


# Black Skin, White Masks

## Chapter 1 (CW: Racial Slurs)

“My mother wanting a son to keep in mind  
if you do not know your history lesson  
you will not go to mass on Sunday in  
your Sunday clothes  
that child will be a disgrace to the family  
that child will be our curse  
shut up I told you you must speak French  
the French of France  
the Frenchman’s French  
French French”  
(Pg. 5)

**Before we begin, how do you interpret this short poem?**


# Continued



Fanon continues, saying that there are many types of minds. In his words, “I am speaking here, on the one hand, of alienated (duped) blacks, and, on the other, of no less alienated (duping and duped) whites. If one hears a Sartre or a Cardinal Verdier declare that the outrage of the color problem has survived far too long, one can conclude only that their position is normal” (Pg. 17).

Philosophically, we can share certain worldviews, without necessarily having identical beliefs. We all see the world from our own unique lens, just as Fanon’s quote implies.

A certain set of people, typically African American individuals, find themselves at the center of isolation, alienation, and racism. Again, Fanon describes a world where not only African Americans are met with isolation, alienation, and racism, but experience the previous listings at a higher significance due to history.



# Chapter 1's Conclusion

Using the Antilles argument, we learn that the purest philosophical viewpoint one can derive is the one based off of the best self. Best self (in my opinion) comes from a basis of wondering what life we should live.

My ideal life is most likely different from the next person's, seeing as “we should be honored, the blacks will reproach me, that a white man like Breton writes such things” (Pg. 27).

“These ready-made phrases, which seem in a common-sense way to fill a need—for **Aimé Césaire** is really black and a poet— have a hidden subtlety, a permanent rub. I know nothing of Jean Paulhan except that he writes very interesting books” (Pg. 26).

## Question:

How do you feel *Black Skin, White Masks* represents a philosophical connection to the brain? Why?

# This map, like last time, means nothing.

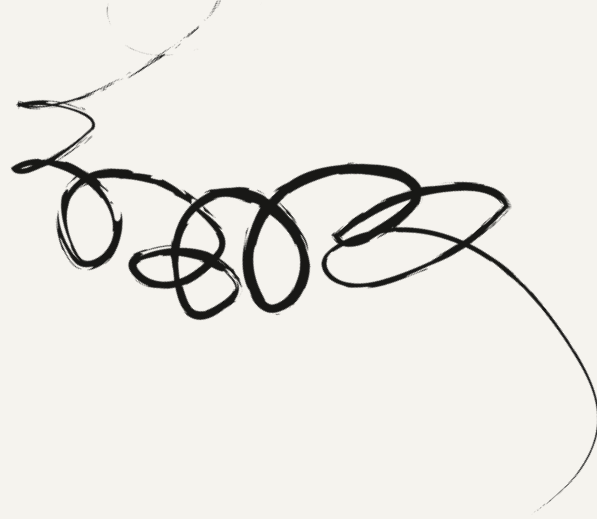


**So....**

Do you have any  
questions so far?

**France**

This is just interesting to  
point out because  
today's authors were  
born and lived in France.



# O4 Excerpts





# Poems, 1/3



## Emmett Till

your eyes were a sea conch in which the heady  
battle  
of your fifteen year old blood sparkled.  
Even young they never had any age,  
or rather more than all the skyscrapers  
five centuries of torturers  
of witch burners weighed on them,  
five centuries of cheap gin of big cigars  
of fat bellies filled with slices of rancid bibles  
a five century mouth bitter with dowager sins,  
they were five centuries old EMMETT TILL,  
five centuries is the ageless age of Cain's stake.



## Statue of Lafacadio Hearn

Ye clambered up the palm tree  
Nanie-Rosette was eating on a boulder  
the devil was flying about  
anointed with snake grease  
with the oil of departed souls  
a god in the town was dancing wearing an ox head  
auburn rums were flowing from throat to throat  
in the ajoupas anise was being mixed with orgeat  
at the crossroads tobacco-colored men  
squatted at dice  
and dispatched dreams along their fingers  
in the shade in pockets long razors were sleeping





# Poems, 2/3



## ... On the State of the Union

I imagine this message in Congress on the state of  
the Union:

situation tragic,

left underground only 75 years of iron

50 years of cobalt

but 55 years worth of sulfur and 20 of bauxite

in the heart what?

