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# DECOLONIZING BLACK COLOR IN DAILY LANGUAGE

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**Abstract**

*The psychological impact of white supremacy on Black individuals extends beyond physical oppression, embedding itself in education, language, and economic structures. Black lives are often framed within white paradigms, pressuring individuals to dissociate from their identity. This leads many to seek alignment with whiteness—whether by adopting "civilized" cultural norms or altering their physical appearance, such as through skin bleaching. Blackness is persistently burdened with negative connotations—linked to ugliness, fear, immorality, and misfortune—while whiteness is idealized as purity, innocence, virtue, and perfection.This paper examines linguistic frameworks that devalue Blackness and the Global South, which is frequently framed in pejorative terms. The study follows a bibliographical approach in two phases. The first reviews works by scholars who have challenged white dominance, including Frantz Fanon (1952), Kabengele Munanga (2005), Léopold Senghor (n.d.), Joseph Ki-Zerbo (2003), and Paulina Chiziane (2008). The second analyzes linguistic expressions that portray the Global South as impoverished and inferior.Findings reveal that language demeaning Black people is often internalized and perpetuated by Black individuals under the guise of "linguistic mastery" or intellectualism. This study argues that language is not neutral but a powerful ideological tool that reinforces racial hierarchies. Recognizing and dismantling these constructs is essential for the decolonization of discourse and the reclamation of Black identity.*

**Key words**: Black; White; Color; Decolonization.

## Introduction

Language is more than a means of communication; it is a cultural lens that shapes how people perceive and interpret the world. As Franz Boas (1940) notes, language serves as the front page of a people's culture, embodying their history, values, and evolving societal realities. However, language is not neutral, it absorbs and reinforces dominant ideologies.A clear example of this is the deliberate association of Blackness with misfortune, malice, sin, and evilan

intentional construct designed to impose shame on Black people and justify their marginalization. This linguistic and symbolic manipulation has been central to the projection of white dominance, embedding notions of superiority and inferiority into everyday discourse. In contrast, whiteness has been consistently framed as the opposite of Blackness, representing purity, innocence, goodness, and perfection. These deeply ingrained associations reveal the ideological underpinnings of language and highlight the need to critically examine how it perpetuates social hierarchies under the guise of neutrality.

One of the most significant contributions of Italian philosopher and Marxist Antonio Gramsci is his work *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1929), where he explores the concept of cultural hegemony. Gramsci argued that ruling classes maintain control not merely through force or economic dominance but by shaping cultural and ideological systems. He emphasized that the most effective form of domination is not physical coercion but intellectual controlcreating systems that lead individuals to disown their identities while positioning the oppressor as the "savior." This is achieved by embedding the values, norms, and beliefs of the ruling class into the cultural fabric, making them appear as "common sense" or natural. As a result, subordinate groups internalize these ideas, often without realizing they serve the interests of those in power.

White elites have tirelessly sought ways to justify their dominance, the enslavement, and the exploitation of Black people, constructing narratives that positioned Blackness as inherently inferior, uncivilized, and in need of salvation. This ideological manipulation was not only reinforced through institutions and policies but also deeply embedded in cultural expressions, including language, education, and national symbols. A striking example is found in Cameroon's first national anthem *(from 1957 to 1970)*, which included a line where Cameroonian by singing it were accepting that they were*livingin "barbarism and savagery" but little by little they wwould leave it, Bissohong (2021).* Such rhetoric reinforced the notion that Black people were backward and in need of guidance, typically from white colonial powersto attain "civilization." This narrative served as a powerful tool for legitimizing colonial rule and continued subjugation, making Black people internalize the very ideologies that sought to oppress them.

In fact, the thoughts of many white people were perfectly articulated by Friedrich Hegel in his influential work *The Philosophy of History* (1837). Hegel characterized African societies as being in a perpetual state of savagery and barbarism, arguing that Black people lacked historical development compared to European societies. He claimed that Africa existed outside

the trajectory of world progress and that the history of Black people was stagnant, devoid of any meaningful contributions to human civilization. In essence, his perspective reinforced the idea that Africa was a land without purpose, open for exploitation by those who desired it, while its people were dehumanized, reduced to mere objects rather than recognized as agents of their own history.

