Racial binaries, the co-optation of culture and salvation through colonial violence: Nietzsche in the colonies

Drerup, Joe

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Joe Drerup
(s2485397)

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Supervisor: Matthew Longo
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Universiteit
Leiden

BSc International Relations and Organizations
Faculty of Social Sciences
Leiden University

Dehumanized, insensitive
Scrutinize the way we live for you and I
Enemies shook my hand, I can promise I'll meet you
In the land where no equal is your equal

Kendrick Lamar, The Heart Part 5

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1.Introduction

Recently, an array of divisive social issues related to the issue of colonialism have attracted increasing public attention, whilst the debate around them is characterised by its toxicity: especially arguments denying the issue's social relevance are often qualified by inherent racism. Some observers identify this as a form of "new racism" (Stoler, 1997) that expresses itself primarily culturally and in more nuanced ways, whereas before it primarily assumed material forms of physical violence and material exploitation that are characteristic of colonial rule. Whilst I agree that this "new" form of racism manifests itself in more nuances and primarily culturally, I do not agree that it is a "new" phenomenon. Culture was essential to colonial rule: it is captured by colonial morality which inserts its imaginary framework of racist values that come to convince the colonised of his own "backwardness". Morality – as a sub-category of culture – in particular represents the major avenue through which colonial power finds its ways to discipline, punish and convert the colonised. Given the shared fundaments of racism across the contemporary issues related to colonialism, they should be seen as what they are: a direct repercussion and therefore extension of colonial morality into the present. This, I want to argue, makes the case for investigating the more nuanced and non-intuitive ways in which morality and culture create and sustain colonial power inequalities. Specifically, I want to investigate the way in which the colonial morality enabled violence. To establish an overview on colonial morality, the second section of this thesis examines the contemporary debate: it highlights colonial morality's racialised ideology and justificatory distinction between "civilized" and "slave", that – I will argue in section fours – to date continues to justify violence against non-white and non-European people by conceptualising colonialism as project of moral education. Given the debate's complex interlinkage of cultural, moral and ideological dynamics and the corresponding interdisciplinarity, it lacks a comprehensive framework to analyse colonial morality in its entire complexity. This is deplorable, given its relevance in defining and understanding the remaining contemporary avenues of colonial morality through Nietzsche's account of slave morality. For this, however, we need a theoretical baseline against which Nietzsche's account can then be compared. From this dilemma, the following research question can be inferred:

> *What attributes does Nietzsche identify as characteristic of "slave morality" and how can his account of slave morality be mobilised to understand colonial morality?*

Someone who might offer a solution to this dilemma, I want to argue, is Friedrich Nietzsche. His impressive legacy of interpreting morality and culture as vehicles for power begs the question why only few scholars have applied his account to the colonial context and its underlying structural feature of racism – a surprising fact, given both represent exactly the state of corrupt morality that Nietzsche criticises. Conversely, most scholars rather point out his apparent antisemitism, the fact that his writings were famously utilised by the Nazis to justify their atrocities as well as its recurrent glorifications of violent subjugation of the "weak" (Scott, 2003). Regarding colonialism, the distinctive feature among the few that have done so (Bernasconi, 2017; Scott, 2003), is that virtually all have employed his noble/slave dialectic by characterising the coloniser as the noble and the colonised as the slave. The intuition behind characterising a suppressed group through Nietzsche's "slave" who shares this condition is obvious – its utility, however, less so. This is primarily because Nietzsche uses the "slave" to criticise a certain morality – "slavishness for Nietzsche is precisely the slave's inability to value herself (or in general to adopt beliefs and values that are truly her own)" (Anderson, 2011, p.31). It is this negative characterisation of his "slaves" as "somehow lower or weaker […] precisely because of the moralizing methods they employ" (p.42) that leaves a bitter aftertaste from attributing slave morality to the colonised, given it would mean critiquing her without at first identifying her as the suppressed party, thereby legitimising her oppression (Schotten, 2020). Additionally, classifying the colonised as slave exaggerates their only similarity – which is their suppression. Conversely, defining the coloniser as "noble" neglects the many overlapping characteristics of colonial and slave morality – this point is explored in detail in section three.

Yet, I want to argue that Nietzsche is relevant here: section three proposes the contrary reading of his account, by counterintuitively characterising the colonised as noble and the coloniser as slave. In other words, I mobilise the concept of slave morality to characterise colonial morality. I find, that Nietzsche's previously mentioned antipathy for "slavishness" with all its elements – assumptions of universality and moral superiority, imaginary dichotomies, and punishment as mean to overcome the feeling of guilt – is appropriate to criticise surprisingly resemblant elements of colonial morality: especially its moral superiority grounded in employment of the "civilization/savage" distinction as well as its conceptualisation of punishment as legitimate means to morally educate the colonised. In terms of answering the research question, then, we can assert that Nietzsche primarily characterises slave morality through its assumed moral

superiority and creation of imaginary dichotomies grounded in hatred for its "Other", subsequently employed to justify and promote punishment as means for its "Other" to overcome its condition of "moral unrighteousness" and thereby convert them to slave morality's own moral outlook. This, I assert, resembles the way in which colonial ideology conjures up the racially charged dichotomy of "civilized" and "savage" to justify its system of colonial violence by terming it "moral education". Thus, I find that Nietzsche's account of slave morality as facilitator of its particular system of dominance can be employed as macro-theoretical framework wrapping together the contemporary debate on colonial morality.

