in which the skin bleachers, like the Eurocentric characters in the novel are influenced by *colorism.*

The identity theorem. The skin bleaching participants in this study are from the working class but there are Jamaicans from all social classes who bleach their skin. The identity theorem dealt with the identity images that the skin bleachers use to lighten their skin and create their identity. The skin bleachers have varying awareness of the light skin *themata,* which is determined by their personal experiences of this social consensus and their membership in a negatively stigmatized racial group. The skin bleachers differ in

the extent to which they understand and believe the complexion continuum. The skin bleachers give eight reasons why they lighten their skin, which is discussed below.

The influential light skin image embedded in the skin bleachers' narratives suggests that bleaching cures a pimpled face and is beautiful, unlike dark skin, which is ugly. Therefore, light skin is socially acceptable, and having this complexion will make the participants attractive to potential partners. However, one participant argues that some criminals in Jamaica lighten their complexion as a disguise they use to hide from the police, which reveals that not all Jamaicans bleach because of *colorism*. The dominant colorized reasons motivate the skin bleachers to develop a shared consensual social process about how to modify the body versus the face, and which combination of products to use. An important component in this process is the combination of products to use for heavy bleaching and light bleaching. This shared social knowledge and understanding also involves the type of clothes to wear to protect the skin from the sun and facilitate rapid melanin depletion.

The skin bleachers know the meanings of the bleached self that exist because of the cultural images circulating in Jamaica about light skin. The light skin *themata* generate shared ideas of how to be. The complexion consensus provides answers to the skin bleachers' questions of "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" which stabilize the self. The skin bleachers incorporate the external light skin representation into the self. The incorporation is dual meaning-making because the self-definition is an external construction that is elaborated internally. The skin bleachers internalization of the light skin consensus manifests itself in their changed physical appearance, which they believe enhances their aesthetic physicality.

The skin bleacher expresses a Black identity that does not accord with the strict Afrocentric conceptualization of Blackness because the skin bleachers' Black identity is malleable. There is a brown skin definition of Blackness which projects that the bleachers have rejected the strict Afrocentric Blackness in favor of a blackness guided by the brown skin consensus. Some of the skin bleachers argue that they are just toning their skin; they do not want to become White—they just want a light complexion. This argument suggests that these skin bleachers identify with their race, but this identification is not static. The skin bleachers choose to move to a lighter shade of black on the complexion continuum within their definition of what it means to be Black. This Black identity which is influenced by *colorism* argues that brown skin is a lighter shade of black skin.

The skin bleachers' psychological status suggest complex personhood because they identity themselves as Blacks but they are altering their black physicality. Complex personhood is an integrated, multidimensional, sophisticated and natural way of being in which each skin bleacher speaks and displays contradictions, vulnerabilities, ambiguities, purpose, fears, confidence, weaknesses, strengths and resilience. All of the foregoing occurs as each skin bleacher makes sense of the totality of his or her daily subjective experiences in the Jamaican culture (Charles, 2009).

Some of the skin bleachers speak of toning in their informal beauty practices which is similar to the toning in the formal beauty industry where cosmetic products are used to even out the skin tone. These participants' use of skin bleaching products to tone the skin is constructed as low end skin bleaching because they identity as skin bleachers.

There is competing social thinking among the skin bleachers on race relations which argues that the racial groups in Jamaica live peacefully and there is acrimony

among the races. These polemical images argue that Blacks experience racial discrimination from Chinese and Whites, and the members of the various racial groups live in unity. SRT argues that these contrasting cultural understandings among members of the same social group reveal that the images they use to construct reality have varying antecedents based on the skin bleachers' subjective values and worldview (Moscovici, 1988). The representations held by the skin bleachers are situated in their contrasting social positions and the dialogic coalescence about racial interaction. The skin bleachers, in their shared consensual understanding of racial status, argue that the Chinese and Whites have the high social status, unlike Blacks. The high status of Whites and Chinese is influenced by the economic power of these racial groups despite the cultural power of Blacks.

The complexion *themata* influences the skin bleachers' cognition because they minimize their risk of skin bleaching damage and maximize the risk for others. The skin bleachers embrace the consensus that supports skin bleaching without fear because they believe there are minimal risks associated with the practice. This minimal risk perspective rejects the socially shared understandings of the dangers about the practice circulating in the society. The skin bleachers argue that the perceived risks of death, pain, stress, skin problems, weight loss, nausea, and social rejection from Afrocentric Jamaicans will not happen to them. This seemingly irrational behavior of the skin bleachers can be explained by the colorized images anchored in their social consciousness, which reflects the view that the social benefits of skin bleaching far outweigh the dangers. The skin bleachers purchase the skin bleaching products because of the perceived social benefits. I now transition to institutionalization theorem in which

these social benefits drive the business interaction between skin bleaching vendors and their customers.

The institutionalization theorem. The central research question of this theorem dealt with how the repeated social exchanges between the vendors of skin bleaching products and their customers became institutionalized cultural practice and beliefs. Over time, the repeated daily vendor-customer economic exchange became routine. The vendors operate on the sidewalks and in wholesale and variety stores in Downtown Kingston. Many of the skin bleaching products are sold openly on the store shelves of established, legitimate entrepreneurs. The ongoing exchange in the market such as the common buying and selling of skin bleaching products takes on an objective character by becoming institutionalized practices and beliefs. The content of the consensual understanding generated by the routine exchange reveals that skin bleaching is a popular, accepted, and safe practice with a vibrant market. The vendors sell the popular but illegal skin bleaching products openly to children, adolescents, and adult customers without fear of arrest. Some customers even shout their orders from the street and some pay for the products with the correct amount of money without asking the price, which means that they have been purchasing the products for some time. Other customers, after purchasing the products confidently, apply the skin bleaching regimen to their faces right there on the street. This behavior suggests that some customers are comfortable with the bleaching of their skin publicly because there are very little social sanctions against the practice.

Many customers intensely scrutinize the goods for a while before purchasing, because they are not in a hurry while shopping, which means they are comfortable and confident while shopping. The customers expect and demand courteous service as if they

are purchasing legal goods and curse the vendors when this service is not forthcoming. Credit and discounts are strategies used by vendors to keep their regular customers happy as other vendors do. The purchase of skin bleaching products by a female cop suggests that although vendors sometimes hide the products from the cops on patrol, they know that there are officers among the group who are potential customers, which highlights the grip of *colorism* on the perception and attitudes of some Jamaicans.

The routine interactions between vendors and customers suggest that the skin bleachers do no think about skin bleaching in isolation. The skin bleachers' interactions with each other and with the vendors create a structure of shared references that influence how they think of the colorized environment in which they live. The images created by social thinking organize the beliefs and available information that the vendors and their customers find important in their business transactions. The representations construct the commercial reality for the vendors and customers, and structure how they talk and think about important business issues.

The customers believe that the therapeutic skin bleaching products make the skin better and the vendors and their respective staffs have "expert" and "professional knowledge" about skin care and the use of the products. Store staffs demonstrate their "expertise" confidently by examining the face and skin of customers and making recommendations about which products to use. This "expertise" is valued by the customers who ask questions about the safest way to lighten their skin. The vendors not only give advice about skin care, but also advice on which products to purchase for light and heavy bleaching and how the products should be applied. The belief of the skin bleachers in the positive effects of the products and the expert knowledge and advice they

receive from the vendors and their staff points to the importance of skin bleaching among some Jamaicans and its establishment as a social practice.

Some customers engage in deliberative group shopping at their own leisure with the social support of friends, so the stores become deliberative beauty spaces. The light skin consensus creates networks of collective thought from social interaction because the friends of skin bleachers who accompany them to the stores provide useful social networks that are used for social support and advice during shopping. This network is evident in the five groups of females and two adult groups of males that came to purchase skin bleaching products. The male and female customers sometimes buy different product combinations, and women buy more products than the men in each shopping trip. This difference means that bleaching is more salient to women compared to men. The colorized consensus is a social elaboration because the consensus is socially shared by the vendors, employees, customers, and their friends in a network all of them deem important.

