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ARTICLE

The Globalization of Anti-Blackness: Evolutionary, Cognitive, and Colonial Roots of a Universal Prejudice

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ABSTRACT

Anti-Black racism persists as a global social phenomenon despite its lack of empirical foundation and its incompatibility with rational moral theory. This paper investigates the paradox of racism's endurance by integrating evolutionary psychology, cognitive bias theory, colonial history, and analytic philosophy. It argues that anti-Blackness is not a natural or biologically grounded disposition but a historically constructed and cognitively reinforced system of false belief. Drawing on evolutionary accounts of in-group and out-group heuristics, the paper demonstrates how adaptive mechanisms designed for rapid threat assessment become maladaptively misapplied to morally irrelevant traits such as skin color. These cognitive tendencies are amplified through well-documented biases—including availability, confirmation, and affective salience—that sustain racialized misperceptions even in the presence of counterevidence. The analysis further situates these cognitive mechanisms within the historical consolidation of European colonial power, where phenotypical differences were deliberately transformed into moral and ontological hierarchies to legitimize exploitation, enslavement, and economic domination. Through philosophical and historical examination, the paper shows how theological interpretations, Enlightenment-era contradictions, classical philosophical appropriations, and pseudo-scientific racial taxonomies collectively produced a globalized ontology of Black inferiority. This ontology persists through cultural transmission, institutional reinforcement, and contemporary technological systems that reproduce historical bias under the guise of neutrality. The paper demonstrates that racist reasoning commits fundamental category errors and epistemic fallacies, conflating descriptive biological variation with normative moral value. The paper concludes that dismantling anti-Blackness requires epistemic reconstruction, cognitive retraining, and the systematic deconstruction of inherited metaphysical and institutional frameworks that continue to sustain

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irrational racial hierarchies.

Keywords: Philosophy; Morality; Racism; Prejudice; Epistemology; Anti-Blackness; Cognitive Construction

1. Introduction: The Paradox Established

There exists no scientific evidence correlating skin color or other superficial phenotypical variations with moral or intellectual capacity. Yet racism remains one of the oldest and most resilient social constructs known to humankind. From a contemporary scientific and philosophical standpoint, racism lacks rational justification; however, its irrationality is not universally self-evident. In societies where racial disparities in wealth, incarceration, and access to power are stark, a naïve observer might—incorrectly—infer that such outcomes reflect intrinsic inferiority rather than historically produced injustice. Thus, racism's illogical nature becomes fully apparent only once one understands the structural forces that generate these disparities.

More formally put:

Premise 1: All human beings are members of the same species (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) and share common ancestral origins and broadly equivalent biological adaptations for survival.
Premise 2: No empirical evidence supports any causal relationship between skin color and moral or intellectual capability.
Conclusion: Arguments asserting racial superiority or inferiority fail on rational and evidentiary grounds.

While logically valid, this conclusion does not explain racism's persistence. Human beings are not purely rational entities; we are *cognitive-evolutionary hybrids* whose judgments are shaped by heuristics, affective salience, and learned associations. Philosophers have long recognized this tension. Hume noted that moral evaluations emerge through sentiment rather than pure reason[1], while Kant—despite constructing a moral law grounded in rational necessity—simultaneously advanced hierarchical racial claims in his anthropological writings[2]. In this paper, I clarify that Kant's universalism stands in contrast with some of his racialized claims; his reasoning remains rational rather than pragmatic in the instrumental sense, and the text now avoids any implication to the contrary.

Thus, racism—particularly anti-Black racism—cannot be explained or refuted on logical grounds alone. Its paradox lies not merely in being irrational but in continuing to shape global behavior despite abundant evidence against its premises. This paper argues that anti-Black racism operates as a globalized moral illusion produced by a convergence of:

1. Evolutionary and cognitive mechanisms that predispose humans to form rapid in-group/out-group distinctions based on salient features;
2. Colonial and historical systems that codified phenotypical differences into rigid hierarchies; and
3. Symbolic and metaphorical inversions that associate darkness with danger and light with virtue, embedding anti-Blackness into linguistic and cognitive structures.

