



France's Lost Empires: Fragmentation, Nostalgia, and la fracture coloniale (After the Empire: The Francophone World and Postcolonial France)

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France's Lost Empires brings together ten essays that collectively investigate the historical, cultural, and political legacies of French colonialism and, specifically, the endings of the French empire(s). Combining analyses of three "lost" territories (Canada, India, and Saint Dominigue) of the "first" French colonial empire, that of the *Ancien Regime*, with investigations of the decolonization of the "new" colonies of the "second" French overseas empire (specifically in North Africa), the essays presented here investigate the ways in which colonial loss has been absorbed and narrativized within French culture and society, and how nostalgia for that past has played a fundamental role in shaping French colonial discourses and memories. Beginning with the Haitian Revolution and its historicization during the 1820s and ending with an examination of the "postcolonial" republic at the end of the twentieth century, the chronological structure of the volume serves to reveal the extent to which the memories of territorial loss have been sustained throughout French colonial history and remain evident in current metropolitan representations and memories of empire.

In analyzing the longevity of these tropes of loss and nostalgia, and their importance in shaping France's identity as a colonial power both during and after periods of colonization, *France's Lost Empires* reveals a basic premise: it is not simply successful conquest which creates a self-validating colonial discourse; failure can do so too. Indeed, the pervasive and tenacious nostalgia for past colonial glories, variously identified by the contributors to this volume, suggests that, for some, the emotional attachment to France's colonies has not waned and remains today as it was in nineteenth-century France.

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