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Nietzsche and Fanon on the Political Breeding of Race and Class as Caste*

Nietzsche e Fanon: sobre a política do cultivo de raça e classe como castas

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Abstract: Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* suggests aristocracies inadvertently produce a dangerous "slavish" counter-type of moral agency grounded in resentment and exhibiting a morality of resignation. Throughout the text, he conflates biological and political registers, speaking of human types as "species" (*die Spezies*) and classes as "races" (*die Rassen*), thus implying all human kinds are socially constructed and that their primary cause is political organization. It's in this sense that Nietzsche is a "radical aristocrat." Against the conservative view that social hierarchy mirrors a fixed order in nature, he recognizes hierarchies *create* the types they seek to preserve, precisely against *natural* contingency. This poses a practical dilemma for aristocracies: how maintain an underclass without provoking the slavish psychology and morality that undermine aristocratic values? In other texts, Nietzsche develops an answer with his interpretation of the Hindu law of Manu. Every aristocracy must create the illusion that classes are *natural castes* rather than political constructions. Caste-systems are cultural and ideological institutions designed to protect class-systems by giving class identities the appearance of fixed "species": deeply-internalized forms of psychology and moral agency that reinforce class positions by being more rigidly-defined and easily socially recognized. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon subversively redirects this theory away from Nietzsche's reactionary aims toward revolutionary ones, applying its logic to the racialized hierarchy of colonization. Fanon also blurs the line between the social and biological, referring to colonizer and colonized as different "species" (*espèces*) and suggesting social position causes class-groups to develop the deep psychological and moral identities characteristic of castes. For Fanon, race is the primary way colonized societies *materially* support caste-ideology. Though socially-determined, race-concepts are anchored in visible differences, giving the class position of the colonized a false appearance of naturalness. However, against Nietzsche, who blames the oppressed for slave morality, Fanon insists "the colonizer creates the colonized." Slavish psychology originates in the ruling class who, to save their good conscience, reinterpret privilege as merit by adopting a Manichean view of the colonized as essentially evil, leading to deep-seated hatred for them as a *racialized caste*. The colonizers' *primary psychology of resentment* in turn produces a secondary psychology of resentment among the colonized, shaping both into opposing "species," identities grounded in each other's exclusion, pressing the colonized not (as Nietzsche thinks) toward *moral* revolt but toward political revolution. Fanon's critical reconstruction of Nietzsche's caste-theory has three important consequences. First, Nietzsche's analysis implies, against his own hopes, that aristocracies necessarily produce their own downfall. Second, if race is politically constructed as a disguised form

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of class, racism cannot be overcome independently of the class structures it was created to disguise. However, third, if caste-systems produce not just racist attitudes, practices, and social structures but also the racist as a *species* of psychological identity grounded in resentment, then while class politics can resolve racism's historical origins, it will not prevent its *continuation* among existing members of that type. Consequently, anti-racist politics cannot be reduced to issues of either class or race alone.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Frantz Fanon, Race, Racialization, Class, Caste, Colonialism.

Resumo: A *Genealogia da Moral* de Nietzsche sugere que aristocracias produzem um contratipo escravo perigoso de agência moral fundamentada em ressentimento, que exhibe uma moralidade de resignação. No decorrer do texto, ele mescla os registros biológico e político ao falar de tipos humanos como “espécies” (*die Spezies*) e de classes como “raças” (*die Rassen*), implicando com isso que todos os tipos humanos são socialmente construídos e que sua causa primária é a organização política. É neste sentido que Nietzsche é um “aristocrata radical”. Contra a visão conservadora de que a hierarquia social reflete uma ordem fixa na natureza, ele reconhece que hierarquias *criam* os tipos que buscam preservar, precisamente contra a contingência *natural*. Isto coloca um dilema prático para as aristocracias: como manter uma subclasse sem suscitar uma psicologia e uma moral escravas que [inevitavelmente] enfraquecem os valores aristocráticos? Em outros textos, Nietzsche responde com sua interpretação da lei Hindu de Manu. Cada aristocracia deve criar a ilusão de que classes são castas naturais em vez de construções políticas. Sistemas de castas são instituições culturais e ideológicas feitas para proteger sistemas de classes, por darem aparência de “espécies” fixas às identidades de classe: formas profundamente internalizadas de psicologia e agência moral, que reforçam posições de classe por serem mais rigidamente definidas e facilmente reconhecidas socialmente. Em *Os Condenados da Terra*, Frantz Fanon, de forma subversiva, redireciona essa teoria para longe das metas reacionárias de Nietzsche, na direção de outras revolucionárias, aplicando a lógica de Nietzsche à hierarquia racializada da colonização. Fanon também torna turva a linha entre social e biológico, referindo-se a colonizador e colonizado como “espécies” diferentes (*espèces*) e sugere que uma posição social faz com que indivíduos agrupados em classe desenvolvam as profundas identidades psicológicas e morais características de castas. Para Fanon, a raça é o meio primário de sociedades colonizadas darem suporte material à ideologia de casta. Apesar de socialmente determinados, conceitos de raça são ancorados em diferenças visíveis, conferindo à posição de classe do colonizado a falsa aparência de naturalidade. No entanto, contra Nietzsche, que culpa o oprimido pela moralidade do escravo, Fanon insiste que “o colonizador cria o colonizado.” A psicologia escrava se origina da classe dominante que, para salvar sua boa consciência, reinterpreta o privilégio como mérito, adotando uma visão maniqueísta de que os colonizados são essencialmente maus, o que leva ao bem assentado ódio contra eles como *casta racializada*. A *psicologia primária do ressentimento* dos colonizadores produz uma psicologia secundária do ressentimento entre os colonizados, dando forma a ambos como “espécies” opostas, identidades fundamentadas na exclusão um do outro, empurrando os colonizados não (como Nietzsche pensa) na direção de uma revolta *moral*, mas na direção de uma revolução política. A reconstrução crítica de Fanon da teoria de castas de Nietzsche tem três consequências importantes. Primeiro, a análise de Nietzsche implica, contra suas próprias esperanças, que aristocracias necessariamente produzem sua própria queda. Segundo, se a raça é politicamente construída como uma forma dissimulada de classe, o racismo não pode ser superado sem a superação das estruturas de classe cuja dissimulação motivou sua criação. Contudo, terceiro, se o sistema de castas produz não somente atitudes racistas, práticas e estruturas sociais, mas também o racista como espécie de identidade psicológica fundamentada no ressentimento, então enquanto classes políticas podem esclarecer as origens históricas do racismo, isto não evitará a *continuidade* do racismo dentre os membros existentes daquele tipo. Por consequência, políticas antirracistas não podem ser reduzidas a problemas de classe ou raça isoladamente.

Palavras-chave: Nietzsche, Frantz Fanon, raça, racialização, classe, casta, colonialismo.

Introduction

The influence of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* on Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* has been underappreciated, in part because the *Genealogy*'s implied political content and historical materialist method have been ignored. In this paper, I argue Fanon draws on that overlooked political aspect to critically reconstruct Nietzsche's history of "slavish" *ressentiment*-psychology and morality, tracing its proximate origins to the ruling class rather than the underclass and locating its primary cause in the material inequality that structures aristocratic societies.

The key implication of this critical reconstruction is that colonialism's compartmentalized society and Manichean values represent an extreme toward which every modern, class-based society tends: a caste system that fuses race and class by "breeding" (*züchten*) what Fanon calls distinct "species" (*espèces*): internalized, racialized identities that support the ideology of natural hierarchy and the ruling class's illusion of moral superiority through the demonization of an underclass perceived as essentially evil. In the process, Fanon proves himself an exemplary Nietzschean leftist (as opposed to a "left Nietzschean"): a political philosopher who makes critical use of Nietzsche's best descriptive philosophical insights against Nietzsche's worst — predominantly *unphilosophical* — prejudices, as expressed in his normative political goals. Specifically, Fanon successfully turns Nietzsche's historical materialist politics of breeding against its intended goal of creating aristocracies that avoid the side effect of slave morality.

I draw two key conclusions. First, Fanon demonstrates that if the underclass's psychology and morality are derivative, an inversion of the ruling class's own violent, hate-driven, Manichean *ressentiment*-psychology and values, then aristocracies can be surmounted only through political revolution, not reform. Second, Fanon presents a novel reason to reject both race and class reductionism. If the racist as a psychological type is caused by material inequality and serves as ideological support for the noble lie of natural hierarchy, then it cannot be eliminated without overcoming the class-system. However, because racism is grounded in the political production of the racist as a caste-type, a deep-seated form of *ressentiment*-psychology rather than in merely moral or epistemic error, class politics can by itself only eliminate future racism, and not effectively resist existing forms.