The labels of the foreign manufactured skin bleaching products tap into the complexion consensus as the companies respond to the demand for light skin. The international cosmetic companies like the local vendors are profiting from the local demand for light skin. Some of the products are marketed specifically for parts of the body like the face, the hands, body, legs, and the knees and elbows. These products suggest that there is a demand to lighten only certain parts of the body. Overall, the colorized themes found on the product labels promise to lighten, fade, tone, medicate, and cleanse, which are embedded in the light skin consensus that skin bleaching not only fades, tones, and lightens the skin, but also heals and purifies the skin. The labels on the

products project images that meet the social needs of the customers who want to modify their complexion, so this is why these products are widely available. The establishment of skin bleaching as a social practice is not only evident in the vendor-customer interactions, but also in the conversations of Jamaicans. I deal with this issue next.

The dialogic theorem. This theorem dealt with the racial, *colorism,* and skin bleaching images in the conversation of Jamaicans. There is a dichotomized condensation of voices or divergent views in the conversation among focus group participants. The narratives reveal the competing understandings of race and the legacy of plantation slavery. The absence of consensus suggests there are polemical representations about the effects of race and slavery in modern Jamaica. The competing images suggest that the supremacy of white skin is a legacy of slavery and slavery is not affecting people's behavior now. The conversational divide extends to the role of Whiteness in the social construction of race. Several coalesced voices argue that Whiteness is the standard for racial categorization, and in terms of racial power, Whites control Jamaica. However, these social positions are attacked with the alternative argument that people matter, and not race. SRT posits that the competing social positions and views of the participants on race and the legacy of slavery reveal that the discussants are guided by their normative values acquired during their socialization in Jamaica (Jovchelovitch, 2001). The participants take different positions because they do share the same experiences and beliefs and do not necessarily have access to the same information about race and slavery in the society (Jovchelovitch, 2001).

Despite the conversational variance above, there is dialogic integration about race relations, racial status, and Black unity in the majority of the participants' narratives in

which they argue that the racial groups live in peace, Blacks have the least social status, and Blacks are divided because they do not support each other. The conversational fusion arising from the majority arguments generated the solution that Blacks must unite. However, there is the nuanced position of the minority that there are individual and systemic barriers to Black progress, but some Blacks are gaining societal influence. The dialogic consensus and variance suggest shared knowledge about race and slavery. The participants' dynamic moods and opinions drive the conversational ebb and flow, which cause uncertainties and misunderstandings (e.g., that the past does not affect the present [as in the effects of slavery]) and disagreements (e.g., the racial groups live in peace versus there are systemic obstacles to Black progress).

Colorism is embedded in the narratives of the majority of participants. The condensation of these voices reveals that the family, school, relationships, the police, and other social institutions are driven by the complexion consensus. The institutional consensus articulates that families prefer light-skinned relatives, light-skinned students are treated better in school, some people prefer light-skinned partners, and the police discriminate against poor, dark-skinned citizens. The complexion *themata* is at the center of this fizz of dialogue because the semantic commonality is "light skin" which influences discrimination against dark-skinned Jamaicans in the various societal institutions. However, there is a dialogic variance that attacks the complexion consensus by arguing that what really matters is people's personal qualities, their abilities, and the amount of money they have, and not their complexion. The clash of ideas over the role of skin color in the society introduced new ways to talk about *colorism* and provided the opportunity for the development of new forms of social knowledge about the issue.

The coalesced images that are grounded in the conversation suggest that light skin is better, sexy, accepted, and creates social access and economic advancements, unlike dark skin. The coalesced images led the participants to argue that the alteration of the Black physicality occurs because of mental pathology in which the "browning thing" has been instilled in the minds of the skin bleachers, which leads to low self-esteem. The skin bleachers experience *colorism* because light-skinned Jamaicans are viewed as beautiful, and they get better treatment, which facilitates their social mobility. The preferential treatment of light-skinned people tells the skin bleachers that light skin is better than dark skin. Therefore, the skin bleachers tone their skin to be popular and survive economically, which is reinforced by dancehall music and intimate partner relationships. The rigidity of the colorized images in Jamaica is derived from the support these images receive from social institutions like the family and school, among others. These institutions not only support, but also reflect, the colorized norms.

The dialogic commonality about skin bleaching highlights a social preference for light skin, which drives the practice. The use of the term light skin was circulated and reinforced in the flow of the focus group discussion. Therefore, it is evident that *colorism* shapes the participants' thoughts and ways of thinking about skin bleaching, which create their reality about this social phenomenon. The representations of *colorism* allowed the participants to gather information from each other and have dialogue about skin bleaching. The narratives are an integration of the participants' semantic knowledge and their beliefs about the cultural practice, which became a dialogic space in which knowledge about skin bleaching was socially produced. In other words, the participants

learned more about skin bleaching from their social interaction in a group discussion about the issue.

The participants in their narratives fuse the racial, skin color, and skin bleaching images. In explaining the effects of slavery, the majority of the participants argued that the legacy of slavery is the supremacy of White skin. The location of the origins of *colorism* in slavery reflects the participants' socially shared understanding that there is a light skin historical continuum. The participants link the historical continuum with the prestige of light skin in contemporary social institutions, which they then use to interpret the behavior of the skin bleachers. The persistent colorized *themata* structures how the skin bleachers behave and how participants think and talk about this issue. Recall that not all the participants agree on the impact of the complexion continuum because of the minority challenges that the complexion *themata* is a myth. This challenge provides the rhetorical and sub-cultural spaces for the minority perspective of the race and complexion-neutral Jamaicans to create a counter-narrative within the society.

The study is more gendered than the difference between the male participants who bleach their faces and the females who bleach their faces and bodies. The skin bleaching ads in the *Jamaica Gleaner* during the colonial period targeted only women who were objectified as sexual trophies to be won by men. The newspaper articles about skin bleaching in the *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer* in the contemporary period spoke mostly about women as the purveyors of the practice. Some of the dancehall songs like the ads in the colonial newspaper also objectified women as beautiful sexual possessions because of their brown skin acquired at birth or through skin bleaching.

Therefore, patriarchy looms large from the past to the present in terms of how women are constructed in relation to skin bleaching.

This study has contributed to the literature on skin bleaching by intersecting history, cultural products, and the establishment of cultural practice, individual meaning making, and social conversations as the integrated conceptual milieu within which to understand the sophisticated practice of skin bleaching. The integration of the macro processes (history and culture) with the micro processes (of cognition and behavior) in the lives of the skin bleachers is a useful analytical matrix to study this aspect of the Jamaican culture. This analytical matrix also made use of several levels of analysis (history, culture, social groups, and individuals) to understand the Jamaican culture and interrogate the status quo.

Despite the strengths mentioned above, there are a number of limitations to the present study that need to be considered. This is an interpretive study in which there were no measures of inter-coder agreement or reliability. Only urban lower class skin bleachers were interviewed and urban non-bleaching professionals were interviewed, and they are unrepresentative of the larger Jamaican population. Evidence of *colorism* in the country's history and culture as expressed in the lives of skin bleachers and in the conversation of non-bleachers does not necessarily suggest that *colorism* and skin bleaching are widespread in Jamaica. The study focused on the presence of skin bleaching in Jamaica rather than how entrenched this practice is in the country. Another limitation concerns the issue of self-hate as one of the causes of skin bleaching. A few participants stated that they bleached their skin because black skin is ugly. These narratives suggest self-hate, but the participants self-esteem (a form of self-hate) were not

measured using a self-esteem test. The non-measurement of self-esteem is a limitation because we do not know the extent to which the participants internalized the negatives about Blackness. The is also the limitation of the social desirability bias, where it is possible that during the interviews the participants told the author what they thought he wanted to hear to get his approval.

Moving beyond the limitations, there are some trajectories I would like to follow in future research on skin bleaching. There are some mixed findings in Jamaica in which some skin bleachers have high self-esteem and others have low self-esteem. In the future, I would like to check for measurement problems and conduct a national survey on self-esteem and skin bleaching in Jamaica. Another line of research is to understand how skin bleaching is related to other forms of body modification such as tanning, hair straightening and coloring, tattooing, body piercings, and cosmetic surgeries. These are all interesting areas for future research.