Over time, successive generations of nonconformist and conscious Africans played a crucial role in challenging and dismantling the distorted narratives about Black people that had been propagated in the West. Among the key fronts of resistance was the Pan-African Association, founded in the early 1890s by John Langalibalele Dube, alongside African leaders such as Solomon T. Plaatje. Their efforts extended beyond Africa, as they collaborated with influential figures in the Americas, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Edward Blyden, to promote solidarity and unity in the fight against racial discrimination and the oppression of Black people. In the early 20th century, Marcus Garvey further advanced this cause by founding the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914. The UNIA focused on fostering economic self-sufficiency, cultural pride, and political independence among African people worldwide, reinforcing the movement for Black empowerment and global Pan-African solidarity(Adi, 2018).

In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, *LaNégritude* movement emerged as a powerful cultural and intellectual force led by Léopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal, Aimé Césaire from Martinique, and Léon Damas from French Guiana. Through literature and poetry, they challenged French colonial rule and the policy of assimilation, reclaiming Black identity and cultural pride. It was no coincidence that they named their influential journal *Présence Africaine*, a call for Africa to rise and assert its place in the world. In the following decade, the push for African unity took a major step forward with the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The OAU sought to promote solidarity among African states, focusing on decolonization, economic development, and regional security, marking a significant move toward the continent's political integration. Beyond these movements, numerous other organizations and activists have continued the fight for Black liberation and empowerment. The African Studies Association, founded in 1957, became the largest academic body in North America dedicated to the study of Africa, while countless activists and regional organizations have played vital roles in advancing the African cause.

It is undeniable that significant milestones have been achieved in the long and arduous struggle to liberate and empower Black people. Today, Black individuals are recognized as

human beings with full rights, segregation has been officially abolished, and Black and white people can freely share public spaces in cities like Paris, Vienna, and New York. However, despite these advancements, the deep-seated inequalities persist, reflected in economic disparities, healthcare systems, education, and even in the language used to describe Blackness. Many of these linguistic associations still carry deeply ingrained negative connotations. This paper seeks to ignite critical reflections on the decolonization of language, particularly in how Blackness, Black people, and their geographical spaces, such as the Global South, are described. It is primarily a bibliographical study and is structured as follows: (1) the historical context of Black as a negative symbol, (2) a linguistic analysis of color and emotion, (3) cultural variations in the symbolism of Black, and (4) an exploration of humor and stereotypes about the Global South.

**Historical context of black as a negative symbol**

The historical context of black as a negative symbol has deep cultural, social and political roots that have evolved over the centuries and in different societies and aspects. This involves religious and mythological attributions, colonialism and racial ideology. These aspects have impacted art, literature and the media, cultural and linguistic norms with lasting repercussions in the continent and diaspora.In many ancient cultures in Africa, black was not so unlucky as to lead to physical rejection. In ancient Egypt, black didn't just have negative connotations or be linked only to the unknown, but also had many good meanings. Black was associated with fertility, which contrasted sharply with *deshret* or red earth, which represented the barren deserts surrounding the Nile Valley.

The Egyptians themselves called their land Kemet, which means black earth. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Kush, located to the south of Ancient Egypt (present-day Sudan) is an excellent example of a society that was proud of black color. The term *Kush* itself was associated with “black” in ancient texts (Török, 1997). The people of Kush, who inhabited Nubia were known for their dark skin and had this as part of their identity. Therefore, in various African societies, the black color was adopted as a symbol of identity, pride and power, not as a negative attribute. In several other landmark empires such as Zulu and Mali, African peoples historically identified with their African roots and their dark skin as a source of strength and distinction. The legacy of these societies must continue to inspire pride in the identity of black people throughout the African diaspora.

In his work *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, Haynes Stephen (2002) explores the biblical foundations of racial dualism and how interpretations of the

Bible, in particular the story of Noah's curse, have contributed to the construction of racial hierarchies, especially the association of the black color with sin or negativity. The biblical story of Noah's Curse tells of Noah getting drunk after planting and being naked in his tent. His son, Ham, the father of Canaan, sees his father's nakedness and tells his brothers, Shem and Japheth. The brothers covered Noah without looking at him. When Noah wakes up and discovers what Ham has done, he curses him with the words "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:25). Noah curses Canaan, son of Ham, to be the humblest of the servants of his uncles, Shem and Japheth. It is important to note that the curse is directed at Canaan and not at Ham, who committed the offenses against his father, and we are convinced that in the division of the land by this family, exactly the cursed family came to the continent of the blacks (Africa).

