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"Orange Is the New Black": The Skin-Tanning Phenomenon and Its Influence on Perceptions of Race, Class, and Gender

Madeleine Polovick

The College of Wooster, mpolovick17@wooster.edu

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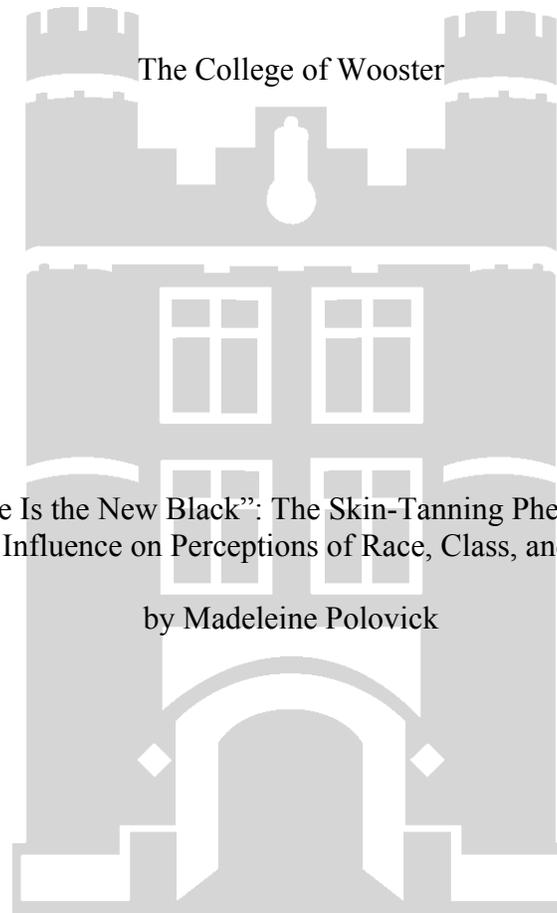
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“Orange Is the New Black”: The Skin-Tanning Phenomenon
and Its Influence on Perceptions of Race, Class, and Gender

by Madeleine Polovick

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Senior Independent Study Thesis

THE COLLEGE OF

Supervised by: Anne Nurse

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
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WOOSTER

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

This research paper examines how skin tanning attitudes and behaviors influence our perceptions of race, class, and gender. I also focus on White people and the possible relationship between racial bias and favorable opinions of tanned skin among this population; there is currently no research on this. This study is pertinent because within the last century tanned skin has become a beauty standard in Western society and People of Color continue to face discrimination on the basis of skin color. Additionally, various populations in Western society are pressured to engage in this behavior and to conform to standards, such as women and individuals of lower socioeconomic status (SES). Data was conducted with college students at a small liberal arts school in the Midwest in two phases. The first phase of data collection involved an online survey on tanning attitudes and behaviors, and the second, an Implicit Association Test (IAT) on racial bias administered only to White students. My results indicated that women tan more frequently than men do; that lower socioeconomic status individuals tan more frequently than higher SES individuals; and that there is likely no correlation between racial bias and tanning attitudes and behaviors.

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“If it was so honorable and glorious to be black,
why was it the yellow-skinned people
among us had so much prestige?”

-Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942)

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Why are you always sitting out here in the sun?” my host aunt, Coumba, asked me one afternoon; I was sitting on the rooftop of the apartment where my host family in Thiaroye, Senegal lived. I spent many afternoons up there when I was not teaching at the elementary school nearby. I liked the roof because I could have some solitude to write in my journal while being outside. The latter I loved because I was fond of watching people go about their day down on the street below, but also because writing on the rooftop allowed me to tan at the same time. I replied to Coumba’s question, “*parce que je veux bronzer*”—because I want to tan. She did not seem to take to my answer, telling me that I was going to get darker if I spent more time in the sun. I told her that was okay because I liked being tan.

A few weeks prior to my interaction with Coumba, I was waiting with two of my Senegalese friends for a bus to take us to the beach. While we waited, I stepped out from the large, green trees that were shielding us from the blistering sun, figuring that I might as well ‘work on my tan’ while we waited. I was only in the sun for a few moments when my Senegalese friends asked why I was standing in the sun, advising me to move into the shade. As with Coumba, I explained that I wanted to tan; they told me that I would have all day to be in the sun, that it would be bad if I stayed under the sun’s rays for too long and got darker as a result.

* * *

Before I embarked for Senegal I purchased several books to bring with me during the two months that I would be teaching in Thiaroye, a ghetto of Dakar. One book was about colorism that I grabbed on a whim and at the last minute, titled *The Color Complex (Revised): Skin Color Politics in a New Millennium* (Russell-Cole, Wilson, and Hall 2013). Were it not for my spur-of-the-moment decision to purchase this book I do not believe that I would have devised this study,

let alone even conceived of my research questions. *The Color Complex* introduced me to an entirely new world of prejudice that I had never known that existed: discrimination based on skin tone with preference given to lighter skin. As I read the book I began to more frequently identify instances of skin color prejudice within Senegal, as well several that I could recall from my life in the United States, such as the popular trend of young Black people proclaiming online that they are on “Team Light-Skin” or “Team Dark-Skin”. I was astounded that I had never been aware of this historical and cross-cultural prejudice.

I could not stop thinking about the contrast between myself, an individual from the Occident, who wanted to be more tan and my host aunt and Senegalese friends telling me that I should not do so. The moments that I shared with those women talking about skin tanning, in combination with what I was concurrently reading about colorism, sparked the beginning of my intense reflection upon the stark differences of how different societies throughout the world assess skin tone. These thoughts were ceaseless and churned in my mind, and after I returned from Senegal they were magnified by a continued exposure to colorism during the semester that I spent abroad in Rabat, Morocco. The aggregate of these experiences was an intense contemplation about why the Western world values tanned skin as greatly as it does, given that People of Color throughout the world continue to be discriminated against on the basis of their skin tone.

* * *

The preferential treatment of lighter skin tones, or colorism, as coined by Alice Walker (1983), is a principal element of my research. Since humans shifted to agrarian ways of life a light-skin bias emerged as the result of labor and class division (Russell-Cole et al. 2013). These divisions remained pertinent to many societies throughout history, for example European nobles

had much lighter skin than the peasants who were darker skinned. Labor and class divides were conflated because these nobles were wealthy enough to pay peasants to labor outdoors for them and thus could live a leisurely life indoors. Therefore, skin color became a trait that easily identified class (Russell-Cole et al. 2013). This shows that colorism is both historic and cross-cultural. While colorism still persists in the modern-day across the globe, the skin-tanning phenomenon presents an interesting twist to the long-established skin color prejudice.

Within the last century-and-a-half, tanned skin has been re-constructed from a symbol of lower status and disgrace (Russell-Cole et al. 2013) to one of prestige, greater attraction, and is generally sought after as a desirable physical trait (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis, Lowe, and Snetselaar 2009; Chung et al. 2010). When working-class jobs moved indoors during the Industrial Revolution, tanned skin lost its social recognition as a mark of the lower class. With the help of fashion trends, predominantly Coco Chanel in the 1920s, the upper class quickly adopted tanned skin as a signifier of their elite status, endowing tanned skin with symbolic capital (Jablonski 2012). While the majority of people in Western countries began to tan their skin and quickly began to recognize it as a standard of beauty, however, the naturally darker skin tones on People of Color remained to be associated with negative characteristics (Hunter 2005; Glenn 2009; Russell-Cole et al. 2013).

White, Western global dominance has altered the significance and symbolism that is associated with purposefully tanned skin so that it has become incorporated into hegemonic social and beauty ideals. Purposefully tanned skin is different from the naturally dark skin of People of Color, meaning that it is acquired through means such as sunbathing, going to indoor tanning salons, or using cosmetics or other artificial products to darken the skin; this type of tanned skin has become a highly valued beauty standard that is exclusively available to White

people. Our standards of beauty have been modified to reflect Whiteness, creating the normalization of and desire for White traits such as blond hair and blue eyes. The proximity of purposefully tanned skin to Whiteness is one of the reasons to which People of Color are unable to benefit from its social value.

Tanned skin has also become a physical trait that individuals are able to utilize and manipulate as a way to control their impression management. This means that individuals who wish to appear more attractive, healthy, or socially desirable overall, are able to use tanned skin as a way to control how they present themselves to society. We observe women engaging in skin tanning behaviors more frequently (Robinson, Rigel, and Amonette 1997b; Banerjee, Campo, and Greene 2008; Yoo and Kim 2011) most likely because they are more pressured to conform to standards of beauty (Burton, Netemeyer, and Lichtenstein 1995). Additionally, it is possible that individuals of lower socioeconomic status (SES) might use skin tanning as a way to present themselves as being of higher SES. These tanning attitudes and behaviors spanning race, class, gender are a few that I will explore in this paper.

This research paper aims to examine how the skin-tanning phenomenon affects our perceptions of race, class, and gender. I will do this by first exploring literature on skin tanning attitudes and behaviors, specifically reporting on skin tanning in relation to: health knowledge, gender, attractiveness, media images, and socioeconomic status. I will then apply multiple theories to analyze tanning from different perspectives. These theories are: appropriation (Ashley and Plesch 2002; Rogers 2006), Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital (2013), Goffman's theories of impression management ([1956] 2013) and stigma (1963), Courtenay's theory of hegemonic masculinity and gendered health behaviors (2000), and Greenwald and Krieger's

theory of implicit bias (2006). I will then describe my methods of data collection and report on my findings. The final chapter contains conclusions and the social implications of my research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There have been many studies conducted on attitudes and behaviors of skin tanning. In this literature review I focus on skin tanning attitudes and behaviors in relation to five themes: health knowledge, gender, attractiveness, media images, and socioeconomic status. I chose these themes because they appeared to be the salient in how many people perceive suntanned skin, as well as how they choose to engage with tanning behaviors. I also suspected that intersecting factors such as gender and SES would influence responses.

HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Numerous studies have been conducted on tanning attitudes and behaviors and how knowledge of health risks affects individuals' perceptions of tanned skin. Despite persistent efforts by medical professionals and campaigns to make known the dangers of skin tanning (Robinson et al. 1997b), research suggests that attitudes towards skin tanning drive its practice, not knowledge of health risks (Miller et al. 1990; Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009). Suntanned skin has become a well-established signifier of social status, as well as of perceived health and greater attractiveness (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2010). Current research argues that the majority of people are unable to reconcile tanned skin's social value with the harmful health risks that it brings (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Robinson et al. 1997a; Dennis et al. 2009). It is evident that changing the behavioral patterns of skin tanning will take more than campaigns publicizing its health risks.

While tanning outdoors—colloquially referred to as sunbathing—is still popular, indoor tanning with UV radiation has become an increasingly favored method to darken the skin. This is because it is cheap, convenient, and is an outlet to socialize (Beasley and Kittel 1997). A study conducted by Dennis, Lowe, and Snetselaar (2009) found that participants who reported a belief

in the importance of tanning actually had greater knowledge of the health risks of artificial UVR tanning and sunbathing. Their findings were the result of a cross-sectional survey conducted at a university in the Midwest with sorority or fraternity members. The 162 participants, predominantly female and white, were chosen because the researchers believed they would be strongly influenced by their peers to tan, and specifically to use indoor tanning beds. The survey contained demographic information, true and false questions regarding knowledge of health risks related to tanning, and a survey on attitudes of and behaviors towards tanning. The researchers found that participants who assigned positive traits to tanned skin also had high exposure rates to artificial UVR. They concluded that to combat this phenomenon, behavior-changing techniques must be employed in combination with targeting high-risk populations. This might include campaigns that portray tanned skin as unhealthy, emphasizing safer or sunless methods of obtaining a tan (such as using cosmetics), and having a strong focus on cancer prevention efforts.

It is paradoxical that tanned skin is a socially constructed signifier of perceived health while in reality it has detrimental effects to a person's health. Between 1960 and 1980 the rates of skin cancer quadrupled (Beasley and Kittel 1997), suggesting that the levels to which people tan are not slowing down. In fact, a study conducted by Beasley and Kittel (1997) found that frequent tanners are actually "more likely to engage in healthy behaviors such as regular exercise," (p. 373) further enforcing the contradiction between perceiving tanned skin as healthy and acting upon this belief by tanning. Beasley and Kittel conducted research in a Midwestern city with 137 participants who were frequent patrons at a local indoor tanning salon. Prior to entering the tanning salon the participants, all Caucasian and with ages ranging from 17 to 66, were given a questionnaire about tanning attitudes, knowledge of commercial tanning salon regulations, and the perceived influence that salon regulations would have on their tanning

behavior. Similar to Dennis et al's (2009) study, Beasley and Kittel concluded that changing attitudes of and behaviors towards tanning would require more than just regulation because the immediate convenience of indoor tanning and the feelings of relaxation, socialization, and general well being that it facilitates outweighs the long-term health risks. As a result, they suggest that campaigns against skin tanning will be more effective by focusing on the "negative, long-term effects of UV exposure [than] warnings that stress health risks." (p. 385)

The likelihood of using indoor UVR tanning beds is increased as a result of its social perception as being a healthier alternative to sunbathing (Beasley and Kittel 1997). The convenience of indoor-tanning salons gives patrons a quicker way to achieve their desired skin color. Because the health risks of skin tanning are not immediate people may be able to put them out of their minds. People therefore are more inclined to tan their skin because the immediate desired outcome outweighs the distant possible threat. This inclination to continue tanning while disregarding its potential health risks could also be likely rooted in resistance to or denial of the dangers of tanning (Miller et al. 1990).

An additional consideration as to why people continue to tan despite knowledge of its negative health effects is reactance theory, as discussed by Stephen Worchel and Jack W. Brehm (1971). They suggest that when presented with two options and the freedom to choose one is threatened, people are more likely to pick the threatened one simply because they want to exercise their freedom of choice (Worchel and Brehm 1971). Reactance theory applies to the skin-tanning phenomenon: the knowledge of its health risks is perceived as a threat to the freedom of choice to engage or not engage with skin tanning behaviors. So, ultimately, people choose to continue tanning as a reaction to this threat because they want to exercise their freedom of choice.