With these results in hand, the last entertains the thought experiment of asking whether we can declare the colonial system of domination to be over. I argue against this, given the breadth of decidedly colonial remnants in our apparently post-colonial world, but more importantly because of the racism that is still to be found at the bottom of our social interaction. I argue, that through the account of slave morality one can locate racism as the ordering principle behind the colonial system of domination. Given, that this ordering principle still manifests in very real effects in our contemporary societies, I cannot affirm the idea that we have exited the colonial system of domination.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature aiming to understand the moral dimension of colonialism is extremely scattered across diverse disciplines such as biology or the humanities and methods like discourse analysis or medicine. Being interdisciplinary, however, also means that there is a chronic lack of theorising at a macro-level, making it difficult to analyse colonial morality holistically. Macro-level here refers to a theoretical account that thematically integrates the most relevant and recent findings into a coherent analytical framework of the contemporary debate on the moral dimension of colonialism – which is exactly what I hope to establish through Nietzsche's account of slave morality. Thus, this section reviews post-colonial ideas on how colonial ideology co-opts culture by replacing the pre-colonial cultural framework with one that is primarily characterised by the existence of a discourse bisecting humanity into "civilized" and "savage" peoples. Subsequently, this discourse serves to justify colonial violence in form of

punishment as legitimate given its portrayal of the colonised subjects as requiring "civilization" through the coloniser, which renders the colonial project essential one of moral education. In other words, colonial morality is primarily characterised by its attempt to convert the colonised to the moral outlook of the coloniser presenting the colonised as morally, mentally and culturally inferior, wherefore all violent means are permitted to advance this conversion. Through such a framework of colonial morality, then, I hope to provide a tool to analyse the remaining, more opaque avenues of colonial power that we see today.

2.2 System of domination

The core procedure of post-colonial analyses is to define colonialism by highlighting its systematised domination. Although defining it as such entails describing its many economic and physical forms of domination, this conception emphasises morality and culture as the dominant power relations and agents of power in colonialism (Harris, 2004). Thus, post-colonial scholarship focuses on the implicit ways through which colonial power relations and violence take shape, suggesting a wider range of modes of domination and exploitation (Comaroff, 1997). Representative of systems of dominations is also its distinctively hierarchical relationship with built-in violence and its power inequalities. To illustrate, Foucault (2021) implies that domination and violence are institutionalised in the rules and values set up by the dominating party to control social conduct. Thus, norms, rules and values that govern our behaviour, but particularly culture, are tools to those in power to sustain the respective system of violence and thereby their power.

Importantly, the concept "culture" here subsumes all values, morals, categories, frameworks and ideologies that human beings use to construct and give meaning to the environment they inhabit – including our normative systems of ethics, justice and morality (Garland, 1990, p.222). Given, "morality" or the "moral dimension" of colonialism are rather ambiguous terms and difficult to define, post-colonial scholarship aims to understand "culture" and "ideology" as containers for moral dynamics and thereby as vehicle for the diffusion of power into value-judgements.

Given this definition of colonial culture, colonial morality as a sub-field of culture, then, is primarily an instrument to ensure submission to the will of those in power, it "serves the normalizing and disciplinary functions of power, stigmatizing, ostracizing, and punishing some in the name of an abstract and coercive ideal" (Schotten, 2020, p.45). What academic scholarship then subsumes under the heading of "system of domination" is not only the

condition of systematised oppression, but more importantly the opaque avenues through which power and violence find their way to inflict harm on the colonised body and sustain their violent rule. Relating this back to my aim to understand colonial morality, it is safe to say that the moral ideologies, narratives and justifications constitute its opaque avenues of power and violence. Therefore, to grasp how the academic debate comes to characterise colonialism as a form of violent moral education, any macro-theoretical framework tracing colonial morality must first focus on these implicit forms of violence as the engines of power.

2.3 Ideology and culture

In line with the post-colonial emphasis on tacit power, the following section looks at the nature of the primary vehicle for power in colonialism's moral dimension – namely colonial ideology – and the dynamic through which this ideology ultimately justifies colonial violence: the co-optation and enrolment of culture as agent of power. Given their entanglement with each other, it makes sense to outline each element in detail.

2.3.1 Colonial ideology

For one, a considerable segment of scholars highlight the sustenance of colonial oppression through a dominant ideology that demands adherence to its values, norms and rules – operating "through culture and the construction of the imaginary" (Bosworth and Flavin, 2007, p.3). Colonial ideology is seen to co-opt culture to justify colonial occupation for both coloniser and colonised through its primary ideological instrument: the construction of the imaginary. This tension between image and reality provides an instable fundament for colonial conquest, given it often relies on a repertoire of constructed imageries of othering – a notion that will be revisited in the following sections again (Pieterse and Parekh, 1995). These imaginaries, then – no matter if true or false – construct social realities and relations. In other words, the racially charged Manichean imaginaries typical to the colonial situation such as Black vs. white and "savages" vs. "civilized" or orientalist and racist stereotypes all are constitutive of real harms. In sum, then, the imaginaries structure social hierarchies and justify the employment of violence towards non-group members by infusing culture with its imaginary value-judgements and constructions.

