



Notebook of a Return to My Native Land: Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal (Bloodaxe Contemporary French Poets) (English and French Edition)

By Aime Cesaire

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French-English bilingual edition. Andre Breton called Cesaire's Cahier 'nothing less than the greatest lyrical monument of this time'. It is a seminal text in Surrealist, French and Black literatures - published in full in English for the first time in Bloodaxe's bilingual Contemporary French Poets series. Aime Cesaire (1913-2008) was born in in Basse-Pointe, a village on the north coast of Martinique, a former French colony in the Caribbean (now an overseas departement of France). His book Discourse on Colonialism (1950) is a classic of French political literature. Notebook of a Return to My Native Land (1956) is the foundation stone of francophone Black literature: it is here that the word Negritude appeared for the first time. Negritude has come to mean the cultural, philosophical and political movement co-founded in Paris in the 1930s by three Black students from French colonies: the poets Leon-Gontran Damas from French Guiana; Leopold Senghor, later President of Senegal; and Aime Cesaire, who became a deputy in the French National Assembly for the Revolutionary Party of Martinique and was repeatedly elected Mayor of Fort-de-France. As a poet, Cesaire believed in the revolutionary power of language, and in the Notebook he combined high literary French with Martinican colloquialisms, and archaic turns of phrase with dazzling new coinages. The result is a challenging and deeply moving poem on the theme of the future of the negro race which presents and enacts the poignant search for a Martinican identity. The Notebook opposes the ideology of colonialism by inventing a language that refuses assimilation to a dominant cultural norm, a language that teaches resistance and liberation.

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- Sales Rank: #1685173 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 1995-03-01
- Original language: French
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .47" w x 5.43" l, .55 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 160 pages

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Editorial Review

Language Notes

Text: English, French (translation)

Original Language: French

About the Author

Aime Cesaire (1913-2008) was born in Basse-Pointe, a village on the north coast of Martinique, a former French colony in the Caribbean (now an overseas department of France). His book *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) is a classic of French political literature. *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1956) is the foundation stone of francophone Black literature: it is here that the word *Negritude* appeared for the first time. *Negritude* has come to mean the cultural, philosophical and political movement co-founded in Paris in the 1930s by three Black students from French colonies: the poets Leon-Gontran Damas from French Guiana; Leopold Senghor, later President of Senegal; and Aime Cesaire, who became a deputy in the French National Assembly for the Revolutionary Party of Martinique and was repeatedly elected Mayor of Fort-de-France. Cesaire attended high school and college in France, returning to Martinique during the Second World War. He was mayor of Fort-de-France from 1945 to 2001, except for a break from 1983 to 1984. He helped Martinique shed its colonial status in 1946 to become an overseas department of France. He was affiliated with the French Communist Party early in his career but became disillusioned in the 1950s and founded the Martinique Progressive Party in 1958. He later allied with the Socialist Party in France's National Assembly, where he served from 1946 to 1956 and from 1958 to 1993. He died in 2008, aged 94.

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