Worchel and Brehm came to this conclusion with the data from two experiments that used the manipulation of power to threaten participants' freedom of choice. The first experiment included 94 male participants from Duke University and was designed to study decision making under different power conditions. One participant was placed in a room with two confederates and all three read two case histories. Afterwards they discussed which case they would prefer to try to solve, culminating in a vote. The participant had the same number of votes as one of the confederates but the other had either a lower, equal, or higher number of votes. This elicited a no-threat or threat condition in which the participant would subconsciously alter their decision depending on the number of votes, as there was a majority number needed to make a decision. The confederates made several scripted interjections that were designed to manipulate decision-making by the participant. Worchel and Brehm observed that the results from this experiment supported reactance theory: when a participant's freedom to choose one of the alternatives was threatened they were more likely to make that choice.

One of the limitations of the literature on tanning is the demographics of participants in much of the research, especially that relating to perceived health. There has also been a focus on the White, female adolescent and college population (Broadstock, Borland, and Gason 1992; Jones and Leary 1994; Robinson et al. 1997a; O'Riordan et al. 2006). This could be because students are easily accessible, or because it is simply a common demographic to study for this topic. Alternatively, it could reflect the fact that young, White women disproportionately tan.

The research on the perceived health of suntanned skin provides an alarming look at our society. It demonstrates a widespread disconnect between what people consider to be unhealthy behaviors and an actual awareness and knowledge of them. What is more, the societal value of tanned skin has become so significant that it seems to trump the desire to be healthy. It is

people's attitudes of tanned skin, then, that drive their behaviors despite having knowledge that those behaviors are detrimental to their health.

GENDER

A number of demographic variables appear to have an effect on attitudes and behaviors of skin tanning. For example, research indicates that men and women have different skin tanning attitudes and behaviors, such as the types of practices used to suntan, frequency of tanning, and level of importance or perceptions of attractiveness placed on tanned skin (Robinson et al. 1997b; O'Riordan et al. 2006; Yoo and Kim 2011). Much of the literature on tanning involves a female, adolescent population (Robinson et al. 1997a; O'Riordan et al. 2006; Mahler et al. 2010; Dixon et al. 2014), which might be because "suntanned body images, body-tanning habits and norms develop during adolescence." (Yoo and Kim 2011:361) Some researchers believe that the difference between genders in tanning attitudes and behaviors stems from tanned skin being a sexually dimorphic trait (van den Berghe & Frost 1986; Frost 1988). Other researchers suggest that higher rates of tanning for women are related to the combination of men regarding tanned skin as more attractive and women wanting to appeal to men's desires (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008).

Gender is linked to a discrepancy between rates of skin tanning and knowledge of its health risks as found in a study by Robinson, Rigel, and Amonette (1997). They open their study with a discussion of the American Academy of Dermatology's attempts since 1983 to provide prevention programs for skin cancer and melanoma because their rates have been increasing. By using longitudinal data the researchers compare how awareness of skin cancer and tanning attitudes and behaviors changed over a decade, as well as then-current behaviors towards preventing skin cancer with sun protection behaviors.

Data was first collected from a national random sample of 1,012 people in 1986. The researchers used a 10-question survey, which they repeated in 1996 with 1,000 different participants. The sample size had nearly equal numbers of men and women; was 83 percent non-Hispanic Whites in 1986, which dropped to 76 percent in 1996; and included ages of 25 to 64 years old. The surveys asked attitudes towards health perceptions of tanned skin, behaviors of both intentionally procuring a tan and attempts to reduce sun exposure, and sun-related skin problems. The 1996 survey expanded on these questions by asking participants to classify their “skin type/sun sensitivity, their perceived risk of development of skin cancer, and personal or family history of skin cancer.” (p. 180) Additional questions asked if tanned skin looks better, the duration and times that participants spent outdoors, and the likelihood of sun-protective behavior. The 1996 survey also used a randomized split-sample where some surveys asked about ‘your skin’ versus ‘the skin’, to see if personal relevance altered responses.

The researchers found that while there was an overall decrease in men and women perceiving tanned skin as healthy, both genders on average still perceived a tan as attractive. They observed that men were 1.5 times more likely than women to think that people looked better with a tan; that they had more outdoor exposure time than women; and that they reported more instances of having a sunburn. Comparatively, women in their study were 1.8 times more likely than men to be aware of skin cancer information, but were 1.5 times more likely to intentionally tan and three times more likely to use artificial light to tan.

Robinson, Rigel, and Amonette’s finding of the differences of tanning attitudes and behaviors between genders supports the results of Banerjee, Campo, and Greene’s study (2008). The primary intent of their study was to investigate differences between men and women’s opinions of women who are tan. They also wanted to determine whether or not tanning behaviors

are a true reflection of attitudes surrounding tanned skin, specifically that it is regarded as an attractive physical trait. Research was conducted with 362 male and female, predominantly White students aged 19 to 25, at a large northeastern university. Participants were put into a room with up to 10 others and given a survey to complete individually. The survey included an image of a female whose skin ton was digitally manipulated by the researchers so as to appear with either light, medium, or dark skin depending on the copy of the survey. Participants were asked to answer questions concerning the woman in the photo's perceived attractiveness, health, height, and weight.

Banerjee, Campo, and Greene divided tanned skin into light, medium, and dark tones to determine if certain tones of tanned skin have an effect on men and women's perceptions of physical and interpersonal attractiveness, perceived health, and of height and weight of women. They chose to use tanned women as their research model because women have higher rates of tanning than men (Robinson et al. 1997b), and therefore are more likely to utilize tanned skin as an attractive trait. Their hypothesis was that both women and men would find a tanned female to be more physically and interpersonally attractive, healthier, taller, and thinner than a less tanned female.

Only the men's responses were statistically significant, demonstrating an overall preference for the dark-tanned female over then medium-tanned. Banerjee, Campo, and Greene found that their results contradict previous research that has shown a preference for medium-tanned skin over dark-tanned skin (Broadstock et al. 1992). They also found that the men viewed the darker-tanned women as thinner. Thinness, like suntanned skin, is also a social standard of beauty. With this knowledge they argue that: "if tanning provides a perception of thinness, then it follows that women, in particular, may be motivated to tan for the 'ideal image'." (p. 250)

They reason that women might tan more often than men because they believe men that find them more attractive that way; which, these perceptions of women by men were proven most likely accurate with their study.

The significance of men's perception of attractive traits as the driving force behind women's behaviors, but not the inverse, might be supported by the existence of sexual dimorphic traits. Research on sexual dimorphic traits among humans in the last several decades has come to suggest that skin color preference is a sexual dimorphic trait that has an effect on mate selection in humans (van den Berghe and Frost 1986; Frost 1988). One reason skin pigmentation became a sexual dimorphic trait may be because it is often discussed as a display of fertility and health (Darwin 1871; Van den Berghe and Frost 1986; Fink, Grammer, and Thornhill 2001). Fink, Grammer, and Thornhill's study (2001) examines previous theories of skin pigmentation as a sexual dimorphic trait by testing it.

The researchers begin their analysis with a discussion of the female body and how males deem the female body attractive or unattractive, especially when considering certain components of it such as facial texture and skin color. They incorporate findings from other papers such as Van den Berghe and Frost's study (1986), which hypothesizes a variety of reasons for the development of lighter skin as a sexual dimorphic trait for women. For example, the emergence of lighter skin in women during puberty contrasts with the darkening of women's skin during pregnancy or while taking contraceptive pills. This has come to create an association of lighter skin on women with youth and fertility.

Fink, Grammer, and Thornhill hypothesize that a female face with a smooth surface would be most attractive to men, and that lighter skin tones on women would also be attractive because they signify a higher fertility that is also associated with young adulthood. To test their

hypothesis they recruited 54 males from the University of Vienna at the Vienna Biocenter, in Vienna, Austria to analyze two sets of images. The images were of 20 randomly selected Caucasian women, ages 18 to 25 who were rated on their attractiveness in a previous study with a likert scale (Thornhill and Grammer 1999). These images were digitally altered so that they were standardized with all the facial features relative to the same center of gravity and were split into two groups. The photos in Set A were manipulated by size and orientation; these composites were then blended to create a singular photo to use for Set B. 27 men viewed Set A, and the other 27 men viewed Set B. The men viewed the images on a computer in a room by themselves and were asked to rate the photos with adjectives on a 7-point likert scale.

The researchers discovered that their findings did not support Van den Berghe and Frost's hypothesis that men were more attracted to lighter-skinned women, especially as linked to a sign of fertility, because their data showed a preference for women with darker skin (measured by color parameters that indicated a skin value based on blue and green in comparison to red components). Their data indicated a preference for the images of women who had a slightly reddish complexion, which they suggest to be affected by the view that suntanned skin is seen as healthy, a sign of greater social status, and one that can be attributed to "the luxury of leisure time." (p. 97)

These studies indicate that gender is related to fundamental differences in attitudes and behaviors towards skin tanning. Regardless of research that suggests that lighter skin on women is a sign of youth and fertility, men still find suntanned skin on women, specifically darker skin tones, as more physically attractive and healthy; this is an interesting finding considering that symbols of youth and fertility as traits for sexual selection should emulate health (Buss and Schmitt 1993) when juxtaposed with the skin tanning's detrimental health risks. The desire to

cater to men's perception of women as more attractive when tan provides possible reasoning as to why women have higher rates of skin tanning, despite their greater awareness of skin cancer and knowledge of sun prevention methods (Robinson et al. 1997b); Banerjee et al. 2008).

It should be noted that these studies of skin tanning in relation to gender are incredibly heteronormative. By basing perceptions of tanned skin on women by only using male participants or by referring to women's desire to have tanned skin as a means to attract men is founded in and perpetuates heteronormativity. While we do live in a society that is controlled by male and heterosexual hegemony, future studies on this topic would benefit by disregarding heterosexual behaviors as the only or main driving factor behind women and men's attitudes and behaviors.

ATTRACTIVENESS

Within the last century having tanned skin has become a social beauty norm because it is perceived as a more physically attractive and fashionable trait, as well as a signifier of prestige and healthiness (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2010). Various studies have been conducted that demonstrate the perception of suntanned skin as being more attractive (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2010; Mahler, Beckerley, and Vogel 2010). It should not be surprising then that the desire to tan is increased because "living up to social standards of attractiveness has important implications for an individuals' self-esteem." (Cox et al 2009:1) Suntanned skin has become a means for people to control their own attractiveness (Banerjee et al. 2008). People who have lower self-esteem and who consider themselves to be less attractive are able to use suntanned skin as a means to feel better because of suntanned skin's social value; this intensifies suntanned skin's social significance and perpetuates the standard of suntanned skin as attractive and a social beauty norm.

Chung et al (2010) set out to measure how purposefully tanned skin affects how people perceive attractiveness. They open their study by comparing data collected in 1988 and 2007 about tanning attitudes, showing that over the two decades, the percentage of respondents who believed that people look better with a tan jumped from 58 percent to 81 percent (Robinson, Kim, and Rosenbaum 2008). To conduct research for their study they first took photographs of 50 participants from Emory University, aged 21 to 35; the researchers did not indicate the race of their participants. These photos were uploaded onto the public website Hotornot.com where anyone is able to rate the photos on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most attractive. Every photo was given the pseudonym “Emory” and the location of Georgia. They remained on the website until at least 100 votes had been cast for each. This process was repeated a second time by the researchers taking down the photographs, digitally altering them by giving the people in the photos an artificial tan, and uploading them again on the website. There were five images of men who never received 100 votes, so they were discarded from the study.

Chung et al observed that out of the 45 photographs, the ratings of 30 of them improved after being given a tan. They conclude that because Hotornot.com is inherently measuring attractiveness, the people who use it are going to use social standards of beauty to rate the photos. In this case, people who use Hotornot.com will be more likely to give people in photos who appear to be more tan a higher rating. They reason that factors such as the media drive people to continue to tan and to regard it as “‘healthy’ and beautiful.” (p. 1654)

Cox et al (2009) examined the desire to abide by social conceptions of beauty in order to ease thoughts of mortality. They hypothesized that “engaging in appearance-based behavior can be understood...as an effort to live up to cultural standards of value in the service of managing the potential for anxiety associated with mortality awareness.” (p. 747) The authors used terror

management theory, which hypothesizes that an individual's self-esteem drives certain decisions that are adaptive or maladaptive.

The researchers conducted two experiments to analyze the situations under which individuals find tanned skin attractive. The first experiment was conducted at a large Midwestern university with 101 female psychology students. They chose to limit the sample to females based on previous research indicating that women are more likely to tan and are more likely to report self-esteem as a factor that drives their appearance (Pliner, Chaiken, and Flett 1990; Hillhouse et al. 1999). Participants answered questions regarding mortality salience; completed a word search and mood assessment; were presented with magazine articles that used images of celebrities to display either tanned, pale, or natural skin as the ideal look; and answered a survey of tanning intentions. They concluded that mortality salience only increased the desire to tan among participants who already valued physical attractiveness as a part of self-worth, and ultimately, that social standards of attractiveness like skin tone are malleable (Cox et al. 2009).

The second experiment occurred on a public beach where the researchers approached 53 White women and asked them if they would like to participate in a survey. These women answered the same questions as those in the first experiment in addition to questions regarding their future intentions to use sunscreen and which type of sun product they would prefer to receive from the researcher as an incentive (coded as different levels of SPF in sunscreen or tanning lotion). Cox et al observed that when participants were primed with mortality salience their association of attractiveness and fair skin increased the level of SPF selected, and they also indicated a greater chance of using sunscreen in the future. Overall they found that while people do want to conform to social standards of attractiveness, such as skin tone, they would shift their behavior when they are forced to consider their mortality. This observation contradicts previous

research on perceptions of health and skin tanning that show how the social significance of tanned skin overrides people's knowledge and awareness of the health risks of skin tanning (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Robinson et al. 1997a; Robinson et al., 1997b; Dennis et al. 2009).