2.3.2 Co-optation of culture

Additionally, the modus operandi of colonial ideology consists of "capturing" culture, a process which is primarily facilitated by an insertion of alien values into pre-colonial culture (Pieterse and Parekh, 1995). This form of imposition and sustenance of foreign ideological and cultural frameworks always requires resorting to violence as the colonizer coercively prevents the subject from "accessing their own experiences" (Balagangadhara, 2012, p.117) – they term this cultural effect of this interplay "colonial consciousness". This cultural subconsciousness is primarily determined by a commitment to novel cultural, cognitive and ideological framework inserted into colonial culture by the coloniser. The imposition of such a framework generates psychological cues for the colonial subject, for instance a feeling of shame about their culture or the idea that they themselves are "backward" (Balagangadhara, 2012). Through continuous suppression, the suppressed assimilates and adopts the ideology and behaviour presented by the oppressor, thereby becoming agent of their own oppression (Bulhan, 1985, p.126). It is in this process of internalization, that the colonial inferiority complex originates.

Summarising, then, this violently imposed framework is the colonial ideology which captures pre-colonial culture by imposing its racially charged distinctions and categorisations to create justifications – for the coloniser *and* colonised – for conquest and the employment of colonial violence with the ultimate aim of elevation to a "higher" moral standard (Balandier, 2010). The following sections therefore explore the particular dynamics through which colonial culture and ideology justify colonial violence.

2.4 Justificatory discourse

Again highlighting the systematised nature of colonial violence, Balandier (2010) claims that "colonial domination is based on […] a system of pseudo-justifications and rationalizations" (p.34). Importantly, the nature of such justifications for the colonizer was seldomly based on self-interest and commercial interests, however – rather, these "enterprises were made morally palatable by the rhetoric of responsibility and care for enslaved and colonized Others" (Narayan, 1995, p.134) to ultimately come to justify the employment of violence against the less "civilized". Already hinting at the interpretation of colonialism as project of moral education, most literature considers two dynamics as constitutive of the main components of colonial justificatory discourse: once in the abstract – in terms of "Othering" – and in detail: as the "civilization" discourse.

2.4.1 Othering

The justificatory discourse of colonial ideology is often referred to through a more general dynamic: that of "Othering". This concept describes the discursive differentiation between "Self" and an "Other" that is generally used to make sense of a "threatening" opponent. Applied to colonialism, Corbey (1995) identifies the imaginary categories of European Self and non-European Other "as categories in Western representations of Self, as characters in the story of the ascent of civilization, depicted as the inevitable triumph of higher races over lower ones" (p.73). In other words, through "Othering", the nature of the Self – or Western identity – was made sense of by inventing distinctions and categories to determine the position of individuals and groups in humanity's hierarchy, including its own. Thus, the white European coloniser declared his own standing to be above that of the colonised, thereby creating an identity of its own (Corbey, 1995). The fact that this identity of assumed superiority is grounded in the differentiation to an "Other" based on imagined racial differences highlights the racism at the fundament of colonial ideology. As part of colonial ideology, characterisations of "Self" and "Other" are integrated into culture and ultimately provide the racially charged justifications for perpetrating colonial violence in the name of moral education. Again, this proves how such *imagined* categories structure social relations with *real* effects for the colonised population.

2.4.2 Civilized/savage

The imagined binary of "civilized" and the "savage" is seen as the primary justificatory discourse of colonial conquest and the primary example of "Othering". Colonial ideology, thus, constructs a false imagery of domination and racial difference based on which "groups of people were normatively defined in terms of their relationships as inferiors and subordinates vis-à-vis members of dominant groups" (Narayan, 1995, p.136). Comaroff (1997) shows how the European civilizing missions were rushing to replace a native society with one that resembled more the developed, industrial, and morally superior European society. The narrative that transformed this idea of European superiority into a moral justificatory discourse for the perpetration and continuation of colonial harms, then, was the imaginary binary of "civilization" and "savagery" (Harris, 2004). It violently bisected the population of the world into civilized and savage peoples, into whites and non-whites and into Europeans and non-Europeans, the fundamental assumption being that "savagery" could only be cured through the application of European "civilization" (Brantlinger, 1995). The basic assertion is that through "civilization", the colonised can be elevated to the coloniser's moral standards.

Such Manichean worldviews promoting "civilizational infantilism" then justified the application of virtually all forms of violence to either enlighten or extinct those practicing "savage" customs. Through teaching colonial subjects to read and reason, Western virtues were entrenched in native societies (Comaroff, 1997). Traditional customs and practices were criminalized, whilst assimilation policies were employed to disseminate European and Christian values, which perfectly illustrates how ideologically charged imaginary dichotomies such as "civilized" and "savage" come to infiltrate pre-colonial culture to then justify all forms of colonial violence by pointing to its benevolent motivation of education – ultimately still resulting in a psychological pathologies (Mehta, 1997).

2.5 Colonialism as moral education

Finally, then, after gathering all the individual elements outlining the imagined moral superiority grounded in the imagined differences of white people vis-à-vis non-white people and its cultural and moral entrenchment, it is not impossible to understand why some scholars interpret the colonial situation as an essentially educational project. Representatively, Balagangadhara (2012) compare colonialism to an educational process given both are similar in the ways in which they intervene between the colonised and his "experience of the world" (p.117). Relating this back to the previously explained violent imposition of cultural frameworks, it becomes clear how ideology intervenes between the native and his "true" experience of the world to justify colonial conquest as moral education. The difference between the educational process and colonialism, however, is the nature of the framework that intervenes for educational purposes purely out of rationality – for instance, to advance adolescent development. In the colonial situation, however, scholars distinguish between two qualities characterising such a framework: a) its use of culture and b) its distinctively moral dimension.

