

What *are* the cognitive costs of racism? A reply to Gendler

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Abstract Tamar Gendler argues that, for those living in a society in which race is a salient sociological feature, it is impossible to be fully rational: members of such a society must either fail to encode relevant information containing race, or suffer epistemic costs by being implicitly racist. However, I argue that, although Gendler calls attention to a pitfall worthy of study, she fails to conclusively demonstrate that there are epistemic (or cognitive) costs of being racist. Gendler offers three supporting phenomena. First, implicit racists expend cognitive energy repressing their implicit biases. I reply, citing Ellen Bialystok's research, that constant use of executive functioning can be beneficial. Second, Gendler argues that awareness of a negative stereotype of one's own race with regard to a given task negatively affects one's performance of that task. This phenomenon, I argue, demonstrates that those against whom the stigma is directed suffer costs, but it fails to demonstrate that the stigmatizers suffer cognitively. Finally, Gendler argues that racists are less competent when recognizing faces of other races than when recognizing faces of their own race because, in the first instance, they encode the race of the face (taking up cognitive space that could have been used to encode fine-grained distinctions), whereas in the second instance they encode no race. I argue that in-group/out-group categorization rather than racism is the cognitive cost. I conclude that Gendler has failed to demonstrate that there are cognitive costs associated with being a racist.

Keywords Implicit racism · Implicit belief · Bias · Alief · Tamar Gendler · Stereotype-threat · Cross-race facial deficit · Executive function

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1 Introduction

Racism is morally costly, but might there be epistemic or cognitive costs as well? Tamar Gendler has recently argued that one who lives in a racially structured society (i.e. a society in which race plays important sociological roles) faces a dilemma: either one fails to encode base-rates containing racial information and so is irrational in committing a base-rate fallacy, or one encodes base-rates containing racial information which, Gendler argues, leads to epistemic costs. Gendler offers three phenomena in support of the second horn of her dilemma. First, racists are worse at recognizing faces within other racial demographics than they are at recognizing faces within their own racial demographic (a phenomenon known as cross-race deficit). Second, racists suffer a threat from their stereotypes: namely, when primed with information relevant to a bias against their own race, their performance on the task against which they are stigmatized declines (a phenomenon called stereotype-threat). Finally, aversive racists (i.e. those explicitly endorsing racial equality while maintaining implicit biases (see Devin and Elliott 1995/1147) must expend cognitive energy suppressing their implicit bias. Gendler concludes that encoding racial information is epistemically costly. However, because societies like the United States are structured by race, it is rational to use race as a category and endorse some of the stereotypes associated with race. Furthermore, Gendler argues that failing to do so is to commit a base-rate fallacy. Gendler concludes pessimistically that a “perfectly rational decision maker [living in a racially structured society] will manifest different behaviors, explicit and implicit, towards members of different races....[L]iving in a society structured by race appears to make it impossible to be both rational and equitable” (Gendler 2011, p. 47). We may either be irrational, failing to encode base-rates while being moral, or we may be immoral and suffer cognitive costs.

Unfortunately, Gendler has not demonstrated that racism is epistemically costly to racists. I begin by arguing that Gendler is too quick to conclude that aversive racists incur epistemic costs when using their cognitive faculties (or, more specifically, their executive functioning) to suppress their implicit biases. In fact, depleting executive functioning in the short-term may have cognitive benefits in the long-term. Second, I argue that stereotype-threat does not provide the support for Gendler’s dilemma that she claims because it pertains only to those aware of racial stereotypes against their own race. Finally, I argue that cross-race facial recognition deficit is not costly because of racism; rather, it is costly in virtue of classifying faces as in-group or out-group. Thus, Gendler has failed to demonstrate that racism is epistemically costly. If I am right, we are led to an even more startling dilemma between morality and rationality.