1. The *Genealogy* as a Historical Materialist Politics of Aristocratic Cultivation

Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* is first and foremost a work of political philosophy, only secondarily one of moral philosophy. It is also best understood as historical materialist in method, although of course in a broader, descriptive sense compatible with Nietzsche's aristocratism (MIYASAKI, 2022a, II.7). While it identifies the origin of *ressentiment*-based values in order to call them into question, it does so by identifying the origin of all morality in political organization, critically assessing not moralities or psychologies but the political orders that promote them and the material conditions that support them. In this way, the *Genealogy* evaluates human types and their values not morally but materially and politically: as products of and conducive to social flourishing or failure, domination or submission, health or weakness.

This identification of the political origins of types and values serves Nietzsche's goal of selecting and preparing the ground for societies that will promote presumably higher types, a political project he sometimes refers to as one of "breeding" (*züchten*, also "cultivation" or "discipline") (BGE 203, A 3, TI "Improving" Humanity), which can be understood in two distinct senses. First, a politics of breeding does not theorize normative political principles it then tries to persuade us to adopt. Rather, it is a *descriptive metapolitics*, telling us not what politics *ought* to do but what every politics necessarily does, identifying unique material and political conditions that "breed" unique types of morality and moral agency. Every political order is a machine for manufacturing value-systems that are internalized in corresponding psychological and moral types. In this sense every politics is, intentionally or not, a politics of breeding. Individuals do not produce societies. Societies produce individuals, producing their forms of moral agency or the drive-organizations that shape how they live, make choices, and find meaning (MIYASAKI, 2022a, II.8.1).

Second, in a normative sense, "breeding" refers not to the *aim* but *effective means* of politics. If a society's material conditions support certain political orders, which in turn produce certain kinds of morality and agency, then any politics can succeed at promoting its preferred vision for humanity only by changing those material conditions rather than through moral and rational persuasion or education. Note that neither sense of a politics of breeding commits us to Nietzsche's aristocratic political program (MIYASAKI, 2022a, II.8.2).

Moreover, we should not understand *züchten* primarily in its use as a *zoological* metaphor — for example, in Nietzsche's description of "breeding an animal with the prerogative to promise" or his contrast of morality as breeding to "domesticating [*zähmen*] the human beast" (GM II 2; TI Improvers 2, 5). In his later

works *züchten* is more frequently a *botanical* metaphor — for example, when he asks “where and how the plant man has grown the strongest” or describes a “hothouse for rare and exceptional plants” that gives “rise to exceptional people who possess the most dangerous and attractive qualities” (BGE 242; WP 898).¹

In order to better understand Nietzsche’s political philosophy, particularly its implications for our conception of “race,” we should interpret *züchten* primarily in the latter sense. A politics of breeding is a *horticultural* and *agricultural* politics whose principal activity is shaping the earth (the material conditions of our social existence) into gardens and fields (social, economic, and political structures) that will *cultivate* the survival and proliferation of preferred forms of human psychology and moral agency.² For this reason, I will translate *züchten* as “cultivation” rather than “breeding.”

The *Genealogy*’s primary purpose is to pose a problem for his own political goal of creating an aristocracy that enhances supposedly higher types. The problem is that all hitherto existing exemplars of his preferred type have only existed as “strokes of luck” — and as products of aristocracies that also produced the opposite, so-called slavish type (A 4). Worse, this type is psychologically defined by its *ressentiment* against the higher, “noble” type. Anticipating Fanon’s development of this point, the slaves are psychological Manicheans: their values, character, and identity are entirely reducible to their rejection of the nobles, who they perceive as absolutely evil. The slave class’s Manichean psychology, combined with its greater numbers, ensures the gradual cultural victory of slave morality, eventually undermining aristocratic values and politics.

So, Nietzsche’s politics of cultivation cannot simply reverse-engineer the psychological types characteristic of historical aristocracies without inviting another slave revolt in morality. He must instead critique traditional aristocracy, drawing on the success and failure of historical ruling classes to develop a new version of the noble, cultivated by a novel, “radical aristocratic” politics. This critical reconception of nobility and aristocracy is the primary task of his later works, so we should not too quickly dismiss Nietzsche’s somewhat superficial enthusiasm for Georg Brandes’s label “radical aristocratism.” In that phrase he recognized the core task of his final works: not a return to traditional aristocracy but its reinvention. While Nietzsche’s preferred political program is anti-

¹ See also BGE 6, 44, 224, 262, 258; TI “Improving” Humanity 4, Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 18, 38; CW Where I Admire. For further discussion of *züchten* as botanical metaphor, see Miyasaki (2022b, IV.8.1).

² Winchester interprets breeding biologically by rejecting the false alternative of breeding as education (2005, p. 270). However, breeding is not primarily about *either* biology or education, but the transformation of the material conditions of life that shape both mind and body.

egalitarian, anti-democratic, and anti-socialist, it is not truly “reactionary” or “conservative” (MIYASAKI, 2022b, I.3). The foundation of conservatism is belief in a natural hierarchy that morally justifies a hierarchical society which assigns social positions and functions by the supposedly innate characteristics of classes, races, and genders, treated as natural kinds. Conservative politics is primarily about authority, the legitimacy of which it ultimately grounds in conformity to nature — a nature sometimes, but not always, identified with the divine.

In contrast, Nietzsche’s radical right-politics takes precisely the opposite view. It begins with the death of God, as well as the death of all traditional representatives of divine authority: nature, the state, the church, and the ego. Unlike traditional aristocracy, radical aristocracy is rooted in the rejection of nature as a foundation for moral value or political legitimacy: “development is not linked to elevation, increase, or strengthening in any necessary way” (BGE 188). Uncultivated nature is “utterly wasteful and indifferent” to human enhancement; the “struggle for existence” tending toward “the disadvantage of the strong, the privileged, the fortunate exceptions. Species do *not* grow in perfection: the weak keep gaining dominance over the strong” (TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 14).³ Therefore, politics must *create* an *artificial* hierarchical order designed not to mirror nature but promote human flourishing. In contrast to the survivalist criteria of animal breeding, the politics of cultivation serves an aesthetic rather than biological aim: to *beautify* rather than preserve humanity, shaping nature to humanity’s ends rather than humanity to nature’s.⁴

Nietzsche’s aristocratism is radical because he seeks to create a social hierarchy that cannot be justified by appeal to its foundation in a natural hierarchy. That is why he defines politics as the creation and legislation of values rather than their discovery, proof, or justification (BGE 211). But this requires an aristocracy that will not be undermined by slave morality, in which the underclass finds a modest kind of happiness. The *Genealogy* ends with this suggestion: if not suffering but lack of purpose creates the slave’s *ressentiment*-psychology (GM III 28), then a successful radical aristocracy must provide its underclass with meaning (MIYASAKI, 2022b, I.3.2).

³ See also BGE 9, 13; A 4.

⁴ This is a reason to be wary of all “perfectionist” interpretations, an ethical tradition tied to the dubious assumptions that there is a way nature intends us to be and that we are obligated to obey its intentions. See, for example, Conway (1996), Conant (2001), Hurka (2007), Katsafanas (2013), and Church (2015). For critiques of the perfectionist reading, see Lemm (2007) and Miyasaki (2022a), I.4.

2. The Manu Caste System as a Radical Aristocratic Politics of the Noble Lie

Nietzsche now turns to the Laws of Manu that established the Hindu caste system, again looking to historical precedent not to replicate but correct it. In contrast to Greco-Roman aristocracies, which are not conscious projects of cultivation but the work of “unconscious artists” (GM II 17), Manu is a *radical* aristocracy, *intentionally* cultivating an order of rank rather than assuming, like the *Genealogy*’s nobles, that rank occurs naturally and they, conveniently, are its pinnacle. A radical aristocracy intentionally creates an artificial hierarchy precisely because it *acknowledges* that higher types do not endure naturally. They appear fortuitously, sporadically, and individually, not as peoples, nations, races, genders, or classes with fixed, essential characteristics (A 4, TI Skirmishes of an Untimely Man 14).