To combat the perception of tanned skin as more attractive, Banerjee et al (2008) suggest that: "campaign efforts need to focus on normative approaches to changing tanning perceptions." (p. 250) Tanned skin has become a societal norm and as a result the attributes associated with it have also become normalized. By challenging the standards of beauty that are associated with tanned skin it will be easier to alter perceptions of tanned skin as a whole. Additionally, Banerjee et al suggests that because women's high rates of tanning are based on their desire to be attractive to males, campaigns should direct their efforts towards addressing the necessity for women to "keep themselves healthy and to not tailor their behaviors to attract males." (p. 250) They should also attempt to change men's perceptions of women with tanned skin so that they no longer consider it more attractive and desirable (Banerjee et al. 2008).

MEDIA IMAGES

Mass media has had a significant impact on the perception of tanning and tanned skin. For example, the media promotes skin cancer prevention campaigns and helps to spread knowledge about skin tanning health risks and sun protective behavior (Hay et al. 2009; Wakefield, Loken, and Hornik 2010; Dixon et al. 2014). However, research has shown that the media has also had a detrimental impact on these health efforts by furthering the perception that tanned skin is attractive and is an indicator of health (Mahler et al. 2010; Dixon et al. 2014). The portrayal of tans as healthy reaches a large population (Hay et al. 2009; Wakefield et al. 2010) and allows the media a great deal of power to create social standards of beauty (O'Riordan et al. 2006; Wakefield et al. 2010).

Given their exposure, celebrities have the power to popularize items and create trends. Mahler, Beckerley, and Vogel (2010) believe that models exemplify our standards of beauty, and, as a result, they control our beauty desires. Their study demonstrates that media imagery has helped in the perpetuation of tanned skin as a beauty ideal. They explain that the most common reason why people continue to expose themselves to ultra-violet light is because of the positive traits that are associated with tanned skin, going so far to describe it as an “appearance enhancement.” (p. 119) These kinds of standards of beauty develop from the internalization of media images. Mahler, Beckerley and Vogel hypothesized that if people were to see models without tans, they might change their views of tanning.

The researchers collected data using two experiments: the first was conducted at the University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos with 128 females between the ages of 18 and 30 who were predominantly Caucasian. Participants viewed one of two binders that contained 18 photographs of models: in one the models had skin that was not tan, and in the other the researchers altered the same photos so that the models had tanned skin. Participants also answered questions concerning how often they read magazines, their opinions of the models’ success in certain advertisements, and their attitudes towards tanning. The researchers found that participants who viewed the models without a tan had less positive attitudes towards tanning than those who viewed the models who had a tan.

Mahler, Beckerley, and Vogel conducted their second experiment with 169 female, primarily Caucasian undergraduate students at the same two universities. This experiment was identical to the first except that the images were taken directly from magazine advertisements and skin tone was not manipulated. Participants answered questions concerning the models’

appearance. Results from the second experiment displayed once again that viewing models with skin that is not tan correlates with less favorable attitudes of skin tanning, and vice versa.

Because they wanted to avoid sensitizing patients to the reality of their study—tanning attitudes—they did not collect baseline attitudes towards skin tanning for either experiment. As a result, they were unable to conclusively determine whether or not exposure to models with or without suntanned skin has a positive or negative effect on participants' perception of tanned skin. However, their findings from both experiments did support their hypothesis that exposure to models with out suntans would correlate to a less favorable perception of and importance placed on tanned skin.

Mass media is a double-edged sword: while it has the power to create the standard for and normalization of purposefully tanned skin, it also has the ability to spread information about tanning's harmful nature. Hay et al (2009) examined the effect that mass media has on shaping health beliefs and behaviors in their study. The researchers indicate that it is important to consider the Internet as a resource because Americans are increasingly using it for health information, especially for cancer-related information. They also point out the power of mass media, in “television, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet represent[s] promising channels for widespread dissemination of public health-oriented skin cancer risk and prevention information.” (Hay et al. 2009:784)

The researchers decided to examine how levels of media exposure in combination with demographic differences affect skin cancer beliefs and behaviors, and how the dissemination of health information through the media affects sun protection behaviors. They used data from a 2005 national probability survey of randomly selected American adults by the Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS). The sample had 1,633 participants, with nearly

equal numbers of males and females, and an age range of 18 to 69. Participants were predominately White but there was also a significant percentage (14.7 percent) of Hispanics. Participants were asked questions regarding their exposure to mass media outlets, their beliefs of skin cancer, its perceived causes and possible ways to prevent it, and how often they used skin protective behavior.

This study demonstrated that, while media exposure to health information on the Internet was greatest for the younger participants, older participants had more awareness and knowledge of skin cancer and its risks as well as higher rates of sun protective behavior. These findings were also true for non-Hispanic White participants with higher levels of education. Women were more exposed to health information through magazines/newspapers and television and were more likely to use sun protective behavior, but men had higher rates of wearing sun-protective clothing. The data also showed that participants who had searched on the Internet for both health and sun protective information in the last 12 months were more likely to use sunscreen and wear sun protective clothing.

In conclusion, the researchers argue that the continuation of health information in print media and television is important, as they reach a larger and more diverse population than the Internet. They also argue, however, that for the dissemination of skin cancer information and preventive behaviors the Internet is a good way to reach “Internet-savvy” audiences, such as younger people (Hay et al. 2009).

It should be noted that little research has been done on the effects of the media on skin tanning behavior. Instead, we primarily see research highlighting the media’s role in disseminating health information and its influence on skin cancer prevention campaigns (Saraiya et al. 2004; Kemp, Eagle, and Verne 2010; Wakefield et al. 2010; Cokkinides et al. 2012). Future

research would benefit by further examining the relationship between representations of tanned skin in the media and its possible influence on attitudes and behaviors of skin tanning.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Not very much research has been conducted on the influence of class or SES on tanning attitudes and behaviors. Instead, most of the research has focused on the association of SES with both the awareness and development of melanoma (Kerkpatrick, Lee, and White 1990; Clarke et al. 2010; Wich et al. 2010; Johnson-Obaseki et al. 2015). For example, a national survey in 1995 discovered that only 12 percent of Americans with less than a high school education knew that melanoma is skin cancer, compared to 52 percent of college graduates (D. Miller et al. 1996; Pollitt et al. 2012). Other reports take an intersectional approach and have combined SES with ethnicity to review the impact that those demographics have on incidence of melanoma (Zell et al. 2008; Wich et al. 2010).

Pollitt et al's study (2012) found that lower SES is correlated with decreased awareness of and preventative behaviors surrounding melanoma. While SES is typically an aggregate of variables such as education, occupation, and income level, it should be noted that the measure of SES in this study was strictly education level. They hypothesized that lower SES, as measured by education level, would be associated with a thicker melanoma at the time of diagnosis. From 2006 to 2009 they surveyed 566 patients who were within three months of a melanoma diagnosis at the Stanford University Medical Center, Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, and University of Michigan. These participants were between 18 and 99 years, were just slightly majority female (51.3 percent), and were predominantly White. Their education measurement for SES was broken down into high school/general education degree or less; associate or technical school degree; or college graduate or more. In addition to being asked about their attitudes,

perceptions, and awareness of melanoma and skin-self evaluation (SSE), participants were asked about access to health resources for skin cancer and physician/patient communication.

The researchers observed that lower SES correlated to less access to health care, which led to serious attitudes about melanoma, less knowledge of how to detect it, and reduced levels of communication with their physician about melanoma in general, including screening/detection. It is evident that SES is an incredibly significant factor that influences a person's likelihood of contracting melanoma and curing it. Pollitt et al specify that overall, lower SES is linked to "later stage melanoma at diagnosis, higher case-fatality rates, and decreased survival." (p. 4009) As mentioned earlier, the measure of SES in this study was only educational level so future studies would benefit by combining other demographics to better examine how SES affects awareness and preventative behaviors of melanoma.

Unlike the results of Pollitt et al (2012), a study by Clarke et al (2010) observed that a college education and higher household incomes for White Americans was actually a greater indicator of melanoma incidence rates. Unlike other studies that have shown that women tan more frequently than men (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008) Clark et al found that males in the highest 20% of neighborhoods in California ranked by SES had higher rates of melanoma. This is not necessarily correlated to the behavior of purposeful tanning, rather that it is a measure of general exposure to UV radiation. Overall they observed that higher-SES neighborhoods had greater rates of melanoma incidence. The researchers reasoned that this association was the result of individual behaviors of UV exposure that were short-term and high-intensity such as going to indoor tanning salons, spending leisure time outdoors, and taking vacations in sunny areas (Clark et al. 2010). They also reasoned that this correlation could be the result of a "cultural [preference] for tanned skin." (p. 2732)

While there is considerable research available on melanoma incidence and SES, future studies would benefit by examining the relationship between tanning attitudes and behaviors and SES. Other demographics such as gender and age have proven to have an effect on tanning attitudes and behaviors (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008; Hay et al. 2009). It is important to consider intersectional factors and how they might affect research. Therefore it would be advantageous for this topic of study to include research on the role that SES has on tanning attitudes and behaviors.

CONCLUSION

This literature demonstrates that many factors influence skin tanning attitudes and behaviors. It is evident that many people choose to suntan because it is widely considered to be a strong indicator of attractiveness and health (Miller et al. 1990; Chung et al. 2010), and that overall it has become adopted as a standard of beauty (Miller et al. 1990; Yoo and Kim 2012). Even though skin tanning poses an enormous threat to a person's health (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008) much of the research indicates that people's desire to have suntanned skin overrides their knowledge of the health risk that it poses (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009; Yoo and Kim 2012). Other research provides evidence that the media is a strong influence in perpetuating suntanned skin as an ideal (Mahler et al. 2010), although it does prove to be a useful tool in spreading health-related information that could decrease rates of sun tanning (Hay et al. 2009). There is a clear gender divide in the skin-tanning phenomenon as well, with women tanning at much higher rates than men (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008; Yoo and Kim 2011). While men find tanned skin on women more attractive (Banerjee et al. 2008), it is not clear whether this is why women tan more often. While there is relatively little literature on it

socioeconomic status appears to have a small effect on rates of skin tanning as well (Pollitt et al. 2001; Clarke et al. 2010).

Chapter 3: Theory

In this chapter I use a combination of theories to deconstruct the complex nature of the skin-tanning phenomenon. To analyze my hypotheses of the influence of tanning attitudes and behaviors on race, class, and gender, as well as a possible association between racial bias among White people and their positive attitudes towards tanned skin, I break down the processes and elements that have led to these possible correlation in this chapter. Primarily, this involves the historical power of White hegemony, colorism and the light-skin bias, and the type of tanned skin that has capital. The theoretical perspectives that I use in this chapter include several appropriation theories, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital (2013), Goffman's theories of impression management ([1956] 2013) and stigma (1963), Courtenay's theory of hegemonic masculinity (2000) and its association with femininity, and Greenwald and Krieger's theory of implicit bias (2006).

APPROPRIATION

Before discussing the appropriation of skin color through the practice of skin tanning it is important to clarify that we are talking about aesthetic rather than cultural appropriation. Most of the literature on appropriation is focused on cultural appropriation, which is the “[usage] of a culture's symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture” (Rogers 2006:474) and is rooted in “the assimilation and exploitation of marginalized and colonized cultures and in the survival of subordinated cultures and their resistance to dominant cultures.” (Rogers 2006:474) Skin color cannot be culturally appropriated because skin color is not inherent to specific cultures, but rather it can be associated with aesthetic values. Merriam-Webster defines aesthetic as “of relating to art or beauty,” supporting the idea that the adoption of darker-colored skin by White people can be seen as aesthetic appropriation.

Appropriation is driven by unequal power structures and is analogous to the conscious taking of something from another individual or collective with the purpose of serving one's own interest (Ashley and Plesch 2002; Rogers 2006). The Latin term *appropriare* means to "make one's own," bolstering the "connotation of an unfair or unauthorized taking—that is, theft." (Rogers 2006:475) This unauthorized taking is directly related to the social and power structures that are associated with appropriation. Appropriation is a one-way process that occurs between a dominant culture and subordinate culture, often one that is unable to retain control over its representations (Ashley and Plesch 2002; Rogers 2006); this definition emphasizes the role of hegemony in the act of appropriation. Merriam Webster defines hegemony as: "the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group." The appropriation of skin color occurs because White people—the dominant group—have taken darker skin tones and applied it in a new context for their benefit. Because of the historical power relations between populations with darker skin and White people, the White population is able to use their hegemony to appropriate darker skin tones.

The significance of darker skin is historical and directly associated with White hegemony. Since humans transitioned from nomadic to agrarian societies, darker skin tones have had negative connotations, as it traditionally has been associated with laborious, outdoor work and the lower class (Russell-Cole et al. 2013). Lighter skin tones have historically been favored as the consequence of its association with the upper class and White colonizers. The historic prejudice against darker skin tones by the White population makes their appropriation of darker skin tones through skin tanning more ironic. The new connotations that the White population has given darker skin tones would not be appropriation if darker skin tones were redefined as an acceptable physical trait for all members of society. However, People of Color are unable to

enjoy the benefits of having darker-colored skin in the same manner as White people. True to the nature of the Latin term that it derives from, White people have truly appropriated darker-colored skin to ‘make it their own’ (Rogers 2006).

According to Rogers’s theory of appropriation (2006) there are four forms of appropriation: cultural exchange, dominance, exploitation, and transculturation. The appropriation of darker skin tones is the result of cultural dominance and cultural exploitation. Cultural dominance is the state that created the conditions for appropriation to occur, whereas cultural exploitation is the action of appropriating dark skin tones.

