

CHAPTER 2

C2 The Other as Unbeautiful

Analytic Somaesthetics, Disgust and the Albinotic Body in African Traditions

Elvis Imafidon

C2.S1 1 Introduction: Disgust as Norm

C2.P1 Perhaps, Charles Darwin is the first to provide a scholarly description of the now popular conception of disgust as an emotion in the eleventh chapter of his seminal work, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.¹ Discussing disgust alongside other emotions such as disdain, contempt, guilt, and pride,² Darwin defines disgust as “something offensive to the taste”.³ He adds,

C2.P2 It is curious how readily this feeling is excited by *anything unusual* in the appearance, odour or nature ... [it] causes annoyance, it is generally accompanied by a frown, and often by gestures as if to push away or to guard oneself against the offensive object.⁴

C2.P3 Darwin's discussion of disgust in a few pages of his work is primarily associated with how this emotion is aroused by taste or smell, particularly as associated with food, but not as much as how it is aroused by sight particularly, to explore further his own words, when we see *anything unusual*, including bodily or behavioural differences. However,

¹ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions of Man and Animals*, Francis Darwin (Ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), pp.269–273.

² See *Ibid.*, pp.265–292.

³ *Ibid.*, p.269.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.269–270. Emphasis is mine.

post-Darwinian research on disgust particularly in psychology has focussed attention on other aspects of this emotion beyond taste and smell of food. For instance, as Burlingham, McDaniel and Wilson acknowledges,⁵ the eight domains of disgust identified and discussed by Haidt, McCauley, and Rozin offer a comprehensive analysis of the causes of disgust. They are food, sex, body products, envelop violations, magic, animals, hygiene, and death.⁶ Concerning the fourth, for instance, envelop violation consists of the “alteration of the normal exterior envelop of the body, including gore, surgery, puncture wounds, *deformity* and other situations. Some examples entail viewing body parts that are normally inside the body in a state of exposition, (e.g., intestines, bones, a severed hand or a decapitated head).⁷

C2.P4 The above analyses, primarily psychological/psychoanalytic, of disgust is essential and important in understanding the individual and subjective, conscious experience of disgust as an emotion. But these analyses often ignores the understanding of disgust not only as an emotion but also as a norm. To define disgust as a norm is to hold and defend the claim that disgust is not only an individually experienced emotion but also a carefully and deliberately entrenched norm in society and culture. In this sense, disgust is the expression of repulsion for something or some act that disagree with, or are in contrast with, social or cultural norms of things and behaviours that we have become accustomed to, or that is generally accepted in our place of dwelling. Consider a few

⁵ Amanda Burlingham, Chad McDaniel, and David O. Wilson, ‘A Historical Review of Disgust’, *Modern Psychological Studies*, 5.1 (1997), pp.39–42.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.40.

⁷ *Ibid.* Emphasis is mine.

examples. If it is the norm to eat with cutlery in our society, we feel a strong sense of dislike and disgust when we see someone feasting on food with her bare hands. If it is considered repulsive to eat frogs in our culture, we feel disgust when we see someone enjoying a frog meal, but those in the frog-eating culture do not feel disgust when they see someone eating frogs because such disgust is not a universal emotional expression against something naturally offensive. Again, if we come from a culture, society or religion where the norm is to abhor body tattoos, we would feel disgust if we see someone who has tattoos drawn all over or in some parts of the body.

C2.P5 There are two main implications of the understanding of disgust as norm: first, this form of disgust gains strength and legitimacy from the group since it is accepted by several persons as what is right. This makes it difficult for the recipient of the disgust to challenge or overcome it; second, it provides opportunity for the one to hide under the umbrella of the many not only to feel disgust, but to express it and act against the recipient of the disgust sometimes in hideous ways. In what follows, I make as my focal point in this essay an analytic somaesthetic study of the albinotic body in African cultures. Put differently, I attempt a descriptive and theoretical analysis of the African perception of the albinotic body. I argue that the albinotic body is perceived in African thought as disgust and this form of disgust is a norm-based form and it is deeply entrenched and perpetuated in African societies. To defend this claim, I begin in the first section by exploring and theorising how this disgust for the albinotic body is entrenched and sustained in African societies through an interplay of systemic ignorance and ontic-bodily (re)presentation. In the second section, I proceed to show how the normative perception of the albinotic body as disgust is legitimated by actual cases of disgust by