A Another important line in the project of implying negativity in black color is Jewish dualism[i]. The negativity associated to black in the context of dualism is deeply rooted in religious, cultural and philosophical traditions where black and white have often been contrasted to represent opposing moral, spiritual and existential forces. In the Judeo-Christian traditions, the concept of light versus darkness became an important dualism. Light came to symbolize goodness, knowledge and divine power, while darkness represented ignorance, evil and sin (Klawans, 2000). The Bible often uses the metaphor of light as moral clarity, while darkness is associated with evil or the absence of God's presence.

In Philosophical and Religious Dualism one of the first examples of dualism can be found in Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion. In his work Zoroastrians: Religious Beliefs and Practices, Boyce (2001) explains that Zoroastrianism presents the universe as a battle between two opposing forces: Ahura Mazda (the god of light and goodness) and AngraMainyu (the force of darkness and evil). In this worldview, light is associated with purity, truth and righteousness, while darkness represents deceit, corruption and evil. It's important to stress that the representations of light and darkness we're talking about here have been simplified to a simple black and white colors In Christianity, the dualism between light and darkness is evidenced in passages such as John 1:5: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The contrast reinforces a moral distinction in which light represents the divine and good and darkness is linked to the moral and spiritual character of evil. This dualism has shaped centuries of Christian thought, influencing the way black and white are viewed culturally. In fact, the Bible didn't clearly condemn black color by assigning it pejorative connotations.

However, in the methodologies used in Sunday schools in churches, the opposing force to spirituality (the devil) is always represented in black and the angels in white.

One of the most symbolic traditions in the Vatican's papal election process is the interpretation of smoke signals, which visibly reflects the deep-rooted associations between color and meaning. During the conclave, when cardinals vote for a new pope, the color of the smoke emerging from the Sistine Chapel chimney determines the outcome. Black smoke signifies that no candidate has secured the required majority, indicating deadlock or failure. In contrast, white smoke signals a successful election, announcing to the world that a new pope has been chosen. This ritual, embedded in one of the most influential religious institutions, reinforces the widespread perception of black as a symbol of rejection or inadequacy, while white represents approval, purity, and triumph, (archtoronto, available via the link in the list of references).

In Western cultures, black usually symbolizes death, mourning, danger and evil, while white symbolizes purity, innocence and peace. For example, at traditional Western funerals, people wear black to mourn the dead, and white is usually worn by brides to represent purity and this practice has been imposed on black people and the accompanying argument is civilization or domestication. However, the dualism between black and white varies across different societies. In many Asian cultures, these associations are different. According to Gage (1999) in China and other parts of East Asia, white is the color of mourning and death, while black often has neutral or even positive associations, depending on the context.

Dualism was even stronger in philosophy. In the Western philosophical view, especially during the Enlightenment, light came to symbolize reason, knowledge and progress, while darkness was linked to ignorance and barbarism. This was especially observed in the writings of philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and David Hume, who emphasized the power of human reason to overcome the "darkness" of superstition and tradition (Israel, 2001). This association between light and knowledge and darkness and ignorance reinforced the symbolic hierarchy between black and white, presenting black as something to be overcome.

Therefore, the philosophical and religious dualism between light and darkness had significant implications for the way race was viewed, particularly during the colonial era and the rise of European imperialism. As European powers expanded into Africa and other parts of the world, they began to associate black color and, by extension, dark-skinned people with low qualities such as primitiveness, savagery and moral corruption. These racialized interpretations of the black-white dualism served as justifications for slavery and colonialism.Black began to symbolize not only moral or spiritual darkness, but also the apparent inferiority of the African

people who needed to be subjugated and controlled. The European colonizers, on the other hand, called themselves 'civilized' and white. However, the negritude movement questioned this attribution through its poetic verses. For example, in Léopold Sédar Senghor's "poem to my white brother" (n.d.), he questions the following:

When I was born, I was black;
When I grew up, I was black;
When I'm under the sun, I'm black;
When I'm sick, I'm black;
When I die, I'll be black.

While you, white man,
When you were born, you were pink;
When you grew up, you were white;
When you're under the sun, you're red;
When you're cold, you're blue;
When you're afraid, you're green;
When you're sick, you're yellow;
When you die, you'll be gray...

So, between you and me,
Who's the man of color?