My conclusion is that there is a social consensus on the superiority of light skin or *colorism* in Jamaica. This consensus is a *themata* or persistent image which is a historical continuum that links colonial and post-colonial Jamaica. *Colorism* has been diffused into the Jamaican culture. The persistence and hegemony of *colorism* in the society has faced fierce Afrocentric challenges stretching from slavery to the contemporary music of reggae and dancehall, and literary works such as poems and novels. The diffusion of *colorism* in the culture is also evident in the routinized skin bleaching vendor-customer exchanges that establish skin bleaching as a cultural practice. As such, some Jamaicans use the norms and values of *colorism* (that influence them to bleach the melanin from their skin) to define the self. Skin bleaching is so popular that the subject can be

overheard in the conversations of Jamaicans who talk about race and skin color in the society.

The history of *colorism* in Jamaica, its diffusion into the society, its establishment as a social practice, its influence of skin bleachers, and its presence in conversations, therefore, means that the complexion consensus is a hegemonic representation. This representation is rigid, uniform, pervasive and coercive, which means it is very powerful in its societal and cultural impact. The colorized *themata* is so entrenched and powerful in the Jamaican society that it continues to strongly influence some Jamaicans despite the ongoing Afro-centric challenge from slavery to the present.

Appendix 1

List of skin Bleaching Products from Participant Observations

African formula: Black cream – (blemish remover- dark spot remover), Ambi Even and Clear Exfoliating Wash, Ambi Even Clear Foaming Cleanser, Ambi Skin Care (Skin Toning Cream), Ambi Soap (even skin Tone)

Black and White Bleaching cream, Body Clear Skin Toning cream

Civic bleaching Cream, Crusade Skin Lightening Cream, Crusade Skin Lightening soap

Facial Fading Gel, Facial Fade lightening cream

Germicide Soap (facial tone)

Hand and Body Lightening Cream, Heal Fade Cream

Idole (Skin toning Soap)

Knee and Elbow lightening cream, Knee and Elbow lightening Stick

Leg Fade Cream, Lemon Skin toning cream,

Metasol medicated Skin lightening Cream, Metasol Medicated Soap (For even skin tone and removal of dark spots and blemishes), Milk Protein (Skin Toning, Miki Skin Lightening Cream, Movate (Skin toning Soap), Mud Soap (Bleach Soap), Mud Soap cut up into pieces and place into bags

Nadinola Bleaching Cream, Nadinola Bleaching Cream in a bag, Nadinola Bleaching Soap, Neonate Skin lightening Bar

Prosane skin lightening cream, Prosane Bleaching Soap, Roldan (Skin Bleaching Soap), **S**ymba Bleaching Cream, Symba Skin Bleaching Soap, Skin Success- Skin Lightening, Sulphur Soap

Tropic Clear Cocoa Butter Skin- Lightening Lotion

Ultra Bleaching Cream, Ultra Bleaching Soap, Ultra Glow skin tone cream, Ultra Glow Cleansing bar and cocoa butter

Appendix 2
Skin Bleachers Interview Guide

Demographics

Demographic question were asked (age, gender, education, occupation, race etc.)
Tell me about your life in Jamaica? What is it like here?
How are you treated in Jamaica base on where you live and why? (uptown/downtown)
How are you treated in Jamaica base on your gender (male or female) and why?

Skin Bleaching

Why do you bleach your skin?
Do you bleach your skin to become white? Explain your answer.
Do you bleach your face or your entire body and why?
How long have you been bleaching your skin?
Where do you get the bleaching products?
Which skin bleaching products do you use?
How much do you spend per week/month buying skin bleaching products?
Do you use homemade skin bleaching products? List them.
Explain the process of skin bleaching-how do you actually do it?
Where and from whom did you learn the process of how to bleach your skin?
What are the risks associated with skin bleaching?
What are the things in the Jamaican culture that influences you to bleach your skin?
How do you respond to people who treat you well because you are bleaching your skin?
How do you feel when they treat you well because you are bleaching your skin?
Give me a list of the people who treat you well because you are bleaching your skin?
How do you respond to people who treat you badly because you are bleaching your skin?
How do you feel when you are treated badly because you are bleaching your skin?
Give me a list of the people who treat you badly because you are bleaching your skin.
Do you plan to stop bleaching your skin, explain your answer?
What would you say to the people who argue that the government should ban skin bleaching?

Appendix 3

Focus Group Interview Guide

Demographics

Demographic question were asked (age, gender, education, occupation etc.)
Tell me about life in Jamaica? What is it like here?
How are people treated in Jamaica base on where they live and why? (Uptown/downtown)
How are people treated in Jamaica base on whether they are male or female and why?

Power and Race Relations

What is the relationship like between Blacks, Indians, Chinese and Whites in Jamaica?
How are the racial groups (Blacks, Indians, Chinese and Whites) viewed in Jamaica in terms on social status and why?
Which racial group (Blacks, Indians, Chinese and White) run Jamaica and why?
Which racial group (Blacks, Indians, Chinese and White) has the most/least money or resources in Jamaica and why?
How are Black people treated in Jamaica, explain?

Social Institutions and Colorism

How do family members treat their relatives who have dark skin/light skin and why?
How are dark skin/light skin members treated at church and why?
How are dark skin/light skin citizens treated by the police and why?
How are people with dark skin/light skin treated when they are looking a job and why?
How are dark skin/light skin customers treated in business places and why?
How are people with dark skin/light skin treated on the streets and why?
How are people with dark skin/light talked about in Dancehall music and why?

Cable Television and Colorism

Which TV stations do people in Jamaica watch and why/why not?
What are the things reported on the TV news about Blacks and Whites?
How do people feel/think about the news reports about Blacks and Whites?
Are there more Black than brown journalist on TV in Jamaica, explain?
Which cable channels are the most popular in Jamaica and why?
Is there a difference between the roles/characters Black people play and the roles/characters White people play in the movies you watch on cable channels, explain?
How/what do people feel/think about this difference?

Skin Bleaching

Why do people to bleach their skin?
Do the skin bleachers bleach their skin to become white? Explain your answer.
Why do some people bleach their face and others bleach their entire body?
How long do people bleach their skin?
How much do people spend on bleaching products per week/month?
Where do people get the bleaching products?
Which skin bleaching products do people use to bleach their skin?
Which homemade products do people use to bleach their skin?
Why is it that some people do not bleach their skin?

Explain the process of skin bleaching-how is it actually done?
What are the things in the Jamaican culture that supports skin bleaching?
How are the skin bleachers treated by people because they are bleaching their skin?
Is skin bleaching a widespread practice in Jamaica? Explain your answer.
Should the government ban the practice of skin bleaching? Explain your answer.

Appendix 4 : Consent Forms

My name is Christopher Charles. I am a doctoral student in the Psychology Program at The Graduate School at the City University of New York and the co-investigator of the project "Representations of Colorism and Skin Bleaching in Jamaica." This research is being conducted to understand the cultural factors that influence Blacks to bleach the melanin from their skin. I would like your permission to interview you about race and skin color in Jamaica and the reasons why people bleach their skin.

The interview will take about 45 minutes. The information on the questionnaire will only be seen by me and my advisors. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisors will have access. With your permission I would like to audio tape the interview. At any time you can refuse to answer any question or end the interview.

I foresee no potential harm for participating. Potential benefits of this research will include meaningful dialogues about the reasons for skin bleaching among Blacks in order to better understand this issue from a psychological perspective. You will be paid $20.00 for your participation in this study. There will be approximately 8 participants in this study.

I may publish the results of this study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 977-7807 or by email, ccharles@gc.cuny.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York at 212- 817-7525 or kpowell@gc.cuny.edu. You may also contact my advisors, Dr. William Cross at 702-895-3185 or wcross@gc.cuny.edu and Dr. Martin Ruck at 212-817-8720 or mruck@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for participating in this study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-taped, please circle one: Yes No

_____ _____

Participant's signature Date

_____ _____

Co-Investigator's signature Date

My name is Christopher Charles and I am a doctoral student and the co-investigator of the project "Representations of colorism in and skin bleaching in Jamaica". This research which is being conducted for my dissertation deals with the cultural factors that influence Blacks to bleach the melanin from their skin. I would like your permission to participate in a focus group interview with nine other people about race and skin color in Jamaica and the reasons why people bleach their skin.