2 Clarification of the dialectic

It will be helpful to clarify the dialectic before I begin my criticism. First, although Gendler claims that racism forces us to incur epistemic costs, the three examples she gives of such costs seem to be less epistemic than cognitive. Cognitive depletion, for

example, is hardly an *epistemic* cost. Gendler is not using cognitive depletion to argue for the claim that aversive racism results in an agent having less knowledge, or even less justified beliefs. She is arguing that racism is *cognitively* costly. I understand epistemic costs to be a subset of cognitive costs. Since at least one of Gendler's main points does not seem to concern epistemic costs, I think we should charitably take Gendler's thesis to be about cognitive costs. Henceforth I will speak only of cognitive costs.

At some points Gendler indicates that her dilemma is between a moral cost and a cognitive cost. For example, she says that, given that one lives in a racially structured society, it is "impossible to be both rational and equitable" (Gendler 2011, p. 57). At other times, it would seem that the dilemma is between two cognitive costs. Given that society is structured by race, using race as a category will be rational because base-rates containing race are salient for belief formation, but Gendler argues that using race as a category leads to cognitive costs—namely cross-race deficit, stereotype threat, and cognitive depletion. We can combine these dilemmas in the following way: Given that one lives in a racially structured society, one can either fail to encode base-rates that contain race, thereby being irrational, or one can endorse base-rates containing race and incur both moral and cognitive costs.¹ However, as we will shortly see, this combination involves a tacit assumption.

Another confusion in Gendler's paper arises because she sometimes talks about racism in a normative sense and other times uses racism to mean simply the view that there are races that have different features. The latter concept is what Appiah calls 'racialism'—the view that humans can be divided into groups (called 'races') such that each group shares "fundamental, heritable, physical, moral, intellectual, and cultural characteristics" with one another that are not shared with other groups (Appiah 1996, p. 80). Following Appiah, I reserve 'racism' for the view that one race is better than some other race. This terminology can help clarify some confusion in Gendler's paper.²

Of the three cases with which Gendler supports her dilemma, only cognitive depletion and stereotype-threat seem to require racism (rather than mere racialism) to be at work. Aversive racists must suppress their implicit biases in which they more easily associate the other-raced person with 'bad' rather than 'good'. Endorsing the proposition that there are races with distinct characteristics (given that some of these characteristics are task-oriented) is enough for there to be a stereotype-threat. Perhaps this is merely racialism. However, if the content of the racialism is something like, "people of that race are bad at math," then this content might be construed as a case of racialism plus racism. Most (if not all) stereotypes at work in stereotype-threat are of this form. So we may be charitable to Gendler and say that stereotype-threat involves racism as well as racialism. However, facial recognition deficit seems only to require racialism since there only needs to be a recognition that the faces are of a race to which one does not belong for the deficit to

¹ Note that Gendler is committed to the claim that rationality is always truth seeking. That is, a rational agent will always aim to form true beliefs.

² Thanks to an anonymous reviewer's suggested use of this distinction.

occur. Thus, at times Gendler's arguments support costs associated with racism, and at other times they support costs associated with racialism. How are we to understand the relation between these costs? What is the relation between racism and racialism? One way to make sense of Gendler's overall claim is to make the plausible assumption that racism implies racialism. She might support the claim by saying that to think that one race is better than another (racism) requires that one believe that there are races with distinct characteristics (racialism). She could even argue that this is analytically true. The claim which Gendler's three cases are supposed to support is that racialism is cognitively costly. Since racism implies racialism, racism is cognitively costly as well.

When we distinguish racism from racialism, Gendler's combined dilemma follows directly from only two of her supporting cases—namely, stereotype-threat and cognitive depletion—because these two cases involve both racism and racialism. What would be needed for her combined dilemma to follow from cross-race facial recognition deficit (which involves only racialism) is the claim that racialism implies racism. Such a claim seems false. Gendler herself seems to think it is possible for a non-racist to believe that there are races. The upshot is that at least one of the cognitive costs at issue has little to do with *racism*, per say, and more to do with *racialism*. With this distinction in mind, let us turn to the three cases that Gendler claims are cognitively costly for the racist.