2.5.1 Utilisation of culture

Colonialism, then, can be interpreted as systematised punishment for not being "civilized". The ultimate aim of culturally, physically and psychologically assimilating the punished to that standard is illustrated by Nandy (2010), showing that "a colonial system sustains itself by inducing the colonized, through socio-economic and psychological rewards and punishments, to accept new social norms and cognitive categories" (p.126). It does so, for one through culture: cultural attitudes and codes that are captured by colonial ideology partly determine our

collective and social definitions of punishment. In other words, punishment is a "cultural artefact, encoding the signs and symbols of the wider culture in its own practices" (Garland, 1990, p.226). Thus, defined as legitimate by colonial ideology intervening in cultural dynamics, punishment aids in constructing the world by reproducing, institutionalising but most importantly enacting categories and distinctions such as the moral-political categories of "civilized" or "savage". This again proves how colonial culture becomes a vehicle for the *imaginary* binaries that colonial ideology employs to serve as justification for inflicting very *real* violence in form of punishment on the colonial subject.

2.5.2 Moral dimension

Most important for this exercise, however, is that punishment is primarily a moral process – it "forms, symbolizes and expresses moral judgements, and its effects are primarily to reaffirm the moral order" (Garland, 1990, p.62). In other words, punishment is justified, when acts of sacrilege arouse feelings of resentment and shock in a community of believers. Given, that one interprets not being "civilized" as such a sacrilege, it is obvious how in the eyes of the coloniser, his violent attempt at "civilizing" becomes legitimate, given it constitutes punishment for moral unrighteousness and serves solely the purpose of moral education.

2.6 Conclusion

To sum up, this interpretation of colonialism as moral education does well to capture the violently moralising tendency of colonialism. What the overall debate lacks, however, is a macro-level theory linking the indoctrination of culture by colonial ideology, its insertion of imaginary and racially laden binaries that then come to justify the infliction of harm on colonial bodies, to this interpretation of colonialism as a form of moral education. In other words, the need is great for a theoretical framework that applies to colonial conquest with its ideological indoctrinations and justifications conjuring up the imaginary binary of "civilized/savage" – only to then inflict punishment in form of psychological and physical violence on the subject for deviating from the socially constructed imaginary of racial difference. Nietzsche, I want to argue, can help with this dilemma: he illustrates through his concept of slave morality how some higher ideal or ordering principle – such as racism for colonialism – are constructed for a system of domination.

3.Nietzsche

3.1 Introduction

Nietzsche, I want to argue, can help with this dilemma. As presented in the introduction, Nietzsche could be posited as staunch supporter of colonial conquest. This view is grounded in his recurrent glorifications and affirmations of the noble races' violent quest for ever greater power through which the "weak" are continually subjugated. This interpretation, I want to argue, is not necessarily correct and explains why Nietzsche's ideas are generally not applied to the issue of colonialism: this reading of the master/slave dichotomy does not offer any novel insights regarding the power dynamics of colonialism. Not only do I want to argue that a careful reading of Nietzsche rather proposes the contrary interpretation: that Nietzsche's contempt for slave morality with all its features – assumptions of universality and moral superiority, imaginary dichotomies, and punishment as mean to overcome the feeling of guilt – suggests, that he would have characterised colonial morality precisely as "slave morality" and therefore as something deplorable. Also, this reading suggests that Nietzsche's understanding of morality as defendant and enabler of its respective system of dominance suggests that his account can also be used as macro-theoretical framework that focalizes contemporary findings on colonial morality in a way that is absent in the contemporary debate. To illustrate this argument, this section sets out to define the two hallmark characteristics of Nietzsche's conception of slave morality: its dichotomous categorisation of the world into the value-judgements "good" and "evil" as well as its reconceptualization of punishment as means to salvation from the colonized subjects' eternal sin – not having white skin colour. Both conceptualizations, I will ultimately argue, can help redefine our understanding of colonial morality by providing a coherent theoretical framework on colonial morality.

3.2 Good vs. Evil

As outlined in the literature review, the violence and legitimacy of the colonial relationship depends on a central justificatory discourse which presents the white European colonizer as developed and civilized and the non-white, non-European colonized as "backward" and "savage". Interestingly, one of the central characteristics attributed to Nietzsche's slave morality is its utilization of an astonishingly similar dichotomy – namely that of "good/evil".

3.2.1 Good vs. bad

To grasp the importance of this "good/evil" distinction, however, one must first outline the "good/bad" distinction that structures the evaluative framework of noble or master morality and therefore represents the stellar opposite of "good/evil". Nietzsche's self-set task in the *Genealogy of Morals* is the "re-evaluation" of modernity's values – in other words, he seeks to understand the function or value of each morality (master and slave). The noble "good/bad" and the slavish "good/evil" distinctions are used as the primary evaluative axes along which each morality operates (Guess, 2011, p.20) – in other words, they provide socially constructed cues through which evaluative judgements are made. For noble morality, the value-judgements subsumed under "good" are constructed to reflect typical traits of the noble. These character traits, then, come to constitute the virtues (and therefore what is "good"), whilst slavish traits come to be seen as "bad". To provide an example, Nietzsche traces the etymological development of the German word "schlecht" (bad), which according to Nietzsche arises out of the word "schlicht" (simple) designating the "common man" (GM I:4, p.14). This mode of value-creation is grounded in the hierarchical and oppressive relationship between nobility and slaves – termed by Nietzsche the "pathos of nobility and distance, the enduring, dominating, and fundamental overall feeling of a higher ruling kind in relation to a lower kind" (GM I:2, p.13). In sum, this pathos manifests itself unconsciously in the collective psyche and self-perception of the nobility as a feeling of superiority vis-à-vis the slaves and expresses itself through the valuation of character traits associated with the nobility (Owen, 2007, p.77). Nietzsche, to summarise, employs the "good/bad" distinction to demonstrate what morality looked like before its turning point – the slave revolt in morality. He provides a "baseline morality" against which his account of slave morality can be compared.