The interview will take about - I hour. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisors will have access. With your permission I would like tio audiotape the interview. At any time you can refuse to answer any question or end the interview.

I foresee no potential harm for participating. Potential benefits will include meaningful dialogues about the reasons for skin bleaching among Blacks in order to better understand this issue from a psychological perspective. You will be paid $20.00 for your participation in this study.

I may publish the results of this study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 977-7807 or by email, ccharles@gc.cuny.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study you can contact Miss Kay Powell of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York at 212- 817-7525 or via email, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu. You may also contact my advisors, Professor William Cross at 702-895-3185 or via email, wcross@gc.cuny.edu and Professor Martin Ruck at 212-817-8720 or email at mruck@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for participating in this study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-taped, please circle one: Yes No

_____ _____

Participant's signature Date

_____ _____

Co-Investigator's signature Date

My name is Christopher Charles and I am a doctoral student and the co-investigator of the project "Representations of colorism and skin bleaching in Jamaica". This research which is being conducted for my dissertation deals with the cultural factors that influence Blacks to bleach the melanin from their skin. I would like your permission be a participant observer for a business day while you interact with your customers.

The participant observation will last from 9:00 AM-5:00 PM. The data from the participant observation will only be seen by me as the co-investigator my dissertation advisors. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisors will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any question or end the interview.

I foresee no potential harm for participating. Potential benefits will include meaningful dialogues about the reasons for skin bleaching among Blacks in order to better understand this issue from a psychological perspective. You will be paid $20.00 for your participation in this study.

I may publish the results of this study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 977-7807 or by email, ccharles@gc.cuny.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study you can contact Miss Kay Powell of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York at 212- 817-7525 or via email, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu. You may also contact my advisors, Professor William Cross at 702-895-3185 or via email, wcross@gc.cuny.edu and Professor Martin Ruck at 212-817-8720 or email at mruck@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for participating in this study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

_____ _____

Participant's signature Date

_____ _____

Co-Investigator's signature Date

Table 1 Summary of the Study

Research Questions	Theorems	Method	Data to Be Generated	Plan of Analysis
1. What is the history and content of the colorized images in Jamaica?	*History* The images which influence behavior of people in their cultural milieu have a history	Archival search	The content of past and present contested arguments, social positions and supporting values from news stories, letters, editorial and opinion columns about skin color, race and skin bleaching	Content analysis will be done by identifying general ideas or themes by repeated reading of the transcripts. Exemplars for themes will be selected and organized into theoretically meaningful patterns of convergence and divergence
2. How are the colorized images and the practice of skin bleaching manifested in popular culture?	*Diffusion* The ideas diffused by the media and the people's network of meanings are embedded in the culture	Archival search	Themes of colorism and skin bleaching evident in cultural products such as popular songs, poems and a novel	Content analysis will be done by identifying general ideas or themes by repeated reading of the transcripts. Exemplars for themes will be selected and organized into theoretically meaningful patterns of convergence and divergence
3. What are the content and meaning of the colorized images in the minds of the skin bleachers that influence the definition of the self and the alteration of his or her Black physicality?	*Identity* People use the images circulating in their culture to construct their identity	In depth interviews	Colorized reasons and motivations for skin bleaching and identity construction generated from the transcripts	Content analysis will be done by identifying general ideas or themes. by repeated reading of the transcripts. Exemplars for themes will be selected and organized into theoretically meaningful patterns of convergence and divergence
4. What are the routinized and institutionalized social practices that occur and the beliefs that are expressed in the interaction between skin bleaching vendors and customers?	*Institutionalization* Repeated social exchanges between individuals become routinized which eventually become institutionalized cultural practices and beliefs.	Ethnography	Social practices, beliefs, images and behavior from the conversations and interactions between vendors and customers and the products sold.	Content analysis will be done by identifying general ideas or themes by repeated reading of the transcripts. Exemplars for themes will be selected and organized into theoretically meaningful patterns of convergence and divergence
5. What are the narrated images and meanings about race and skin color in everyday societal discourse and what are the reasons for these images?	*Dialogic Interaction* The social phenomenon becomes a part of everyday conversations	Focus group	The images and meanings of the contested arguments in the fizz of dialogue/debate about skin bleaching and the routinized institutions that promotes colorism in the culture.	Content analysis will be done by identifying the general ideas or themes by repeated reading of the transcripts. Exemplars for themes will be selected and organized into theoretically meaningful patterns of convergence and divergence

Table 2
Colorized Images from Skin Bleaching Advertisements in the Jamaica Gleaner: 1951-1961

Name of Products	Ads No. (%)	Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
Nadinola Bleaching Cream	25 (49)	woo men	Nadinola Bleaching Cream brightens and freshens skin color; Look how men flock around the girl with the clear, bright Nadinola complexion; He never came until I discovered Nadinola	*Light skin is sexy and attractive*
Skin Success Bleaching Cream and Soap	8 (15.9)	success	Don't let dark dull skin hold you back. Palmer's SKIN SUCCESS Bleach cream has proved it works wonders in just a few days to make the skin look lighter, smoother, softer and younger	*Light skin brings success*
Nutrine Beauty Aids Lemon Bleach Pack	5 (9.8)	beauty	Now tour beauty needs more care. Take the best care of your beauty during the summer months. Protect your skin from the sun….. make up to perfection with these essentials	*Protect the beautiful light skin from sun damage*
Bleaching Cream Valmor Products Co.	5 (9.8)	bleach	Agents Wanted To Sell Our Customer Line Beauty Products. Made especially for dark skinned people. We manufacture 300 different products including hair dressings…Bleach creams	*Blacks provide a skin bleaching market*
Elizabeth Arden Crème Extraordinaire	3 (5.8)	miracle	No other cream has helped the skin in so many different ways. With a few applications, you can see for yourself what this miracle cream does for your skin; lovelier than anything you've ever used	*Skin bleaching work wonders for dark skin*
Posner's Skintona	2 (3.9)	toning	New Skintona, contains amazing Hydroquinone. Lightens, brightens skin. Makes all skin bleaches old fashioned. Lightens dark spots- perfect powder base	*Light skin tone is beautiful*
Golden Peacock Bleaching Cream	2 (3.9)	gold	Beauty comes with care! Care for your skin; Is not the birthright of every girl, but with the aid of Golden Peacock Bleach Cream you can acquire softer, smoother, clearer skin. Get a jar today.	*Light skin is beautiful*
Bleaching Cream Rubenstein Beauty preparations	1 (1.9)	beauty	For new radiant beauty. Use famous Helena Rubenstein beauty preparations. ..Bleaching Cream…Excellent for tan, freckles and sallowness	*Light skin is beautiful*
Total	51 (100)			

N=51

Table 3
Distribution of Contemporary Newspaper Articles on Skin Bleaching: 1999-2008

Name of Newspaper	Type of Newspaper Articles				Total	(%)
	Columns	News Stories	Letters to the Editor	Editorial		
Jamaica Gleaner	26	14	7	1	48	(48)
Jamaica Observer	27	19	3	3	52	(52)
total	53	33	11	4	100	(100)

N=100

Table 4
Contemporary Newspaper Images about the Causes of Skin Bleaching: 1999-2008

