

# Antiblackness, Antisemitism, and the State: Fanon, The Frankfurt School, and the Social Contract Tradition

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## Adorno and Identity Seminar Quotes

1. “At first glance, it may seem surprising that the attitude of the antisemite is similar to that of the negrophobe. It was my philosophy teacher from the Antilles who reminded me one day: ‘When you hear someone insulting the Jews, pay attention; he is talking about you.’”<sup>1</sup>
2. “Every intellectual gain calls for a loss of sexual potential. The civilized white man retains an irrational nostalgia for the extraordinary times of sexual licentiousness, orgiastic scenes, unsanctioned rapes, and unrepressed incest. In a sense, these fantasies correspond to Freud’s life instinct. Projecting his desires onto the black man, the white man behaves “as if” the black man actually had them. As for the Jew, the problem is more clear: he is not trusted, because he wants to possess wealth or take up positions of power. The black man is fixated at the genital level, or rather he has been fixated there. Two different spheres: the intellect and the sexual. [...] The black man represents the biological danger; the Jew, the intellectual danger.”<sup>2</sup>
3. “It is not easy to understand how it can become possible to deprive an instinct of satisfaction. Nor is doing so without danger. If the loss is not compensated for economically, one can be certain that serious disorders will ensue.”<sup>3</sup>
4. “[T]he religion which began with the prohibition against making an image of God develops more and more in the course of centuries into a religion of instinctual renunciations.”<sup>4</sup>
5. “...among the custom by which the Jews made themselves separate, that of circumcision has made a disagreeable, uncanny impression, which is to be explained, no doubt, by its recalling ... castration. [...] the deeper motives for hatred of the Jews are rooted in the remotest past ages; they operate from the unconscious of the peoples [...] hatred of Jews is at bottom a hatred of Christians.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 101. Translation modified.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 143. Translation modified.

<sup>3</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, Anna Freud, and Alan Tyson, 24 vols. (London: The Hogarth Press, 2001), 21:97.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 23:118.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 23:91-92.

6. “The blindness of anti-Semitism, its lack of intention, lends a degree of truth to the explanation of the movement as a release valve (*Venti*). Rage is vented on those who are both conspicuous and unprotected. And just as, depending on the constellation, the victims are interchangeable: vagrants [the 1944 edition instead reads: “Negroes, Mexican wrestling clubs”], Jews, Protestants, Catholics, so each of them can replace the murderer, in the same blind lust for killing, as soon as he feels the power of representing the norm. There is no authentic anti-Semitism, and certainly no born anti-Semite.”<sup>6</sup>

6. “The truer character of European history resides *beneath* the phenomenology of nation and state.”<sup>7</sup>

7. “Race is not, as the racial nationalists (*Völkischen*) claim, an immediate, natural peculiarity. Rather, it is a reduction to nature as mere violence, to the obdurate (*verstockte*) particularism which, in the existing order [the 1944 edition instead reads: “capitalism”], constitutes precisely the universal. Race today is the self-assertion of the bourgeois individual, integrated into the barbaric collective. [...] *The persecution of the Jews, like any persecution, cannot be separated from that order.*”<sup>8</sup>

8. “The multitude of poor, and yet strong people still increasing, they are to be transplanted into countries not sufficiently inhabited: where nevertheless, they are not to exterminate those they find there; but constrain them to inhabit closer together, and not to range a great deal of ground, to snatch what they find; but to court each little plot with art and labour, to give them their sustenance in due season. *And when all the world is overcharged with inhabitants, then the last remedy of all is war; which provideth for every man, by victory, or death.*”<sup>9</sup>

9. “The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his Labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, *and thereby makes it his Property.* [...] God gave the World to Men in Common; but since he gave it them for their benefit ... He gave it to the use of the Industrious and Rational.”<sup>10</sup>

10. “[In the social contract tradition,] the norming of space is partially done in terms of the *racing* of space, the depiction of space as dominated by individuals of a certain race. At the same time, the norming of the individual is partially achieved by *spacing* it [the individual], that is, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of space. So this is a mutually supporting characterization that ... becomes a circular indictment.”<sup>11</sup>

11. “[T]he Racial Contract is *global*, involving a tectonic shift of the ethicojuridical basis of the planet as a whole, the division of the world, as Jean-Paul Sartre put it long ago, between ‘men’ and natives,”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 140.

<sup>7</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*, 138. Translation modified and emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> William Molesworth, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, 11 vols. (London: Bohn, 1839–1845. Reprinted 1992.), 3:335. Emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), §27 and §34. Emphasis added.

<sup>11</sup> Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 41–42.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 20. Mills is citing Sartre’s preface to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2007).