Nietzsche explores the dynamics through which this distinction comes into being and subsequently operates to illustrate how morality and values – such as "good" and "bad" – give meaning to reality by employing seemingly value-free categorisations that are created by those in power to sustain their superiority. Especially considering the assertions in the literature review positing morality as tool for disseminating colonial ideology and thereby legitimating its violence, this observation is particularly relevant given it represents an extreme instance of such a subtle manifestation of power: it was here, that the imposition of supposedly neutral virtues and morals was employed to make meaning of the cruel reality that colonialism really constituted. Thus, one can understand how applying Nietzsche's master/slave dichotomy intuitively to the colonizer/colonized relationship by characterising colonial morality as "noble morality", suggests itself. However, I want to argue that colonial morality can be understood

better through Nietzsche's concept of "slave morality" – especially because of its villainization of its "Other", its superiority grounded in hatred and finally its justification of punishment as a form of salvation. All these distinctive characteristics find their origin in slave morality's evaluative axis of "good/evil" that comes to replace this noble "good/bad" distinction – explored in the following section.

3.2.2 Slave revolt and the creation of "evil"

Returning to Nietzsche to explain my reasoning for applying his concept of "slave morality" to colonial morality, to advance his criticism of the nature of modernity's morality, however, he must offer an account of how its primary evaluative framework of "good/evil" comes into being – he locates its origin in the slave revolt of morality. Nietzsche uses the word "revolt" here to describe how the slaves changed the nature of morality by not only reversing the noble "good/bad" framework and thereby the moral structure of modern societies, but also the power hierarchy between nobility and weak, master and slave. Thus, one result from this "revolt" is that the weak slave comes to constitute the "strong" and "good", whilst the strong master becomes "weak" and "evil" (GM I:7, p.19). Now, not the noble and strong, but the "miserable alone are the good; the poor the powerless, the low alone are the good […] the noble and the powerful, you are for all eternity the evil" (GM 1:7, p.19). Slave morality is principally characterised by

> saying no to an "outside", to an "other", to a "non-self": and *this* no is its creative act. […] this *necessary* orientation outwards rather than inwards to the self – belongs characteristically to *ressentiment*. In order to exist at all, slave morality from the outset needs an opposing, outer world; in physiological terms, it needs external stimuli in order to act – its action is fundamentally reaction. (GM I:10, p.22)

This quote neatly illustrates the nature of slave morality by highlighting its three central purposes of 1) constructing an "Other" and subsequently negating all this "Other" represents by declaring it "evil", 2) fabricating a radical sense of superiority based on 1) and 3) providing a justificatory framework for the employment of violence as punishment for not complying with the moral heteronormativity demanded by slave morality – outlined in the following section.

3.2.3 Saying no to an "outside"

For one, then, this quote shows that Nietzsche defines slave morality by its villainization of its "Other". Its obsession with declaring every noble activity and virtue as "evil" constitutes its purpose and origin. What is defined as "good" – the conditions of the slave's existence – is of secondary importance, whilst everything "evil", then, is definitively negative and must be destroyed if the "good" is to prevail (Hatab, 2011, p.196). Initiated by the slave's condition of being violently suppressed, this "No" to something that is different, stems from what Nietzsche calls "ressentiment": "the resentment that X is able to act powerfully in ways in which I would like to act myself, if only I did not feel myself too weak to do so" (Guess, 2011, p.20). Slave morality therefore springs from the envious denial of something it regards as threatening (Hatab, 2011, p.197). Again, reversing the common application of Nietzsche's master/slave dichotomy by counterintuitively characterising the coloniser as "slave"– instead of the colonised – makes it easy to see how the pseudo-self-defence mechanism of negating and villainizing something regarded as threatening resembles the "civilization/savage" distinction in the colonial situation. In this reading, the colonizer is rendered fundamentally insecure in his own identity, because although this feeling is *not* motivated by a situation of oppression as for Nietzsche's slaves, the coloniser perceives his identity fundamentally threatened by the visual, cultural and moral difference of the colonized. To cope with this fear, the colonizer constructs the "civilization" discourse underwritten by a racist fundament – which constitutes nothing less than what Nietzsche terms "insatiable hatred" (GM I:11, p.25) for anything non-European and non-white. Next to this deep antipathy characteristic of colonial morality, then, the "pathos of distance" through which noble morality expresses its contempt for anything that is not itself, grows pale and therefore does not represent an accurate tool to understand colonial morality. Slave morality's creation of new values to villainize any *non-Self*, however, resembles the dynamics through which colonial conquest finds justification and purpose. To summarise, the coloniser who perceives any difference from his standard of "Europeanness" and "whiteness" as threat, copes with his fear by inventing "a lexicon of animality and barbarity that re-writes the indigene as a sub-human […] [and] constructs the demand for colonial intervention: it is under the rubric of bringing "civilization to the natives" that the practices of colonialism are rationalized" (Pugliese, 1997, p.287).