3 Short-term cognitive depletion does not constitute a cognitive cost

Gendler claims that, because aversive racists explicitly hold that peoples of different races are equal to themselves while implicitly believing otherwise, they must suppress these implicit beliefs.³ This suppression uses cognitive resources in the short-term, leaving the aversive racist less cognitive resources with which to engage the world. Gendler supports her claim with a series of studies performed by Jennifer Richeson. In these studies, white participants who had previously taken a Black/White Implicit Association Test (IAT) interacted with a white or black peer (under the pretense that this was the student manager of the laboratory). Immediately after this interaction, each participant was asked to complete a Stroop Task—a standard measurement of executive function and cognitive depletion.⁴ The result was that, on average, white participants who interacted with a black peer prior to performing the Stroop Task performed worse than did those who interacted with a white peer. “Furthermore, the greater...the relative ease with which [these participants] associate[d]...negative words with...Black American racial categories [as

³ Gendler would say that the aversive racist *believes* that their race is superior. However, I think nothing hangs on Gendler's account of *alief* and am unclear as to how one's beliefs, desires, and reasons interact with ones *aliefs*, *desires*, and *easons*. See Gendler (2011, pp. 41–42) and Gendler (2008) for further discussion.

⁴ This well-known test involves the subject being shown the names of colors written in various colored prints. The subject is asked to give the name of the print-color. The faster the participant gives the color of the print (rather than the word), the higher executive functioning and less tired that participant is, while the slower the participant gives the name of the color of print, the lower the participant's executive functioning and more cognitively tired the participant.

demonstrated by their IAT score]...the poorer their Stroop performance after interracial interactions" (Richeson and Shelton 2007, pp. 316–317). Therefore, interracial interactions are cognitively costly for the aversive racist.

Suppose that Gendler is right in her explanation of the poorer Stroop Task performance of aversive racists. If so, then aversive racists constantly use their executive function to suppress their racial biases, thereby depleting their executive function in the short-term. However, this depletion is not necessarily a cost (*simpliciter*). Constant use of one's executive function can in fact have cognitive benefits, especially if we liken executive function to a muscle; using it in the short-term strengthens it in the long term (see Muraven and Baumeister 2000). In other contexts, psychologists liken executive functioning to a muscle in precisely this way. As just one example, I offer Ellen Bialystok's research on the cognitive benefits of bilingualism.

When using one language, bilinguals use their executive function to suppress their non-active language. Their constant use of executive function, though it depletes executive functioning in the short-term, strengthens it in the long-term. As evidence of this, Bialystok has conducted tests showing that bilinguals perform better on the Stroop Task (Bialystok et al. 2008) and the Flanker Task (Costa et al. 2008). Bilinguals do experience some disadvantages, such as lower vocabulary than monolinguals (Bialystok et al. in press) and lower scores on verbal-fluency tasks (Michael and Gollan 2005). However, there are numerous benefits to having strengthened executive functioning. For example, Bialystok argues that bilinguals' constant use of executive function builds up a cognitive reservoir (see Stone 2002) resulting in the offset of dementia (Bialystok et al. 2007).

From the above data, we should draw the following conclusion: if one constantly uses one's executive function, though one's executive function will be depleted in the short-term, it will be strengthened in the long-term. Now, according to Gendler and Richeson, if one is an aversive racist then one will use executive function to suppress one's bias when interacting with members of other races. Thus, aversive racists will build up their executive function by interacting with members of the group toward which they are implicitly racist. While this may tire the aversive racist's executive function in the short-term, in the long-term the aversive racist will benefit cognitively from frequent use of executive function.⁵

To be fair, Gendler does think that the aversive racist will benefit from interaction with other races. Assuming a kind of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethic, she proposes that racism might be overcome through repeated interactions that would alter the dispositions and implicit beliefs of the aversive racist (see Dovidio et al. 2011). In other words, Gendler and Dovidio et al. think optimistically that one might escape implicit racism through interracial interaction. Even if racism can be overcome through mere racial interaction, this overcoming of racism is a *moral* benefit since racism is morally costly. One might defend Gendler here by linking moral and cognitive costs. However, for Gendler to claim that overcoming racism is *cognitively*

⁵ This is an empirical prediction. To test it, we should take aversive racists and non-racists who both frequently interact with members of other races and see (when not primed) who does better on the Stroop Task. If interacting with members of other races gives aversive racists a mental workout (as it were), then they should perform better on the Stroop Task.

beneficial because it is *morally* beneficial would either be question begging (as she has yet to demonstrate that it is cognitively costly) or would trivialize the claim that racism is cognitively costly (as we all agree that it is morally costly).