Nietzsche begins his account of Manu with the assertion that every morality is founded in a version of Plato’s “holy lie” (A 55), but contrasts Christianity’s “bad purposes” to Manu’s nobler aim: “it lets the noble classes...stand above the crowd; noble values everywhere, a feeling of perfection, saying yes to life, a triumphant sense of well-being both for its own sake and for the sake of life, —the sun shines over the whole book” (A 56). Here we have a perfect encapsulation of Nietzsche’s politics: values are not moral truths but legislated lies that may become self-justifying *a posteriori* if they successfully create a “feeling of perfection” and well-being “for its own sake” that makes moral justifications superfluous. For Nietzsche, a politics, like everything else, is justified only if it does not *need* justification (MIYASAKI, 2022b, I.2.2).

And how do the Laws of Manu try to achieve such a self-justifying form of social existence, even for those at the bottom of its social hierarchy? By convincing the underclass their suffering has purpose, that their place in the social order is the essential core of their identity, that nature has made them for the purpose of fulfilling their class function. In other words, a *radical* aristocracy protects itself from the side effect of slave morality by consciously promoting the ideology of *traditional* aristocracy: that “Nature, not Manu, separates” individuals into classes, and that “the supreme law of life itself, splitting off into three types is necessary for the preservation of society, to make the higher and highest types possible” (A 57).

Such an ideology seems a feeble bulwark against the virulent rancor Nietzsche attributes to the oppressed. However, as a good — if unknowing — historical materialist, he emphasizes not Manu’s *ideology* but its *material* method of *incorporating* it into individual psychology: “This is the presupposition of every type of mastery, every type of perfection in the art of life. To prepare a book of law

in the style of Manu means to give a people the right to become master one day, to become perfect — to aspire to the highest art of life. *To this end, it must be made unconscious.*” Individuals must internalize ideology so deeply that they automatically assume Manu’s caste system has always existed, that people have always fit its categories, and that no other society is imaginable or desirable: “*caste-order*, the most supreme, domineering law, is just the sanction of a *natural order*, natural lawfulness *par excellence*.”

So, radical aristocracy seeks to create society where “everyone finds his privilege in his own type of being,” achieving modest happiness in fulfilling an assigned social role:

To be a public utility, a wheel, a function — you need to be destined for this by nature: it is *not* society but rather the type of *happiness* that the vast majority of people cannot rise above that makes them intelligent machines. For the mediocre, mediocrity is a happiness, mastery of one thing, specialization as a natural instinct. (A 57)

Individuals do not need to be forced or persuaded to conform to their class position if they fully identify themselves with it, achieving “a perfect automatism of the instinct...the presupposition of every type of mastery, every type of perfection in the art of life.” That is what Nietzsche really means by “*züchten*”: the political production of unconscious instincts that perfectly unite an individual with their existence, creating a sense of happiness, mastery, and perfection — in other words, creating *amor fati* (MIYASAKI, 2022a, I.5.2–3). The challenge of radical aristocratism is to ensure that every caste, not just the ruling one, achieves this sense of well-suitedness to their existence, thus preventing the development of slave psychology and morality. To accomplish this, it must transform *descriptive* concepts of *political* rank into *normative* concepts of *spiritual and moral* rank, encouraging individuals to conflate what they *are* with what they *ought* and *deserve* to be.

Nietzsche’s analysis of the Laws of Manu has, then, established two key differences between traditional and radical aristocracy. First, radical aristocracy does not sincerely believe hierarchy is natural or morally justifiable. It is a *consciously ideological* project of *transforming classes into castes*: groups whose members unconsciously equate their class position with their *essential nature*. Second, to achieve its goal of enhancing higher types, radical aristocracy must make the question of natural foundations or moral justifications superfluous by promoting *amor fati* at every social level, including that of the underclass.

3. The Paradox of the Outcaste as the Origin of Racialist Ideology

Why does Nietzsche think Manu's caste system is more effective than traditional aristocracy? The answer is related to Nietzsche's puzzling conception of "race." He describes caste systems as "the *cultivation* of a particular race and type [*Rasse und Art*]" — in Manu's case, "four races [*Rassen*] at once: a priestly race, a warrior race, a merchant and agricultural race, and finally a servant race, the Sudras" (TI "Improving" Humanity 3). But what does he mean by "race," and how is it different from "type"?

We can get a better sense of his meaning by examining Manu's methods. Nietzsche does not mention its laws governing sexuality or marriage, as we would expect if he reduced race to biology. Instead, he focuses on day-to-day hygienic practices and the fulfilment of basic material needs.⁵ For example, the Chandala are prohibited from eating anything other than garlic and onions, drinking from wells, rivers, or ponds, bathing, assistance in childbirth, cleaning clothes or wearing new ones, and using unbroken pots. As Nietzsche notes, such measures are more likely to produce death and disease than successfully cultivate a caste with its own "perfection in the art of life" to serve as "a public utility, a wheel, a function" (A 57).⁶

So, neither the functions of Manu's "races" (priest, warrior, merchant or farmer, servant) nor its methods of cultivating them (the "sanitary policing" of diet and hygiene) are primarily biological. As R. J. Hollingdale and, more recently, Gerd Schank have argued, Nietzsche primarily uses "race" to mean "peoples living for a longer time in a specific environment and developing a character of their own in such environments" (HOLLINGDALE, 1965, p. 224; SCHANK, 2003, p. 238) — as for example, when he describes "how race arises": "character is the result of an environment, a firmly established role by virtue of which certain facts are repeatedly emphasized and strengthened...in the long run" (NF 1884, 25[462]; KSA 11/136). So, rather than reduce race to the psychological, he expands the concept of peoples to include the overlap of biology and psychology. As Schank explains, he treats "physiology ('Physiologie') as the link between environment ('Umgebung') and the 'character' of a people: the 'external' environmental conditions influence the physiological constitution of people, and the physiological condition of the

⁵ This is consistent with Nietzsche's focus on diet and hygiene in all discussions of morality in his later works, including his favorable account of Buddhism's "hygienic measures" against poor "physiological conditions" that successfully "free the soul of" *ressentiment* (A 20).

⁶ As I write this, nearly a year into Israel's devastating military response to the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, Palestinians in Gaza have been reduced to drinking from puddles to survive, and a Palestinian baby has contracted the region's first case of polio in a quarter-century.

people finds its expression in cultural phenomenon as religion, morals, and so on” (2003, p. 239).

Jacqueline Scott makes a similar case (2003, p. 61), convincingly arguing that Nietzsche anticipates contemporary philosophers of race who insist on its reality as social-constructed, against eliminativists like Kwame Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack who would dispense with the concept altogether (SCOTT, 2006, p. 152; APPIAH, 1995; ZACH, 1995). She compares his view to Lucius Outlaw and Charles Mills, who insist race cannot be eliminated, given its significant role in the production of cultural meaning (OUTLAW, 1996; MILLS, 1998). However, Nietzsche’s approach may be closer to Michael O. Hardimon’s “minimalist biological” view that races are non-universal, non-essential groups defined by shared visible features, ancestry, and geographical origins. Like Hardimon (2017), Nietzsche’s concept of race is a “*deflationary biological realism...that repudiates the idea that...race is a fundamental biological reality or robust biological kind*” but “acknowledges the limited biological significance of minimalist race” (p. 158).

Now that we have a better understanding of Nietzsche’s concept of race, we face a new complication. This usage cannot be directly applied to his account of the Chandala, since the Chandala are not, after all, one of the four races the laws of Manu intend to cultivate. They fall *outside* of the caste system, “the unbred people, the human hodgepodge.” In fact, for Nietzsche, their existence and the brutality of their treatment prove Manu has *failed*. Manu’s promise “to give a people the right to become master one day, to become perfect — to aspire to the highest art of life” is betrayed by this superfluous social remainder that it cannot incorporate, perfect, or utilize. Like Christianity, Manu resorts to the same morality of “domestication” (*zähmen*) that Nietzsche has condemned in the immediately preceding section: “the only way it was able to render these people harmless, to make them weak, was to make them sick” (TI “Improving” Humanity 3).⁷ Both the existence of an *outcaste* and the need for such desperate measures against it refute Manu’s claim to be “the sanction of a natural order” (A 57).