3.2.4 Superiority

Another element in Nietzsche's account that resembles the literature on colonial morality is slave morality's self-constructed sense of superiority. Revisiting the slaves' re-evaluation of

their own misery and subsequent employment of purpose-giving hatred suggests that it originates here: "slaves are able to look at themselves and see not unrelenting, unredeemed misery, but a new kind of goodness" (Migotti, 2006, p.112). Importantly, whereas the nobility's feeling of superiority towards its Other was characterised as "kind of pity, consideration, and forbearance" (GM I:10, p.23), the slave's superiority after the revolt is qualified by its "insatiable hatred" (GM I:11, p.25) for everything "evil". Thus, the slave's superiority is again constituted externally – by its hatred for the "Other". The classification of "evil", then, becomes the primary tool in slave morality's toolbox to overcome the slave's bleak conditions of existence – it invents new virtues and morals that idealize slavish weakness, thereby inventing a new form – a *moral* form – of superiority replacing the ideal of physical superiority of the "nobles" (Reginster, 2021). Additionally to this fundament of hatred, this moral superiority relies on an assumption of universal applicability of virtues – its striving for universal acceptance of its values marks a crucial difference between master and slave morality. Whereas the former aims to maintain its power inequalities by reserving his form of life only for himself, the latter yearns for making everyone equal in one respect: adherence to its "universal" values. In other words, slave morality asserts itself as the only "true" moral framework, it negates and denies the relevance, validity and "goodness" of its opposite (GM III:14, p.102).

To summarise, then, given the slave's superiority grounded in hatred and aggressive demands of universality, parallels to the superiority asserted by the colonizer are drawn quickly. Just as slave morality presents itself as meta-morality, asserts its right to judge others from a position of privilege and portrays its cause to be in "the best interest", the coloniser attains his superiority through systematically attacking and othering all elements that do not assimilate to his moral outlook. By judging all other positions as "primitive, irrational, and/or barbaric, western law [read: morality] generates the space from which it can define itself as the embodiment of reason, impartiality and universality" (Pugliese, 1996, p.280). Slave morality's demand of universal compliance with its values and its superiority grounded in hatred, again, clearly serves as evidence of slave morality being more appropriate than noble morality to analyse the colonial situation. Additionally, Nietzsche's interlinking of the previously explained villainised construction of an "Other" and its subsequent justification of slave morality's self-asserted superiority illustrates the suitability of using Nietzsche's account as the macro-theoretical framework for analysing colonialism that the debate requires.

3.2.5 Free will

To understand the exact linkage between superiority and demands of universal compliance with its values, one must highlight that slave morality produces these claims through adopting a certain view on the issue of human agency – discussed mostly as the subject of "free will". This notion asserts that those who do not adhere to the norms and rules set out by slavish values "could have acted otherwise" (GM II:4, p.44). Thus, human beings are equal in one important way: they all possess the property of free will. Reginster (2021) shows how slave morality's hallmark is the expectation of universal compliance with its values (p.94): based on the assumption that human beings possess a free will, failure to adhere to moral values set forth by slave morality is not just condemnable, but the individual is blamed for it as they could have acted differently. Thus, the slave assumes (self-perceived) moral superiority since he adheres to its own values whilst the master does not – and therefore is denounced as morally inferior.

To conclude, Nietzsche shows through his concept of "slave morality" how the "good/evil" binary built on a fundament of hate and superiority – through its assumptions of universalism and free agency – opened a space for ideas of equal moral rights and duties and thereby created a justificatory discourse for punishment that is explained in the following section. Of course, Nietzsche shows most powerfully how such a justificatory discourse consisting of moral rights and duties that are self-evidently perceived to have universal validity, are defined by the dominant group according to their interest to remain in power. Thus, again, this conceptualisation is highly relevant to colonialism, as it basically mirrors and integrates the findings in contemporary literature on colonial morality into a coherent framework.

3.3 Guilt and punishment

The second element of slave morality that will reveal the concept's suitability to revisit colonial morality from a new vantage point is its mobilisation and justification of punishment as a form of salvation. The classic application of Nietzsche's slave/master dichotomy – the colonizer as the master and the colonized as the slave – is not suitable for the colonial context, as noble morality does not mirror slave morality's particular relationship between guilt and punishment. Additionally, Nietzsche's account of punishment links its individual moral dynamics together to explain how punishment is legitimised by slave morality's employment of constructed imaginaries of "free will" and "guilt". This linkage of individual dynamics leads me to believe it could constitute a macro-theoretical framework of colonial morality.

3.3.1 Responsibility and promise-making

Responsibility, under slave morality, is central because its existence as a character trait determines the validity of an individual's claim to be awarded the status of a "person". This concept is relevant to my argument, as particularly moral responsibility under slave morality is given the quality to adjudicate on claims to personhood – in other words, on responsibility in adherence to moral standards. Clearly, this aspect of slave morality can be employed to analyse how the colonizer equally predicates the subjects' humanity on moral adherence to certain evaluative paradigms – namely that of "civilization". To start, then, the trait of responsibility, for supporters of slave morality, manifests itself in keeping a promise. Making a promise, so Nietzsche, is a distinctly human capacity, it is what differentiates man and animal (GM II:1, p.39). The convolution of this capacity with being responsible originated in the relationship between creditor and debtor. It was here, through the necessity of entering contractual relations, that man realised first the importance of making and keeping promises (GM II:5, p.45). For slave morality, I am regarded as responsible when I can be trusted that I will repay my debts – I "attain" responsibility by honouring my promises. Responsibility is the slave's "measure of value: looking out at others from his own vantage-point, he bestows respect or contempt" (GM II:2, p.41). Being responsible, in slave morality, thus constitutes not only a characteristic, "it is a standing or a status, in which the value of power (or freedom) is instantiated" (Reginster, 2011, p.72). Thus, being responsible determines how others perceive me, act towards me and evaluate my claims to personhood as legitimate or illegitimate. In other words, being responsible and honouring promises display the benchmark characteristics against which every individual's claims to personhood and group membership are judged. This slavish definition of responsibility, then, is the perfect illustration of how virtues come to be defined by "those in power" and subsequently are employed to sustain their rule.