Reasons	No.	%	Exemplars	*Representations*
Self-hate	42	22.2	Inferiority complex; dislike themselves so much; issues with self-esteem; mental slavery	*Skin bleachers suffer from mental slavery*
Beauty	20	11	Lighter skin women are perceived as more attractive; fairer skin is more beautiful	*Light skin is pretty*
men like it	20	11	What they believe to be attractive to men	*light skin is sexy and attractive*
Dancehall music	13	6.8	Dancehall artistes began elevating browning	*Music promotes light skin*
Racism/colorism	12	6.3	Anything too Black no good; shade discrimination	*Black skin/Blackness is inferior*
Light skin is seen	12	6.3	Hollywood complexion is pride of place	*Light skin is spotlighted*
Identity	11	5.8	An identity crisis of major proportions	*Skin bleachers have identity confusion*
miseducation	10	5.2	How can we blame the bleacher without blaming the history teacher?	*Education system elevates light skin*
Social mobility	8	4.2	a higher color to improve social mobility	*light skin facilitates social ascension*
Social status	8	4.2	Lighter skin is a status symbol	*Light skin has high social status*
Media	7	3.7	Media saturated with images of light skin women	*The media promotes light skin*
Social acceptance	6	3.1	Lighter skin is the route to general acceptance	*light skin people gets societal acceptance*
To look white	4	2.1	Some dreaming of becoming white	*Skin bleachers desire whiteness*
Fashion/popular	4	2.1	To be in fashion by doing in the in thing	*Light skin is fashionable*
Racial self-hate	3	1.5	Lack of racial pride	*Bleachers hate Blacks*
Don't like appearance	3	1.5	No longer satisfied with their appearance	*Black skin is ugly*
Stereotype	2	1	The stereotype that is being portrayed	*Black ness is bad*
Politicians	2	1	The politicians inherit the Massa syndrome	*Politicians are house slaves*
The church	1	0.5	How can we blame the bleacher without blaming the pastor?	*God is white-The devil is Black*
Michael Jackson	1	0.5	Bleaching has it's origins with Michael Jackson	*Michael Jackson influence skin bleachers*
Total	180	100		

Table 5
Race, Colorism and Skin Bleaching in Selected Reggae and Dancehall Songs

	Artistes	Songs	Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
REGGAE MUSIC	Errol Dunkley	Black Cinderella (1973)	Love Black Cinderella	They cannot find my Black Cinderella. I have got to find my Black Cinderella. She cannot be far away. I go to find you. To give you happiness	*Love Black woman*
	Peter Tosh	African (1977)	Black identity	-No min' your complexion. There is no rejection, you are an African. If your complexion high…low [or] in between you are an African	*Blacks are Africans*
	Bonie M	Brown Girl in the Ring (1978)	Brown girl is sweet	-Brown girl in the ring tra la la la la . There is a brown girl in the ring, she looks like a sugar in the plum, plum	*Brown skin is sweet*
	Bob Marley	War (1976)	Racism and color ism cause wars	-Until the color of a man's skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes -Me say war.	*Equality brings peace*
DANCEHALL MUSIC	Barrington Levy	Black Roses (1983)	Black roses are special	-Black-Black roses in my garden. I got to stay and take good care of the roses. My garden, my garden is so special Black roses is blooming in my garden	*Blackness is special*
	Captain Barkey	Bleach On (2001)	Bleaching makes you Beautiful	-If you a bleach and bleaching fit you Bleach on, bleach on. If you a bleach and bleaching fit you. Bleach on, bleach on… you prettier than Mona Lisa	*Brown skin is beautiful*
	Richie Spice	Brown Skin (2007)	Love brown skin girl	-Brown skin-girl I want to wrap you and lock you in my arms and thing. Woman I love the vibes, I love the spice and I love the passion you bring	*Brown skin is nice*
	Queen Ifrica	Me nah rub (2008)	Reject bleaching	-A no every body a rub, a no everybody a rub, not because Grace and Jack and him granny a rub, no mean say everybody a rub…. Bleaching you fi stop it…me nah bleach	*Skin bleaching is dangerous*

Table 6
Race and Colorism in Selected Jamaican Poems

Poets	Poems	Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
Louise Bennett	Back to Africa (1947)	Repatriation	Den is weh you gwine Miss Mattie? Oh, you view de countenance, And between you and de Africans Is great resemblance	*Black Jamaicans are Africans*
Mutabaruka	Skins (1989)	Colorism and Racism	Skin is Black, skin is white, we live through the day, we live through the night … the color of the skin is not the right to might… Stop playing that skin trick I say.	*Skin politics is oppressive*
Joan Andrea Hutchinson	Dat Bumpy Head Gal (2003)	Black physicality	For if it kinky or straight, if we Black or white, transparent or opaque. Good make all a we for a special reason, An God don't make mistake	*The Black physicality is Perfect*
Lorna Goodison	Guinea Woman (1986)	Bloodline	But, great grandmother, I see your features blood dark appearing in the children of each new breeding. The high yellow brown is darkening down. Listen Children, it's great grandmother's turn.	*The intergenerational transmission of the Black physicality is good*

Table 7
Race and Skin Color Themes in the Castle of My Skin (1953)

High Order Themes	Low Order Themes
Colonial Ideology	Racism, Colorism, Miseducation
Social Stratification	Social Distance, Segregation, Social Deference, Social Buffer
Oppositional Identity	Humor, Verbal Attack, Physical Violence, Unionism, Political Action, Local Knowledge, Black Racial Identity

Table 8
Colonial Ideologies in the Castle of My Skin (1953)

Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
Racism	English officials were like that…they knew how to get their work done…They were civilized; The white men couldn't understand how they did it they looked curiously a if they were inspecting animals	*The civilized English are racially superior*
Colorism	The best looking girls in the village and in the whole island were those whose mother had consorted with white men. They were brown skin, soft, chocolate creamed with long hair that curled and flew in the wind; he told my mother…it was a pity I don't have her skin. With my hair and her skin everything would be alright. I could get a permanent appointment at Barclays Bank…my mother…was a very fair mulatto. I was brown; My people are low down nigger people…The myth had eaten through their consciousness like moths through the pages of ageing documents.	*Light skin is beautiful and promotes social mobility*
Miseducation	[At the school the children sang] God save our gracious King. Long live our noble King, God save the King; They had read about the battle of Hasting and William the Conqueror…And slavery was thousands of years before that. It was too far back for anyone to worry about teaching it as history; You'll never remember that they ever tell us 'bout Marcus Garvey; My mother who is a Sunday School teacher has explained it well. There is nothing for us to do, she tell me, but to rejoice in our bondage.	*British history and culture are important unlike African history and culture*

Table 9
Racism, Colorism and Social Stratification in the Castle of My Skin (1953)

Themes	Exemplars	Representations
Social distance	The English officials had an almost inhuman sense of the right distance to keep in human relations. It was noticeable they way they listened. You could never say you had their confidence. Never.	*The British are above their colonial subjects*
Segregation	We were now in Belleville where the white people lived, the streets bordered by palm tress called avenues; after the privileged spots had been sold they were going to sell the other spots to the villagers	*Blacks are not equal to Whites*
Social deference	Let the white gentl'man pass, someone says. The villagers move back, and the young man…make his way through…and give his order; I went on my knees, and I say, may almighty God bless you always Mr. Creighton; The head teacher blew his whistle and the whole school saluted as the inspector walked out.	*Blacks are below Whites*
Social buffer	Direct contact with the landlord might have helped towards some understanding of what the others, meaning whites, were like, but the overseer nominally was a mediator had functioned like a bridge which might be used, but not for crossing from one end to the other; The supervisor sat behind the narrow table, looking strict important and aggressive; [After the inspector departed the head teacher] went back to the platform and surveyed the school. His face was coarse and savage and sad.	*Blacks must stay in their place*

Table 10
Oppositional Identities to Racism and Colorism in the Castle of My Skin (1953)

Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
Humor	When the head[teacher] 'say bout the queen was a great queen…[Boy Blue asked] if the queen's bloomers was red, white and blue';	*The British is a joke*
Verbal attack	Send anybody you like to send, you mulatto shit-smelling son of a bastard. But I'd like you to come yuhself next time [and get me off the land].	*Mulattoes are traitors*
Physical violence	And there were one or two men in the village who wouldn't think twice about skinning the landlord alive; even if the fighting was carried out in the interest of the village, he didn't like the idea of the outsider assaulting [the landlord].	*Violence must be used against the White oppressors*
Unionism	But when the men refuse to go to work in the shippin' company where he got business he say he see trouble coming…'twus the first time anything 'o the kind ever happen and from then he wusn't himself.	*Black collective action is power*
Political action	The year after [Mr. Slime] left the school he won his seat in the general election with a great majority; There was nothing the landlord could do to reverse the other's power.	*Local people must have political power*
Local knowledge	I see the purchase of the tribes on the silver sailing vessels, some to Jamaica, Antigua, Grenada, some to Barbados and the island of oil and the mountain tops…Christopher followed his mistake; The queen freed some of us but most of us are still slaves.	*Africans must know their history and control their destiny*
Black racial identity	He had found something to cradle his deepest instincts and emotions. He was a Negro and he was proud. Now he could walk in the sun or stand on the highest hill and proclaim himself the Blackest evidence of the white man's denial of conscience.	*I am proud to be Black*