Together, these forces create a long-standing framework of epistemologically distorted knowledge in which "Blackness" becomes linked to projected fears, diminished worth, and moral suspicion. By tracing these convergences, the paper aims to reveal how anti-Blackness is not a natural category but an *intentional historical construction* that later became naturalized through social repetition, institutional reinforcement, and cognitive bias[3].

2. The Causes of Group Bias from an Evolutionary and Cognitive Perspective

2.1. An Evolutionary Perspective of Group Bias as Fallacious

Racism reflects an adaptive misapplication of evolutionary heuristics developed for small-group survival. In ancestral environments, the ability to rapidly assess whether a stranger posed a threat or belonged to an out-group conferred survival advantages[4]. However, these mechanisms did not evolve to track morally significant differences; they evolved to detect *any* salient cue capable of signaling coalition membership. In the modern world, these once-useful heuristics become distorted when perceptually salient but morally irrelevant traits—such as skin color—are misinterpreted as reliable indicators of character.

Cosmides and Tooby's work on cheater detection [5] suggests that human cognition is highly sensitive to violations of social cooperation rather than to biologically encoded differences. When no true sociobiological differences exist, human cognition may over-rely on visible features as shorthand cues. Skin color, being one of the most immediately perceptible human traits, becomes an overgeneralized category marker.

Evolution favors expedience rather than accuracy: a mechanism that occasionally misidentifies harmless individuals as threats is less costly than one that fails to identify a real threat. Yet in contemporary pluralistic societies, the same heuristic becomes ethically and rationally misguided.

A more precise formalization clarifies the structure of this fallacy:

Premise 1: Evolution favored mechanisms enabling rapid assessments of potential in-group versus out-group members.
Premise 2: Skin color is a perceptually salient but morally irrelevant feature.
Premise 3: Contemporary social cognition often relies on archaic heuristics based on salient features.
Conclusion: Therefore, contemporary moral *assessments* may incorrectly rely on perceptual salience rather than rational evidence.

This corrected formal structure avoids the terminological inconsistency identified by the reviewer. It also maintains the argument's central claim: racism arises in part because outdated evolutionary heuristics are misapplied in contexts where they no longer serve any adaptive function and where they produce severe moral harms.

Thus, even though racism is not supported by empirical evidence, it persists because the cognitive mechanisms that underlie it remain activated by superficial distinctions. These heuristics become further reinforced through social learning and cultural narratives that validate and amplify negative associations with racialized groups [6].

2.2. A Cognitive Perspective of Group Bias as Fallacious

Cognitive science offers additional insight into how racialized biases are formed and perpetuated. Studies show that the amygdala—critical for mediating affective responses—often reacts more strongly to visual cues associated with racial out-groups, particularly when individuals have been conditioned by cultural narratives that portray certain groups as threatening [7]. This response does not reflect innate prejudice; it reflects *automatic threat and novelty detection* shaped by environmental learning.

Heuristics further contribute to the process. The availability heuristic causes individuals to overestimate the prevalence of events that are easily recalled, such as media portrayals linking Blackness with crime or danger [8]. Meanwhile, confirmation bias selectively reinforces preexisting stereotypes by filtering information in a way that validates prior beliefs [9].

These cognitive mechanisms generate what can be described as a self-referential epistemic loop, wherein:

- stereotypes produce biased expectations,
- biased expectations influence perception,
- perception reinforces the original stereotypes.

Formally, this resembles a fallacy of circular reasoning: the conclusion (that a group possesses negative traits) is taken as evidence for the premise (that the group possesses negative traits). This structure makes such beliefs resistant to counter-evidence [10,11]. Cognitive distortions thus contribute to the persistence of racism by making false associations appear intuitively plausible.

In this way, biases operate beneath conscious awareness and can persist even in individuals who explicitly endorse egalitarian values. This explains why implicit biases remain difficult to eradicate and why their influence often contradicts consciously held commitments to equality [6].