3.3.2 Guilt

The concept of "guilt" is the central mobilizing tool through which slave morality manipulates and converts its Other to its own moral worldview. Guilt, for Nietzsche, constitutes a particularly moral sentiment: it is "to feel that *one could have done otherwise* […] and to feel that the transgression reflects a fundamental defect of character or personhood" (Leiter, 2002, p.237). Here, the previously highlighted concept of "free will" arising through slave morality's particular notion of human agency comes to the fore again – the idea that all human beings possess the property of free will (GM II:4, p.44). Anyone can be expected to comply with universal moral values and therefore blamed for failing to comply – including by themselves

(Reginster, 2021). Any transgression creates guilt because it is seen as intentional and therefore devalues the personhood of the transgressor in the eyes of himself and his social environment, as both proclaim his responsibility diminished given his inability to hold a promise (that of adhering to moral norms set out by slave morality). Again, Nietzsche links seemingly unrelated dynamics together to provide a coherent framework of how a morality comes to define itself and subsequently justify its rule vis-à-vis an "Other". Its moralisation of rule-breaking is particular to "slave morality" and is also reflected in colonial morality: the act of colonisation is justified given that the colonized violates the universal norm of "civilization" through his "backwardness". Through slave morality's doctrine of "free will", this imaginary status becomes an intentional choice of the colonised which therefore devalues his worth as a person. Now, he can be blamed for not adhering to the "universal" norm of civilization, thereby making him feel guilty and devaluing his personhood. More specifically, given Nietzsche's claim that promise-making is what differentiates man and animal, breaking the norm of "being civilized" relegates the colonised to sub-human status thereby legitimising the infliction of all levels of violence on him. To restore his status as "rightful human", he is left with one option only: to accept punishment in form of colonial occupation and violence as rightful – this is explored in the next section.

3.3.3 Punishment

Punishment is Nietzsche's concept that links "responsibility" and "guilt": most important in realm of this exercise, is the purpose of guilt specific to slave morality – it functions as justification for punishment for both parties. The primary reason for employing slave morality's notion of punishment as interpretive frame for colonial morality, is that contrary to the widely accepted idea that punishment causes the feeling of guilt in the transgressor, Nietzsche asserts that punishment under slave morality, in fact, is not the instrument to instil guilt in the criminal (GM II:14, p.62). Rather, under slave morality, the individual who is made to believe to be guilty accepts his punishment as legitimate *because it serves as compensation for his wrongs*. The concept of guilt – the fabricated awareness the that one could have done otherwise – thus presents the use of violence as legitimate to its employer and receptor alike. The "slave" who employs violence justifies his endeavours by telling himself that his Other could have acted otherwise, namely in accordance with the values set forth by him. Punishment, then, becomes "simply the image, the *mimus* of normal behaviour towards a hated enemy" (GM II:9, p.53). For the master, however, as he breaks the promise of adhering to slave morality's values, the doctrine of "free will" manufactures his feeling of "being guilty", thereby depriving him of his claim to being a responsible agent and thereby of his personhood. Being

in this psychological dilemma of being denied his identity, his guilty conscious readily accepts his punishment as rightful, as only undergoing it and displaying commitment to the values of slave morality will restore his personhood (Reginster, 2021, p.74). Thus, punishment becomes a means to salvation for the transgressor as he tries to restore his personhood – his humanity – through enduring the punishment exacted on him justified by his moral unrighteousness. Contrary to the common interpretation of punishment as beneficial primarily for the punishing party, slave morality's punishment portrays it also as beneficial to the punished party – anyway, then, violence and punishment become a means to facilitate the master's elevation to a more advanced moral system (Pugliese, 1996, p.283). In other words, violence becomes an instrument to exact moral education. Essentially, then, Nietzsche's account integrates neatly into contemporary scholarship interpreting colonialism as education: violence in form of punishment is legitimised in the eyes of the coloniser given its subject could have adhered to his standard of "civilization", whilst for the coloniser the guilt instilled in him for being "backward" is so strong that he comes to accept colonial conquest as legitimate and sole route to restore his status as human being – which he does by becoming more like the coloniser: more "civilised" and – crucially – more white.

To conclude, this section outlined Nietzsche's conception of slave morality by emphasising its two distinctive features: the "good/evil" dichotomy that ultimately comes to justify punishment for everything that is "evil" and its subsequent portrayal of punishment as a form of salvation. More specifically, the "good/evil" dichotomy villainises everything that is not itself to glorify the slave's own suppressive conditions. This glorification of something conventionally seen as "bad", then feeds into their assumed moral superiority which is paired with a strong drive to universally implement their own slavish moral outlook. Ultimately, both becomes a justification for punishment of all those who do not convert or adhere to slave morality. Secondly, slave morality portrays this punishment as legitimate tool to elevate his "Other" to a higher system of morality – that of slave morality. It does so, by invoking a strong feeling of guilt – thereby relegating them to a sub-human category – in those that do not adhere to the values it sets out, so that punishment becomes a means to restore their humanity. Again, the parallels of both dynamics with colonial morality are obvious: for one, the imaginary construction of dichotomies such as "civilization/savage" to justify colonial conquest can clearly be explained by the account of slave morality whilst the invocation of strong feelings of guilt hollows out the subjects' perceived (self-)worth as a human being until she comes to see punishment as legitimate form of salvation and restitution of her humanity.