Rogers defines cultural dominance as “the use of elements of a dominant culture by members of a subordinated culture in contexts in which the dominant culture has been imposed on to the subordinated culture.” (p. 477) He elaborates on this by explaining that this process does not allow the subordinated culture to choose whether or not to appropriate elements of the dominant culture because the dominant culture has greater overall power. Cultural dominance is the reasoning behind the prolongation and extensiveness of the light-skin bias: white colonization and therefore hegemony, created a world system in which the colonized had to adopt light skin in order to ensure their survival. It is important to make the distinction that while Rogers considers cultural dominance as a form of cultural appropriation, the action of a subordinate culture adopting aspects of the dominant culture as a survival tactic is not appropriation but rather cultural imposition.

To further Rogers’s theory of appropriation, an additional characteristic of cultural dominance is assimilation, which is when the colonized culture internalizes the dominant culture and as a result, reforms their “identity, values, and ideologies” (p. 481) in order to assimilate. Throughout the long history of European colonization the majority of those who were colonized

were People of Color. European colonialism lasted several hundred years and was incredibly expansive: their settlements could be found in the empires of the Americas, Africa, and various locations in southern and southeastern Asia (Fieldhouse 1965). As a consequence, the prejudice towards darker-colored skin within these colonized cultures of predominantly People of Color exemplifies their assimilation of aspects of the dominant culture. The global significance, value, and power given to light skin is the consequence of White cultural dominance, thus its adoption by subordinate cultures.

Cultural exploitation is the active form of appropriating darker-colored skin, existing as the means in which the dominant culture actively seeks to serve its own interests by “[mining]” (p. 486) elements of the subordinate culture. Rogers explains that these acts “function to establish and reinforce the dominance of the colonizing culture” (p. 486) and that they “often carry the connotation of stealing or of in some way using the culture of a subordinated group against them.” (p. 486) Commodification of elements of the subordinate culture is used as a way to expand upon the active nature of appropriation. Commodification is the function of cultural exploitation that pulls cultural traits from the subordinate, removes their meaning by turning them into commodities, and then placing them into new contexts to be used and consumed by the dominant culture. This process is how the White population is able to take darker skin tones and remove them from their original connotations as associated with People of Color, resulting in their exploitation by the new function that it is given by White people. The exploitation of skin color by the White population is a manner of reinforcing the power structure between White people and People of Color.

Skin color is a political matter—it has painful and historic ties to the centuries of colonization and oppression of People of Color by White people. The adoption of darker-colored

skin by White people through the practice of skin tanning not only reinforces the power imbalances between the two groups but also demonstrates the exploitative nature of appropriation. As the consequence of White dominance and its imposing power, People of Color made the choice to adapt to hegemonic ideals in order to survive. After People of Color assimilated to White hegemony by more deeply conforming to the light-skin bias, the White population used its positional power to extract darker skin tones as a trait from the subordinate, colonized population to use it for their own gain. The exploitation of darker-colored skin by White people—all while upholding negative connotations of darker-colored skin on People of Color (Russell-Cole et al. 2013; Monk 2014; Hannon 2015)—exemplifies the active process of appropriation by a dominant culture.

SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital and its relation to social classes is essential in examining the relationship between tanned skin and power. According to Bourdieu (2013), symbolic capital is the power granted to properties based on how they are recognized by society. This recognition translates to positionality, making a distinction between the social significance of various properties. Bourdieu argues that "individuals or groups [are] endowed with schemata of perception and appreciation that predispose them to *recognize*...these properties, that is, to constitute them into expressive styles, transformed and unrecognizable forms of positions in relations of force." (p. 297) Tanned skin and variations of it have been endowed with symbolic capital, as it is a property that is viewed with appreciation by the majority of society. This appreciation is converted into social significance, endowing it with symbolic capital.

The symbolic capital of tanned skin has shifted throughout time. The change in social power of properties throughout time, across cultures, and within societies is what Bourdieu calls

“opposite values.” (p. 297) As discussed in the first chapter the Industrial Revolution brought about the initial change of the meaning, and therefore symbolic capital, of tanned skin. With Coco Chanel as the catalyst, social conceptions of tanned skin quickly transformed to emulate prestige, health, and beauty—all of which also happen to be recognized as signifier of the upper class. These associations remain true in the modern-day and are the reason for the heightened symbolic capital of tanned skin.

The value of tanned skin is not only positional to time period but also to social group. Darker skin as the result of tanning within the White population is associated with greater symbolic capital. People of Color, however, do not gain the same amount of symbolic capital from darker skin as Whites are able to. Communities of color historically have a decreased value of darker skin because of the prolonged existence of colorism, and this undesirability still holds true for People of Color in the modern-day (Russell-Cole et al. 2013). It is conceivable that this has contributed to darker skin’s association with less symbolic capital, in addition to its decreased positionality and thus status a signifier of the lower class. It is feasible that People of Color’s disassociation of symbolic capital with darker, or tanned, skin has conversely resulted in their association of symbolic capital with lighter skin.

Bourdieu would regard the light-skin bias within communities of color as an example of social bluffers. His theory of bluffers and snobs is grounded in the assimilation and dissimulation of the dominant culture or social class. Bluffers, Bourdieu argues, are those who “[identify] with groups spotted as superior because they are reputed as such.” (p. 295) For People of Color, their adoption of light skin is a result of their recognition of light skin as a signifier of the upper class. This choice allows them to ‘bluff’ and attempt to gain access to a higher social class by utilizing a property that has symbolic capital. This is also a snob act, in which people are “striving to

distinguish oneself from groups identified as inferior.” (p. 295) The paradox of this is that while People of Color are bluffing and snobbing as a means to gain entry into a greater social class, the upper social classes redefined the criteria that they deem as prestigious.

Bourdieu reasons that there are symbols of distinction among properties that determine how they are recognized and perceived by society. This process occurs by putting properties into relation to one another and, from that, their symbolic capital is able to be determined. In regards to the significance of tanned skin, the property of whiteness is put into relation with artificially darkened skin. The symbol of distinction that gives tanned skin different symbolic capital for White people—and thus that makes it unattainable for anyone who is not White—is its origin. This is the criterion that determines the accessibility of tanned skin for higher social classes. The type of tanned skin that has symbolic capital for White people is artificial and actively acquired, meaning darker colored skin that is obtained through actions like sunbathing, going to indoor tanning salons, using make-up or other products, et cetera. The opposite of this type of tanned skin is naturally tanned skin, or that which exists from birth: this is the type of tanned skin that People of Color have.

The distinction in how darker colored skin is acquired provides a suggestion as to why tanned skin’s symbolic capital is only available for White people. The value attributed to tanned, or darker, skin exists in its artificial state. That is, the type of tanned skin that has been given social significance and symbolic capital is tanned skin that is actively acquired. Thus, skin that appears to be tanned on people who were born with that skin color, or who racially classify as non-White, does not have the same amount, if any, of symbolic capital. Bourdieu reasons that prestige is based on exclusion, and so this gap in distinction of how tanned skin is socially perceived by the dominant class has conceivably created a more prestigious and elite upper class.

To re-apply Bourdieu's interpretation of assimilation and dissimulation as bluffs and snobs within the White population is to regard tanned skin as the means that created a new hierarchy within that group. While an overall hierarchy of skin color exists with lighter skin as a signifier of the upper class and darker skin of the lower class, the White population's adoption of tanned skin as a property with symbolic capital within their social group has constructed a double hierarchy. For society as a whole, White hegemony has resulted in lighter skin having greater symbolic capital. Within the White population however their recognition of artificially tanned skin as more desirable and their endowment of symbolic capital to tanned skin has created a hierarchy within their group. The aforementioned paradox arises when White people, attempting to dissimilate from the lower class within their social group, use the symbolic capital of tanned skin as a means to associate with the elite. Their usage of tanned skin to bluff their way into a higher social class, while naturally darker skin on People of Color is still associated with the lower class, solidifies that the symbol of distinction for tanned skin is its origin and how it is procured.

Because White society is dominant, our cultural norms and ideals are inherently based off of White society's norms and ideals. The idealization of tanned skin as a result of the skin-tanning phenomenon in combination with continued discrimination against People of Color on the basis of skin color (Russell-Cole et al. 2013; Monk 2014; Hannon 2015) suggests that White people want to have darker skin but they do not want to actually be People of Color. If this correlation is true, it is plausible to suggest that White people's racial prejudices function as a rationalization of their desire for tanned skin.

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT AND STIGMA

Goffman's theory of the presentation of self and impression management illustrates, fundamentally, that the means in which individuals present themselves in society and to themselves is a performance. Goffman proposes that performances are crafted from a front, the "expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance." ([1956] 2007:55) The front can be as simple as the physical setting of the performance, including things such as furniture and décor, or can be more intimate, as with the personal front. The personal front constitutes fixed expressive tools for a performance, such as age, sex, and gender, but it also includes characteristics that can move between different performances and change frequently during it, including clothing, facial expression, and body gestures. Oftentimes values of the society strongly manifest themselves in an individual's performance, making it "'socialized', molded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented;" (p. 58) Goffman calls this process idealization ([1956] 2007).

Goffman's theory assumes that individuals play parts akin to actors, and that the end goal is to convince the audience that the "impression of reality which he stages is the real reality." (p. 53) The adoption of tanned skin as a socially significant trait by White people is a method for this group to control how they present themselves to society. When White people use tanned skin as a part of their impression management they may be attempting to play a part, as Goffman suggests. This act entails individuals striving to convince their audience that their true self and reality possesses the heightened social status that they receive from adopting tanned skin. This is also an idealized performance, for the social values attributed to tan skin may manifest in the performance of White people that suntan. For example, the idealization of this performance

might include an attempt to express the aura of the upper class or the confidence of someone who knows that they are considered attractive.

Using tanned skin as an aspect of impression management also relates to Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital and how properties are granted capital. Because tan skin on White people is associated with positive and valuable characteristics, the frequency of individuals utilizing this physical trait as a way to control their presentation of self normalizes tanned skin as a favorable way to employ impression management. With the understanding that individuals know that they can use tanned skin in this manner, it prolongs the association of tanned skin on White people with elite characteristics, which in turn maintains its symbolic capital for that group.

The values of a society influence and construct social categories and identities that are considered acceptable or normal. Certain attributes and identities that are in opposition to social norms are considered a stigma, an alienated identity "that is deeply discrediting." (1963:3) Stigmas are different than a mismanaged impression because they are more serious: they are established by society and call into question the whole person. As a result they affect an individual's performance because they do not align with what is considered socially acceptable. Stigmatized individuals are able to conceal their stigma through impression management by "passing:" an attempt to present themselves to society so that they seem 'normal', as Goffman describes it (Pp. 5-9). He provides examples of individuals who consciously attempt to conceal their stigma, such as "when a physically deformed person undergoes plastic surgery, a blind person eye treatment, an illiterate remedial education." (p. 9) Goffman suggests that passing also occurs when individuals are not aware that they are passing and that individuals might choose to pass only in certain contexts such as on vacation or at work, rather than everyday or in all

environments. This act of passing coincides with Bourdieu's term for *bluffers*, or individuals who adopt aspects of a more socially valuable identity in order to disassociate from their real identity.

Race is commonly regarded as a stigmatized category, and Goffman considers it to be one as well; this can be discerned from the historical oppression and discrimination against most People of Color. Individuals of a stigmatized race may choose to pass in order to alleviate their navigating through social spaces. Consequently, some People of Color choose to pass by acting upon the light-skin bias by making their skin color lighter as a means to disassociate from the stigma of darker skin and pass as a member of a higher social class. Similarly, White people's reconstruction of darker skin from tanning as socially valuable, but only valuable for their consumption of this trait, incorporates the avoidance of the historical stigma of dark skin. White people who tan their skin are also passing, but in a manner that allows them to adopt darker skin while still retaining, or managing, their Whiteness. The act of skin tanning is a chance for White people to pass as a more elite member of their group while disassociating themselves from the stigma attached to People of Color; white people who tan want to be darker, but they do not want to be associated with People of Color, or for it to be thought that they are a member of that group.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Hegemonic masculinity and femininity are the idealized and dominant forms of performing the male and female gender (Budgeon 2013). Hegemonic masculinity and femininity are constructed by gender stereotypes that dictate how men and women should act by society's standard. Because they are the societal ideal, hegemonic masculinity and femininity are generally sought after. "People are encouraged to conform to stereotypic beliefs and behaviors, and

commonly do conform to and adopt dominant norms of femininity and masculinity,” (2000:1387) states Courtenay in his theoretical approach to the construction of gender. He goes on to argue that there is a relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity and how men and women choose to engage with their health.

The tenet of Courtenay’s theory (2000) suggests that just as individuals ‘do gender’, they also ‘do health’: how men and women perform masculinity and femininity is emulated in their health behaviors and beliefs. To reference Goffman’s theory of impression management ([1956] 2007), ‘doing gender’ and ‘doing health’ are ways in which individuals are able to control the persona that they present to society. “The activities that men and women engage in, and their gendered cognitions, are a form of currency in the transactions that are continually enacted in the demonstration of gender.” (Courtenay 2000:1388) These activities grant men and women a symbolic capital that is emblematic of how satisfactorily they are performing idealized versions of masculinity and femininity.

Courtenay’s theory suggests that the success of these performances is through their relation to power, which is one of the fundamental ways that society understands gender. He theorizes that gendered demonstrations of health and health behaviors function to keep women and lower-status men subjugated by the patriarchy. While the patriarchy exists as macro-systems and institutions controlled by men, hegemonic masculinity is constructed as the “[embodiment of] the currently accepted problem of the legitimacy of the patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.” (Budgeon 2013:6) Thus, demonstrations of hegemonic masculinity and the subsequent sustainment of the patriarchy are produced by men displaying power. The utilization of health and health behaviors is an action that allows men to publicize their level or type of masculinity.