In the context of Manu’s failure to produce only castes, we can better understand how — despite that failure — it improves upon the methods of traditional aristocracy. Nietzsche’s initial designation of castes as both “types” and “races” indicates Manu’s central innovation: the attempt to transform aristocracy’s social “types” defined by politically-imposed, contingent practices into radical aristocracy’s “races”: internalized, less-variable character types that resemble natural kinds. Returning to the *Genealogy*, we see that traditional aristocracies already made casual, accidental use of this strategy: “the concept of

⁷ On the contrast between breeding and domestication, see Miyasaki (2014).

political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of psychological superiority” (GM I 6). For example, the priestly-aristocratic class’s conception of “purity” was originally entirely “unsymbolic,” referring to their bathing, dietary, and sexual habits. However, the success of this transformation of descriptive into normative superiority is endangered by the obvious arbitrariness of class-practices in the face of our shared humanity. After all, anyone has the ability, if not the opportunity, to engage in such mundane practices, so why would they reflect an essentially distinct class-nature?

To anticipate Fanon: the caste system’s solution is to more firmly anchor individuals’ social positions in innate, visible, physiological differences, such as those of race and gender, creating the illusion of a non-arbitrary link between nature and class. Fanon calls this the “epidermalization” of inferiority (2008, p. xv). Although Nietzsche does not endorse this strategy, it is an inevitable danger of radical aristocracy’s strategic use of the noble lie of natural hierarchy, one he directly anticipates. Speculating about the origins of moral language, he suggests that “common” may have originally meant “dark-skinned,” while “aristocracy” may have originally designated a “blond person” (GM I 5). Because its morality “grows out of a triumphant saying ‘yes’ to itself,” the noble class is entirely untroubled by conscience, identifying itself as “the truthful,” the one “who has reality.” So the nobles inevitably attribute their good fortune to natural superiority, interpreting their every physical characteristic — no matter how superficial — as its verification.

We should worry, then, that in any society with a visible marginalized group, Nietzsche’s reconceived radical form of aristocracy will inevitably transform the ruling class’s casual racism into something even more systematic and dangerous than Manu’s caste system: a *racialized caste system* that cultivates not just racist attitudes, habits, and behaviors but the *racist* as a psychological type — a form of moral agency grounded in the myth of racial superiority, defining and evaluating itself and others by essentialist racial categories.⁸

⁸ So, although Bernasconi (2017) is mistaken to think Nietzsche’s politics is an *intentional* project of “racialized breeding,” we should still worry it may be an unintentional one. For the same reasons, although it is beyond the scope of this paper, radical aristocracy is also likely to produce a *gendered* caste system and the *sexist* as psychological type.

4. Fanon's Humanist Politics of Cultivation

I have suggested that Nietzsche's radical aristocratic politics of cultivation risks unintentionally promoting systemic racism and sexism. Is this a reason to reject Nietzsche's politics of cultivation, or does it only implicate his aristocratism? I will now turn to Frantz Fanon's work to refine this objection in two ways. First, Fanon's analysis of colonizer and colonized as "species" (*espèces*) produced by a "compartmentalized" society will demonstrate that the "master," not the "slave," originates *ressentiment*-psychology and morality, so Nietzsche's radical aristocracy would not only generate systemic racism but also fail in its primary purpose of preventing the rise of slave morality. Second, Fanon's analysis of the colonists' Manichean morality will reveal that the racist as a psychological type is the product of social hierarchy, so it is Nietzsche's aristocratism, not his metapolitics of cultivation, that is to blame.

Although Nietzsche's influence on Fanon is generally acknowledged, the depth of that influence is underappreciated.⁹ *Black Skin, White Masks* is framed, in its introduction and final chapter, by two quotations attributed to Nietzsche. The first — a *misattribution* — appears in a discussion of racism's enduring psychological harm. Fanon affirms that man's tragedy is "that he was once a child" but immediately qualifies it: "nevertheless...the fate of the neurotic lies in his own hands" — suggesting he preserves hope for an individual, moral, or clinical resolution to these political harms (FANON, 2008, p. xiv). As Lewis R. Gordon notes, Fanon apparently found this quotation in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, but she attributes it to Descartes (GORDON, 2015, p. 30). Nevertheless, Fanon's *intention* to open and close his first major work by aligning himself with Nietzsche is a clear sign of Nietzsche's importance to his project.

The second quotation appears in the final chapter, after Fanon questions the relevance of Hegel's dialectic of lord and bondsman to anti-Black racism. Because a Black individual under French rule must doubt "whether the white man considers him consciousness in-itself-for-itself," the Hegelian dialectic is frozen, leading to neither mutual recognition nor full-scale conflict (FANON, 2008, p. 197). It is in this context of withheld recognition that Fanon turns to Nietzsche's opposition of active and reactive values, tempering the introduction's optimism:

⁹ Fanon's personal library contains only three works by Nietzsche. However, in addition to *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Untimely Meditations*, and a marked copy of the *Genealogy of Morality*, he owned a heavily-annotated biography of Nietzsche and Karl Jasper's *Nietzsche and Christianity* (FANON, 2018, pp. 746–747, 724, 739, 724). He also references Nietzsche in annotations written in other books (pp. 725–726, 731).

We said in our introduction that man is an *affirmation*. We shall never stop repeating that. *Yes to life. Yes to love. Yes to generosity.* But man is also a *negation*. *No to man's contempt. No to the indignity of man. To the exploitation of man. To the massacre of what is most human in man: freedom.* Man's behavior is not only reactional. And there is always resentment in *reaction*. Nietzsche had already said it in *The Will to Power*. To induce [*amener*] man to be *actional*, by maintaining in his circularity the respect of the fundamental values that make the world human [*font un monde humain*], that is the task of utmost urgency [*la première urgence*] for he who, after careful reflection, prepares to act. (FANON, 2008, p. 197, 2014, p. 214)

In echoing Nietzsche's description of his "formula for my happiness: a yes, a no, a straight line, a *goal*..." (TI Arrows and Epigrams 44) while announcing a completely contrary goal, Fanon is clearly rejecting Nietzsche's *normative political program*. But he is also signaling support for Nietzsche's *descriptive metapolitics* in three ways. First, he is suggesting that overcoming racism requires becoming actional rather than reactional, endorsing Nietzsche's view that the "real reaction" is "that of action," in contrast to the "slaves' revolt in morality" (GM I 10). The ultimate cure for the colonized individual's reactive psychology is political and material, not moral or clinical: "my objective will be to enable him to choose action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict, i.e., the social structure" (FANON, 2008, p. 80).

Second, like Nietzsche, Fanon identifies becoming actional with the creation of affirmative values, in contrast to slave morality, whose purported "yes" is really a "no" to another's morality (GM I 10). By emphasizing that saying "no" to contempt, indignity, exploitation, and massacre is one and the same as saying "yes" to life, love, and generosity, Fanon is introducing an implied *internal critique* of Nietzsche's pretense that his radical aristocratic politics can truly affirm life without also saying "no" to contempt, indignity, exploitation, and massacre.

Finally, Fanon says we must lead (*amener*) "man to be actional." So, we should avoid a voluntarist or individualistic interpretation of the introduction's claim that "the neurotic's fate is in his own hands." Overcoming the psychological harms of racism and becoming actional is not primarily a task for medicine, morality, or education. It is a *collective* task that requires the individual's "maintaining in his circularity the respect of the fundamental values that make for a humane world [*font un monde humain*]." We must create social relationships that concretely embody and preserve the value of all members of humanity. Fanon is announcing a politics that transforms concrete social relations in order to create active, affirmative forms of psychology in all, rather than in one class. It is politics

as “the creation of new men” — a Nietzschean politics of cultivation, but of a distinctly *humanist* variety (FANON, 2004, p. 2).¹⁰

Fanon develops this critical Nietzschean politics in *The Wretched of the Earth*, particularly its opening chapter “On Violence.” Despite the notoriety of that chapter, there has been surprisingly little attention to how closely its analysis of colonial society resembles Nietzsche’s *Genealogy* in content and method. Although Fanon does not explicitly acknowledge the debt, the book’s first page announces it, defining colonial society as the political production of colonizer and colonized as psychological “species” (*espèces*) (FANON, 2004, p. 1; 2002, p. 39). Fanon introduces the word in scare quotes, suggesting that, as in Nietzsche’s use of “race” and “breeding,” it should not be understood too narrowly. This ironic framing also resonates with Nietzsche’s claim that caste systems have the ideological function of promoting the idea of natural hierarchy not sincerely but as a noble lie. Fanon later drops the quotation marks, suggesting — again, as in Nietzsche — that it is not *merely* metaphor. It reflects the real overlap of the human and animal, the psychological and biological, and so resembles Nietzsche’s historical materialist view that political, psychological, and moral identities are ultimately the products of physiological and material conditions of life.