Nothing, zero,

mine without ore,

cavern in which nothing prowls,

of blood not a drop left.



## From My Stud Farms

Clouds, jump the tracks with a blowtorch! Rain  
violent girl unravel your shreds! Sea wound settle in  
with a hiss! All funnels and volcanoes adrift! Stampede  
mad gods! Blow your brains out! Let the fields be  
ripped apart by the trident and the pearl fishermen be  
catapulted to the very sky! A thought. What? The fire  
that is no longer squandered. What is possible tearing  
in its sumptuous chest everything slow in becoming.

Night. What? The entire matter which weighs and  
exhausts itself to become space. The password. What?  
To pass the world through a sieve and the lack of  
solidarity in each subterfuge.





## Poems, 3/3



### It is Myself, Terror, It is Myself

Stranded dried up dreams flush with the muzzles of rivers  
create  
formidable piles of mute bones  
the too swift hopes crawl scrupulously  
like tamed snakes  
one does not leave one never leaves  
as for me I have halted, faithful, on the island  
standing like Prester John slightly sideways to the sea  
and sculptured at snout level by waves and bird droppings  
things things it is to you that I give  
my crazed violent face ripped open in the whirlpool's depths  
my face tender with fragile coves where lymphs are warming  
it is myself terror it is myself




### Prophecy


There,  
where adventure keeps a clean eye  
there where women shimmer with language  
there where death is beautiful in the hand like a milk season bird  
there where on bended knee the underground gathers a wealth  
of sloes more violent than caterpillars  
there where for nimble wonder anything goes  
there where vigorous night bleeds the speed of true vegetables  
there where bees of stars sting a hive's sky brighter than night  
there where my heel sound fills space and counts down the  
removal of the face of time  
there where my word's rainbow must bring together tomorrow  
and hope, infant and queen.







**Which poem  
interested you the  
most, and why?**





# Who was Aimé Césaire?

- Born in the Overseas France on June 26, 1913
- Elected mayor of Fort-de-France and deputy to the French National Assembly for Martinique
- Passed a law addressing departmentalization approved unanimously in March of 1946
- Notable works and areas:
  - Poet
  - Politician
  - Martinican Progressive Party  
(A party of those breaking away from communism)
- Died in Overseas France on April 17, 2008 at the age of 94



# Excerpts Conclusion


The six poems we have read only move to strengthen *Black Skin, White Masks*, as we hear the harrowing story of Emmett Till and other racist pieces.

“—Hey Chicago Boy is it still true that you’re worth as much as a white man?” (Pg. 1)

The above quote shows just what Fanon’s texts do: that being African American (or different from what is privileged) during this time was both alienating and isolating.



# Discussion Questions

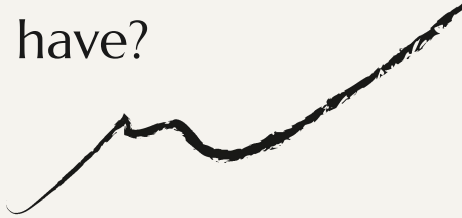


Why are these viewpoints important when constructing a worldview?

What do Césaire's poems represent beyond a surface level?

How do you interpret Fanon saying “alienated and isolated”?

What philosophies do Fanon and Césaire represent based on the knowledge we have?






# The Main Conclusion!

Philosophically, our worldview is based off  
of our environment and actions we take.

Beyond that, one's worldview can be  
controlled by things we cannot control such  
as race, gender, sexuality, monetary class,  
and beyond.



# Thank You!

# Questions?

Credit to Tommy for  
proofing the slides!





# Sources

- Wikipedia
- BooKey
- Frantz Fanon
- Aimé Césaire