It should be noted that science proves the change in 'white' skin color described in the poem. In works such as Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color, Jablonski (2012) explains the various changes in skin tone that occur in white individuals due to physiological and environmental factors. Therefore, emotions in relation to colors are highly variable, as can be seen in the following section.

**Linguistic analysis of colors and emotions and anti-racist struggle**

Language adopts color symbolism in idiomatic expressions that convey abstract concepts. For example, *black market* (illegal trade), white lie (harmless lie). In politics there is always a *black moment* for democracy, in the economy no country wants to find itself in the *black hole* of debt, with climate change many countries have been punished by *black rains*,

among the lists, the*black* is the most feared or even the fact that black dolls only serve to frighten kids shows us the emotions projected onto the meaning of what is black. These and many other expressions have echoed in our ears and we have grown up normalizing them naturally.

Colors serve to represent feelings, ideas or social meanings that go beyond their literal meaning. This symbolism often varies according to culture and historical contexts, shaping the way we interpret and express ideas. Certain color attributions are considered universal. For example, red often represents love and danger. Blue can symbolize calm, but also sadness (feeling blue). But at the same time, colors are used metaphorically and in idiomatic expressions that associate them with emotions or states.

Cultural context plays an important role in how different societies interpret colors and emotions. These associations can vary greatly around the world. In many Western countries, white symbolizes purity, innocence and peace. This is often associated with weddings, baptisms and new beginnings, reflecting positive emotions. But in countries like China, Japan and India, white is often a symbol of mourning, loss and death. White attire is traditionally worn at funerals and represents the transition after death. In China, red is a color of luck, prosperity and celebration. Red decorations at New Year celebrations are common. At wedding ceremonies, brides wear red to symbolize luck and happiness,Yang (2011).

In some African traditions (the Pepel people of Guinea-Bissau, for example) red is associated with blood and earth, symbolizing life and strength. However, it can also represent conflict and is used as a political symbol. Black represents resistance. In Zulu culture (South Africa) black is associated with maturity, stability and the earth. It is considered a basic color that represents the roots and foundations of life. These values are represented in various Zulu arts, such as beads. In many African communities, wearing black during mourning rituals symbolizes reverence for the deceased, who is often believed to pass into a spiritual world where she/he protects the living. This gives black a dual role of mourning and honor, reflecting respect for both life and death, Ross (1998).

Literature and mythology have also been used to naturalize the negativity of black color. In Greek mythology, Hades (the god of the underworld) and his kingdom are often depicted in dark tones symbolizing death and mystery. In films, villains or opposing forces are often depicted in black or dark clothing, shaping the social perception of black representing negativity or evil. Many languages incorporate idioms in which black connotes something undesirable, such as blackmail, black sheep or blackout. These expressions reinforce the idea of black as something to avoid or be wary of.

Although black color was already been demonized but some movements (e.g. Black Pride[ii])advocated for the recovery of color values. This recovery challenges the negative connotations and also highlights the extent of the historical negativity of black color in traditional narratives. Natural disasters such as "black blizzards" (dust storms) or "blackened" skies after volcanic eruptions associate black with destruction and ecological devastation. Black is associated with pollution or poor hygiene, as represented in images of black smoke or oil spills, reinforcing ideas of contamination or damage. In fact, by analyzing the trajectory of the narratives justifying white domination through various black authors, we can see that even things that we have long considered "simple" (like color) are not as we think. Many writers have contributed to dismantling the naturalized "lies" about the inferiority of black people, but unfortunately the most we get out of them are quotes in our theses, because the system silences anyone who dares to go much further than that

KabemgueleMunanga argues that racism is not just an individual prejudice, but a structural issue rooted in social institutions and practices. He says that systemic racism is rooted in the political, economic and educational systems, perpetuating the inequalities that keep black and indigenous populations at a disadvantage. Munanga stresses that the fight against racism requires a change in consciousness and education. He argues that people need to be aware of how racism works in society and how it is perpetuated through stereotypes, discriminatory practices, Munanga (2005).