Courtenay states that hegemonic masculinity in modern-day America is viewed as “heterosexual, highly educated, European American men of upper-class economic status.” (p. 1388) According to DeVisser, Smith, and McDonnell (2009), hegemonic masculinity is oppositional to femininity and other, or “inferior,” (p.1048) forms of masculinities. The type of masculinity that a man exemplifies is determined in part by the amount of “masculine capital” (DeVisser Smith, and McDonnell 2009)—a type of symbolic capital, to call upon Bourdieu’s theory—he receives from his gender performance. Masculine capital is established by society’s conception of various behaviors as masculine traits, such as physical prowess, lack of vanity, sexuality, and alcohol use (Courtenay 2000; DeVisser et al. 2009). Traits with greater amounts of masculine capital signify higher-ranking forms of masculinity, and, ultimately, hegemonic masculinity. Conversely, traits with lower capital signify inferior masculinities or often femininity.

The forms of masculinity and femininity that are accepted by society are constructed from systems of power. As discussed by Courtenay: “the social practices required for demonstrating femininity and masculinity are associated with very different health advantages.” (p. 1388) Engaging with health is a gendered practice and leads to contrasting health outcomes and behaviors for men and women. Men experience and die from health related issues at much higher rates than women (Courtenay 2000) because a disregard for health gives men masculine capital. Conversely, employing healthy behaviors is considered feminine, leaving women to be healthier than men on average (Courtenay 2000).

Courtenay concludes that the relationship of power and privilege to displays of health and health behaviors results in men idealizing risky behaviors as a way to gain masculine capital. These risky behaviors include things such as “the denial of weakness or vulnerability, emotional

and physical control, the appearance of being strong and robust, dismissal of any need for help, a ceaseless interest in sex, [and] the display of aggressive behavior and physical dominance.” (p. 1389) As previously mentioned a lack of vanity, specifically men showing that they are not concerned about their appearance, is a highly prized behavior that demonstrates hegemonic masculinity (DeVisser et al. 2009). Despite the health risks that it poses (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Robinson et al. 1997a; Dennis et al. 2009) the skin-tanning phenomenon proves to be complex by not fitting in with other health behaviors that serve as indicators of male gender performance, such as participating in competitive sports, drinking excessively, and ostentatious heterosexuality (Courtenay 2000; DeVisser et al. 1999).

While it is not socially recognized as such, skin tanning is a risky behavior because it threatens the health of the people who participate in it. Because men compromise their health by engaging in hazardous behaviors as a way to indicate their masculinity, skin tanning rates should conceivably be the highest among men. Skin tanning rates, however, are actually highest among women (Robinson et al. 1997b). Courtenay proposes that men have greater social pressure to conform to stereotypes—and therefore adhere to hegemonic masculinity—than women do. Because skin tanning is an activity that displays vanity, it may be associated with femininity and grants less masculine capital to men. Although men face greater pressure to conform to hegemonic masculinity, women specifically face greater pressure to conform to standards of beauty (Burton et al. 1995). This might reinforce women’s participation in skin tanning and as a consequence decrease men’s likelihood of tanning. It is possible that skin tanning is a behavior that grants men less masculine capital, therefore providing reason for their lower rates of that activity.

Courtenay theorizes that in women's attempt to achieve cultural standards of femininity they "engage in far more health-promoting behaviors than men and have more healthy lifestyle patterns." (p. 1386) This reinforces feminine traits and femininity as oppositional to hegemonic masculine traits and hegemonic masculinity. The proposition that women strive to be healthy to indicate femininity once more contradicts what we might expect of women's rates of skin tanning. Because women are more affected by social standards of beauty than men (Burton et al. 1995) it can be hypothesized that in choosing how to exhibit their femininity their desire to comply with these standards overrides their desire to engage in healthy behaviors. It is possible that this likely reinforces the behavior of skin tanning as an expression of femininity and lowers the probability that men would use it as a risky behavior to gain masculine capital.

Courtenay also theorizes that economic status is "intimately and systematically related to the social structuring of gender and power" (p. 1390) and that it is essential in determining which sorts of risky behaviors men use in demonstrating their masculinity. He states that: "demonstrating masculinities with fearless, high-risk behaviors may entail skydiving for an upper-class man, mountain climbing for a middle-class man, racing hot rods for a working-class man and street fighting for a poor urban man." (p. 1390) Certain behaviors are either not risky enough or have different levels of masculine capital depending on a man's SES. Depending on their SES, for men attempting to achieve hegemonic masculinity skin tanning might not be a risky enough behavior to gain enough symbolic capital, especially when considering its relation to vanity and femininity.

In regards to performing gender through health behaviors, the skin-tanning phenomenon proves to be out of the ordinary. In their pursuit of hegemonic masculinity men should, conceivably, want to choose skin tanning as a risky behavior, just as women should conceivably

stray away from the practice to exemplify their healthy choices. It is possible that skin tanning's relation to vanity associates it with femininity, perhaps decreasing the likelihood of men engaging in it and considering it as a behavior that gives them masculine capital. In addition, the pressure for women to conform to standards of beauty and tan their skin might override their desire to uphold healthy behaviors. This might also be related to what I discussed in the literature review about the health risks of tanning being so far off that it doesn't seem to pose an actual threat (Miller et al. 1990; Beasley and Kittel 1997). Additionally, tanned skin is traditionally associated with the upper class (Jablonski 2012) and so lower-class men feasibly have less to lose by engaging in a feminine behavior as a way to gain masculine capital. Because they are regarded as further away from hegemonic masculinity, lower-class men might be more inclined to consider skin tanning as a risky behavior in their endeavor to obtain hegemonic masculinity.

IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit and explicit processes dictate the manner in which individuals perceive and interact with their surroundings. Implicit cognition occurs when individuals are not aware or do not have "intentional control over the processes of social perception, impression formation, and judgment that motivate their actions." (Greenwald and Krieger 2006:946) The converse to implicit cognition is explicit, in which individuals consciously perform a behavior or act with the intention and knowledge of why they are making that decision. In their theory of implicit bias Greenwald and Krieger (2006) inform the reader that a host of mental processes are implicit, such as memory, perception, attitudes, stereotypes, self-esteem, and self-concept (p. 947). They provide the example of implicit memory based on previous research: "when a person cannot voluntarily ('explicitly') retrieve a memory, that person's behavior may reveal that some previous experience has left a memory record. In such situations, the memory is said to be

implicitly expressed, and not explicitly, in the behavior.” (p. 947) Because implicit processes like these are involuntary, they have the capability of exhibiting individuals’ suppressed or unknown beliefs.

Greenwald and Krieger propose that two of these processes, implicit attitudes and stereotypes, are the most relevant to bias and discrimination. They define attitude as, “an evaluative disposition [or] the tendency to like or dislike, or to act favorably or unfavorably toward, someone or something,” (p. 948) and define stereotype as “the mental association between a social group or category and a trait.” (p. 949) Implicit attitudes and stereotypes are more pertinent to bias and discrimination than explicit processes because they have the power to reveal biased subconscious beliefs and produce involuntary discriminatory behaviors. Conversely, explicit processes tend to yield anticipated and intentional manifestations of bias and discrimination. Implicit processes are more potent, operating without individuals’ cognition and covertly influencing their behaviors and attitudes. Implicit bias and discrimination is treacherous because it may give rise to implicit racism.

Racism, defined by Tatum (1997), is the system of advantages based on race that “operates to the advantage of Whites and to the disadvantage of People of Color.” (p. 126) Racism becomes more dangerous when it is implicit because it is an involuntary manifestation of both conscious and latent beliefs towards or support for a society that favors White people. Even though they are unintentional and spontaneous, implicit biases are able to manipulate the mental processes of individuals who have racial biases—including those who might even be aware of them to a certain extent. Implicit biases, especially implicit racism, might cause people to exhibit hegemonic attitudes or behaviors. It is possible that implicit bias may be observed in White

people with how they engage with the practice of skin tanning and their beliefs towards tanned skin.

Greenwald and Krieger theorize that biases have roots in in-group/out-group relations. They also propose that biases can be “favorable or unfavorable” (p. 951), and thus that “a positive attitude toward any in-group necessarily implies a *relative* negativity toward a complementary out-group.” (p. 952) From this we can infer that because in-group bias among White people encourages them to favor their own group, this leads to implicit racial attitudes against the out-group, People of Color. However, Greenwald and Krieger also state that: “there is a widespread intuition that it is often acceptable to be biased in favor of at least some of the groups to which one belongs. In this view, bias is a problem only when it is directed *against* some group.” (p. 951) Bearing in mind skin tanning, White people’s acceptance of darker skin for their own group yields a negative perception of darker skin towards the out-group, in this case People of Color. These in-group biases and implicit racial attitudes can be observed in the continued discrimination of People of Color on the basis of the skin tone by White people, as mentioned in the prior sections of this chapter. This gives support to White people’s potential implicit skin color bias that favors darker skin for their own group while also fortifying the product of implicit racism that is White favoritism.

Implicit and explicit attitudes and behaviors that develop into biases may be attributed to how individuals are socialized. In American society White favoritism is incorporated into the socialization process as the consequence of White hegemony. Therefore White hegemony and White favoritism often strongly influence individuals’ implicit mental processes. Because White hegemony in America controls beauty standards, an implicit bias within White people has developed towards skin color that favors lighter skin (Hannon 2015). This bias is observed in

how White people engage with skin tanning as a practice, their beliefs towards tanned skin, and their perception of and relations with People of Color. Conceivably in-group bias has influenced White people's belief that darker skin is only socially acceptable for their group, and has affected their views of darker, and typically natural, skin on those in the out-group.

CONCLUSION

Goffman's theory of impression management ([1956] 2007) allows us to understand why various groups might have higher rates of skin tanning than others. The symbolic capital of tanned skin grants it a greater use-value that is advantageous to utilize in the presentation of the self. For individuals of lower SES, they might be able to use this trait as part of their impression management as a way to present themselves as upper class. Because men view women with tanned skin as more attractive, women might also choose to use tanned skin as a way to control their attractiveness and thus manage their presentation of the self.

The skin-tanning behaviors of men and women vary considerably and do not correspond with traditional or normative gendered behavior. Skin tanning rates are the opposite of what Courtenay's theory of hegemonic masculinity and femininity proposes; it possible that pressure to conform to standards of beauty and stereotypes are the cause of this. It could be inferred that because tanned skin is strongly associated with beauty (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009; Chung et al. 2010; Mahler et al. 2010), engaging with this behavior is inherently categorized as feminine. The greater pressure placed on women to conform to standards of beauty (Burton et al. 1995) might drive them to tan at higher rates than men (Robinson et al. 1997b), albeit their typically healthy behavior. Skin tanning's association with femininity might be the reason why men do not tan as frequently despite their desire to engage in risky behavior as a way to earn masculine capital and display idealized masculinity.

As a result of power imbalances, White people were able to extract darker skin tones from their original context—negatively associated with People of Color—and insert them into a new context. This new context saw that White people were able to engage with skin tanning while still maintaining their Whiteness. Essentially, White people gain a symbolic capital from tanned skin that People of Color are unable to receive. The symbolic capital of tanned skin is the product of how it is acquired: the type of tanned skin that is valued is actively acquired through means such as sunbathing, going to indoor tanning salons, or using cosmetics. This is the symbol of distinction that separates it from the darker skin tones of People of Color and that which deems it more socially acceptable.

Implicit bias theory suggests that in/out-group relations are an important element in the construction of implicit racism. In-group bias often leads to a negative perception of the out-group, simply because of in-group favoritism (Greenwald and Kriger 2006). For White people, this in-group bias may ultimately end up reflecting attitudes in favor of White hegemony. Additionally, in-group bias among White people who also have favorable opinions of skin tanning might lead to negative perceptions of tanned skin on the out-group, People of Color. This in combination with White favoritism might reveal implicit racism.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The goal of my research is to examine tanning attitudes and behaviors and how they might influence perceptions of race, class, and gender, as well as how they might be associated with racial bias. The literature that I studied helped me to develop my five hypotheses:

- Women will have a more favorable opinion of tanned skin and will have higher rates of tanning than men (Goffman [1956] 2007; Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008; Yoo and Kim 2012);
- Exclusively heterosexual individuals will find the opposite sex more attractive with tanned skin and, specifically, that heterosexual men will find tanned skin on women more attractive than heterosexual women will find it on men (Goffman [1956] 2007; Banerjee et al. 2008);
- Lower SES individuals will have a more favorable opinion of tanned skin and will have higher rates of tanning than higher SES individuals (Goffman [1956] 2007; Courtenay 2000; Hay et al. 2009; Pollitt et al. 2012; Bourdieu 2013);
- White people will have a more favorable opinion of tanned skin and will have higher rates of tanning than People of Color (Goffman 1963; Ashley and Plesch 2002; Rogers 2006; Bourdieu 2013; Russell-Cole et al. 2013);
- White people who have a racial bias will exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors towards skin tanning (Ashley and Plesch 2002; Greenwald and Krieger 2006; Rogers 2006).

To test my hypotheses I collected data in two phases. The first method of data collection was an online survey distributed to students at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. I used an online survey because it would be accessible by a large number of participants and I could easily assess tanning attitudes and behaviors with it. The second method of data collection was a

race Implicit Association Test (IAT), which I chose for its capacity to demonstrate participants' subconscious racial attitudes. The IAT was distributed at the same college but only to White students. I opted to use the student body at the small liberal arts college as my research population because of its accessibility and high population of White students. Additionally, using this research population made my study comparable to the majority of the literature on tanning because many researchers also used college students as populations for their studies.

The content of my survey was strongly influenced by preexisting studies (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009). I designed the survey to assess participants' motivations, attitudes, and practices of skin tanning, as well as to examine if there were variations across race, class, and gender. I used the website Qualtrics to create and distribute my survey online. Five hundred participants were randomly selected from the college's directory and were contacted by an email with a link to the survey. Students at the college were also notified about the survey through class-year Facebook pages on which the survey link was posted.

