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Title: Rewriting the French Colonial Topos of the Island in the Works of Marie Ferranti, Jean-François Samlong, and Chantal Spitz

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Abstract: The island trope is a recurring theme in colonial travel literature but how do contemporary authors of the French-speaking world conceptualize the island in the 20th and 21st century? My project examines the complexity of the notion of islandedness in the works of three contemporary authors of Francophone islands outside the French Caribbean: Corsican author Marie Ferranti, Réunionese author Jean-François Samlong, and Tahitian author Chantal Spitz. Drawing on different discourses of postmodernity including intertextuality, supermodernity, the hyperreal, the time-image, and violence, I argue that the island becomes an important site from which ethnography, the crisis of time and meaning, and techniques of resistance are negotiated and constructed. In my analysis, I build on various foundational theories of cultural contact from the French Caribbean and Francophone Africa to account for the diversity and difference of the non-French Caribbean island text. Particular attention will be given to the literary text as a tool to reflect upon a colonial past and neo-colonial present in three different contexts of the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the South Pacific.

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