In *Black Skin White Masks* Fanon (1952)argues that white domination imposes a sense of inferiority on colonized peoples, affecting their self-perception and mental health. He describes how colonialism imposes racial hierarchies that cause black individuals to internalize feelings of inadequacy and self-hatred, leading them to desire to be "white" as a way of gaining accepted status. This internalized racism, according to Fanon, distorts the identity of the colonized individual, making them adopt the oppressor's view of themselves as inferior, irrational and less human. Fanon refers to this phenomenon as "epidermalization", in which black people are reduced to the color of their skin and the stereotypes associated to it, undermining their humanity, he denounces language as a powerful instrument of white domination. And it is with language that we have all been reduced to the damned of the earth.

In this trend of thinking about Africa and black people, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, a Burkinabè scholar already saw the danger of Eurocentric visions in Africa in his analyses, and encouraged the promotion of endogenous development. Ki-Zerbo believes that decolonization should go beyond political independence and include cultural and intellectual decolonization. He argued

that Africans need to deconstruct the internalized colonial mentality that portrays Western culture as superior and African cultures as backward. He believed in the revival of African philosophies, arts and sciences as part of a wider effort to recover African identity and self-esteem. Ki-Zerbo believed that African languages were essential to promote a strong sense of identity, cultural pride and effective learning. He saw the use of indigenous languages in education as a crucial step towards an endogenous development model, in which education would be adapted to Africa's unique cultural and social context, empowering future generations, Ki-Zerbo (2003).

Paulina Chiziane argues that African languages are vital for expressing the true cultural and social experiences of African peoples. she stresses the importance of using local languages to capture the essence of African life and identity, rather than relying solely on colonial languages such as Portuguese, and believes that African languages carry unique systems of knowledge, wisdom and cultural nuances that cannot be fully expressed in colonial languages. In fact, in Africa, we are schooled in languages that neither the teachers nor the students understand perfectly, and the worst thing is that we pray in these languages.

Chiziane has discussed the need to "decolonize" the Portuguese language in various interviews, papers and public statements. Her argument focuses on adapting and transforming Portuguese to better reflect African realities, experiences and linguistic expressions, rather than strictly adhering to colonial norms and structures. He stresses that Portuguese, as it is used in African countries should evolve to incorporate idiomatic expressions or "breathe Africa", cultural references and African expressions that fit the local contexts, Chiziane (2008).

It is important to note that in some dictionaries, the idea of the subjugation of black people is even more outrageous. For example, in the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française* "noir/noire" means a man who says something out of place. It also means tear, sorrow, dirt. It can also mean gloomy, melancholy. "Noir:" can also mean a man who can't read, and to whom is presented a book, a piece of paper on which he knows only black and white. In the first and second editions of *Caldas Aulete's Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa* the word *catinga* was interpreted as "smelly sweat, especially from black people". These are just a few of the thousands of prejudiced slogans about black people and were for long time been taught at schools and boldly used in public spaces.

**Jokes about the global south**

In terms of development, countries are categorized into groups. The first world nations are Western, capitalist countries led by the USA. The second world: Communist bloc led by

Russia and the third world: Non-aligned, developing nations mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These countries have sought neutrality, but are often lobbied by the two superpowers in search of global influence. In the 1970s developing countries began to organize and demand more equitable treatment on the world stage. The term "Global South" emerged as a way of unifying these countries around shared interests, especially in forums such as the United Nations. The so-called Brandt Line, introduced by the Brandt Report in 1980, symbolically divided the world between the North, richer and more industrialized countries, and the South, poor (I would say impoverished) and developing countries based on income and economic structure, (Brandt1980).

Currently, the "Global North" and the "Global South" generically distinguished as richer, industrialized countries (e.g. North America, Europe, parts of East Asia) from the less wealthy, developing regions (e.g. Africa, Latin America, South Asia). This division reflects economic power, influence in global governance and access to resources, although it is recognized that these labels oversimplify the diverse realities of each region. Countries like China, India and Brazil are traditionally classified as part of the Global South, but they have fast-growing economies, significant global influence and are even part of powerful coalitions like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). China, for example, has become a major global economic player, challenging the idea that all countries in the Global South are economically disadvantaged or dependent. Labeling China, India and Brazil as part of the Global South doesn't capture their economic power or global influence, making the North-South schema seem outdated.

In many Global North countries, there are significant internal inequalities, with some areas suffering from poverty, underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of access to health care. They face similar poverty and health problems as some of the developing countries. The North-South division ignores these internal disparities, assuming uniform prosperity in the North and uniform poverty in the South. In fact, the idea projected is an inferiority of the "global South", characterizing it in a pejorative way, as we can see in some of the expressions analyzed bellow.