In reply to my claim that the aversive racist's use of his or her executive function may be beneficial, Gendler has pointed out that, if the aversive racist is supposed to have increased executive function, the aversive racist should also demonstrate an increased ability to delay gratification.⁶ Gendler might hypothesize that the aversive racist surely would not perform better than non-aversive racists on tests that measure their ability to delay gratification. Thus aversive racists would not have increased executive function. This is an empirical prediction that requires testing, but there is reason to think that this hypothesis is false. No such correlation between executive function and delay of gratification is evident from Bialystok's research either. Bilinguals do not perform better than monolinguals on delayed gratification tests (Carlson and Meltzoff 2008). Whether the cognitive mechanism being strengthened through suppression of one language is distinct from the cognitive mechanism responsible for delay of gratification or whether they are different aspects of the same mechanism is irrelevant for my purposes (though it does demonstrate confusion in the field regarding the definition of executive function). My argument still works without reference to executive function because I may simply use a placeholder. From Bialystok's research I may say that there are cognitive benefits from x given that x is such that x suppresses y in the presence of z. In the case of bilingualism, z is an interlocutor speaking one language to the agent and y is the language not being spoken. In the case of aversive racism, z is the presence of a member of another race and y is the implicit bias. Whatever x turns out to be,⁷ it has cognitive benefits in the case of bilingualism. Since bilingualism and implicit racism are similar in that they both involve suppressing one tendency in favor of another, we may predict that the cognitive benefits manifest in bilinguals will manifest for the aversive racist as well.

Of course, there are important differences between bilingualism and aversive racism. It might be that the features relevant in bilingualism, which contribute to its cognitive benefits, are not present in aversive racism. As a preliminary reply, I should emphasize that bilingualism is just an example of the likening of executive function to a muscle. Other cases of short-term cognitive depletion are viewed as beneficial in the long-term. For example, coping with stress, altering moods, and resisting temptation are all costly in the short-term but beneficial in the long-term (see Muraven and Baumeister 2000). More importantly, we should first note that Richeson et al. understand the executive functioning involved in interracial interactions in precisely the way that I am characterizing it. They suggest that those who frequently engage in

⁶ In the empirical literature, enhanced executive function has been tied to the ability to delay gratification. For example, Carlson (2005) notes that as children, increase their executive function, they also gain the ability to delay gratification.

⁷ Perhaps the cognitive system involved in suppressing a language (in the case of bilingualism) is different from the system involved in suppressing implicitly racist beliefs. If this is right, one might claim that one of these systems is like a muscle and one is not. Such a claim, however, would be odd, since both research programs take the Stroop Task to be the paradigmatic measurement of the cognitive system they are studying. (Thanks to Muhammad Ali Khalidi for pointing this out).

interracial interaction and engage in self-regulation will strengthen their “prejudice regulation metaphorical muscle” (2005, p. 944). Here Gendler could reply that, if one abandoned one’s implicit racism, there would be no need to have a strong prejudice regulator at all. This reply assumes that the mechanism involved in suppressing implicit biases is domain-specific. However, since Richeson and Gendler think that the metaphorical muscle used in suppressing implicit biases is the same muscle used for the Stroop Task, Richeson and Gendler seem committed to the claim that the metaphorical muscle used to suppress implicit racism is domain-general. I conclude that, while short-term cognitive depletion due to interracial interactions is cognitively costly, it should be cognitively beneficial in the long-term.