Historical materialist-method is a second point of continuity between Nietzsche’s *Genealogy* and Fanon’s analysis of colonialism. Fanon introduces decolonization as “the substitution of one ‘species’ of mankind by another,” a process through which “the last shall be first” (FANON, 2004, p. 1). As we will see, this ironically *Christian* framing aptly foreshadows Fanon’s critique of Nietzsche’s aristocratism, but it also invites misunderstanding. Decolonization does not invert the social positions of these two “species” but replaces both. As we have seen, it is “truly the creation of new men” (FANON, 2004, p. 2). It is “a historical process” that “cannot be accomplished by the wave of a magic wand, a natural cataclysm, or a gentleman’s agreement,” precisely because it is primarily a material process and thus requires the “total upheaval” of society.

This brings us to a final point of continuity. Fanon, like Nietzsche, is a *political realist*, a theorist of a *politics of power*.¹¹ The conflict of social classes is

¹⁰ Another important attempt to fuse Nietzsche, humanism, and socialism can be found in the work of Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense: “If you believe that man is the ultimate being, then you will act according to your belief. Your attitude and behavior toward man is a kind of religion in itself, with high standards of responsibility” ([1973] 2009, p. 178). For an excellent overview of Nietzsche’s influence on African-American political thought — including Hubert Harrison, Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Wright, Huey P. Newton, and Cornel West, see Ratner-Rosenhagen (2015).

¹¹ On Nietzsche’s political realism, see Miyasaki (2022b), I.2. Fanon’s critical appropriation of Nietzsche’s power-politics anticipates both Martin Luther King Jr. and Huey P. Newton. King argues

primarily grounded in their material inequality, not in the differing characters of their “noble” or “slavish” moralities. If there is any “dialectic” in their relationship, it is not solved by Hegelian recognition, which for both Nietzsche and Fanon presupposes rather than enables power.¹² Fanon announces this in the book’s opening pages, unapologetically asserting that “decolonization is always a violent event” and “an agenda for total disorder.” In keeping with Nietzsche’s historical materialist politics of cultivation, he depicts individuals and classes not as agents but products of conflict. The primary agent of politics is the social order, more precisely, the conflicting *forces* that create the social order, the relationships of material and economic power that produce, transform, and sometimes destroy individuals and peoples.

In Fanon’s description, “decolonization is the encounter between two congenitally antagonistic *forces* that in fact owe their singularity to the kind of reification [*substantification*] secreted and nurtured by the colonial situation” (FANON, 2004, p. 2, emphasis mine). Social conflict does not begin for moral reasons but “because it is desired, clamored for, and demanded.” This “need for change” is not the expression of the Hegelian desire for recognition as self-consciousness but is embedded in colonial society’s very conditions of life: it “exists in a raw, repressed, and reckless state in the lives and consciousness of colonized men and women” (FANON, 2004, p. 1).

So, in contrast to Hegel’s lord and bondsman, the colonist and colonized are no more the principal players in their drama than Nietzsche’s “noble” and “slave” or Manu’s caste and outcaste. Just as the nobles’ or slaves’ characters are the necessary after-effects of their happiness or misery, so too colonist and colonized as types are something their *situation* “secretes” and (in a metaphor recalling Nietzsche’s horticultural metaphor) “nourishes” or “feeds” [*alimente*] (FANON, 2002, p. 40). Like Nietzsche’s genealogy of Christian morality, Fanon’s genealogy of colonialism is not an ethics but a historical materialist politics: the “singularity” of these colonial “species” is merely the residue of their political situations, in turn

Nietzsche mistakenly “identified...power with a denial of love,” but concludes “there is nothing essentially wrong with power. The problem is that...power is unequally distributed” (1968, p. 37–38). According to Newton, Nietzsche’s view that “the will to power is the basic drive of man” inspired the Black Panther slogan “All Power to the People,” but he adds, “What we seek...is not power over people, but the power to control our own destiny” ([1971] 2002, p. 227). Christa Davis Acampora has also suggested that Frederick Douglass shares Nietzsche’s positive conception of the agonistic aspect of power (2006, p. 176).

¹² Many scholars mistake Fanon’s rejection of Hegel’s dialectical history for a rejection of determinism rather than idealism — and so underestimate the depth of Fanon’s historical materialism. See, for example, Ciccariello-Maher (2017, p. 53).

the work not of moralities or political ideologies but of the singular historical and material conditions that shaped them.

5. The Colony's Racialized Caste System as Solution to the Paradox of the Outcaste

Now that we have identified their core continuities, we can turn to Fanon's critical reconstruction of Nietzsche's analysis, which allows him to apply Nietzschean metapolitical means to the anti-Nietzschean political end of socialist revolution. We saw that Nietzsche admires the aim of the Manu caste system, but thinks it fails in that aim by producing, beyond its intended four "races," the side-effect of the Chandala class as an *outcaste*. If caste is the incorporation of the myth of natural classes, then the outcaste appears as anti-natural, the intrusion of an outside to nature that somehow retains a permanent, unofficial place in Manu's supposedly perfect society. This residue — or in Fanon's language, "secretion" — that cannot be synthesized betrays the fact that Manu's castes are cultivations not natural kinds, evidence Manu suppresses by imposing a brutal — and slavish — morality of domestication that weakens, sickens, and destroys the Chandala's members.

This is also exactly how Fanon describes the colonists' perspective toward the colonized. They are not seen as a true "species" with a positive if inferior social position — "a public utility, a wheel, a function" (A 57) — but as an anti-species that must be excluded, suppressed, and weakened: "Colonized society is not merely portrayed as a society without values.... The 'native' is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values. He is, dare we say it, the enemy of values. In other words, absolute evil" (FANON, 2004, p. 6).

As in Manu's caste system, colonial society conditions each class's socially-formed psychological characteristics into fixed types, making them appear to be natural kinds. But in the colony's *racialized* caste system, these contingent forms of psychology are also tied to politically-enforced class status and socially-constructed racial categorizations in a paradoxical way. The colonized are perceived not merely as inferior but as evil or, in the language of the politics of cultivation, not merely as lower types but as *non*-types or *anti*-types, just as the Chandala were seen not as a race but as the "unbred" (TI "Improving" Humanity 3). So, the colonized are not so much "reified" as dissolved or nihilated, reduced not merely to less than human but to less than a thing.

Fanon makes a similar point about anti-Black racism: "the black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of a white man," who reduces him to a "zone of nonbeing" in which "the image of one's body is solely negating" (FANON, 2008, p.

90, xii).¹³ As in Black experience of the white gaze, in the eyes of the colonizer the colonized feel themselves “explode” into “fragments”: “the white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am fixed.... I see in this white gaze that it’s the arrival not of a new man, but a new type [*type*] of man, a new kind [*genre*]” (FANON, 2008, p. 89, 95, translation mine).¹⁴ This new kind — note, not an *espèce* — is precisely the anti-species, a domesticated rather than cultivated, negatively rather than positively-defined class that no longer exists primarily to serve a subordinate but positive social and economic function (as in the institution of slavery), but the cultural function of propping up the illusion of the ruling class’s psychological, spiritual, and moral superiority. This is our first clue that colonialism’s production of a rationalized outcaste is not, as in Nietzsche’s interpretation of Manu’s Chandala, the accidental side-effect of failure but an intentional strategy — as well as our first clue that the master caste had a “slavish” psychology all along.

But colonialism’s strategic reduction of the colonized to nonbeing poses a potential problem. Recall that aristocratic ideology pretends the good and the natural are continuous. Consequently, evil cannot appear as a positive reality; it can only be conceived as an absence or unrealized potential. So the colonized present the same paradox as the Chandala: how can a successful aristocracy consistently admit the existence of a “species” that is essentially evil, the absolute absence and negation of value — that is to say, the existence of evil as actuality not imperfect potentiality, the existence of anti-nature within a supposedly natural hierarchy? As we saw in Manu’s caste system, to acknowledge this contradiction in colonialism would undermine the holy lie on which its radical aristocracy depends. If the colonized are either anti-natural but part of colonized society or natural but excluded by colonized society, then colonial hierarchy is not only artificial, an imperfect reflection of a natural and moral order, but an anti-natural attempt to create an order incompatible with nature.¹⁵

¹³ Elyse MacLeod notes that this “fixation” has an important temporal dimension, reducing a type to anti-type by restricting positive existence to the past, “my race and my ancestors” (2022, p. 507). For MacLeod, this denial of recognition still permits an ethics that Al-Saji describes as “the creative capacity of the past to be *reconfigured*” and “makes room for different ways of living” (2018, p. 349), a moral emphasis that seems incompatible with Fanon’s view that decolonization is “an agenda for total disorder” (FANON, 2004, p. 2).