persons with albinism (PWAs) due to ignorance. I proceed further in the third section to highlight the dire consequences for meaningful existence for PWAs caused by the norm of disgust of albinotic bodies and these include suicide and loss of hope. In the fourth section, I explore the role enlightenment plays not only in overcoming the albinotic bodily norm of disgust in African places, but in enshrining beauty for the PWA. I also highlight the problem of epistemic access in the pursuit of enlightenment. I conclude by highlighting the dangers of perceiving the body solely from normative lenses rather than from enlightened lenses also.

C2.S2 **2 Systemic Ignorance, Bodily Norm and Disgust for the Albinotic Body**

C2.P6 In this section, I explore how the perception of the albinotic body arouses disgust in African places. But first, it is essential, I believe, to explain in a few words in what senses I use the terms systemic ignorance and bodily norm. Systemic ignorance is the ignorance operative in a system. This ignorance is its many forms – not-knowing, not-willing-to-know, not-caring-to-know, or ignoring-what-should-be-known – is operational in a system to the extent that one could not understand the body of knowledge in the system without understanding as well the ignorance within the system as well. Recent advancements in the epistemology of ignorance reiterates, I believe, the utmost importance of paying attention to ignorance in the *logos* of knowledge. In the words of Linda Martin Alcoff,

C2.P7 The idea of an epistemology of ignorance attempts to explain and account for the fact that such substantive practice of ignorance – wilful ignorance, for example, and socially accepted but faulty justificatory practices – are structural [or systemic]. This is to say that

there are identities and social conditions of a variety of sorts, that are in some cases epistemically disadvantaged or defective.⁸

C2.P8 Hence, understanding systemic ignorance is essential in understanding systemic knowledge of human conditions including albinism. Bodily norm on the other hand, or what Claudia Liebelt Sarah Bollinger and Ulf Vierke call ‘standardisation in bodily appearance’⁹ is the accepted, typical, or standard form of a body in a place or context. Think, for instance, about the fashion modelling world as a context and the perfect figure which often excludes plus sized or fat persons for failing to present a body form that is in accordance with the norm. Bodily norms therefore stereotype the body and put anyone who falls outside the norm in a defensive, pitiable and awkward position.

C2.P9 Systemic ignorance and bodily norm in African cultures are the key factors responsible for the arousal of disgust against the albinotic body in African societies. Concerning the first, African indigenous thought has a body of knowledge of albinism. Generally speaking, albinism is seen in African communities as a negative human condition and persons with albinism are seen as lacking essential qualities for being human. Common linguistic phrases in African communities show persons with albinism being referred to as ghosts, curse from the deities, beings with superhuman powers and so on. For example,

⁸ Linda M. Alcoff, ‘Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types’, in S. Sullivan and T.

Nancy (eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

⁹ See Liebelt Sarah Bollinger and Ulf Vierke, *Beauty and the Norm: Debating*

Standardisation in Bodily Appearance (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

C2.P10 Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria in West Africa, there are various explanations for albinism in humans. A popular notion of albinism is that persons with it are agents of divinities (*eniorisa* as they are often called) sent to families who have erred against some divinity or ancestral spirit as some form of punishment or curse. They are therefore often called *afin*, meaning horrible beings. For this reason, persons with albinism are often sent to serve in shrines, and some individuals draw the conclusion that since they are agents of the divinities, their body parts and blood must have superhuman powers that can be used for ritual purposes such as money-making rituals and charms for long life and different forms of protection.¹⁰

C2.P11 Similar attitudes towards albinism can be deduced from many African cultures in other parts of Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa, Malawi and so on. What is obvious here is that these African understanding of albinism is ignorant of the empirically tested and proven scientific facts of albinism. The facts are that

C2.P12 Albinism in persons refers to a condition where a person partially or completely lacks pigmentation or colouring due to certain biological conditions such as the absence of melanin (the substance that gives a person his or her colour) and other genetic mutations. A person with albinism (PWA) visibly lacks pigment in all or some parts of his or her body including skin, hair and the iris and pupil of the eyes. Such persons generally

