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Light-Skinned with Good Hair: The Role of Christianity and Comptonization in the Maintenance of Self-Hatred in African Americans

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“Most African Americans deny or are at least unaware on a conscious level of the impact of the media and Christianity on the formulation of their self-image.”

Most African Americans deny or are at least unaware on a conscious level of the impact of the media and Christianity on the formulation of their self-image. The phrase "light-skinned with good hair" is still commonplace within the African American vernacular. What is particularly remarkable about this reality is the lack of recognition of this cultural phenomenon as indication of a deep, subliminally anchored self-hatred. This paper explores how feelings of self-hatred in African Americans are perpetuated through media and the standard physical and ideological manifestations of Christianity.

This presentation will also elucidate the role of rap video in the perpetuation of negative social stereotypes of African Americans, especially Black males in American society. Colorism, white supremacist ideology, the "light-skinned-good hair" syndrome, and the print media as contributors to this syndrome also will be discussed. The rap music video "Murder Was The Case," starring Snoop Doggy Dogg, will be viewed, analyzed, and discussed as indicative of the aforementioned syndromes.

PRESENTER

Omowale Akintunde earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music education from Alabama State University and a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction and African American studies from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has published and lectured extensively regarding issues of rap music and racism. He is the recipient of the Donald K. Anderson Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Gertrude Mathews Award for Excellence in Teaching, Music Education, Research, and Scholarship, and the Gus T. Ridgel Fellowship. He has also served as a Holmes Scholar and is a Faculty Fellow at the University of Wyoming.