¹⁴ On the dual appearance of Blackness as presence and absence, see Lewis R. Gordon (1995, III.14).

¹⁵ This is arguably why religion can play a critical as well as a placating role in oppressive societies. The contrasting concept of a divine order that integrates all of nature highlights the antinatural contradictions of artificial social hierarchies. For example, Angela Y. Davis argues that although “there was a calculated effort on the part of white, slave-owning society to create a special kind of religion that would serve their interests,” there can still be “a positive function of religion because its very nature is to satisfy very urgent needs of people who are oppressed” ([1970] 2010, p. 61). So, against Nietzsche’s focus on moralities’ *origins*, Davis evaluates them by *aims*: whether they remain “wish-dreams” or “create that eternity of bliss for human society here in the world.”

In order to prevent recognition of this contradiction, colonial society develops a more effective form of the politics of cultivation than we saw in Manu, securing the noble lie of natural hierarchy more deeply by anchoring class status in observable, innate phenotypical characteristics that create the illusion of a necessarily biological link between social status and heredity. In other words, it takes the general strategy of *cultural racism* that Fanon analyzed in *Black Skin, White Masks* — the perception of non-whiteness as negativity and absence — and systematizes it into an explicitly *political* identity. Colonialization thus perfects aristocratic ideology by *fusing race and class* together in the *concept of caste*. Caste is visibly marked in the body, making it appear as essential nature, and so seemingly verifies membership in a biological, economic, and political human category identified as intrinsically inferior.

So, Fanon has shown us that colonialization develops Nietzschean radical aristocracy beyond Manu's production of caste as *internalized, regimented* class identity into caste as *essentialized, racialized* class identity, transforming aristocracy from a politics of cultivation into a slavish morality of domestication — a politics that creates not an ordered rank of positive types but a Manichean war of species against anti-species. In doing so, he has also identified a fundamental contradiction in Nietzsche's aristocratism. If aristocracies develop into caste systems, caste systems into racialized caste systems, and racialized caste systems into dual systems of noble morality for the colonizer and slave morality for the colonized, then *slave psychology and morality must have pre-existed the political underclass*.

As we will see in the next section, this is Fanon's most crucial critical insight: the very structure of slave psychology as *inverted Manichean ressentiment* proves it could only have been produced by a ruling class already characterized by *ressentiment*-psychology and morality. Nietzsche's so-called nobles can accidentally produce the slavish psychological type only because the political masters were already psychologically slaves. As Hedwig Dohm astutely observed about Nietzsche: "anyone who wants slaves is not a master" (2021, p 131).¹⁶ It is no accident that traditional aristocracy, traditional caste systems, and colonial societies all fail in the same way, producing a negatively-defined outcaste characterized by a slavish form of psychology. They share the same common denominator: a materially unequal, socially hierarchical, aristocratic society.

¹⁶ Hedwig Dohm was a contemporary of Nietzsche and German feminist whose 1894 novel *Become Who You Are!* (DOHM, 2006) drew both sympathetically and critically on Nietzsche's thought.

6. The Slavish Master: Colonial Compartmentalization as Origin of *Ressentiment*-Morality

We will now turn to Fanon's central criticism of Nietzsche: slaves don't create slave morality, aristocracies do. Social and material inequality is a political machine for manufacturing slavishness in *both* master and slave. If so, Fanon's commitment to socialism is not accidental to his commitment to overcoming the inferiority-complexes created by the colony's racialized caste system: against Nietzsche's view, the only way to end *ressentiment*-psychology is by abolishing, not radicalizing, aristocracy.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon announced that the "task of utmost urgency" is to help victims of racism become truly affirmative, grounding their "no" to indignity, exploitation, and massacre in a primary "yes" to life, love, and generosity, enabling them to move from "reactional" to "actional" (FANON, 2008, p. 197). That task, in turn, requires understanding how they became reactional. Fanon answers bluntly in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "It is the colonist who has fabricated [*fait*] and continues to fabricate the colonized subject. The colonist derives his validity [*verité*], i.e., his wealth, from the colonial system" (FANON, 2004, p. 2; 2002, p. 40).

If the colonized are a species fabricated by the colonial politics of cultivation then, counter to Nietzsche's account, the underclass does not invent its reactional *ressentiment*-psychology, the ruling class does.¹⁷ The colonists deny their own *ressentiment*, projecting it onto and eventually infecting the colonized with it.¹⁸ This is, of course, the exact opposite of Nietzsche's story, in which the slave develops *ressentiment*-psychology, and a priestly-aristocratic subcaste transforms it into an

¹⁷ José A. Haro rightly points out that, unlike Nietzsche's masters, the colonists explicitly share the slavish Christian morality they impose on the colonized, arguing, "The first upshot of colonial *ressentiment* is that the reactions of the colonized should call attention to the structure engendering such reactions. It is very easy to lose sight of the underlying foundation and to focus on particular instances or agents" (2019, pp. 29, 33). However, rather than seeing this as a point of contrast, we should apply the same structural emphasis to Nietzsche's *Genealogy*.

¹⁸ As in European colonialism, in American slavery the continuity of master and slave morality is undeniable. Compare W. E. B. Du Bois: "Nothing suited [the slave's] condition then better than the doctrines of passive submission embodied in the newly learned Christianity. Slave masters early realized this, and cheerfully aided religious propaganda within certain bounds. The long system of repression and degradation of the Negro tended to emphasize the elements in his character which made him a valuable chattel: courtesy became humility, moral strength degenerated into submission, and the exquisite naïve appreciation of the beautiful become an infinite capacity for dumb suffering" ([1903] 1999, p. 125).

inversion of noble morality which the underclass adopts, initiating a “slave’s revolt in morality” that eventually infects and weakens the nobility.¹⁹

But if the colonist fabricates the colonized, what fabricates the colonist? In this respect, Fanon is more consistently historical materialist than Nietzsche, who recognizes slave morality, slave psychology, and aristocratic political orders all have a material history and origin, yet treats the noble as almost *ahistorical* and *causa sui*. The material conditions that produce the nobles are only vaguely implied by their character and values. They are strong, healthy, happy, and free of guilty conscience. They enjoy physical activity, conquest, and warfare. In other words: they are the products of good fortune, of lives untroubled by significant failures or privations such as hunger, poverty, disease, weakness, or conquest. The material conditions of their production as a psychological type are entirely negatively-defined. They are also, quite frankly, *fanciful*.

Where, after all, in human history — particularly *early* human history — do we find a people prone to warfare, conquest, and expansion who miraculously, over the course of many generations, avoid any large-scale environmental misfortune, social crisis, or political defeat? Where is the difference between fortunate or unfortunate, conquering or conquered a difference not of time, place, and degree but *kind*? It is, after all, a central claim of Nietzsche’s politics that human types are cultivated on a time-scale of centuries. The individual is not the product of recent history but “the entire line of humanity up through himself.” Consequently, “the beauty of a race or family, the grace and goodness in all its gestures, have been worked on: beauty, like genius, is the final result of the accumulated labour of generations” (TI Skirmishes 33, 47). Nietzsche’s characterization of a self-created, ahistorical noble people is utterly incompatible with his historical materialist, genealogical method — a Quixotic myth belonging in romantic literature, a schoolboy’s fantasy of aristocratic adventure, bravery, and heroism.