Table 11
Demographics of the Skin Bleachers

Gender	Education	Occupation	Class	Age	Length of Time Bleaching	Money Spent on Bleaching
Female	High School	Unemployed	Lower	49	1 year	$1,500 per month
Female	Junior High	Vendor	Lower	32	5 years	$1,080 per month
Female	High School	Unemployed	Lower	31	13 years	$10, 000 per month
Female	High School	Unemployed	Lower	18	4 years	$1000 per month
Male	High School	Vendor	Lower	25	5 years	$ 600 per month
Male	High School	Janitor	Lower	23	3.5 years	$1000 per month
Male	Junior High	Unemployed	Lower	23	0.17 years	$450 per month
Male	High School	Unemployed	Lower	19	5 years	$135 per month
				M =27.5 SD =10.02	M=4.5 SD=3.8	M=$1,970.60

N=8 US $1.00 = JAM $80.00

Table 12
Skin Bleachers' Race and Skin Color Images

Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
Race relations	if you work wid (with) the Chinese them disrespect you; the Chinese and the white people them-some of them is racist; everybody live good; we don't have no problem; there is no way you can dis[respect] a white man [down]town-you probably get dead	*The is a racial divide* *There is racial unity*
Racial Status	Well me know me respect the white them more… [like] the Chinese them help them one another; people respect Chinese more; the white people them and the Chinese get treated differently; the white people them get the most respect; Black people have the least respect	*Whites and Chinese united and have high status* *Blacks are divided and have low status*
Racial power	[Black people run Jamaica] in a the dancehall way, with the hustling and them way there on the street; Jamaican Blacks have the least money; Black have money but Chinese take it over; Chinese have the most business; Chinese have the most money; The whites run Jamaica	*Blacks have cultural power* *Chinese and Whites have economic power*
Intra-racial schism	[The Chinese and White] them no live bad with then one another like Black people; Black fight against Black; Blacks killing them one another; Black deal with Black like animal	*Black disunity*
Colorism	Them have a higher color; some just too Black to bleach	*Light skin has high social status and prestige*

Table 13
Reasons for Skin Bleaching

Reasons	Exemplar s	Representation
Have facial pimples	Some little bumps come up on my skin so when I use the bleaching cream it take out the bumps and lighten out me face; [When mi shave bumps come.]	*Bleaching cures pimpled skin*
Want to be beautiful	Me like to bleach because it make me look pretty; Me look good when me brown	*Light skin is beautiful*
Have dark skin/want light complexion	I don't like dark…When me Black nobody don't see me…When you dark you lock up and nobody don't see you; I want brown, not white, just have a light complexion; the sun burn me and me skin get Black…so me just start rub; to maintain a higher color	*Dark skin is ugly*
Attract a partner	Man love browning so them run go bleach them body. Them boyfriend no want if them Black so them bleach them body; The one that bleach win the man; [is just a flavor thing. The girl them love it; You get a whole heap a girls	*Light skin is sexy and attractive*
Peer influence	Them follow people; follow me follow [friends]; Me see everybody a do it and me feel good when me do it; from me small me hear them a talk 'bout it; me a bleach 'cause mi have crew name fancy face and the whole a mi friend them face brown	*It is alright to bleach like others*
Bleaching is a popular style	A the style now in a Jamaica-everybody a bleach…all pickney (children) me see a bleach; from me little and a bleach everybody me see a bleach;	*Bleaching is socially acceptable*
It's a fashion	It's all about the flavor fashion	*Bleaching is fashionable*
Criminal disguise	men wanted by police and change them appearance	*Bleaching is a disguise for criminals*

Table 14
Skin Bleaches' Perceptions of the Risks of Skin Bleaching

Risks	Exemplars	*Representations*
Death	Me have a friend who died from it…bleach eat out her cell them inside. She get cut and it couldn't stitch…The doctors tell her to stop and she bleach same way… and the second time she admit [to the hospital] she just dead; Them say it kill people; Me hear say people died from bleaching cream	*Skin bleaching kills*
Pain	It make you feel pain when you wake up in a the morning. You feel like somebody did a beat you up last night	*Skin bleaching hurts*
Stress	It stressful still sometimes	*Skin bleaching is stressful*
Skin Problems	It burn up you skin; It give you fungus; it burst you [skin] up; Some of them get boils on them body; it make you skin thin out; cuts can't stitch; It mash up them skin	*Skin bleaching damages skin*
Weigh Loss	It suck you out. You know if you fat and you bleach you body you get mawga (meager) and crawny (frail)	*Skin bleaching makes you slim*
Nausea	Sometimes you bleach and you walk in the sun you feel dizzy like you a go drop down	*skin bleachingcan make you dizzy*
Social rejection	Some girls say them no want no man who a bleach	*Some people hate bleaching*
None	It no do me nothing; From the time me a do it, it no give me disease	*Skin bleaching is safe*

Table 15
Representations of Selected Product Names

Type of Products	Name of Products	Themes	*Representations*
Cream	African Formula Black Cream; Black and White Bleaching Cream; Civic Cream; Crusade Cream; Facial Fade Lightening Cream; Hand and Body lightening Cream; Leg Fade Cream; Lemon Skin Toning Cream; Metasol Medicated Skin Lightening Cream; Miki Skin Lightening Cream; Mud Cream; Nadinola Cream; Prosane Cream; Symba Cream; Ultra Cream;	lightens, fades, tones	*Skin bleaching makes the face, skin and body better*
Soap	Crusade Soap; Metasol Medicated Soap; Sulphur Soap Roldan; Symba Soap; Ultra Glow Cleansing Bar;	Medicate, cleanse	*Skin bleaching heals and purifies the skin*
Stick	Knee and Elbow Lightening Stick	Lighten	*Skin bleaching lightens dark knees and elbows*
Gel	Facial Fading Gel;	Fades	*Skin bleaching fades dark faces*
Lotion	Cocoa Butter Skin Lightening Lotion	Lighten	*Skin bleaching lightens the skin*
Cleanser	Ambi Even Foaming Cleanser	Cleanse	*Skin bleaching cleanse the skin*

Table 16
Demographics of Focus Group Participants

Gender	Education	Occupation	Class	Age
Female	Postgraduate	Civil Servant	Middle	40
Female	High school	Accounting Clerk	Middle	33
Female	College	Librarian	Middle	28
Male	College	Auditor	Middle	45
Male	College	Teacher	Middle	42
Male	Postgraduate	Civil Servant	Middle	35
Male	Postgraduate	Civil Servant	Middle	26
Male	High School	Unemployed	Lower	26
Male	University	Civil Servant	Middle	24
				M= 33.2 SD=7.7

N=9

Table 17
Racial Images of the Focus Group

Themes	Exemplars	Representations
Racial power	Whites-they own the majority of the resources of the country-them run the country; how the society is organized economically doesn't favor Blacks; Blacks don't own the means of production.	*Whites control Jamaica*
Effects of slavery	There are some things that are lingering from slavery like the supremacy White skin color; from colonial days the whites, Chinese and Indians have the upper hand; A modern time now-slavery no affect me- it affect my grandparents but me no know nothing 'bout slavery	*The supremacy of white skin is the legacy of slavery* *Slavery doesn't affect us now*
Race relations	The few friends who are not of my race-things are cordial	*The racial groups live in peace*
Social mobility	We have more Blacks who are gaining influence; We are not excelling as Blacks because of ourselves and the system;	*Blacks are moving up but there are individual and systemic obstacles*
Black problem	Black people-we tend not to look out for our own; We are just not united…some of us would take the White because them have light skin; It is our won who sell us into slavery;	*Blacks are divided*
Black solidarity	It is about helping out people that you share certain things with and I am saying Black skin color; I am a racist so I am going to pick the Black man; if we do something to help the Black man, why apologize for it?	*Blacks must unite*
Race doesn't matter	There is no White person in a Jamaica right now-all a we Black, no care how you skin would a look brown; A no Black man time now or red man time a just people time now;	*People matters not race*
Racial status	The White man comes first, Syrian, Indian and Chinese almost equal in terms of economic and racial status. The fourth-the majority of Black people are at the bottom.; Black man have the least status-Black man no want to work for what him have-but just thief and rob;	*Blacks have the least racial status* *Non-Blacks have higher racial status*