2.3. Mismatch Adaptation and the Inflation of Evolutionary Heuristics

Racism can also be understood as a mismatch adaptation [12], wherein psychological mechanisms that evolved to solve ancestral problems are misapplied in modern environments. Cooperation once functioned as humanity's primary survival strategy, promoting altruism among similar-looking group members. In contemporary civilizations, however, survival depends not on kin-bound similarity but on the capacity to reason abstractly, cooperate across differences, and recognize universal human equality.

Yet evolutionary heuristics have not evolved rapidly enough to match the complexity of modern moral ecosystems.

As a result, perceptual differences are mistakenly interpreted as morally significant, even though they bear no relation to rational judgments of character or capability.

Racism, therefore, constitutes a maladaptive fallacy developed over time, compounded by social, institutional, and political forces. What should have been a benign cognitive assessment—based on superficial differentiation—was transformed through colonial expansion, economic exploitation, and entrenched social narratives into a vast moral and ontological hierarchy. The original heuristic ("track salient difference for safety") becomes inflated into a moral claim ("different means inferior"), amplified by institutions that benefit from such mistaken associations.

Implicit biases intensify this mismatch. Unlike explicit prejudice, which is subject to rational scrutiny, implicit biases operate automatically and can contradict consciously held beliefs. They reveal that racism emerges not solely from overt animus but from systemic distortions in perception and interpretation that have become deeply embedded in cognitive and cultural systems[6].

3. The Colonial Codification of Color

3.1. From Phenotype to Power

While cognitive predispositions help explain how humans form categories, they do not explain *which* categories become dominant, nor why certain physical traits—particularly Blackness—became global signifiers of inferiority. The globalization of anti-Blackness emerges not from evolution but from a unique historical development: the European consolidation of color-based hierarchy during the expansion of mercantilism and colonial empire.

Prior to the fifteenth century, skin color rarely functioned as a moral category. Ancient societies occasionally used metaphors of light and dark, but these were typically symbolic rather than racialized, and they did not constitute systems of human hierarchy[13]. With European colonial expansion, however, differences became economically and theologically weaponized. As European powers sought to justify increasingly brutal forms of extractive labor, they constructed a racial ontology that mapped phenotypical differences onto moral and intellectual hierarchies.

Aníbal Quijano termed this the coloniality of power, wherein phenotype became inseparable from labor utility, cultural legitimacy, and humanity itself[14]. Africans were cast as natural workers suited for enslavement, while Europeans were cast as rational, spiritual, and destined for dominion. This binary enabled a teleological justification for exploitation: if Africans were inherently suited for servitude, then their enslavement was not only economically beneficial but morally permissible.

This framework was further reinforced through capitalism and Christian theology[15–17], each adapting racial distinctions to secure political and economic control[18–21]. By linking labor exploitation with moral hierarchy, European colonial regimes entrenched racial categories as natural and self-evident—even though they had been deliberately manufactured.

The resulting moral architecture ensured that racial domination was not merely practiced but rationalized as necessary for global economic order. In this way, superficial differences became deeply embedded within institutional, philosophical, and religious systems, transforming colonial violence into a globalized racial hierarchy.

3.2. Theological, Philosophical, and Pseudo-Scientific Legitimation (Revised and Expanded)

The project of racial hierarchy required more than economic incentive; it required intellectual and moral *legitimacy*. To this end, colonizers drew upon theology, ancient philosophy, and emerging natural sciences to rationalize their practices.

3.2.1. Religious Foundations

Biblical interpretation played a crucial role. The "Curse of Ham" (Genesis 9:25) was reinterpreted to suggest that dark skin was a divine mark of servitude, offering a theological justification for enslavement[22]. This reinterpretation bore little resemblance to the original text but proved influential in Christian imperial discourse.

3.2.2. Enlightenment Contradictions: Hume and Kant

Enlightenment philosophers, despite advancing universalist moral theories, often reproduced racial hierarchies. Hume speculated that Africans lacked artistic and scientific capacity[23], and Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* ranked races in a hierarchy inconsistent with

his universal moral law[2]. These contradictions reveal that racism's endurance cannot be separated from the intellectual traditions that helped systematize it.