While Nietzsche obscures this failure to offer a genealogy of noble psychology by focusing our attention entirely on the production of the slave’s psychology, Fanon remedies this by focusing attention on the production of the colonist as much as the colonized. Both originate in the geographically and economically “compartmentalized” character of “a world divided in two...inhabited by different species (*espèces*)” (FANON, 2004, p. 3). And while Nietzsche deemphasizes aristocracy’s specifically material divisions because they

¹⁹ Some scholars (ANDERSON, 2011; REGINSTER, 2013; SNELSON, 2017) think the priestly-aristocratic class that creates slave morality possesses a noble psychology; others argue their declining power in relation to the knightly-aristocratic class causes them to develop a slavish psychology (LOEB, 2018). None recognize, as Fanon will do, the tell-tale signs of *ressentiment* in the values of the aristocratic class as a whole, not just the priestly sub-caste.

call attention to the ruling class's active role in producing the slave's envy, Fanon counters his misdirection by stressing that the colonists intentionally impose and violently uphold material and social compartmentalization:

The dividing line, the border, is represented by the barracks and the police station.... The official, legitimate agent, the spokesperson for the colonizer and the regime of repression is the police officer or the soldier. In capitalist societies, education, whether secular or religious, the teaching of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary integrity of works decorated after fifty years of loyal and faithful service, the fostering of love for harmony and wisdom, those aesthetic forms of respect for the status quo, instill in the exploited a mood of submission and inhibition which considerably eases the task of the agents of law and order. (FANON, 2004, pp. 3-4)

Fanon is not merely filling a lacuna in Nietzsche's genealogy but restoring its historical materialist character: the creation of the colonist is, after all, historically and causally prior to that of the colonized, and the *material* cause of colonial compartmentalization — the violent imposition of a political *geography*, an internal border that creates two incompatible social orders within a single nation — is historically and causally prior to its ideological defense, the inculcation of "moral reflexes" that promote a "mood of submission and inhibition." Fanon underlines this priority, reminding us that even after caste-ideology develops, compartmentalization must still be upheld materially: "the proximity and frequent, direct intervention by the police and the military ensure the colonized are kept under close scrutiny, and contained by rifle butts and napalm."

7. The Function of the Racialized Outcaste in the Colonist's *Ressentiment*-Morality

Fanon goes far beyond Nietzsche's emphasis on the *political* origin of psychology, stressing *material environment* as the ultimate foundation of the political order: a complete genealogy of morality ends not in politics but in a genealogy of politics. Moralities are fabricated by psychologies which are the products of political orders, but political orders, in turn, are fabricated by their material, environmental, and economic conditions — the soil and hothouse of horticultural cultivation. So, not only is the colony geographically compartmentalized by an internal border, the very materials from which it is constructed reinforce and secure that division:

The "native" sector is not complementary to the European sector. The two confront each other, but not in the service of a higher unity. Governed by a purely Aristotelian logic, they follow the dictates of mutual exclusion. There

is no conciliation possible, one of them is superfluous. The colonist's sector is a sector built to last, all stone and steel.... The colonized's sector, or at least the "native" quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people. (FANON, 2004, p. 4)

As in Nietzsche's account of the Chandala under Manu, the colonized do not serve a positive function within the social whole; the colonial sector is "not complementary" but a place of "exclusion," its inhabitants tamed, controlled, and weakened, forced to acquiesce to their outcaste status: "the colonized always remains a foreigner" (FANON, 2004, p. 5).

Fanon focuses not on the colony's morality, ideology, and codes but instead on their material reinforcement. While Nietzsche emphasizes Manu's dangerous injunctions upon the Chandala, Fanon points to a world materially constructed for the purpose of depriving the underclass of alternatives to unhealthy living conditions like those Manu imposes. There is no need to prohibit drinking fresh water where none is to be found, no need to prohibit the abjectly poor from buying new clothes or using new goods. And in contrast to Nietzsche's suggestion that Manu's production of an outcaste proves its failure, Fanon tells us this outcome is no accident. It was *intended*, materially inscribed from the beginning into the very infrastructure of colonial society. The colonized sector does not accidentally become a place of misery, death, and disease. If the colonist's sector was built to last, the colonized sector was built *not* to last.²⁰

So, in contrast to Manu, which succeeds in cultivating four other castes, the colony only intends to cultivate one true caste. Consequently, its aim cannot be, as Manu's supposedly was, to achieve "perfection" and "mastery" in the colonists' "art of life." Instead, its purpose is to create the *illusion* of nobility among the colonists through the manufactured contrast of the colonized as ignoble, unbred, and utterly evil. As Fanon stresses: "it is the racist who creates the inferiorized" (FANON, 2008, p. 73). The colonized as anti-species is fabricated for the purpose of supporting the colonist's aristocratic ideology that they are psychologically and morally, not just politically, superior.

Against Nietzsche's claim that noble psychology originates in a barbaric, pre-moral people's conscience-free pursuit of conquest, Fanon suggests that material conquest instead results in a ruling class characterized by *ressentiment*-psychology and *reactional* morality. For Nietzsche's noble, the slave's "badness" is supposedly conceived only as "an afterthought, an aside, a complementary colour." But to the colonist the colonized represents the "negation of

²⁰ Again, as I write this, the Israeli military is systematically destroying infrastructure in the West Bank, including nearly 70% of the city of Jenin's streets.

values...absolute evil,” an evaluation clearly rooted, like the slave’s, in “the cauldron of unassuaged hatred” (GM I 11). And just as Nietzsche’s slave treats the nobles’ *morality* as the source of their evil, to the colonist “the customs of the colonized, their traditions, their myths, especially their myths, are the very mark of [their] indigence and innate depravity” (FANON, 2004, p. 7).

Most important, just as Nietzsche’s slaves ground their values in a reactionary “‘no’ on principle to everything that is ‘outside,’ ‘other,’ ‘non-self,’” a “reversal of the evaluating glance,” an “essential orientation to the outside instead of back onto itself,” the colonist’s morality and self-worth is grounded in its rejection of the colonized: “The singularity of the colonial context lies in the fact that economic reality, inequality, and enormous disparities in lifestyles never manage to mask the human reality.... The serf is essentially different from the knight, but a reference to divine right is needed to justify this difference in status” (FANON, 2004, p. 5).

In other words, material conquest does not produce Nietzsche’s mythical, amoral, and conscienceless noble; it produces a *moralistic* form of *status insecurity*: “The colonized man is an envious man. The colonist is aware of this as he catches the furtive glance and, constantly on his guard, realizes bitterly that: ‘They want to talk our place’” (FANON, 2004, p. 5). Material inequality produces in the colonists a need to prove *to the colonized* their *spiritual* superiority, thus indirectly convincing *themselves* that they *merit* their *political* superiority. Recall Fanon’s claim that “the colonist derives his validity [*verité*], i.e., his wealth, from the colonial system” (FANON, 2004, p. 2; 2002, p. 40). It is precisely this conflation of validity or truth with material superiority that indicates ideology. Like Nietzsche’s slave, the colonists need “to construct their happiness artificially by looking at their enemies... by talking themselves into it, in some cases by *lying themselves into it*.” And like Nietzsche’s slave, they do so by inventing an evil that they can pretend they choose to avoid, in order to “construe...their particular mode of existence as an accomplishment” (GM I 13).

In short, the colonists have a psychological need to justify Nietzsche’s unexplained, magical transubstantiation through which “the concept of political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of psychological superiority” (GM I 6). And by exposing how the colonists’ morality betrays a slavish psychological need to comparatively verify their psychological superiority — the need for an inferior to prove superiority — Fanon raises the question of why Nietzsche’s nobles, and any other aristocratic ruling class, would not also share the same slavish need. After all, every ruling class intentionally imposes and violently upholds its social status through the same active preservation of the *material structure* of aristocratic society, a continual effort that betrays a psychological need for the inferiors to whom they feign indifference and contempt.

Although Nietzsche insists noble morality originates in the “pathos of nobility and distance...the continuing and predominant feeling of complete and fundamentally superiority of a higher ruling kind in relation to a lower kind,” if the nobles’ belief in their own goodness depends on a *feeling* — psychologically reinforced assurance — of distance, then it is fundamentally comparative. Like slavish morality, it is a “reversal of the evaluative glance,” not an “an afterthought, an aside, a contrasting colour.” As a *need to compare* oneself, the pathos of distance betrays a need for another’s validation.²¹

Where, after all, does the nobles’ delight in “war, adventure, hunting, dancing, jousting” (GM I 7) come from, if not from a desire for competition, a need to *prove* their superiority? Nietzsche incoherently calls them “semi-animals...happily adapted to wilderness, war, the wandering life and adventure” (GM II 16). But this attraction to *adventure* is a uniquely human desire for victory, glory, and fame. And since there is no glory without *merit*, this betrays their distinctly *moralistic* need to, like the slaves, “construe...their particular mode of existence as an accomplishment” (GM I 13). Nietzsche may object that the nobles in fact accomplish something, while the slaves merely “construe weakness itself as freedom.” But the question is not whether they accomplish something, but whether they *need recognition* for it — whether their self-affirmation depends on comparison to an inferior.