The entire survey included 34 questions, beginning with six that pertained to participants' demographics (see Appendix A). These questions asked for participants' age, gender identity, sexual orientation, their family's annual household income, and the highest level of education attained by their father and mother respectively. Table 1 contains information about my participants' demographics and those of the college's student body; the college data is based on enrollment data from 2015. This table only includes the demographic information from the college in instances where it was comparable to my data.

The sample from my study is moderately representative of the college. The racial demographic data from my sample is quite similar to that of the college. As the result of inaccessible data regarding the number of multi-racial students at the college, however, I merged

the “Multi-racial (including White” category with the “Not White” category for my survey sample in the table below. The actual percentage and number of the multi-racial category in my study was 6.4 percent (15). Gender is not as representative, as the percentage of female participants in my study (68 percent) is considerably higher than that at the college (55 percent). Additionally, the college also does not ask about non-binary identification, making it not exactly comparable to my sample. There is also some missing demographic data in my sample from participants who did not answer certain questions.

| Demographics of Survey Participants Compared to the College’s Enrollment Data (Fall 2015) | | | |
|---|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Variable | | Survey Data | College Data |
| | | Percent (%) and Raw Number (n) | Percent (%) |
| Population Size | | 100% (225) | 100% |
| Gender | Male | 28.3% (66) | 44.1% |
| | Female | 67.8% (158) | 54.9% |
| | Non-binary | 2.1% (5) | N/A |
| | Missing | 1.7% (4) | N/A |
| Race | White | 76.4% (178) | 68.6% |
| | Not White | 14.1% (33) | 18.7% |
| | Missing | 9.4% (22) | 12.7% |

Table 1

In addition to the demographic questions were 28 items designed to elicit specific attitudes and behaviors towards suntanned skin and the act of tanning. These questions included items such as whether participants consider suntanned skin to be attractive and healthy; how often they purposefully tan (such as sunbathing or using tanning beds); if they feel pressure to tan; and their opinions of skin tanning in individuals across gender and race categories. All but

one of these questions was coded with a five-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree); one question was open-ended and asked participants to list three words that they think of in association with suntanned skin. The objective of including an open-ended question was so that I could use content analysis to examine attitudes that my survey and IAT might not be able to assess. At the end of this phase of data collection I had 233 respondents.

I created six scales from my survey items for data analysis. The names of the scales, the questions that they include, and their reliability coefficients were:

- *Likelihood of seeking a tan*: “I enjoy tanning (i.e. sunbathing, going to indoor tanning salons)” (Q13); “I like to have a tan for special events” (Q14); “how often do you purposefully tan? (i.e. sunbathing, going to an indoor tanning salon)” (Q17); “how often do you unintentionally tan? (i.e. get a tan from outdoor activities)” (Q18); “how often do you use indoor tanning beds?” (Q19); and “how often do you use sunless products (i.e. makeup, tanning sprays or lotions, etc) to darken your skin?” (Q21). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .72.
- *Appearance of tanned skin*: “Suntanned skin is attractive to me” (Q8); and “suntanned skin looks healthy to me” (Q9). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .67.
- *Perception of self while tan*: “I feel better about myself when I am tan” (Q11); and “I feel better about myself while tan and my peers are not” (Q12). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .75.
- *Pressure to tan*: “I feel pressure from my family to have suntanned skin” (Q24); “I feel pressure from my friends to have suntanned skin” (Q25); and “I feel pressure from the media to have suntanned skin” (Q26). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .62.

- *Importance of tanning*: “Having suntanned skin is important to me” (Q10); “it is important to return from vacation with a tan” (Q15); and “having a tan year-round is important” (Q16). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .74.
- *Positive attitudes towards tanning*: “Suntanned skin is attractive to me” (Q8); “suntanned skin looks healthy to me” (Q9); “I feel better about myself when I am tan” (Q11); “I enjoy tanning (i.e. sunbathing, going to indoor tanning salons)” (Q13); “how often do you purposefully tan? (i.e. sunbathing, going to an indoor tanning salon)” (Q17); and “how often do you use sunless products (i.e. makeup, tanning sprays or lotions, etc) to darken your skin?” (Q21). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .83.

Participants for the IAT were recruited through my online survey. Only those who indicated in my survey that they identify as White were asked if they would be interested in participating in the second phase of research. By including their email address at the end of my survey I was able to contact participants when it came time to begin my second phase of data collection. I used minor deception in the recruitment process for my IAT. Participants did not know that the true intent of my study is to examine the possible relationship between racial bias and tanning attitudes and behaviors. I believed that if my participants knew my exact research question it would create social acceptability bias, throwing into question the validity of my study. Instead, in my recruitment email I shared with participants that my research aimed to study “skin tanning attitudes and behaviors” of the student body at their college. Of my 44 IAT participants, 100% of were White, 69% (29) were female, and the mean age was 20.

The company Millisecond, known for providing computer software for psychological experiments, created the race IAT that I used for my second phase of data collection. The IAT allowed me to directly test my hypothesis by exploring if there was a relationship between a

racial bias among my survey respondents and their favorable opinions of tanning. The IAT operates by having participants make implicit decisions by sorting stimuli into categories as fast as possible, using the *e* and *i* keys on a keyboard to select their response. The experiment has two identical rounds, save all the categories switch keys for the second round. The speed and accuracy in which a participant responds to two stimuli sharing the same response key determines if they have a bias.

The IAT codes the strength of a participant's bias as "slight", "moderate", or "strong" based on a numeric scale of -2 to +2; a zero (0) indicates that there is no apparent bias. As described in the race IAT user manual, "the strength of an association between concepts is measure by the standardized mean difference score of the 'hypothesis-inconsistent' pairings and 'hypothesis-consistent' pairings." (Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji 2003, as cited in Inquisit's Racism IAT user manual) A positive score indicates an association between "White American-Good" and "Black American-Bad" (hypothesis-consistent), whereas a negative score indicates an association between "Black American-Good" and "White American-Bad" (hypothesis-inconsistent).

The order of stimuli that the IAT shows is randomized—some participants will first sort words, others begin with pictures. The race IAT uses pleasant and unpleasant words in combination with facial images of Black Americans and White Americans to test if a participant has a racial bias. For the stage with words, the *e* and *i* keys are coded as either "good" or "bad". Participants must use those keys to sort the pleasant and unpleasant words into their correct categories as quickly as possible as they appear on the computer screen. The same process occurs in the image stage: participants are shown individual photos of Black American and White

American faces and they must sort them with the *e* and *i* keys into their respective “Black” and “White” categories.

In the final stage of the first round, the categories combine so that “good” and “bad” are associated with either “White” or “Black.” For example “good” and “White” might share the *e* key, “bad” and “Black” the *i* key. Participants are shown either a word or image and, once again, must quickly sort them into the correct category. This final stage happens twice, back-to-back. This stage is when a racial bias might be exposed: for example, if, when “good” and “Black” share a response key, a respondent inaccurately categorizes “good” with “White”. Similarly, if he or she categorizes “good” more quickly when it is paired with “White” than when it is with “Black,” also exposes a racial bias.

Afterwards, the second round of the IAT begins. As previously mentioned, the design of the experiment in the second round is the same as the first, save all the categories switch keys. For example in the first round if the *e* key was coded as “good” and the *i* key as “bad”, they switch in the second round to “bad” and “good” respectively. This also occurs when the categories combine, so if “good” and “White” were paired together in the first round this will change in the second round to a pairing of “good” and “Black.” At the end of the experiment participants were not given their results but they were debriefed.

Because the downloaded computer application is mandatory to run the IAT, participants had to come into a lab in order to partake in the experiment. When it was their time to take the IAT, participants came to the library on the college’s campus where they completed the experiment alone in the room using my computer. All participants were debriefed at the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter I present the results of my data collection, followed by a discussion of how the results compare to the literature and theory. I will first briefly report on my content analysis. This will be followed by a description of the survey results broken down by each hypothesis. Finally, I will provide an in-depth commentary on these findings and apply them to the literature and theory.

ANALYSIS

Content Analysis

The survey began with the open-ended question: “when I think of tanned skin I think of these three words.” A content analysis of the results does not explicitly support or reject my hypotheses. The highest counts for individual words were nearly equal: “[skin] cancer” (55), “summer” (54), and “beach” (51). It was unexpected that similar counts appeared for overall words that signified attractiveness (50) such as beautiful and glowing, as well as unattractiveness (48), such as burnt and fake. Slightly higher counts were found for words that signified leisure time or relaxation (68), as expected from the literature on tanning and theory (Etcoff 1999; Fink et al. 2001). There were very high counts for general associations of tanned skin with cancer (76), which was unexpected and demonstrated that my subject population is likely aware of the health risks that this behavior poses. Overall, content analysis indicates that respondents had a complex perception of tanned skin than does not clearly fit with the literature and theory on tanning.

Gender

My first hypothesis is that women will have a more favorable opinion of tanned skin and will have higher rates of tanning than men. This hypothesis was influenced by literature on

tanning and theory that suggested that women engage with skin tanning more often than men (Goffman [1956] 2007; Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008; Yoo and Kim 2012). One study suggested that this behavior might be more common among women because of skin tanning's association with thinness (Banerjee et al. 2008), thinness as a standard of beauty, and thus women being more pressured to conform to those standards of beauty (Burton et al. 1995). To analyze my data I ran five t-tests. Each t-test used the dichotomous gender variable as the independent variable, and the dependent variables were different scales that I created by compiling similar survey items. It should be mentioned that because of my small sample size (233) I am using .10 as the cutoff value for statistical significance.

The first t-test that I ran was designed to see if women seek out a tan more often than men. The dependent variable was the *likelihood of seeking a tan* scale. Each item in the scale used a five-point Likert scale, so the range of possible scores for individuals was 6 to 30; the mean for men it was 10.83 and for women it was 11.73, showing that women reported higher rates of seeking out a tan than men did. This difference was statistically significant, indicating that there is a relationship between gender and tanning behavior ($t = 1.72$; $p = .087$).

The second t-test explored whether women think that tanned skin is more attractive and healthy looking than men do. The scale that I used for this was *appearance of tanned skin*. The two-item scale had a range for possible values of 2 to 10. The mean value for men was 6.4 and the value for women was 6.32, which signals that there was not a large difference in men and women's reports on their opinion of tanned skin's appearance. The small overall difference in the two samples ($t = .35$; $p = .73$) was not statistically significant.

The third t-test examined if women or men feel better about themselves when tan. I used the scale *perception of self while tan*. The range for the scores is 3 to 15. The mean value for men

was 5.1 and for women it was 5.01, indicating that the reports for these items were nearly similar for men and women in my survey ($t = .29$; $p = .77$).

The fourth t-test was designed to see if women feel more pressure to tan than men do. This t-test used the scale *pressure to tan*; this scale also had a value range of 3 to 15. The mean value for men was 5.02 and the value for women was 6.35, revealing that women reported feeling more pressure to have suntanned skin than men did. This difference is statistically significant ($t = 3.8$; $p = .001$), and aligns with my hypothesis.

The last t-test that I ran explored whether women think that having tanned skin is more important than men do. This used a scale of *importance of tanning*. Once again, the possible range of values for this scale was 3 to 15. The mean value for men was 6.02, and for women it was 6.24. While this analysis was not statistically significant ($t = -.58$; $p = .56$), it should be noted that a slightly higher mean for women is in the direction of my hypothesis.

Sexual Orientation

My second hypothesis is that exclusively heterosexual individuals will find the opposite sex more attractive with tanned skin, and specifically that heterosexual men will find tanned skin on women more attractive than heterosexual women will find it on men. The formation of this hypothesis was influenced by literature that suggests that the intersection of gender and sexual orientation influences attitudes towards tanned skin. Several studies reported that men are more likely to think that people look better or more attractive when tan, and so women have higher rates of skin tanning than men do, possibly because they want to appeal to men's desires (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008). The majority of these studies were heteronormative in assuming that men and women maintain certain behaviors because they want to appeal to the opposite sex. It is for this reason that when I constructed my hypothesis on

sexual orientation-based tanning behaviors I made sure to isolate exclusively heterosexual behavior.

I ran two t-tests to analyze if exclusively heterosexual individuals find the opposite sex more attractive when tan. The variable that I used for sexual orientation was dichotomous, so respondents were only able to select if they do or do not identify as exclusively heterosexual. The item for the dependent variables stated: “I think women look better with suntanned skin” and “I think men look better with suntanned skin”; I changed the dependent variable depending on the gender of the respondents.

Both t-tests showed small and statistically insignificant differences, although the mean values were slightly higher for men. The mean value for exclusively heterosexual men was 3.19 and for not exclusively heterosexual men it was 3.14 ($t = .203$; $p = .84$). For women the mean values were 3 for exclusively heterosexual women and 2.9 for not exclusively heterosexual women ($t = .96$; $p = .34$). Although the means were close within each gender, the slightly higher values for men suggests that male respondents found women to be more attractive when tan than female respondents perceived of men.

Socioeconomic Status

My third hypothesis is that lower SES individuals will have a more favorable opinion of tanned skin and will have higher rates of tanning than higher SES individuals. This hypothesis was primarily influenced by Goffman’s theory of impression management ([1956] 2007) and Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic capital theory (2013). These theories led me to speculate that lower SES individuals would be more inclined to engage in tanning behaviors because tanned skin is associated with the upper class and therefore has greater symbolic capital; this would be advantageous if a lower SES individual wanted to present his or herself as being of higher SES. I

tested this hypothesis with five linear regressions. In order to consider SES as a dependent variable I combined three variables: the respondents' annual household income, and the highest level of education attained by their father and their mother.

The first regression sought if lower SES individuals seek out a tan more often than higher SES individuals do. This regression used *likelihood of seeking a tan* as the dependent variable. This regression was statistically significant and supported my hypothesis (b coefficient = -.184; p = .018). The slope of the equation indicates that as SES increased, the likelihood that individuals would seek out a tan decreased (Adj. $r^2 = .027$).