¹⁰ Elvis Imafidon, *African Philosophy and the Otherness of Albinism: White Skin, Black Race* (London: Routledge, 2019), p.19. See also Olugbenga Samuel Olagunju, 'Toward a Biblical Response to Myth and Discrimination against the Human Rights of Albinos in Yorubaland'. *Journal of Studies in Social Science*, 1.1 (2012), p.49.

have pale, milk- or pink-coloured skin, white, milk-coloured or blonde hair; and light-coloured (blue, pink or light brown) eyes. Human albinism can therefore occur in too different forms. It could be complete albinism, which is referred to in medical terms as oculocutaneous albinism (OCA), or partial albinism, which is known as ocular albinism (OA).¹¹

C2.P13 It has also been scientifically proven that only when a couple – a male and a female – who both have the albinism gene mate would there be a probability for a baby with albinism be born. These facts about albinism are no doubt in contrast with the African knowledge claims of albinism. The deeply entrenched systemic ignorance about albinism in African cultures which began as non-wilful ignorance, but is gradually becoming deliberate and wilful in the face of clear facts about the condition provides a basis for the expression of disgust by Africans with melanin against Africans with albinism.

C2.P14 Broadly construed, albinism is socially and culturally represented as an unwelcomed abnormality or difference, much the same way other forms of disability are negatively designated in African traditions. Within and between cultures in African societies, there are varying descriptions of albinism in persons. However, such varying ideas about albinism all point to the same social and cultural representations of albinism as not only abnormal but repugnant; persons with albinism are considered abhorrent and disgusting within such cultural frameworks. Their experiences are shaped by averted glances and other types of avoidance that cut off practices of sociability. Pregnant women, for example, are often told to avoid looking at persons with albinism, lest they

¹¹ Elvis Imafidon, *African Philosophy and the Otherness of Albinism*, p.10.

pass this quality to their child. Specific negative descriptions and representations of persons with albinism are thus formulated to institutionalise the abnormal and repugnant nature of albinism.¹²

C2.P15

Concerning the second – bodily norm, African thought in general and African descriptive conception of a person in particular clearly states what the norm should be with regards to the human body. Besides not being disabled in any form, the human body ought to be dark skinned, bursting out in melanin, full-ledged and full-fleshed, not bonny or skinny, a sign of malnourishment. Melanin-privileged Africans therefore enjoy several rights and privileges by simply being dark skinned enough, and such rights and privileges are denied persons with albinism.¹³ Thus, in line with the African bodily norm, people in African communities would spit just by seeing a person with albinism walk by, a husband would abandon his wife in the hospital because the news reaching him is that she gave birth to a pale-looking, whitish, pinkish baby, pregnant women would hide their face in the sight of a PWA to avoid being caused, a bus passenger would live a cherished seat simply because a PWA seat by her side, and even someone would lose the appetite to eat because a PWA worked into the room. These forms of expression of disgust are no doubt fuelled by a deeply entrenched norm of the body in African societies coupled with the systemic ignorance enshrined into the thought system, which in turn institute a norm of disgust against persons with albinism in general and their bodies in particular.

¹² Ibid., p.19.

¹³ See Elvis Imafidon, ‘Intrinsic versus Earned Worth in African Conception of Personhood’, in Elvis Imafidon (ed.), *Handbook of African Philosophy of Difference* (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2020), pp.248–249.

C2.S3 3 Ignorance and the Legitimizing of the Norm of Disgust

C2.P16 The popular Baconian slogan, 'knowledge is power' is certainly true, but it does imply that a lack of it is weakness. Albinism is a form of disability that may lead to impaired vision and difficulty walking/working under the heat of the sun due to the lack of melanin in the eyes and skin. Being ignorant of these facts by persons with albinism (PWAs) and primary care givers such as parents, relative and healthcare workers could cause adverse damage to the body of a PWA and have severe consequences for her wellbeing in general.