4 Stereotype-threat does not constitute a cognitive cost in the relevant sense

Consider members of a group that, according to a prevalent cultural stereotype, perform a given task poorly. Given that these individuals are aware of the aforementioned stereotype, if their thoughts about their group are activated before performing that task, their performances will decline. This phenomenon is known as stereotype-threat. For example, Steele and Aronson (1995) gave the same test (a section of the verbal Graduate Records Examination (GRE)) to black and white students under two conditions. In the first setup (stereotype-threat condition), the students were told that the test diagnosed intellectual ability. In the second setup (non-stereotype-threat condition), the students were told that the test was merely a laboratory problem-solving test that was not diagnostic of intelligence. When researchers controlled for differences on the SAT, black and white students performed comparably under non-stereotype-threat condition, but the performance of black participants declined under stereotype-threat condition. Assuming that there is a stereotype that black students are not as intellectually able as white students, this data supports the following conditional:

(ST1) If participant x is a member of group y , and y is stereotypically thought to be bad at cognitive task z , then, when primed with information relevant to that stereotype, x ’s performance of z will decline.⁸

The upshot, says Gendler, is that stereotype-threat seems to interfere with knowledge in at least two ways: first, it causes aversive racists to lose access (temporarily) to the contents of some of their true beliefs. Participants may forget the correct answer under pressure. For example, they may forget whether it is sucrose or dextrose that is the disaccharide. Second, it causes aversive racists to lose confidence that they possess true beliefs. Participants may be double-checking some or all of their answers resulting in a loss of efficiency. For example, instead of trusting their memory that $144/12$ is 12 they may multiply 12 by 12 to check. Thus,

⁸ This claim is further supported by Aronson et al. (1999) who demonstrate that white men’s performance declines when they are told that their math tests scores will be compared to Asian men’s scores.

it would seem that, when aversive racists are primed with information relevant to a relevant bias against their own race, implicit racism against their own race causes their performance to decline.

Unfortunately, stereotype-threat does not support Gendler's dilemma. Remember that, according to the second horn of Gendler's dilemma, if one encodes certain racial information, one will suffer cognitive costs. I take it that Gendler's dilemma is supposed to apply to all persons, not just those who are the targets of racism. That is, she is claiming that even the white supremacist (or even one who is averse to his or her own white supremacy) will suffer cognitive costs. Thus, I understand her to be making a universal claim:

(Gendler's strong claim) For all x , if x encodes racial information, x will suffer cognitive costs.

Not the weaker, existential claim:

(Gendler's weak claim) There is an x such that, if x encodes racial information, x will suffer cognitive costs.

Notice that ST1 only supports the second horn of the dilemma in its weak, existential form. The reason Gendler fails to demonstrate the strong claim has nothing to do with *aversive* racism. Aversive and explicit racism can be directed toward one's own race, another race, or both. The aversive and explicit racist toward his or her own race serves as a truthmaker for Gendler's weak claim, but the strong claim is only true if the aversive and explicit racist suffers a cognitive cost for racism against other races. Gendler has, therefore, demonstrated that stereotype-threat affects even implicit (or aversive) racists who stigmatize their own race—an interesting claim in its own right, even if it only supports ST1 and the weak claim. Gendler's failure to support the strong claim might not be so bad for her overall thesis, except that, frighteningly, stereotype-threat is beneficial for racists who think highly of their own race.

Stereotyping is beneficial for members of a group who are stereotypically good at a task. Under the condition that members of such a group are primed with information pertinent to their identity as part of the group, members perform better at the task they are said to be good at than they do in the absence of such priming. Gendler acknowledges that this is the case. Gendler cites studies by Ambady et al. (2001) and Shih et al. (2006) in which Asian-American girls from kindergarten through 8th grade were given age-appropriate standardized math tests. The girls were primed with information to render salient their Asian identity, female identity, or neither. Taking the case in which neither identity was rendered salient as a control, emphasizing their Asian identity resulted in a better performance, while emphasizing their female identity resulted in an impaired performance. Assuming there are stereotypes both that Asians are good at math and females are bad at math, this confirms ST1 and further implies:

(ST2) If participant x is a member of group y , and y is stereotypically thought to be good at cognitive task z , then, when primed with information relevant to that stereotype, x will perform better at z .

ST2 constitutes a cognitive benefit. If a subject thinks that a group to which she belongs is better than other groups at a given task, then she will perform better at that task when thinking of her identity in the aforementioned group.