The second regression explored whether lower or higher SES individuals think that tanned skin is more attractive and healthy looking. This regression used the scale *appearance of tanned skin* as the dependent variable. The data did not support my hypothesis because there was not a statistically significant relationship between the variables (b coefficient = .006; p = .848).

The third, fourth, and fifth regressions used the scales *perception of self while tan*, *pressure to tan*, and *importance of tanning*. These regressions examined if lower SES individuals feel better about themselves when tan, feel more pressure to tan, and think that having tanned skin is more important than higher SES individuals. All three regressions were not statistically significant (*perception of self while tan* b coefficient = .027; p = .557; *pressure to tan* b coefficient = -.024; p = .645; *importance of tanning* b coefficient = -.073; p = .191), however the direction of the relationships were in support of my hypothesis. These regressions suggest that as SES increased individuals may feel increasingly better about themselves when tan, feel less pressure to tan, and have a lessened belief that tanning is important.

Race

In terms of race, I hypothesized that White people will have more favorable opinion of tanning and will have higher rates of tanning than People of Color. This hypothesis was strongly influenced by theory and literature on skin tanning that I reviewed (Goffman 1963; Ashley and Plesch 2002; Rogers 2006; Bourdieu 2013; Russell-Cole et al. 2013). The development of this hypothesis was the result of juxtaposing the historical and cross-cultural phenomenon of colorism, the popularization and idealization of tanned skin in the Western world. I ran five t-tests for this hypothesis. The independent variable for each t-test was dichotomous for race: using White and People of Color.

The first t-test examined if White people seek out tanned skin more often than People of Color, and used the dependent variable *likelihood of seeking a tan*. The range for this scale was 6 to 30; the mean value for White was 11.56, and the value for People of Color was 11.18. Although the difference between groups was not statistically significant ($t = .588$; $p = .56$) a slightly higher mean value for White respondents does indicate that on average they are more likely to seek out a tan than are People of Color.

The second t-test explored if White people think that tanned skin is more attractive and healthy than People of Color do. This t-test used *appearance of tanned skin* as the dependent variable, which had a range of 2 to 10. The mean value for White was 6.31, and for People of Color it was 6.45. The analysis was revealed to be statistically insignificant ($t = .53$; $p = .59$) and was not in support of my hypothesis.

The third t-test was designed to see if White people feel better about themselves when they are tan compared to People of Color. *Perception of self while tan* was used as the dependent

variable, and the range of its value is 3 to 15. There was virtually no difference between groups: the value for White was 5.05, for People of Color it was 5.03 ($t = .065$; $p = .95$).

The fourth t-test examined if White people think that tanning is more important than People of Color do, using *pressure to tan* as the dependent variable. *Pressure to tan* has a range of 3 to 15. The mean value for White was 6.01, and for People of Color it was 5.9. Once again, the small difference in mean values was not statistically significant ($t = .24$; $p = .812$).

The fifth t-test asked if White people think that tanning is more important than People of Color do. This t-test used the dependent variable *importance of tanning*, which has a range of possible scores between 3 and 15. The mean value for White was 6.12, and the value for People of Color was 6.55. While the data is not statistically significant ($t = .921$; $p = .36$) it should be mentioned that the slightly higher mean value report for People of Color goes against my hypothesis. This analysis suggests People of Color may believe tanning to be more important than White respondents did.

Racial Bias

My fifth hypothesis is that White people with a racial bias will exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors towards skin tanning. This hypothesis was influenced by literature on tanning and theory that I reviewed (Ashley and Plesch 2002; Greenwald and Krieger 2006; Rogers 2006; Russell-Cole et al. 2013; Monk 2014; Hannon 2015) that prompted me to contemplate the relationship between White people wanting to have darker skin and discrimination against People of Color on the basis of skin tone. Essentially, this hypothesis was designed to reflect White people's desire to have dark skin like People of Color but that they do not want to actually be People of Color. I ran six bivariate regressions to test this hypothesis with the IAT results as the independent variable and the tanning scales that I created as the dependent variable.

The first two regressions examined the relationship between racial bias and how White people perceive the importance of skin tanning and if they have positive attitudes towards it. Both tests yielded results that were not statistically significant and did not support my hypothesis. The b coefficient for the *importance of tanning* variable was $-.788$ ($p = .456$), and for the *positive attitudes towards tanning* variable it was -1.18 ($p = .586$). These results indicate that as racial bias towards Black individuals increased the importance of tanning and positive attitudes associated with it decreased, which rejects my hypothesis.

The next four regressions directly evaluated how White attitudes towards four racial groups might shift when they are tan. The purpose of this was to analyze if White people are more accepting of their own group engaging with skin tanning but not other racial groups. All four regressions were not statistically significant, however two were in a direction that supported my hypothesis. While both were not statistically significant, the variables that showed an association that were in support of my hypothesis were *Asian people look better tan* and *Hispanic people look better tan*: as racial bias increased, the belief that Asian and Hispanic people look better when tan decreased (*Asian*: b coefficient = $-.117$; $p = .607$; *Hispanic*: b coefficient = $-.018$; $p = .96$). The direction of this relationship supports my hypothesis that White people would disapprove People of Color becoming darker than they already are.

The racial group variables that were in the opposite direction of my hypothesis were *White people look better tan* and *Black people look better tan*. As racial bias increased, the belief that White people look better when tan decreased (b coefficient = $-.107$; $p = .701$). This does not support my hypothesis that expected White people with a racial bias to be more accepting of their in-group when tan. Conversely when racial bias increased, the belief that Black people look

better when tan also increased (b coefficient = .023; $p = .889$). This rejects my hypothesis that expected White attitudes towards Black individuals to decrease when tan.

DISCUSSION

H1: Women Will Have a More Favorable Opinion of Tanned Skin and Will Have Higher Rates of Tanning Than Men

As was suggested in the literature on tanning and theory, the analysis supports my hypothesis by indicating that women do have higher rates of skin tanning, feel more pressure to tan, and think that tanning is more important than men do. The literature tells us that women are more aware than men about skin cancer information (Robinson et al. 1997b; Hay et al. 2009), and theory furthers this by suggesting that health behaviors are gendered (Courtenay 2000)—specifically that engaging in healthy behaviors signifies femininity. The literature also tells us that men have lower rates of skin tanning (Robinson et al. 1997b) yet theory suggests that they engage in risky health behaviors as a means to gain masculine capital (Courtenay 2000). Despite all of this, in reality tanning behaviors among men and women are most likely influenced by the greater pressure that women face to conform to social standards (Burton et al. 1995) and the greater pressure that men face to conform to stereotypes of traditional masculinity (Courtenay 2000).

As shown in the literature, and now in this study, women tan at much higher rates than men and hold more favorable opinions towards it (Robinson et al. 1997b; Banerjee et al. 2008). It is likely that the pressure that women face to conform to social standards of beauty overrides their knowledge of skin tanning's health risks and therefore their desire to display femininity through healthy behaviors. Similarly, the association of skin tanning to femininity is a plausible

reason why men have lower rates of tanning, despite it being a risky health behavior: if men desire to gain and uphold masculine capital, they cannot engage with feminine behavior.

The perception of tanned skin as attractive has increased in the last several decades (Robinson et al. 2008) and has also become associated with thinness, another beauty norm (Banerjee et al. 2008). Other literature tells us that self-esteem is a large factor in how women feel about their attractiveness (Crocker and Wolfe 2001), and that women might be more inclined to tan often because they want to appeal to men's desires (Banerjee et al. 2008). Clearly, appearing attractive is important to women and deeply affects how society perceives them, as well as how they perceive themselves.

It is possible that male hegemony has had a strong influence on standards of conventional attractiveness for women: if men think that women look more attractive with a tan (as is discussed in the next section) and men have the social power to construct social ideals because of their hegemony, it is conceivable that this has boosted tanned skin's perception as a social standard of beauty and therefore women's need to adhere to it. Tanned skin's association with conventional attractiveness and the pressure placed on women to conform to standards leads us to understand why women more often than men seek out a tan, report that they feel more pressure to tan, and believe that it is more important.

H2: Exclusively Heterosexual Individuals Will Find the Opposite Sex More Attractive with Tanned Skin, and Specifically, That Heterosexual Men Will Find Tanned Skin on Women More Attractive Than Heterosexual Women Will Find It on Men

Much of the literature on tanning did not explicitly use sexual orientation—specifically explicitly heterosexual orientation—as a way to understand how individuals of different sexes perceive one another. The literature tells us that men are more likely to think that people, but

especially women, look better or more attractive when they are tan (Robinson et al. 1997b; Fink et al. 2001; Banerjee et al. 2008). As mentioned in my first hypothesis, other studies propose that women have higher rates of skin tanning because they want to appear more attractive to men, and skin tanning is a method that individuals are able to use to control their attractiveness (Banerjee et al. 2008). To revisit Goffman's theory of impression management ([1956] 2007) and Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital (2013) it would be advantageous during impression management to utilize a trait that has symbolic capital, especially for individuals who want to appear more attractive. By employing tanned skin as an aspect of their impression management, individuals would have more symbolic capital and therefore would appear more desirable.

My data analysis, however, did not support this hypothesis. At the same time, there is a slight trend in the data that suggests that men do find tanned skin on women more attractive than women do on men; this aligns with the literature. Additionally, the t-test in the first hypothesis that used the scale *appearance of tanned skin* revealed a higher mean value for men. While this data was not statistically significant, the direction of the relationship does support my second hypothesis. Future research would benefit by exploring the relationship between sexual orientation and tanned skin as a conventionally attractive trait.

H3: Lower SES Individuals Will Have a More Favorable Opinion of Tanned Skin and Will Have Higher Rates of Tanning Than Higher SES Individuals

As was anticipated from the literature and theory, data analysis revealed that lower SES individuals are more likely to seek out a tan, feel more pressure to tan, and believe that tanned skin is more important than higher SES individuals do; this supports my hypothesis. The literature tells us that lower SES individuals have less knowledge of and medical exposure to the health risks of skin tanning (Pollitt et al. 2012), which also helps explain their higher rates of

skin tanning. With the understanding that tanned skin is considered to be a signifier of the upper class, it can be inferred that lower SES individuals might use this trait as a way to control their presentation of the self.

Goffman's theory of impression management ([1956] 2007) suggests that during their performances, individuals attempt to convince their audience that the version of reality that the individual—or, the performer—is putting on is their true reality. If individuals are able to use traits with symbolic capital in their impression management their performances become more appealing, and possibly more believable. Lower SES individuals therefore might be inclined to use tanned skin as a way to gain social recognition, as they “bluff” (Bourdieu 2013:295) and attempt to present themselves as a higher SES individual. The symbolic capital of tanned skin—its association with positive and valuable traits that signify the upper class—is an essential component to lower SES individuals seeking out tanned skin frequently and believing that it is important. This also might be why lower SES individuals feel more pressure to tan, because they feel a greater urgency to conceal their class identity.

An interesting divergence in the data analysis revealed that when SES increased, positive perception of the self when tan also increased. The reasoning for this relationship is possibly rooted in the preexisting elite social status of higher SES individuals. After they tan their skin, higher SES individuals gain more symbolic capital, which heightens their social recognition; we are reminded that Bourdieu based prestige in exclusion (2013). When higher SES individuals have tanned skin they are able to become even more elite, and so the exclusion that this grants them likely reaffirms or boosts their perception of self.

H4: White People Will Have a More Favorable Opinion of Tanning and Will Have Higher Rates of Tanning Than People of Color

The results from this data analysis were inconclusive, so my hypothesis was not supported. However, the t-test that used the scale *likelihood of seeking a tan* revealed a trend in the direction of my hypothesis that suggests that White people seek out a tan more often than People of Color. To begin with, the majority of the literature on tanning used primarily White participants as their research populations (Robinson et al. 1997b; Cox et al. 2009; Dennis et al. 2009; Hay et al. 2009; Clarke et al. 2012; Pollitt et al. 2012), which could be an indication that this population is more inclined to engage in tanning behaviors or that this population is simply researched more often because of White favoritism. The literature also tells us that individuals are strongly influenced by the media, which is known to perpetuate social standards of beauty (O’Riordan et al. 2006; Wakefield et al. 2010). The media often portrays tanned skin as the ideal, leaving viewers to desire and seek out that trait (Mahler et al. 2010; Dixon et al. 2014); it can be inferred from White hegemony that they majority of the people in the media are White, which may perpetuate this population engaging with skin tanning.

To revisit Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic capital (2013), the type of symbolic capital that White people receive from tanned skin is unattainable by People of Color. This is because the symbol of distinction that gives tanned skin symbolic capital is its origin: unlike the naturally dark skin on People of Color, the tan skin that White people don is actively acquired and artificial. White people are pressured to tan by the media, however when they do ultimately engage with this behavior they are able to adhere to a standard of beauty and gain greater social recognition—two things that People of Color are unable to do.

Two t-tests yielded unexpected results: both *appearance of tanned skin* and *importance of tanning* revealed trends in the data that went against my hypothesis. These t-tests suggested that People of Color might have had a more favorable opinion of the appearance of tanned skin and that they thought that it was more important than White respondents did. These results were unexpected considering the historical rejection and dislike for darker skin within communities of color as the result of colorism (Russell-Cole et al. 2013). Additionally, Goffman's theory of stigma (1963) leads us to believe that People of Color would not be inclined to engage in tanning behaviors because of the stigma that is associated with darker skin. Rather, People of Color would presumably be more inclined to 'pass' by engaging in the light-skin bias as the result of colorism, cultural dominance, and cultural imposition (Rogers 2006). It would be beneficial for future research to examine how tanning attitudes and behaviors differ between White people and People of Color.

