Critical Engagement Assignment

Length of paper: **1200 words** (it’s okay to go a bit over, but responses should not be much under the word expectation)

Format: Quotations and other citations in the response, as well as the works cited page, should be formatted in a way that is consistent with the guidelines of either the Modern Languages Association (MLA) or the Chicago Author-Date Style.

The essay must be submitted as a WORD DOC, double-spaced (including long quotations); have standard margins (i.e. MSWord default) and use 12pt font

1. **Summarize ONE key concern, idea, argument, or example from the chosen reading.** You might identify one main argument or two related assertions of the essay, providing examples of how the author supports their position. For instance. I might critically engage with the way Dubois argues the global conflict of the early 20th Century could only end if Africans gained control of their land, achieved sovereignty as nations, and enacted modern civilization. Note: it is not possible to summarize the entire article, so focus on one idea or concern that you are interested in or you believe is important for the course.
2. **Analyze and Assess the idea/argument you identified in the reading in relation to other ideas or arguments in the course,** including concepts, theories, class discussions, and cultural texts/examples (e.g. poems, films, stories, novel, etc.)

Fanon, Frantz “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” in *Black Skin, White Masks*

High level summary of one argument:

Franz elicits a very real and solemn reflection on the meaning of his existence as a racialized person. He divulges with criticisms of Sartre’s *Black Orpheus*, highlighting how it and writings of its nature marginalize people by means of “sapping the intellectual wellspring of intellectualized black existence dry” (Franz 113).

Notes:

“…it might seem strange that the attitude if the anti-Semite can be equated with that of the negrophobe… what he meant quite simple was that the anti-Semite is inevitably a negrophobe” (101).

“Understandably, confronted with this affective ankylosis of the white man, I finally made up my mind to shout my blackness” (101).

Ankylosis: abnormal stiffening and immobility of a joint due to fusion of the bones.

In this case the abnormal stiffening is the ideology that there will always be a white world between the racialized groups of white and black people because the past will not be forgotten. By whom it is not specified, for this reason I believe it applies to both groups.

“I had rationalized the world and the world had rejected me in the name of color prejudice. Since there was no way we could agree on the basis of reason, I resorted to irrationality. It was up to the white man to be more irrational than I” (102).

“I embrace the world! I am the world! The white man has never understood this magical substitution. The white man wants the world; he wants it for himself. He discovers he is the predestined master of the world. He enslaves it. His relationship with the world is one of appropriation. But there are values that can be served only with my sauce” (107).

“Night of Africa, my black night, mystical and bright, black

and shining” (108).

Underlying alignment of blackness and the night. Phrasing “night of Africa” alludes to knight of x perhaps.

“So here I was poet of the world. The white man had discovered poetry that had nothing poetic about it” (108).

“The white man was wrong, I was not a primitive or a subhuman; I belonged to a race that had already been working silver and gold 2,000 years ago. And then there was something else, something the white man could not understand… Although [Schoelcher] mentions nowhere that when the Portuguese landed on the shores of the Congo in 1498, they discovered a rich and flourishing state and hat the elders at the court of Ambasse were dressed in silks and brocade, at least he knows that Africa raised itself to a legal notion of state, and midway through this century of imperialism he hints that after all European civilization is but one among many—and not the most merciful” (110).

“So they were countering my irrationality with rationality, my rationality with the “true rationality… I wanted to be typically black—that was out of the question. I wanted to be white—that was a joke. And when I tried to claim my negritude intellectually as a concept, they snatched it away from me” (111).

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“Black Orpheus marks a date in the intellectualization of black existence. And Sartre’s mistake was not only to seek the source of the spring, but in a certain way to drain the spring dry” (113).

“I did not create a meaning for myself; the meaning was already there, waiting”: “No matter; to each epoch its poetry, for each epoch the circumstances of history elect a nation, a race, a class, to seize again the torch, by creating situations which can express or surpass themselves only through Poetry” (113).