The cognitive cost that occurs in stereotype-threat is always caused by racism against one's *own* race. For example, Gendler notes that black students who have encoded biases against their own race regarding test-taking will achieve lower test scores when primed with information about their racial identity than they will when they are not primed in this manner. This data, though troubling, only supports ST1 and the weaker existential form of the second horn of the dilemma. Of course, Gendler does have half a point because even the weaker claim is some evidence for her dilemma, but the conclusion that racism is cognitively costly to the targets of racism (though troubling) should not be surprising. Furthermore, because her other two arguments fail to demonstrate her thesis, stereotype-threat alone is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate that racism is cognitively costly.

Now one might reply that even members of a dominant group will sometimes find themselves in situations in which their group is disadvantaged. For example, Gendler cites a relevant study performed by Stone et al. (1999) in which white participants' performances declined when told that the experiment was designed to test their natural athletic ability. However, this is not a case of a *cognitive* cost, but rather an *athletic* cost. Now Gendler might reply with research from Aronson et al. (1999) which demonstrates that white men's performance declines on math tests when told that their score will be compared to Asian men's math test scores. What this demonstrates, however, is that, while white individuals generally enjoy (so to speak) being at the top of the stereotype pecking order, they are not stereotypically the smartest race. Furthermore, we should be careful in what we allow to count as a cognitive cost. Almost anything could be construed as a cognitive cost. After all, my writing this paper is preventing me from reading new material on the nature of implicit cognition, but my writing this paper should not turn out to be a cognitive cost to me. If endorsing stereotypes generally helps an agent's cognitive performance, then, even if there are some times that those agents will suffer from carrying those stereotypes, endorsing those stereotypes should be viewed as a cognitive benefit and not as a cognitive cost.

5 Cross-race facial-recognition deficit does not constitute a cognitive cost

It is a well-documented phenomenon (known as cross-race deficit) that people are better at identifying faces of their own race than they are at identifying faces of other races (Meissner and Brigham 2001).⁹ Gendler endorses a version of the social-cognitive explanation for cross-race deficit according to which people process information about in-group and out-group members differently (Bernstein et al. 2007). Specifically, Gendler affirms the asymmetric feature selection hypothesis, which says (in part) that, when participants encounter a face of another race one

⁹ As Gendler rightly points out, this phenomenon generalizes in that people are better at identifying in-group members than out-group members (see Kurzban et al. 2001). Because Gendler limits her discussion to race (specifically black and white), I will do the same.

thing they encode is race, whereas they do not encode race in encounters with same-race faces. Thus, when a white participant (presumably an aversive racist) sees a black face, he or she encodes 'black' whereas, when the same white participant sees a white face he or she does not encode racial information. Because the participant encodes the race of other-race faces, cognitive resources that could have been used to encode fine-grained distinctions (location of eyes, ears, nose...etc.) are spent on coarse-grained racial encoding. On the other hand, because the white participant does not encode 'white' for white faces, he or she has more cognitive resources for encoding fine-grained information. By way of illustration, Gendler compares race encoding to remembering an area code. With a local telephone number, one need only remember seven digits, whereas, with a long distance telephone number, one must remember ten digits. As a result, local numbers are easier to remember than long distance numbers because they don't require one to encode the area code.

Cross-race deficit arises when a subject categorizes faces as being either 'in-group' or 'out-group.' However, there are many in-groups and out-groups that crosscut race, and it is surprisingly easy for subjects to adopt one of these in-group/out-group classifications in the place of race. Studies performed by Kurzban et al. (2001) support the claim that, when a new in-group/out-group categorization (say, school affiliation) is imposed on faces cross-cutting racial categorization, the new categorization takes precedence. For example, if Yale students were shown faces of students of varying races wearing university paraphernalia from either Yale or Harvard, the Yale students would be better at identifying the faces of students wearing Yale paraphernalia rather than Harvard paraphernalia. Thus, what is relevant to incurring a cross-race facial-recognition deficit is the categorization of faces as in-group or out-group. As such, *racism* (as we would normally understand it in any normative sense) is relevant to cross-race deficit insofar as it is an instantiation of the in-group out-group categorization, but presumably one need not be a racist to recognize that there are races and self-identify with a given race. That is, one need only be a racialist and identify oneself with one race to incur this cost. Thus, the *use of racial categories as an instance of in-group/out-group classification* does the causal work in cross-race deficit rather than *racism simpliciter*.