C2.P17 In many African communities, the knowledge of albinism available to community members including PWAs is the theoretical constructs that community provides which, as we have seen from the foregoing, reflects a systemic ignorance about the condition that veils actual facts about it. It is more worrisome that persons who ought to possess factual knowledge about the condition such as healthcare workers, teachers and religious leaders are often guilty of perpetuating the false representations of albinism in African cultures and encouraging the maltreatment, stigmatisation and discrimination against PWAs by deliberate actions and inactions. Here, I analyse how the lack of factual knowledge about albinism by PWAs and caregivers enshrines and legitimates rather than question and overcome the systemic ignorance about albinism in African cultures.

C2.P18 Many PWAs in Africa lack the proper care every human being deserves. This is often due to rejection expressed in words and action by community members, relatives and in some cases, by immediate family members. There are several cases today where in a family with both children with melanin and children with albinism, the head may decide to care for the children with melanin by, for instance, sending them to school, but deprives the children with albinism of the same care. In such cases, the PWAs may be

forced to do outdoor work such as farming, hawking and selling in the hot sunny African weather to survive. In so doing, the PWAs due to high sensitivity to sun light, would gradually experience a tremendous amount of skin damage that could quickly lead to skin cancer. The Mayo Clinic website highlights some of such skin damages, a common sight among persons with albinism in African communities.¹⁴ They include sunburn often experienced frequently by PWAs due to the very sunny environment in Africa, freckles and large freckle-like spots (lentiginos), and moles with or without pigment. The frequent sunburn often lead to a very rough-looking, twisted skin, thick broken skin, bleeding skin, sores, and a general presentation of the body skin that is irritating to see. This sun scotched, irritating albinotic body invariably legitimates the community's false notions about albinism. The gaze and the pointing fingers at the PWA who has in the bid to survive developed the disgusting skin does not show that there is an understanding in the community that the sun caused this. Rather the gaze and pointing fingers simply say: we said it, she isn't really a human and she is not capable of being beautiful. The albinotic other is thus treated not only as a non-human other but also as one incapable of being beautiful.

C2.P19

The situation is worsened by the fact that even many of the PWAs do not know the natural cause of their bodily disgust – the sun. They soon assimilate, accept and live in frustration by the cultural explanation and representation of their being in general and

¹⁴ Mayo Clinic Staff, 'Albinism', in Mayo Clinic (2018). Accessed 12th August, 2019

from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/albinism/symptoms-causes/syc-20369184>.

bodily disgust in particular. Even in scenarios where immediate family members and caregivers do care about the PWA, the lack of factual knowledge about the condition makes it difficult to avoid bodily disgust and ensure bodily beauty. Some caring parents due to the lack of knowledge of what the sun could do to the skin of their child with albinism may still involve them in several outdoor duties such as farming. Worse still, false but popular information about albinism in African communities such as ‘PWAs do not eat salt’ and ‘PWAs should use medicated bathing soap’ are diligently followed by caring caregivers. But these only worsen the situation and present frustration for both the PWA and the caregiver who is doing her best possible to care for the PWA.

C2.P20 Ignorance, we could therefore conclude, is not only the basis for understanding the false representation of PWAs in African places, but also fuels and enshrines the bodily disgust of PWAs and these false representations and lived experiences of PWAs have dire consequences for their being and existence.

C2.S4 **4 Disgust and the Suspension of Meaningful Living**

C2.P21 The engraining of disgust of the albinotic body into the very fabric of many African communities through forms of presentations and representations of the albinotic other and through the reign of ignorance has dire consequences for the wellbeing, existence and everyday lived experiences of PWAs. To put it simply, it leads to the suspension of meaningful living for PWAs. This happens in several ways. One important consequence of the conception of the albinotic body as disgusting is that it denies the PWA of one of

the most cherished African existential value, relationality, or being-with-others.¹⁵ As the result of the disgust felt against her, the PWA is isolated, rejected, and discriminated against by the majority in the community, leading to alienation and the feeling of loneliness. As Elvis Imafidon aptly puts it,

C2.P22

When a person with albinism becomes conscious of her existence in an African community, she also gradually becomes conscious of how the world in which she finds herself perceives and understands her being. While in childhood innocence, she relates with the world and others with openness and without boundaries. In this relation with the world and others, over time, she gradually becomes conscious of the hatred, disdain, social stigma, ill-treatment and discrimination the system and those in it has for her. The debasement of her personhood steadily becomes vivid to her. So, while she struggles to relate with the world and with others – a necessary outcome of her ontological nature of being a being-in-the-world and a being-with-others – the world by its very structures and value systems struggle to isolate her and cut her off, and they succeed quite well in doing this, turning her into a being-to-herself.¹⁶

¹⁵ Communal living, solidarity, relationality, being one's brother's keeper, or the very concept of Ubuntu remains one of the most cherished values in African cultures.