H5: White People Who Have a Racial Bias Will Also Have Positive Attitudes and Behaviors Towards Skin Tanning

This hypothesis was innovative in that there is no literature on a possible relationship between racial bias and tanning attitudes and behaviors. My data analysis did not support this hypothesis, nor was there enough of a trend that could suggest an overall relationship. However, two regressions yielded results that had trends that suggested a relationship in support of my hypothesis—that White people are not accepting of People of Color becoming darker. *Asian people look better when tan* and *Hispanic people look better when tan* showed a slight association that implied that as racial bias increased the belief that Asian and Hispanic people look better when tan decreased.

The literature tells us that as White people continue to seek to darken skin through tanning, discrimination against People of Color on the basis of skin color continues as well (Russell-Cole et al. 2013; Monk 2014; Hannon 2015). Implicit bias theory also suggests that White people's acceptance of darker skin for their in-group should lead to a negative perception of darker skin on the out-group, People of Color. It is possible that White people's in-group bias was revealed in juxtaposition to people of Asian descent because they are perceived as the model minority. Regarding the results for Hispanic people, it might be likely that White people disapprove of them tanning because they already have naturally darker skin and thus would become darker than they already are.

An unexpected result illustrates that as racial bias increased, White people's belief that they look better when tan decreased. Additionally, as racial bias increased the belief that Black people look better when tan also increased. These results contradict the literature and theory that suggests that as racial bias increases we could expect White people to believe that their group looks better when tan—an indication of in-group bias—and that Black people—as well as anyone else in the out-group—do not look better when tan. In spite of this, the results could be suggesting that White people simply do not associate tanned skin with People of Color in the manner that we could infer from the literature and theory. It is likely that tanned skin is not a factor that White people take into consideration with in-group bias, or that it is a subconscious influence for implicit racism.

There was a trend in the data, however, that suggested a relationship against my hypothesis: as racial bias within White people increased their positive attitudes and behaviors towards skin tanning actually slightly decreased. As aforementioned, this contradicts implicit bias theory that leads us to believe that implicit racism should be the result of in-group bias

among White people as consequential of their positive attitudes and behaviors towards skin tanning. Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital (2013) also leads us to suspect that this association might exist because White people are able to gain a symbolic capital from tanned skin that People of Color are unable to. Despite what theory suggests, a negative correlation between racial bias and positive tanning attitudes and behaviors could be suggesting that White people simply do not acknowledge a relationship between the two—White people might be putting artificially tanned skin and naturally dark skin on People of Color in entirely different categories.

As previously mentioned, this hypothesis was unprecedented as there is no literature on a potential relationship between racial bias, especially among White people, and tanning attitudes and behaviors. Future research would benefit by expanding upon this subject matter to examine if there is a relationship between the two, and, if not, how and why White people's perceptions of artificially dark skin acquired through tanning differs from their perceptions of the naturally dark skin on People of Color.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

It is evident from this research that the skin-tanning phenomenon is incredibly complex. We can observe that the status of tanned skin as a highly valued physical trait in Western society continues as shown by the aggregate of the literature, theory, and my data; these suggest that the majority of people continue to regard tanned skin as very significant and desirable. Two of five of my hypotheses were supported with some statistically significant data, and one other had a trend that suggested a relationship that was in support the hypothesis. These three hypotheses indicated that attitudes and behaviors of skin tanning do influence our perceptions of class and gender. Conversely, my findings regarding a relationship between tanning attitudes and behaviors, race, and racial bias did not match what was expected from the literature and theory. While my research does show, as expected, that White people tan more frequently than People of Color, there is no clear evidence as to disparities of tanning attitudes and behaviors across racial categories, as well as a relationship with racism.

My data supports the literature that presents tanned skin as desirable, attractive, and an ideal (Miller et al. 1990; Chung et al. 2010; Yoo and Kim 2012), and also demonstrates that people will continue to engage in tanning behaviors despite their knowledge of its health risks (Beasley and Kittel 1997; Dennis et al. 2009; Yoo and Kim 2012). My findings also strongly support each theory that I used, first by indicating that the power dynamics between the White, Western world and colonized People of Color allowed the West to employ cultural exploitation, a subset of appropriation, as a mechanism for their commodification of darker skin color. Second, that the crux of tanned skin's symbolic capital for White people is the active nature in which it is acquired, juxtaposed to the naturally dark skin of People of Color. Next, that despite the stigmatization of the darker skin of People of Color, tanned skin on White people is

constantly utilized as an impression management tool. Finally, that men and women engage with skin tanning in different manners regardless of predicted behavior rooted in the belief that health behaviors are gendered. The only theory that did not support my findings was implicit bias, which presumed that in-group bias would possibly affect how White people view tanned skin on People of Color.

The small sample size of my study (survey: 233 participants; IAT: 44 participants) and its location at a liberal arts college affected its potential to have generalizable results. If I were to do this study again, I would use a larger and more diverse population that was not situated in just one location. I believe that the research on a potential relationship between racial bias and tanning attitudes and behaviors is especially compelling, so if I were to do this study again I would recruit more participants for the IAT to try to gather a more reliable sample. Additionally, I believe that it would be beneficial for further studies to explore how lower SES individuals choose to use tanned skin as a method of impression management. We know that lower SES individuals tan more frequently and believe that it is more important than higher SES individuals but we do not know exactly why. Were I to do this study again I would make sure to have a more diverse population with regard to SES in order to ensure that I would be able to more comprehensively study this relationship.

The implications of this study suggest that we redirect our focus on skin tanning as a practice and as a mechanism in systems of oppression. First, it appears that people care more about the short-term effects of skin tanning—greater attraction, feeling generally better about oneself, and being perceived as more healthy and wealthy—rather than the long-term health risks. Societal attitudes are the driving factor so more effort should be put into changing social norms about tanning, rather than focusing efforts on preventative behavior. This is also directly

related to the pressure placed on women to conform to standards of beauty. We cannot change tanning norms without understanding how it is intertwined with social attitudes towards what is expected of women.

Second, we as a society must put more effort into reflecting upon how we repeatedly appropriate People of Color culturally and aesthetically. We must be more aware of and active in our understanding of how we consume People of Color. Just as we cannot approach tanning norms without considering their relation to oppressive powers against women, we cannot do the same without considering skin tanning's connection to the oppression of People of Color. If we desire to change positive attitudes regarding tanned skin then we must also strive to change negative attitudes surrounding People of Color.

Throughout the process of this research I have discussed my work with many people, who upon hearing what I am studying, often responded with surprise since they have never considered the social implications of skin tanning. It is likely that the idealization and adoration of tanned skin has clouded perceptions of this social beauty norm. Furthermore, it became apparent from my conversations with people that many cannot see how tanning might be a form of appropriation. This is not to say that skin tanning is inherently bad, but we must critically reflect on how we value tanned skin while also living and participating in a society that still discriminates People of Color simply for their darker skin tone.

The personal is political: for centuries skin color politics have dictated our world, including our Western society, so it is impossible to engage with an individualized behavior such as skin tanning without there being larger social implications. Social norms and standards of beauty are difficult to eradicate, so I do not envision that tanned skin will cease to be a norm in the near future; it is too ingrained in White society. What must be done, rather, is to have greater

value placed on the naturally darker skin of People of Color. This will not be an easy feat either, but as a society we cannot prize tanned skin while simultaneously deprecating similar and darker skin tones on People of Color. White hegemony dictates our norms, so if White society will not diminish the value of tanned skin then it at least must raise the value of that on People of Color. I am not certain of the likelihood of this happening in the near or distant future, but it is necessary to contemplate this as we continue to engage with skin tanning and consider the future of skin color politics, as well as the often fraught relationship between White people and People of Color.

Appendix A**Survey: *Attitudes and Behaviors of Skin Tanning Among College of Wooster Students***

Thank you for deciding to participate in my Senior Independent Study, Attitudes and Behaviors of Skin Tanning Among College of Wooster Students. By indicating at the beginning of this survey that you are at least 18 years of age or older you are giving me permission to use your responses as part of my Senior I.S. All responses will be entirely anonymous at the time of analysis. Access to the data will be restricted by a password protected file. You may change your mind about participating in my survey and may withdraw at any point.

Demographics

1. What is your age? (fill in the blank) _____
2. My gender identity is:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Gender Fluid
 - d. Non-binary or Gender Queer
3. My sexual orientation is:
 - a. Exclusively Heterosexual
 - b. Not Heterosexual
4. My household's annual income is:
 - a. Lower class: less than \$25,000
 - b. Lower-middle class: \$25,001-\$50,000
 - c. Middle class: \$50,001-\$75,000
 - d. Upper-middle class: \$75,001-\$100,000
 - e. Upper class: more than \$100,000
5. The highest level of education attained by my father is:
 - a. Some high school
 - b. High school diploma
 - c. Some college
 - d. Bachelor's degree
 - e. Some graduate school
 - f. Master's degree or higher
 - g. Don't know
6. The highest level of education attained by my mother is:
 - a. Some high school
 - b. High school diploma
 - c. Some college
 - d. Bachelor's degree
 - e. Some graduate school
 - f. Master's degree or higher
 - g. Don't know

Survey

7. When I think of tanned skin I think of (fill in the blank):
 - a. _____

- b. _____
- c. _____
- 8. Suntanned skin is attractive to me
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Disagree
 - f. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - g. Agree
 - h. Strongly agree
- 9. Suntanned skin looks healthy to me
 - i. Strongly disagree
 - j. Disagree
 - k. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - l. Agree
 - m. Strongly agree
- 10. Having suntanned skin is important to me
 - n. Strongly disagree
 - o. Disagree
 - p. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - q. Agree
 - r. Strongly agree
- 11. I feel better about myself when I am tan
 - s. Strongly disagree
 - t. Disagree
 - u. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - v. Agree
 - w. Strongly agree
- 12. I feel better about myself when I am tan and my peers are not
 - x. Strongly disagree
 - y. Disagree
 - z. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - aa. Agree
 - bb. Strongly agree
- 13. I enjoy tanning (i.e. sunbathing, going to indoor tanning salons)
 - cc. Strongly disagree
 - dd. Disagree
 - ee. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - ff. Agree
 - gg. Strongly agree
- 14. I like to have a tan for special events
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
- 15. It is important to return from vacation with a tan
 - a. Strongly disagree

- b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
16. Having a tan year-round is important
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
17. How often do you purposefully tan (i.e. sunbathing, going to a tanning salon)?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Frequently
 - e. Always
18. How often do you unintentionally tan (i.e. get a tan from outdoor activities)?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Frequently
 - e. Always
19. How often do you use indoor tanning beds?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Frequently
 - e. Always
20. How often do you use sunscreen when you are outdoors?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Frequently
 - e. Always
21. How often do you use sunless products (i.e. makeup, tanning sprays or lotions, etc) to darken you skin?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Frequently
 - e. Always
22. I would rather use sunless products to achieve a darker skin tone in lieu of sunbathing or using a tanning bed
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree

- e. Strongly agree
23. [If *Neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*, or *strongly agree* is selected]: I would rather use sunless products to achieve a darker skin tone in lieu of sunbathing or using a tannin bed because (select all that apply):
- a. I do not want to be exposed to ultra-violet radiation
 - b. It is more convenient
 - c. I can use sunless products more often
 - d. I like how I look better when I use sunless products than when I sunbathe or use a tanning bed
 - e. Other
24. I feel pressure from my family to have suntanned skin
- f. Strongly disagree
 - g. Disagree
 - h. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - i. Agree
 - j. Strongly agree
25. I feel pressure from my friends to have suntanned skin
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
26. I feel pressure from the media to have tanned skin
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
27. It is ok for men to suntan
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
28. I think men look better with suntanned skin
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
29. It is ok for women to suntan
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
30. I think women look better with suntanned skin

- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
31. White people look better when they are tan
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
32. Black people look better when they are tan
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
33. Hispanic people look better when they are tan
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
34. Asian people look better when they are tan
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
35. I identify as:
- a. White
 - b. Not White
 - c. Multi-racial (including White)

[If *White* in Question 35 is selected] Thank you for participating in my survey! I am in need of additional participants that would be willing to help me with the second stage of my research at the beginning of the second semester in January. This will involve coming into a lab to take a brief online Implicit Association Test about skin tone. Food will be provided in the lab and you will be entered into a raffle drawing for a \$25 gift card.

I would be interested in participating in the second stage of research for *Skin Tanning Attitudes and Behaviors of College of Wooster Students*:

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please provide your email address so that I may be in contact with you following the completion of my survey: _____

Thank you for participating in my study! Your responses have been recorded. If you have any questions you may email me at mpolovick17@wooster.edu, or my advisor, Professor Anne Nurse, at anurse@wooster.edu.

Appendix B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *Attitudes and Behaviors of Skin Tanning*
Among College of Wooster Students
THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

Principal Investigator: Madeleine Polovick, Department of Sociology

Purpose

You are being asked to participate in a research study. I hope to gain a better understanding of how White people's attitudes and behaviors of skin tanning influence their perceptions of race.

Procedures

If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in an Implicit Association Test (IAT) that will examine your perception of skin tone.

Risks

There are no risks that are attributed to this study.

Benefits

Food will be provided at the end of the experiment as incentive and all participants will be entered into a raffle drawing for a \$25 gift card.

Confidentiality

All given information will be entirely confidential. Access to the data will be restricted to only the researcher and will be stored in a password protected file. After data collection is complete, any identifying information will be separated from the data and permanently destroyed. Analysis of the data will be completely separate from identifying factors.

Cost

There is no cost other than the time and effort required in completing the survey.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You may refuse to participate in the study. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind about being in the study and withdraw at any point during the experiment.

Questions

If you have any questions, please ask me by contacting me by email at mpolovick17@wooster.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Professor Anne Nurse at anurse@wooster.edu.

Consent

Your signature below will indicate that you have decided to volunteer as a research subject, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are 18 years of age or older. You will be provided a copy of this form upon request.

Signature of participation _____ Date _____

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