Table 18
Skin color Images of the Focus Group

Themes	Exemplars	*Representations*
Family	I have son-he was born pale…eventually he got darker but his mothers family who are very light-skinned…are no a happy as they use to be; my sister is lighter so she got more privileges; I got darker as I got older and my grandfather said when you did born you did brown and pretty; My mother use to say anything too Black no good.	*Families prefer light skin relatives*
Schools	In the classroom the lighter skinned children get the push ahead; a brown student a higher color student, brown skin and higher color synonymous; A Chinese man child pass exam for a school and base on the location and the Black people he did let his child attend.	*Light skin students treated better in schools*
Relationships	Some people are influenced by their parents as to the type of mate they should go with-someone with a lighter skin to compliment their dark skin.	*light skin partners are better*
Police	The police stop him and he police ask him where him live and never intend to ticket him but to get some money. The police stop me several times and them aggressive because of my [dark] skin color and my low economic background.	*police discriminate against poor dark skinned citizens*
Skin color unimportant	Sometimes the brown man is poorer than the Black person in a lot of cases; It is what the person is-if they are loving-if they have the qualities that you are looking for. Is not about Black or brown or white. Police stop you base on how you dress and not no whether you White, pink or yellow; Once you Black and have money color no really matter.	*People's personal qualities, their abilities and the amount of money they have matters*

Table 19
The Colorized Reasons for Skin Bleaching in the Focus Group's Conversations

Reasons	Exemplars	*Representations*
Mental pathology	Them sick in a them head; It is a cultural mental thing; browning is instilled in the minds a some people; I think it is a lack of self-esteem	*Skin bleachers hate themselves*
Better treatment	Them bleach to get brown and hence treated better; them bleach to get praises; Them bleach to be more accepted	*Light-skinned people are treated better than dark skin people*
Light skin better	Being light skin is better	*Light skin is better than dark skin*
Toning	Some use it to tone the skin	*Toning lightens the skin*
Beauty	To appear more beautiful	*Light skin is beautiful*
Dancehall	Buju Banton have the song that him want a browning; Buju Banton sing for Black woman him realize the controversy over browning	*Dancehall music promotes light skin*
To be popular	It is something that is easily accessible; bleaching has become the ghetto norm; For the bartender and dancer is who is dark them bleach to be in the limelight	*Skin bleaching is socially accepted*
Social mobility	They think this will get them ahead; them bleach to get ahead	*Light skin facilitates social access*
Find a partner	They bleach in order to get a man; Young guys bleach because they want a girl.	*Light skin is sexy and attractive*
Survival	Its wanting to get by, it is survival	*Bleaching is survival*

Figure 1
Nadinola Skin Bleaching Cream Advertisement

Look how men flock around

the girl with the clear, bright, Nadinola-light complexion

on't let a dull, dark complexion rob you
f romance. Don't let oiliness, big pores,
lackheads cheat you of charm. Try
'ADINOLA Bleaching Cream. Nothing—
ut *nothing*—will improve your com-
lexion faster, in more different ways!

FOR OILY SKIN—*Nadinola Deluxe is naturally. Brightens skin. Imparts shine at the same time.*

ffective but oh, so gentle! NADINOLA con-
ains *wonder-working* A-M, a medicated
gredient which works deep down *within*
e skin to brighten and lighten it,
mbat blackheads and externally
used pimples. Yet NADINOLA is so
***nd* to your skin, we positively guar-**
ntee it! NADINOLA, Paris, Tenn., U.S.A.

FOR DRY SKIN—*The original Nadinola is enriched with fine cosmetic oils to relieve dryness.*

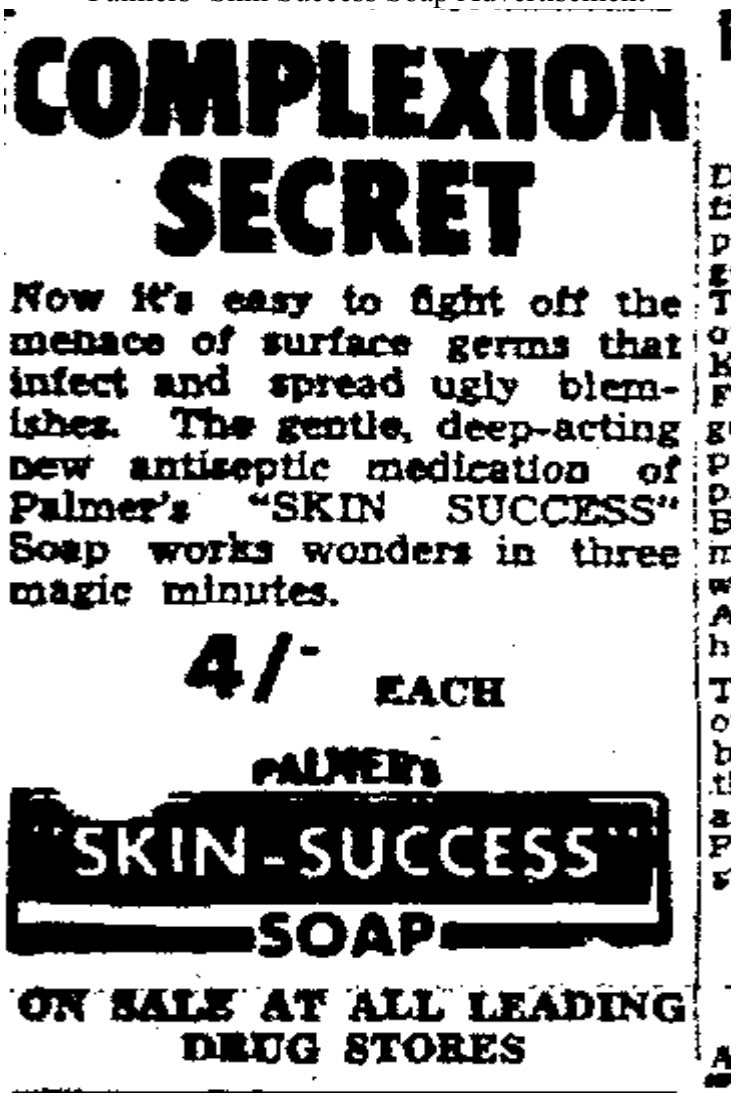
NADINOLA BLEACHING CREAM

Distributors

E. W. Abrahams & Sons — 72 Lawn St. Tel: 22600

Daily Gleaner September 30, 1960. Page 16

Figure 2
Palmers' Skin Success Soap Advertisement



Daily Gleaner January 20, 1960. Page 20

Figure 3
Nutrine Beauty Aids Advertisement

NOW... Your Beauty Needs More Care!

Nutrine

BEAUTY AIDS

...to keep you lovely all summer through!

Take the best care of your beauty during these warm Summer months. Beautify your hair... Protect your skin from sun, rain and wind...make-up to perfection with these essentials.