There have been several scholarly works on this subject. For a detailed analysis of African communitarian philosophy, see, for example, Polycarp Ikuenobe, *Philosophical Perspective on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions* (London: Lexington Books, 2006).

¹⁶ Elvis Imafidon, *African Philosophy and the Otherness of Albinism*, p.102.

C2.P23 This withdrawal-to-self due to rejection by community members could lead to loneliness, depression, contemplation of suicide, suicide. There have been several reports in dailies in the last decades of a number of PWAs committing suicide or attempting to do so because they have lost faith in existence, they could no long find any meaning in life or any reason to keep living. Consider, for example, the report in the *Nigerian Vanguard Newspaper* on August 17, 2015:

C2.P24 A 23-year-old man, Ugochukwu Ekwe, yesterday committed suicide at Festac Town, Lagos, over the colour of his skin being an albino. His dangling body was discovered in an apartment ... where he lived with his parents and siblings. *Vanguard* gathered that the deceased refused to eat since Saturday in protest of what he said was people's rejection and stigmatisation because of his skin condition. He was also said to have refused to go to church with other members of the family yesterday. When the family returned from church, Ugo, as he was fondly called, was dangling at the end of a rope tied to the ceiling fan ... Vanguard gathered that the deceased had attempted to take his life before now.¹⁷

C2.P25 In cases where the PWA is strong enough to carry on with life even when others fell disgust for her and in the face of social rejection and alienation, she struggle to lead a meaningful life. She struggles to cope in school if she has the opportunity for schooling

¹⁷ Evelyn Usman and Esther Onyegbulam, '23-yr-old Albino Commits Suicide over Condition', *Vanguard Newspaper*, August 17, 2015. Accessed April 14, 2017 from: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/08/23-yr-old-albino-commits-suicideover-condition/>.

due to impaired vision which may lead to poor performance, scolding gazes, side comments, murmuring, verbal and direct attacks from fellow students and teachers and consistent and several experiences of sunburns. When she struggles through school and succeeds, it becomes yet more struggle to find employment. Many employers in African are disgusted by the sight of PWAs and are disgusted by the thought of having one work for them. There is a general feeling that due to the disgust of the albinotic body, employing one would irritate and scare customers off. A Ugandan woman with albinism interviewed in March 2019 by the *Voice of America* relates her experience in searching for teaching job although qualified: ‘When I went there to apply for vacancies, they refused. They said children will fear you. Even other teachers looked at me as maybe a curse. So as per now, I don’t work.’¹⁸ These difficulties in living faced by PWAs in the areas of education and employment are experienced in other areas as well such as finding a life partner, making friends, engaging in social activities, participating in religion and politics, and pursuing a career. It requires more than the usual effort, commitment, energy, and determination for PWA to rise above these challenges and lead a meaningful life.

C2.S5 5 Enlightenment, Beauty and the Overcoming of Bodily Norm

C2.P26 In this final section, I theorise how a number of PWAs in African places have changed the perception of the albinotic body as disgust by becoming exceptions to the bodily norm of

¹⁸ Halima Athumani, ‘Women Living with Albinism Struggle to Find a Good Job’, in

Voice of America News, March 08, 2019. Accessed October 14, 2019 from:

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/women-living-albinism-struggle-find-good-job>.