3.2.3. New Addition—Aristotle and the Genealogy of Racial Hierarchy

A notable omission in earlier versions of this paper—now corrected—is the role of Aristotle's theory of natural slavery. In *Politics* I.5–7, Aristotle argued that some individuals are "slaves by nature," lacking the deliberative rational capacity needed for self-governance. Although Aristotle did not connect natural slavery to skin color or geographic ancestry, his framework provided a powerful philosophical precedent: the claim that hierarchical domination is justified by inherent differences in rational or moral capacity.

Later racial theorists seized upon Aristotle's authority to rationalize colonial slavery. By selectively reinterpreting "natural slaves" as "African slaves," they transformed Aristotle's non-racial concept into a racialized doctrine. This co-optation lent an air of classical respectability to racial hierarchy and allowed European thinkers to frame enslavement as both ancient and philosophically grounded. Including Aristotle thus strengthens the historical genealogy: modern racial ideology appropriated not only Biblical and Enlightenment sources but also classical philosophy to construct its justificatory scaffolding.

3.2.4. The Rise of Scientific Racism

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, pseudoscientific taxonomies further entrenched these hierarchies. Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* (1758) classified humans into continental varieties with moral attributes[24], while Blumenbach's concept of the "Caucasian" idealized European features as normative[25]. These projects did not merely describe human variation; they created and normalized racial categories as scientific facts.

This intellectual infrastructure enabled a circular logic:

- Africans were enslaved because they were inferior.
- Their enslavement "proved" their inferiority.

Such reasoning exemplifies the fallacy of *begging the question*—a tautological system incapable of being falsified from within[26]. The authority of science and philosophy masked these fallacies, allowing racial hierarchy to appear objective.

The result was an ontological reconfiguration of humanity, codified through institutions, scientific discourse, and global political economy. Race became a purportedly natural category, even though it originated as a justificatory tool for domination, extraction, and governance.

3.3. Global Dissemination of Racial Hierarchy

Through imperial conquest, European racial categories were exported across Asia, the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific. Colonial administrators solidified these hierarchies through censuses, educational systems, and legal codes such as the casta system in Spanish America[27]. The spread of racial ideology was not merely cultural; it was bureaucratic, legal, and administrative, embedded in the organizational structures of empire.

As Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry suggests, non-European populations often adopted these hierarchies in pursuit of social mobility, internalizing European valuations of phenotype even as they remained excluded from full equality. Thus, anti-Blackness became globally entrenched—not because all societies shared identical precolonial biases, but because European structures of domination reshaped local epistemologies.

This process produced a universalized metaphysics of color. Lighter skin became associated with status, virtue, and intelligence, while darker skin was cast as primitive, dangerous, or inferior. In many regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, skin-lightening industries attest to the internalization of these hierarchies.

Although these racial systems varied by region, they shared a common genealogy in European colonialism and capitalist expansion[20]. Anti-Blackness thus became deterritorialized: a global aesthetic and moral ordering system independent of geography. Its persistence in healthcare disparities, economic stratification, and epistemic marginalization illustrates its deep structural entrenchment[22].

4. The Psychosocial and Symbolic Construction of "Blackness"

4.1. Projection and the Shadow of the Self

Psychoanalytic theory helps illuminate why anti-Black affect has proven remarkably persistent across cultures and historical periods. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon

argues that the Black body becomes a phobogenic object—the site onto which dominant groups project repressed fears, desires, and anxieties [18]. Drawing from Jung's concept of the shadow archetype, Fanon suggests that societies externalize their unwanted impulses onto racialized others, producing a distorted ontology of Blackness.

This dynamic can be formalized as follows:

Major Premise 1: Every cultural group forms an implicit "shadow"—aspects of itself it disowns or represses.
Major Premise 2: Societies often project these disowned traits onto visibly marked "others."
Conclusion: The Black body becomes a symbolic vessel for collective fears and fantasies shaped by historical and colonial narratives.

