



Against the Postcolonial: 'Francophone' Writers at the Ends of French Empire

Richard Serrano

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Richard Serrano begins his provocative new work *Against the Postcolonial* with the bold statement that Of Francophone studies is mostly a mirage, while postcolonial studies is mostly a delusion. He argues that many attempts to use postcoloniality to account for francophone writers tell us more about the criticsO assumptions than about the writersO works. Furthermore, he asserts that postcolonial studies, with its antecedents as an Anglophone Indian project that emerged in response to the weakening British Raj, is but one sort of narrative of colonialism into which writers of French expression do not neatly fit. In an insightful exploration of the work of five writers from lands formerly or currently ruled by France_Algeria, Cambodia, Guiana, Madagascar, and Mali_Serrano demonstrates the rewards of research that engages in textual analysis within its historical and literary context. He deftly argues against the relevance of a homogenizing critical practice; considering these writers Opostcolonial,O he claims, is to misunderstand their aesthetic strategies for survival in the face of French colonialism and modernism. Scholars of Francophone literature, postcolonial studies, and world literature will relish SerranoOs lively invitation to debate and masterful analysis of five brilliant artists.



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