



The Negritude Moment: Explorations in Francophone African and Caribbean Literature and Thought

F. Abiola Irele

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In this collection of essays, which span more than forty years of sustained scholarship, Irele explores the varied aspects of Negritude as a movement and as concept. He provides an account of its historical origins and examines the sociological and ideological background of the themes that have preoccupied French-speaking black writers and intellectuals in their confrontation with the pressures of a difficult collective experience, in both its objective manifestations and its inward implications. The collection includes a rare essay on the structure of Aimé Césaire's imagery in its poetic transmutation of this experience. Throughout the collection, distinguished by the clarity of his language, Irele pays attention to the debates Negritude has generated over the years and stresses the centrality of these debates to the emergence of a modern consciousness in the black world. F. Abiola Irele's *The Négritude Moment: Explorations in Francophone African and Caribbean Literature and Thought* brings together almost fifty years of scholarship on Négritude by a foundational figure in Francophone African and Caribbean studies in the United States. Irele's pathbreaking essays take the reader on an enthralling intellectual journey into one of the most influential cultural and political movements of the twentieth-century, offering the kind of rigorous analysis and historical contextualization that are often lacking in discussions of the subject. The sustained engagement with the philosophical, poetic, political, and sociological writings of Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor serves to highlight their extraordinary impact, the tentacular networks of influence they fostered, and their unique contributions to expanding our understanding of colonialism and race. Irele's essays skillfully navigate this challenging terrain, pointing to complex theoretical questions, while revealing how Négritude in its various incarnations remains pertinent to all kinds of interdisciplinary inquiries and contemporary investigations into questions of ethnicity, diaspora, and global Black consciousness. Dominic Thomas, Professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, author of *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism* (Indiana University Press, 2007).

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