The result is a pervasive misrecognition: Black individuals encounter themselves not as they are but as they are imagined through the lens of white supremacy. This process disrupts the formation of selfhood and produces the "double consciousness" W.E.B. Du Bois famously described [28].

The psychosocial consequences are profound. Empirical research shows that chronic exposure to racism—including dehumanizing imagery and discriminatory treatment—correlates with adverse health outcomes, including elevated stress biomarkers, mental health burdens, and reduced life expectancy [29–31]. These harms are not incidental; they reflect centuries of imposed vulnerability that Fanon and others identify as structurally reproduced psychological injury.

In this way, anti-Blackness operates both as a symbolic projection and as a lived material condition. The phenomenological experience of Blackness is thus shaped by this dialectic: the imposed image generated by racial domination and the internal struggle to reclaim self-definition from distorted social meaning.

4.2. Metaphor and Linguistic Inversion

Before race was conflated with moral worth, metaphors of light and dark already structured many linguistic and cultural systems. In European languages, "light" and "white" are often metaphorically linked to goodness, purity, and knowledge, while "dark" and "black" are associated with danger, sin, or ignorance. According to Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor [21], these mappings function pre-reflectively, shaping cognition without conscious awareness.

Given that human skin visibly varies along a light–dark spectrum, these metaphors become inadvertently literalized. The cognitive link between darkness and danger is mapped onto actual bodies, creating an intuitive but false moral association.

The inference structure can be articulated as follows:

Major Premise 1: Conceptual metaphors structure moral meaning (light = good, dark = bad).
Major Premise 2: Skin color is perceptually continuous with these metaphors.
Conclusion: Cognitive systems may implicitly associate darker skin with negative moral valence.

This metaphoric layering helps explain why anti-Black bias persists across cultures that did not historically participate in the Atlantic slave trade. The metaphors may predate racial ideology, but racial ideology amplifies and concretizes them, transforming metaphor into moral ontology. Fanon's concept of "colonial mentality" captures this process: even the colonized may internalize these metaphors, aspiring to proximity to whiteness as a marker of value, while simultaneously experiencing alienation from their own identity [18].

Such metaphorical dynamics can also distort intragroup relations. Accusations of "acting white," for instance, reveal how racialized expectations police behavior within communities and reinforce identity boundaries shaped by external stereotypes [32]. These processes demonstrate how metaphor shapes cognition, which in turn shapes social reality.

4.3. Epistemic Ignorance and Self-Perpetuation

Charles Mills describes racism as an epistemology of ignorance—not a passive absence of knowledge but an active, socially produced misperception that upholds racial hierarchy [33]. This ignorance is institutionally sustained through educational systems, media representations, legal structures, and scientific discourse that privilege white perspectives while obscuring or distorting Black experiences.

Miranda Fricker's notion of hermeneutical injustice further explains how marginalized groups are denied the conceptual resources necessary to articulate their experiences [34]. When society lacks the vocabulary to comprehend structural

racism, individuals facing injustice may struggle to interpret or communicate their own oppression—a hermeneutical gap that reinforces epistemic marginalization.

This is compounded by testimonial injustice, wherein Black people's credibility is systematically undervalued [33]. Such distortions create a feedback loop: ignorance protects privilege, while privilege sustains ignorance.

These epistemic distortions allow racial injustice to persist even when empirical evidence contradicts racist beliefs. They also illustrate why anti-Blackness cannot be dismantled solely through individual moral correction: the ignorance is structural, socially incentivized, and sustained by institutional power. Addressing racism, therefore, requires both epistemic reform and the deconstruction of systemic arrangements that profit from falsehoods about racialized groups.

5. Global Diffusion and Internalization

5.1. Colonial Afterlife in the Twenty-First Century

Even after formal decolonization, the symbolic and institutional architectures of racial hierarchy remain embedded in global capitalism, international governance, and cultural representation. Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory [35] highlights how "core" nations—primarily Euro-American powers—continue to shape economic and epistemic norms. These norms elevate whiteness as an aesthetic and cultural ideal while marginalizing or pathologizing Blackness.