We may now ask what constitutes the cognitive cost, the determinate of racial categorization, or the determinable of in-group/out-group categorization? It seems to me that to claim that something is cognitively costly is to claim that there would not be a cognitive cost if that thing were not present. That is, a cognitive cost should be a difference-maker between the state of affairs in which there is a cognitive cost and the state of affairs in which there is not that cognitive cost. If my claim is right, then Gendler is committed to the following conditional: if x had not recognized race, x would not have incurred a face-recognizing deficit. The studies by Kurzban et al. (2001) demonstrate that face-recognizing deficit is not exclusive to racial categorization; subjects will find ways to categorize faces as in-group or out-group without racial categories. Given this fact, we might hypothesize that, had x not recognized race, x would have encoded some other feature as in-group or out-group. Since categorizing as in-group or out-group rather than racial recognition is the difference-maker, it seems best to say that categorizing faces as in-group and out-group is cognitively costly. After all, if it is the determinate that is cognitively

costly we will be forced to say that, along with racism, school spirit is cognitively costly.

There is a reply using the racism/racialism distinction offered earlier. Racism implies racialism. The racialist recognizes people as being in or out of her racial group. Anything that categorizes as in-group/out-group will result in cross-race facial deficit and so be cognitively costly. Therefore, racialism is cognitively costly, and so, since racialism is contained within racism, racism is also cognitively costly. However, my criticism stands. Racialism is just one way of categorizing people as in or out of one's group. Remember the conditional to which Gendler is committed: if x had not recognized race, x would not have incurred a face-recognizing deficit. Notice that the concept in the antecedent of this conditional is racialism rather than racism. My claim is that had the face recognizing subject failed to recognize race as the salient category (failed to be a racialist for that moment) he or she would have found some other category by which to recognize some faces as in-group and others as out-group. Kurzban et al. (2001) supports my claim since it is easy to make non-racial features salient to in-group/out-group categorization. So it is not racialism that is cognitively costly in cross-race facial deficit, but in-group/out-group categorization.

6 Failing to encode base-rates

One could choose not to encode base-rate information concerning racial categories. In certain situations this might be the moral thing to do. However, there are cognitive costs to failing to encode these base-rates. Philip Tetlock has researched what he calls 'the psychology of the unthinkable' in which subjects engage in a self-censorship of beliefs. The example relevant here is what he calls 'forbidden base-rates'. Tetlock and his colleagues presented subjects with information that either was or was not correlated with the racial composition of neighborhoods. Subjects regarded actuarial risk as a legitimate factor in setting insurance premiums. However, when Tetlock and colleagues pointed out that actuarial risk was correlated with race, the subjects (especially self proclaimed liberals) "vehemently reject[ed] race-tainted base-rates and invoke[d] multiple grounds for rejecting them" (Tetlock et al. 2000, p. 860). Base-rates that were relevant in a race-neutral context were not permissible in a racial context. There is clearly a cognitive cost here in that refusing to endorse base-rates tainted by race "causes participants to discount information that might be relevant to their full consideration of both background and foreground conditions" (Gendler 2011, p. 55). Thus, being moral in a racially structured society is cognitively costly.

7 Conclusion

Because we live in a racially structured society, base-rate information containing racial categories is relevant to the formation of our beliefs. Gendler claims that the cognitive costs associated with racism imply that it is impossible to be fully rational

because we either fail to encode base rates involving race (and are therefore irrational), or we suffer the cognitive costs associated with implicit racism (and are irrational in another way). Unfortunately, Gendler has failed to demonstrate that racism is cognitively costly to all racists. The targets of racism do suffer cognitive costs—Gendler has demonstrated this through stereotype-threat—but the only cognitive cost faced by the racist who targets other races is, at best, short-term cognitive depletion analogous to physical exercise which is costly in the short-term, but presumably beneficial in the long-term. Similarly, endorsing positive stereotypes for one's own race is beneficial. The dilemma we then face is grimmer than Gendler realizes: we may either be rational or we may be moral, Kant notwithstanding.

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