Consider, too, Nietzsche’s claim that the nobles develop the concept of “bad” from “plain,” “common,” or “simple” (GM I 4). This would be consistent with noble evaluation only if remained a *descriptive* term that, like the priestly caste’s original concepts of “pure” and “impure,” we “should be wary of taking...too far or even symbolically (GM I 6). However, as we have seen, “the concept of political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of psychological superiority.” Why would that transformation be inevitable unless noble psychology *depends on* moral comparison? Precisely because these concepts become normative concepts of psychological superiority, they necessarily also become moral in the slavish sense, designating what one *deserves* rather than what one is, and so what others are *obliged* to do. But to demand from others what one deserves — recognition and treatment appropriate to one’s status, privilege, and rights — is precisely to psychologically depend on them to verify one’s self-affirmation. Nietzschean masters are, just like Fanon’s colonists, psychologically slaves.

²¹ On the noble “pathos of distance” as slavish evaluation, see Miyasaki (2022b, IV.8.2).

Conclusion

Nietzsche's critical analysis of *ressentiment*-psychology ends with a paradoxically moralistic condemnation of the slave class for originating that psychology and its values. In his parable of little lambs and birds of prey, he complains it is absurd "to ask strength not to express itself as strength" (GM I 13), but says nothing about the passage's equally absurd implication that weakness could express itself as anything but weakness — or his own hope that aristocracies could produce anything but *ressentiment* and revolt. By pressing Nietzsche's genealogy of *ressentiment* further, critically analyzing the material conditions that produce aristocratic politics and psychology, Fanon has demonstrated that the ultimate origin of slave morality is not *ressentiment*-psychology but the political order that produced it, which in turn has its origin in the material organization of society.

That is the real meaning of Fanon's puzzling claim that "in the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure." Against his misleading suggestion that for the colonial situation "a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched," he is not departing from a historical materialist view about the primacy of material causes but clarifying the compatibility of primary material causes with *secondary* ideological ones.²² The superstructure develops to protect the material foundation: material inequality cultivates in the colonist a need to ideologically justify that inequality by creating an ideology of class and racial superiority, but that ideology in turn requires materially producing that supposed inferiority in the species of ruling class and outcaste, creating the illusion of its verification.²³

So, when Fanon says "the cause is effect" he means colonialism protects the *real* cause (aristocracy, social hierarchy, material inequality) by making that cause *appear* to be an effect. "You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" means: the effects of your material superiority — your racial and class superiority — have been ideologically constructed to appear as the cause of your

²² Compare, for example, Fanon's view in the 1955 speech "Racism and Culture": "The apparition of racism is not fundamentally determining. Racism is not the whole but the most visible, the most day-to-day and...crudest element of a given structure" (1964, p. 31-32). See also his critique of Octave Mannoni's anti-economic interpretation of racism in *Black Skins*, IV. On Fanon's engagement with Marx, see Gibson (2020).

²³ Compare Du Bois: "It is not enough for the Negroes to declare that color-prejudice is the sole cause of their social condition, nor for the white South to reply that their social condition is the main cause of prejudice. They both act as reciprocal cause and effect, and a change in neither alone will bring the desired effect. Both must change, or neither can improve to any great extent" ([1903] 1999, p. 118).

material superiority, making you believe you are happier, richer, and more privileged because you are naturally superior and so more deserving of happiness.

In this way, the racialized caste system creates in the colonist a *ressentiment*-psychology that is fundamentally racist in its structure: it shapes colonists to identify, understand, and evaluate themselves through the vilification of a racialized group they see as essentially inferior.²⁴ A racialized caste system does not simply promote racist sentiment, behaviors, and institutions, its primary product is *the racist* as an *espèce*: a fixed social, moral, and psychological type.²⁵

We should not then, as Nietzsche does, take the nobles' self-descriptions at their word, particularly the "aristocratic value equation" that "good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = blessed" (GM I 7). If every political conquest creates a ruling class whose defining psychological trait is the need to create an essentialized, usually racialized, outcaste before they can enjoy their material privileges, then power is clearly not equivalent to happiness. If the masters' happiness requires the contrasting shade of the slaves' misery, then their psychology is defined by a deeper unhappiness that can only originate in material inequality as such.²⁶ It is aristocracy, not the slave, that creates *ressentiment*-psychology, *ressentiment*-morality, and racism, and so it is only truer form of democracy — in other words, as Fanon recognizes, socialism — that will eliminate them.

Consequently, far from contradicting the aims and commitments of his socialist politics, Fanon's adoption of Nietzsche's metapolitics of cultivation strengthens his historical material analysis while providing a powerful critique of Nietzsche's normative political aims. By exposing the colonists' *intentional* domestication of the colonized as a demonized outcaste *in order* to secure their illusory sense of moral validation, Fanon uses Nietzsche's best insights against his worst inclinations, demonstrating that aristocracy produces only an *illusory* nobility and order of rank. It is also thanks to Fanon's adoption of Nietzsche's

²⁴ See Gordon: "Fanon would agree with John Rawls that the subject of justice and (racist) injustice is the basic structure of the society itself" (1995, p. 90).

²⁵ Compare Frederick Douglass's account of how "the fatal poison of irresponsible power" completely transformed his new mistress "of the kindest heart and finest feelings" who "had never had a slave under control previously": "the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness" ([1845] 2010, pp. 147-148).

²⁶ Nietzsche's psychology of the will to power is most consistently interpreted as a drive toward the qualitative feeling of power rather than greater quantitative power, which is heightened by contest rather than conquest, resistance rather than domination, and proportional relationships of power equality rather than inequality. This raises the possibility that the surprising source of the ruling class's *ressentiment* is precisely their political superiority, which destroys the feeling of power in resistance they would achieve in more equal social relationships. See Miyasaki (2022a, I.3-4 and 2022b, IV.8).

metapolitics that he can make the case that any deeply unequal society with visible racial groups will likely produce a *racialized* outcaste and the *racist* as a primary psychological type.

Fanon's critical use of Nietzsche's metapolitics also adds support to his claim that decolonization is inevitably violent. For, if the violence that produces *ressentiment*-psychology is not an accident of the colonists' lack of conscience and indifference to their inferiors but instead an expression of their deep-seated, Manichean hatred of the colonized, then the inversion of that morality necessarily takes an equally Manichean form, creating in the underclass a psychological demand not just for moral revolt but ultimately for political revolution, a demand not to feel morally superior to the master but "to take his place," bringing about "the collapse of an entire moral and material universe" (FANON, 2004, p. 2, 9). Decolonial violence is not so much justified as necessitated by colonial violence because it is *one and the same* violence — the material expression and redirection of one and the same psychology, produced by one and the same political order, destined to continue until that order is overturned.²⁷

Finally, Fanon's analysis allows us to conclude that revolutionary politics is not reducible to either anti-racist or class politics alone. On the one hand, if racially diverse class-based societies inevitably produce both a racialized outcaste and the racist as psychological type in order to prop up the ideology of natural hierarchy, then we cannot eradicate racism without first eradicating classes. Even if we successfully educate individuals to abandon racist attitudes, habits, and behaviors, that will not prevent our material political order from continuing to cultivate in future individuals the very same form of psychology that motivates those attitudes, habits, and behaviors in the first place.

On the other hand, precisely because Fanon believes that racism is first and foremost a *species* or psychological type, we cannot overcome *present-day* racism by abolishing class differences. To shut down the machine that manufactures the psychology of the racist does nothing to protect multiple generations of existing individuals directly shaped by that psychology, nor does it protect victims of racism from their own internalization of that psychology.

So, a political solution to racism, as brought into focus by colonialism's racialized class-system, requires both a *class-politics of cultivation*, a socialist order

²⁷ See Fanon (1960): "Violence must first be fought with the language of truth and reason. But it happens, alas — and there cannot be anyone who does not deplore this historical necessity — it happens, I say, that in certain enslaved regions the violence of the colonized becomes quite simply a manifestation of his strictly animal existence. I say animal and I speak as a biologist, for such reactions are, after all, only defensive reactions reflecting a quite banal instinct for self-preservation" (p. 655). For a contrasting argument that Fanon is ethically justifying violence in certain cases, see Oladipo Fashina (1989).

that achieves the “creation of new men,” cultivating a new, universal form of psychology finally freed of *ressentiment*, and an *anti-racist politics of resistance* recognizing that, although racism can indeed be eliminated from our future, it can only be *guarded against, fought, and repaired* in our present.

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