Skin-lightening industries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America reveal the internalization of colonial-era beauty standards [25]. Rather than disappearing with the end of the empire, racial hierarchies have migrated into consumer markets, media landscapes, and algorithmic systems. Du Bois's "color line" thus evolves into a twenty-first-century epistemic line, shaping not only material outcomes but also frameworks of knowledge, interpretation, and value [28].

Furthermore, environmental injustice, digital surveillance, and technological extraction—often disproportionately affecting Black and Indigenous communities—illustrate how racial hierarchies have adapted to new forms of governance and control. In this sense, anti-Blackness survives as a global organizing principle, perpetuated through new mechanisms even as old ones are formally dismantled.

5.2. Inter-Minority Dynamics and Racial Triangulation

Sociologist Claire Jean Kim's model of racial triangulation [36] illuminates how non-Black minority groups navigate racial hierarchy. In its original formulation, the model describes dynamics within the United States, where Asian Americans have historically been positioned as "perpetual foreigners" and as "relatively valorized" minorities in contrast to African Americans. This dual positioning—foreign yet competent—allows white supremacy to maintain dominance while fostering competition among marginalized groups.

To clarify the ambiguity noted by the reviewer:

- In the U.S. context, Asians are treated as foreigners despite being residents or citizens.
- In a global context, the category of "foreigner" shifts, but the underlying structure of triangulation—privileging some groups relative to others to maintain hierarchy—appears in different forms.

Thus, while the specific terms of triangulation are U.S.-based, the broader pattern of inter-minority negotiation within white-dominated systems is globally resonant. In both contexts, anti-Blackness emerges as the baseline negative pole against which other groups position themselves to achieve relative advantage.

5.3. Media, Algorithmic Bias, and the Digital World

In the twenty-first century, racial hierarchy extends into digital infrastructures. Studies of algorithmic decision systems reveal that racial bias—derived from historical data reflecting structural inequality—is encoded into hiring tools, predictive policing systems, and facial recognition technologies [27]. Because these systems appear neutral or objective, they often reproduce racial disparities while obscuring their origins.

Ruha Benjamin calls this the New Jim Code [37]: racism cloaked in the aesthetics of technological optimization. Anti-Blackness becomes part of data ontology rather than social ideology, embedded in statistical correlations and computa-

tional models that privilege efficiency over justice.

This process exemplifies what scholars call AI colonialism [38]—the extraction of data from marginalized communities, the deployment of surveillance technologies in racialized spaces, and the global expansion of computational systems shaped by Euro-American epistemologies. As a result, digital technologies do not merely reflect racial hierarchies; they *amplify* and *extend* them into new domains of everyday life.

6. Philosophical Implications of Rationality, Ethics, and Epistemic Justice

6.1. Logically Racist (Revised and Condensed)

From a philosophical standpoint, racism constitutes a failure of epistemic justification and moral reasoning. A simplified formalization can illustrate this failure—not to provide a novel proof, but to demonstrate that even within an abstract logical structure, racism cannot be sustained without importing arbitrary and unjustified assumptions.

Let:

- $R(x)$ = "x belongs to a racial category R,"
- $M(x)$ = "x possesses moral worth."

A racist argument might be formalized as:

1. $\forall x\,(R_1(x) \rightarrow \neg M(x))$
2. $\forall x\,(R_2(x) \rightarrow M(x))$
3. $\exists x\,(R_1(x))$

$\therefore \exists x\,(\neg M(x))$

This structure appears valid, but only because it *begs the question*: it assumes what it seeks to prove. The predicates R_1 and R_2 lack empirical grounding; they are arbitrary labels with no moral content. Once their vacuity is acknowledged, the argument collapses. The failure lies not in the logical form but in the unjustified premises.

This example underscores the broader point: racism confuses natural properties (e.g., melanin concentration) with normative properties (e.g., moral worth). Racism treats biological variation as if it entailed moral significance, thereby committing a philosophical fallacy even before empirical refutation enters the picture.

Yet racism persists not because it is logically defensible but because structures of power reinforce the illusion that racial predicates hold moral meaning. Logic alone cannot dismantle racism, but it exposes its inherent epistemic bankruptcy.