**Things go south**: presents the idea that something is going wrong or deteriorating. The expression subtly associates "south" with decline or failure, contributing to the negative connotations surrounding the term "Global South".

**Banana Republic:**This expression was historically used pejoratively to refer to politically unstable countries, especially in Central America, where economies depended heavily on the export of a single crop, such as bananas. It has its roots in colonial attitudes and points to

an underdeveloped, dependent or corrupt country. It is important to underline that many of the countries that produce and, to some extent, export bananas are countries of the "global south", such as India, Brazil, Ecuador, China, Nigeria, Angola, Tanzania, and others..(https://currentaffairs.adda247.com/top-10-banana-producing-countries-in-the-world/).

**Jungle nations**: The expression is used to describe places with dense natural landscapes as "wild" or "primitive". A derogatory expression that belittles the culture, political systems or social structures of these regions.

**Third World problems:**This phrase is often used jokingly to trivialize the complaints considered 'luxury' in the Global North, contrasting them with the supposed difficulties of the Global South. This expression is based on stereotypes of poverty or lack of infrastructure, ignoring the diversity and progress of many countries placed in the "global south" category.".

Some expressions may seem very subtle and simple, but sometimes one has to be sensitive to hear them with anti-racist ears. In the anti-racist dictionary (volume II) produced by the Brazilian Public Defender's Office (sd), some of these terms were mentioned.

**I even have black friends**: "A statement generally used as a form of defense when a racist attitude or speech is pointed out"

**Denigrate someone's image**: "Make it dark" or "stain the reputation", strengthening an idea that making something black is not good.

Words carry historical weight, and when they are accompanied by stereotypes or negative connotations, they reinforce distorted narratives about these regions. When people repeatedly hear Africa and the global south described in outrageous ways, sometimes as the "land of safaris", it shapes the way they see the continent and its people, often through an enigmatic or unfortunate lens. Language can perpetuate ignorance or educate and enlighten, highlighting the importance of choosing words that accurately reflect the realities of the "Global South".

Most of our intellectuals are educated in the West or the so-called 'Global North', and often adopt these expressions naturally, reflecting a linguistic mastery influenced by this background. This is why it is essential to promote academic debates at all levels. I am certain of one thing: today's children will be the adults and leaders of the future. Any change that doesn't take deep root will be short-lived.A transformation that restores pride in Africanity and dismantles the narratives associated with the color of our skin requires not only economic growth, but also educational and linguistic policies that allow us to carefully design the kind of society we want to build. We need to reflect on the people we want to raise, the languages we

should speak and how we choose to describe ourselves and others. As the African proverb says: "Until the lions have their own historians, the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunter".

**Conclusion**

The linguistic framing of Blackness has long been entrenched in negative connotations, perpetuating historical biases and reinforcing structures of racial subjugation. This study has illuminated how language functions as both a vehicle of oppression and a potential tool for decolonization. By analyzing historical, philosophical, and cultural narratives, we have seen how linguistic hierarchies have shaped perceptions of Blackness, often associating it with inferiority, savagery, and misfortune. These representations are not incidental but rather the product of deliberate ideological constructs designed to sustain systems of white supremacy.

However, resistance to these narratives has persisted throughout history. Movements such as Negritude, Pan-Africanism, and contemporary anti-racist efforts have challenged the symbolic and structural degradation of Blackness, seeking to reclaim cultural and linguistic agency. The examination of pejorative language associated with the Global South further underscores the enduring colonial mindset embedded in everyday discourse.

Ultimately, language plays a crucial role in shaping collective consciousness and social realities. A critical interrogation of linguistic norms, alongside the promotion of African languages and epistemologies, is essential in dismantling these inherited prejudices. Through education, scholarship, and activism, the decolonization of language can contribute to a more just and equitable society, where Blackness is no longer defined by externally imposed hierarchies but by self-determined narratives of dignity, power, and cultural pride.

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[i]Dualism refers to the division of the world or concepts into two opposing forces, often representing good and evil, light and darkness, white and black or spirit and substance. In many religious and philosophical traditions black has been associated with negative qualities as opposed to white which represents positive attributes.

[ii]Black Prideis a movement that encourages black people to celebrate their respective cultures and embrace their African heritage. In the United States, it initially developed for African-American culture and was one of the direct responses to white racism, especially during the civil rights movement.