- **Cold Cream**
- **Cleansing Cream**
- **Mud Massage**
- **Brilliantine**
- **Lather Oil Shampoo**
- **Hair Lacquer**
- **Massage Cream**
- **Liquifying Cream**
- **Lemon Bleach Pack**
- **Tar Oil**
- **Ocean Foam Shampoo**
- **Hand Lotion**

LESLIE H. MOODIE

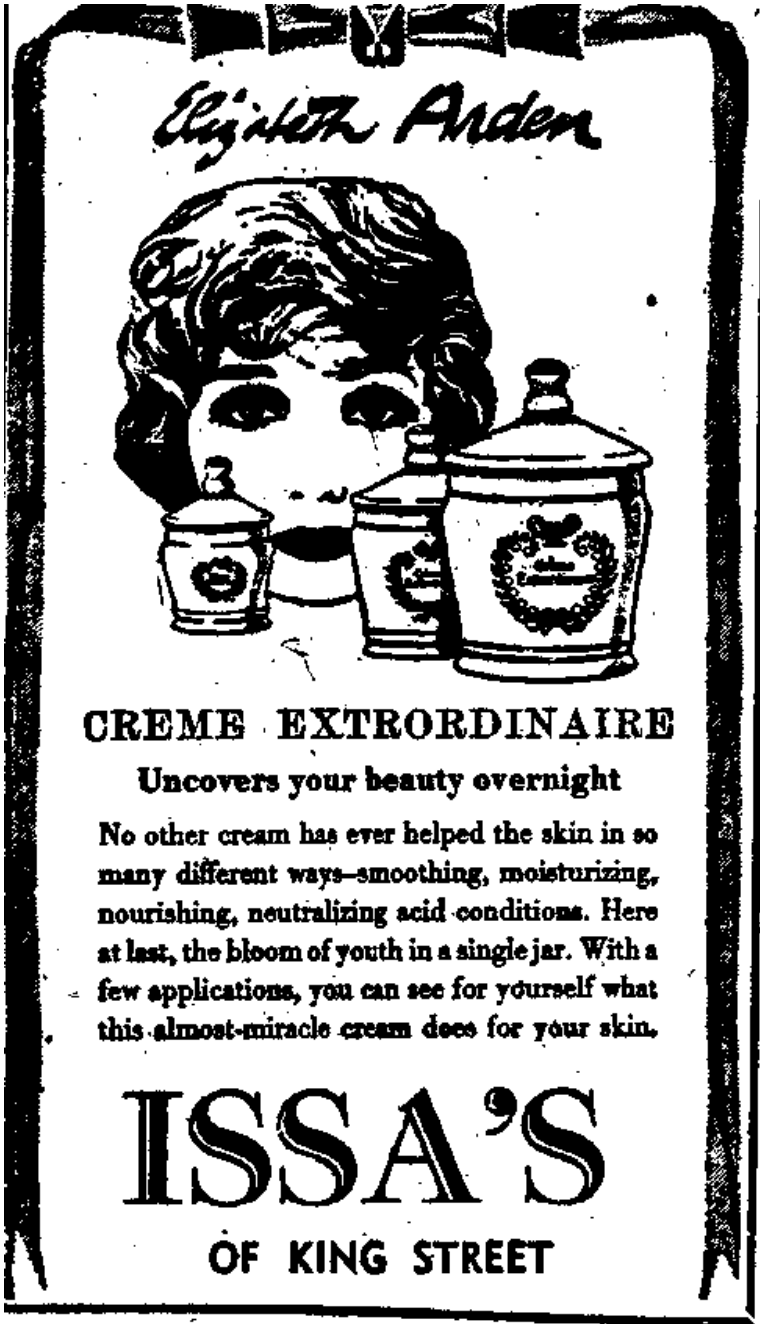
52a Church Street — Phone 3776

Daily Gleaner Monday September 1, 1952. Page 2

Figure 4
Valmor Product Company Advertisement

Daily Gleaner October 10, 1953. Page12

Figure 5
Elizabeth Arden Crème Extraordinaire Advertisement



. Daily Gleaner May 18, 1959. Page 14

Figure 6
Posner's Skintona Advertisement

Available In Jamaica
At Better
Cosmetic Counters!

Agents:

LESLIE H. MOODIE

[illegible] Church Street — Phone 3776

Daily Gleaner- date and page number illegible

Figure 7
Golden Peacock Advertisement

Beauty comes *with* care! Care for your skin *with* —

GOLDEN PEACOCK
BLEACH CREAM

Available at
COMMUNITY STORE
And other leading stores

ALBERT CHANG & Co. Ltd.
(# illegible) King Street — Phone 3058 P.O. Box 177

Daily Gleaner, September 1957. Page 4

Figure 8
Helena Rubenstein Beauty Preparations Advertisement

For New Radiant Beauty!

Use Famous

helena rubinstein

BEAUTY PREPARATIONS

★ **PASTEURIZED FACE CREAM SPECIAL** Cleanses, revives, soothes and beautifies normal and dry skin **8/-** & **12/6** jar.

★ **PASTEURIZED FACE CREAM.** Cleanses, keeps the skin clear and radiant. Ideal for oily, pimpled or blemished skins **10/-** jar.

★ **"APPLE BLOSSOM" CLEANSING CREAM.** Removes instantly dust, dirt and impurities. Bring new vitality and beauty to every skin ..... **10/-** jar.

★ **BLEACHING CREAM.** Excellent for tan, freckles and sallowness ..... **7/-** jar.

★ **PORE WASHING CREAM.** Work in with cotton wool. Massage well into skin. Rinse and dry ..... **10/-** jar.

★ **MEDICATED CREAM.** For spots and acne-blemished skin ..... **7/-** jar.

★ **GRECIAN ANTI-WRINKLE CREAM.** Nourishes and youthifies dry, lined skin **7/-** jar.

★ **"ESTROGENE" HORMONE OIL.** This rejuvenating oil, scientifically prepared from rich natural estrogene extracts and vitamin products, maintains beauty by retarding ageing effects. Apply each night after cleansing ..... **21/-** bot.

★ **REFINING LOTION.** Refines pores, checks oiliness, corrects red veins **12/6** bot.

★ **ANTI-WRINKLE LOTION.** For sensitive skins and tired eyes ..... **7/-** bot.

★ **SKIN TONING LOTION.** Braces tissues, closes pores and prevents fine lines and oiliness ..... **7/-** bot.

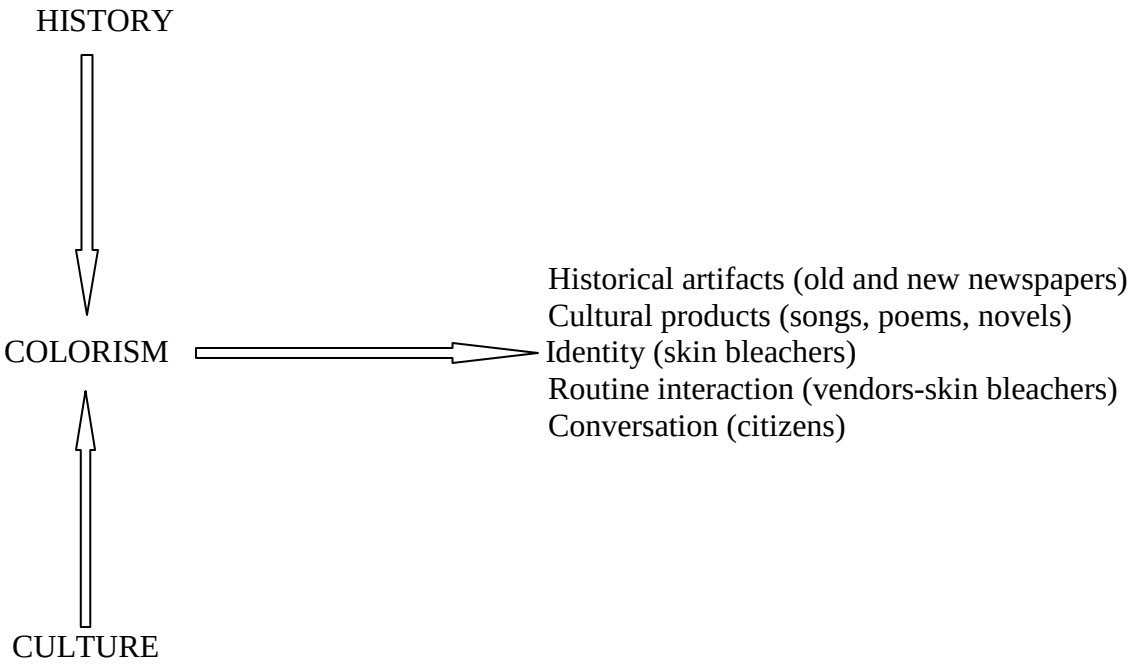
Exclusively At — Jamaica Obtainable In

ISSA'S
Kingston's Smart Shop

TELEPHONE 4651

Sunday Gleaner September 19, 1954. Page 3

Figure 9
Research design



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