disgust and becoming identified as one with a beautiful body through the pursuit of enlightenment understood in the Kantian sense as *sapere aude*, daring to know. Therefore, the ability to, and quite deliberate and successful task to, change the perception of the albinotic body from the negative view of disgust to the positive view of beauty entails essentially a rejection of epistemic docility. In order to become actively involved as an epistemic agent in knowing about albinism. By epistemic docility, I mean the act of being content with, or easily being led along or controlled by, the knowledge claims provided by a group or a person considered to have epistemic authority on a particular object or subject matter. An epistemically docile person is satisfied with the knowledge that has been fed him, is willing to submit her epistemic agency to the group or another individual, and is not ready to at the very least question the knowledge claims presented to her due to, following Kant's understanding, epistemic laziness or cowardice. Perhaps, Kant provides the best description of the distinction between an epistemically docile person and an epistemically active person, showing how the latter is the one in pursuit of enlightenment:

C2.P27

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude!* [dare to know] "Have courage to use your own understanding!" – that is the motto of enlightenment.¹⁹

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, An answer to the question: what is enlightenment? Konigsberg, Prussia. Retrieved February 11, 2011 from

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>, p.1.

- C2.P28 He adds,
- C2.P29 Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a proportion of men, long after nature has released them from alien guidance (*natura-liter maiorenes*), nonetheless gladly remain in lifelong immaturity, and why it is so easy for others to establish themselves as their guardians. It is so easy to be immature. If I have a book to serve as my understanding, a pastor to serve as my conscience, a physician to determine my diet for me, and so on, I need not exert myself at all. I need not think, if only I can pay: others will readily undertake the irksome work for me.²⁰
- C2.P30 To be sure, being enlightened, or being epistemically active does not necessarily imply rejecting the body of knowledge one has come to know, say about albinism as is contained in African thought; rather, it implies being actively involved in verifying the knowledge claims, coming to have evidence for or against such claims, and being willing to accept or reject such knowledge claims based on the evidences and justificatory factors available.
- C2.P31 It is obvious from our discourse in the previous sections that many epistemic agents in relation to albinism in African communities such as community leaders, caregivers, PWAs and other community members are epistemically docile agents, accepting without evidences and justification the handed down body of knowledge about albinism. by implication, they are un-enlightened, or not-daring-to-know about the condition. However, a number of PWAs, caregivers, and community members have become epistemically active about the albinism condition, daring to know and seeking evidences and justification for any knowledge claims held about the condition. For instance, they have come to know factual information about the sensitivity of the skin and

²⁰ Ibid.

eyes of the albinotic other primarily due to the lack of melanin, the life-threatening damages the sun and harsh cosmetics could do to the albinotic body, and the necessary action that can be taken to avoid such. They have not only come to know, they have put such knowledge into action. Having come to know the empirically verifiable facts about albinism, how it can be managed and what to avoid such as the sun, a number of parents/caregivers who have dared-to-know have been able to provide adequate care for their children or wards with albinism; some PWAs have also become able to care for themselves; other community members who have dared-to-know now understand the condition better, empathise when necessary, and provide support when needed. In putting knowledge into action this way, the skin and body presentation of these PWAs who have dared-to-know, or whose caregivers have dared-to-know, have become beautiful minimising sunburns, sores, rough skins, and large freckles. Their skin glow and is admired by many and they change in many ways, the African normative perception of the albinotic body. I spoke with a 15-years old boy with albinism in a secondary school in Nigeria and he said to me: 'People in my school love my skin. They like to touch me but they make jest of the other two albinos in my school, telling them to go and care for themselves the way I do because they don't look very good. They are no spots on my skin and it is clear and smooth.' Caring for one's body and the endeavour by a PWA to appear neat and clean, smooth and beautiful does not only appeal to others and inhibit the feeling of disgust, it does a lot in changing perceptions of albinism in African societies. It may not eliminate completely the stigma and discrimination associated with albinism, but it goes a long way to minimise and challenge them.