4.Discussion

Now, that we have established the reading of slave morality above to be the more appropriate tool to analyse colonial morality as well as its suitability to represent the macro-theoretical framework to analyse colonial morality missing in the contemporary debate, what inferences can we draw from this revelation? The following section will provide food for thought for a potential future extension of this investigation, in that it poses the question whether the colonial system of domination is a thing of the past or not by using Nietzsche to answer this question. What I find, is that through his account of slave morality one can locate racism as the ordering principle behind the colonial system of domination. Given, that this ordering principle still manifests in very real effects in our contemporary societies, I contend that we cannot affirm the idea that we have exited the colonial system of domination.

To attempt to provide the reader with food for thought to indulge in this question that presents itself as so complex that it is impossible to answer within the scope of this section, we must start with Nietzsche's identification of a constant human drive to discharge power – which we express, according to him, mostly through inflicting cruelty. This assumption, then, returns us to the definition of systems of domination explored in the literature review. To reiterate, Foucault (2021) – referring explicitly to Nietzsche's Genealogy – claims that a system of domination is a manifestation of this drive, given it comes into existence because two or more "forces" (any entities such as values, physical bodies or moralities) collide precisely because of this primitive drive to exercise power by dominating the "other". Furthermore, because the violence articulated through this drive during the collision of two "forces" is subsequently institutionalised in laws, rules and norms, the human drive to inflict cruelty never seizes to rage. Thus, Nietzsche and Foucault argue, that human history constitutes a cycle of continuous domination winding from one system of institutionalised violence to the next. Given, we hold this conceptualisation to be accurate, it raises the question whether we still occupy the particular colonial system of domination or whether we have already left it behind.

To illustrate the "No" that I provide as answer, one only needs to turn back to post-colonial scholarship arguing that decolonisation not only pertains to the physical act of decolonisation, but rather to the re-evaluation of today's power relations – that on the surface do not carry the weight of labels such as "colonialism" or "slavery" – through the lens of understanding them as a direct consequence specific to the aftermath of colonialism (Pieterse & Parekh, 1995).

Clearly, then, these scholars perceive the colonial system of domination not to be overcome just because colonies attained formal freedom. One reason for this – illustrated by Nietzsche's revelation of the cultural and psychological depths that are infested with colonial ideology – is that colonialism and its "subconsciousness" truly represent a psychological state, thereby explaining why "colonialism never seems to end with political freedom […] Its sources lie deep in the minds of the rulers and the ruled" (Nandy, 2009, p.126). In other words, it is exactly because the cultural, moral and psychological avenues through which colonial power exacts violence on its subject are more difficult to eliminate (Stoler, 1997), that we still observe their particular imprint – and not, say, that of material inequalities of colonialism – on contemporary power relations.

Nietzsche's account, I want to argue, can help us understand their persistence: he powerfully shows how slavish moralities give meaning to suffering by constructing some higher ideal or ordering principle for its respective system of domination. Applied to colonialism, then, Nietzsche shows how racism as ordering (or justificatory) principle plays an integral and ambiguous role in the perpetuation and sustenance of remnants of the colonial system of domination. To illustrate, imaginary distinctions such as "civilized/savage" and "good/evil" are intertwined with claims to universal applicability and superiority of a particular morality, in that they are incorporated into normative conceptions of a "morally good" individual. Thereby, they ultimately serve as constructed justification for punishment of a "morally bad" individual. Given, however, one sees under the surface of these *imaginary* and constructed differences, the only *real* difference to be found at the bottom of every racist distinction that justifies racial violence is the colour of the subjects' skin. Every violation of different *imagined* moral standards, as well as every subsequent instance of punishment finds its purpose solely in the only *empirically* observable difference – namely the eternal sin of not being white. The promise of the coloniser that once the subject has endured punishment he will find salvation through being elevated to the colonizer's moral standard can never be fulfilled because the *imaginary* demand to "civilize" provides only a fig leaf for the *real* demand: to become more like the coloniser, which is to become white. Thus, by constructing this "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Bulhan, 2004, p.126), the coloniser creates a justification for infinite violence inflicted on the colonized body as it paints a "metaphysical picture in which the individual's […] nature deserves maltreatment, because it stands in antithesis to an infinite creditor" (Janaway, 2007, p.142). Given, the same racism that provided the fundament for colonial

ideology and its justificatory distinction between “civilized” and “slave” continues to justify violence against non-white and non-European people today – although less in material and more in psychological-cultural forms – suggests that the colonial system of domination has not been left behind.

Particularly this fact of colonial continuity again underlines the importance of possessing and applying a comprehensive theoretical framework to analyse those colonial dynamics that extend into the present. This, I have argued, is exactly what Nietzsche provides – and therefore perhaps a tool to finally overcome the colonial system of domination. Only through truly understanding and describing the scope of the psychological, cultural and moral pathologies created by colonial ideological violence, can we disclose the social structures infested by racist thought and therefore drive towards more equity. This, however, is by no means an easy task given that real change can only be facilitated by abolishing racism as ordering principle and all its expressions in implicit, structural and blatant forms – only then, only by abolishing a system in its entirety, can space be created for something new to spring from it. No one knew this better than Nietzsche, to whom we return to conclude: “In order for a shrine to be set up, *another shrine must be broken into pieces*” (GM II:24, p.75).

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