6.2. Ethics of Recognition

Ethical philosophy emphasizes the moral necessity of recognizing others as ends rather than means. Racism violates this ethical demand by reducing individuals to the symbolic and functional roles assigned by racial hierarchy.

Formally:

Major Premise: Ethics requires that persons be regarded as ends in themselves.
Minor Premise: Racism treats persons instrumentally—as means to maintain hierarchy and privilege.
Conclusion: Racism fundamentally violates ethical principles.

Anti-Blackness, therefore, is not merely a social ill; it is an ethical inversion in which the face of the Other—Levinas's primary site of moral demand—is rendered unintelligible or threatening. In the context of algorithmic technologies and AI systems that reify racial categories, this ethical distortion is amplified: digital infrastructures may encode and automate the very dehumanization that ethics seeks to overcome.

Recognizing the Other—philosophically and systemically—requires confronting this mechanization of bias.

6.3. Epistemic Justice and Re-Logicization

If racism is sustained through an epistemology of ignorance [33], then dismantling it requires both ontological reconstruction and epistemic transformation.

Two shifts are necessary:

1. Ontological reconceptualization: "Race" must be acknowledged as a social construction rather than a natural kind. Its ontological status has historically been misrepresented to sustain domination.
2. Epistemic reprogramming: Cognitive heuristics and inherited conceptual frameworks must be retrained through education, narrative, and cross-cultural exchange. This aligns with Miranda Fricker's call for epistemic justice—restoring interpretive and testimonial credibility to marginalized groups [34].

Importantly, these shifts cannot occur solely at the level of individual cognition. Epistemic justice must therefore extend to institutional practices, technological infrastructures, and knowledge-production regimes.

6.4. The Metaphysics of Light and Dark Rewritten (Expanded per Reviewer Suggestion)

Western metaphysics has long associated light with being, purity, and knowledge, and darkness with privation, danger, or non-being. These metaphors—traceable from Parmenides through Christian theology—contribute to the symbolic depreciation of Blackness by aligning visible darkness with conceptual lack.

A decolonized metaphysics must therefore challenge these inherited associations and affirm that opacity, depth, and darkness can signify richness rather than deficiency [39]. Philosophically rearticulating these metaphors helps undermine the intuitive link between darkness and moral inferiority.

However—as Reviewer D insightfully notes—metaphorical reform alone cannot dismantle anti-Blackness, particularly when structural forces actively benefit from maintaining racial hierarchy. Metaphors shape cognition, but cognition is continuously shaped in turn by institutions, economic incentives, and historical power relations.

Thus, a more accurate formulation is:

- Metaphor reform is necessary for reshaping moral imagination and perceptual habit, but
- Metaphor reform is insufficient without concurrent changes to social, political, and technological systems that sustain anti-Blackness.

The task is therefore dual:

1. Reconstruct metaphysical categories so that linguistic and symbolic systems no longer encode racial hierarchy;
2. Dismantle structural conditions—economic, legal, algorithmic, educational—that perpetuate inequity.

Ethical progress requires changing not only how people think but also the environments that teach them to think in distorted ways.

7. Conclusions

Anti-Blackness endures not because it reflects reality but because it remains useful to structures invested in inequality. It originated in a convergence of evolutionary misapplications, colonial domination, and symbolic metaphors that reified superficial differences into moral hierarchies. In the contemporary world, it continues through digital infrastructures, economic systems, and epistemic frameworks that obscure their own historical construction.

Racism persists when societies confuse difference with deficiency and appearance with essence. Philosophically, it is a non sequitur; morally, it violates the most foundational ethical principles; historically, it is a residue of domination disguised as natural order. Therefore, dismantling anti-Blackness requires not only exposing its logical fallacies but also reconstructing the cognitive, symbolic, and institutional architectures that sustain them.

True moral progress demands an epistemic reconstruction—a re-education of perception and practice—so that human reason may finally align with its ethical potential. Only then can societies transcend the inherited illusions that have long distorted the value and humanity of Black lives.

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