C2.P32

But a major challenge to being enlightened and epistemically active about albinism to the extent that one is able to take charge of one's body perception, is the problem of barriers to epistemic access, or access to accurate knowledge of albinism due to knowledge-sharing barriers. There are many PWAs who are more than willing to make their bodies beautiful if they have access to the knowledge of how to do so; there are many caregivers as well who would work hard to care for the skin and bodies of the PWAs under their care. They are more than willing to take the leap from epistemic docility to enlightenment. But they lack access to accurate knowledge to albinism that is needed to necessitate this leap into enlightenment. Several epistemic barriers prevent ease of access to the much needed body of knowledge. Such knowledge-sharing barriers include lack of quality education and training programmes, lack of access to knowledge database and storage systems such as the internet in many communities as well as the knowledge to use such systems. Hence these interested persons are compelled to make use of what is available, but what is available are erroneous claims about the albinotic other, which, as analysed already fosters the perception of the albinotic body as disgust. Therefore, providing epistemic access should be a front burner issue for stakeholders in the albinism discourse such as researchers, activists, policy makers, NGOs, World Organisations, and national and international albinism bodies. Access to vital knowledge is the first step to take toward enlightenment for PWAs, caregivers and community members. Enlightenment in turn promotes the positive perception of the albinotic body.

C2.S6

6 Concluding Remarks

C2.P33

More often than not, what we claim to know about different forms of disability, how we view and understand the person with disability, and more specifically, our perception of

the disabled body are intrinsically influenced and determined by cultural and social lenses. It is difficult to present a somaesthetic analysis of any form of disability and bodily perception without paying attention to deeply rooted and socially perpetuated ideologies of the body in particular or of disability in general in human societies. But as can be deduced from the foregoing, these cultural and social lenses can be stained and cracked with deliberate and non-deliberate forms of ignorance and other forms of prejudices that dent the actual facts of the body and disability. It is thus imperative for the subject's to put on her own lenses to carefully examine the ideas provided by culture or society to test it for evidence, justification and factuality. But it requires courage to take off cultural or social lenses and put on one's own lenses and having the courage to do so shows one's willingness to be epistemically responsible for what one knows. The perception of the body must be an epistemically responsible perception for it to matter and for it to be fair to the perceived. The perceiver and the one claiming to know that the body is x or y, must be epistemically active enough in the knowing process for her claim to be a reliable one. The importance for epistemic responsibility of the knower or perceiver cannot be overemphasized because it provides the knower with the opportunity to relate with the known during the process of knowing, a relation that eliminates false ideologies that beclouds her knowledge of the perceived. Therefore, for the albinotic body to be properly perceived, the perceiver needs to be epistemically responsible to value the efforts it takes for the PWA to present a beautiful body.

C2.S7

Bibliography

Alcoff, L.M. ‘Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types’, in S. Sullivan and T. Nancy (eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

Athumani, H. ‘Women Living with Albinism Struggle to Find a Good Job’, in *Voice of America News*, March 08, 2019. Accessed October 14, 2019 from:

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/women-living-albinism-struggle-find-good-job>.

Burlingham, A., Chad McDaniel, and David O. Wilson, ‘A Historical Review of Disgust’, *Modern Psychological Studies*, 5.1 (1997), pp.39–42.

Darwin, C. *The Expression of the Emotions of Man and Animals*, Francis Darwin (Ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), pp.269–273.

Ikuenobe, P. *Philosophical Perspective on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions* (London: Lexington Books, 2006).

Imafidon, E. *African Philosophy and the Otherness of Albinism: White Skin, Black Race* (London: Routledge, 2019), p.19.

Imafidon, E., ‘Intrinsic versus Earned Worth in African Conception of Personhood’, in Elvis Imafidon (ed.), *Handbook of African Philosophy of Difference* (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2020), pp.248–249.

Kant, I. *An answer to the question: what is enlightenment?* Konigsberg, Prussia.

Retrieved February 11, 2011 from

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>.

Liebelt, S. B. and Ulf Vierke, *Beauty and the Norm: Debating Standardisation in Bodily Appearance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Mayo Clinic Staff, 'Albinism', in Mayo Clinic (2018). Accessed 12th August, 2019 from:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/albinism/symptoms-causes/syc-20369184>.

Olagunju, O.S., 'Toward a Biblical Response to Myth and Discrimination against the Human Rights of Albinos in Yorubaland'. *Journal of Studies in Social Science*, 1.1 (2012).

Usman, E. and Esther Onyegbulam, '23-yr-old Albino Commits Suicide over Condition', *Vanguard Newspaper*, August 17, 2015. Accessed April 14, 2017 from:

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/08/23-yr-old-albino-commits-suicideover-condition/>.