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Claiming 'The Great Black North' in Contemporary Short Stories from Canada

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Dr. Nele Sawallisch works as a senior lecturer in American Studies at Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. Her first monograph *Fugitive Borders: Black Canadian Cross-Border Literature at Mid-Nineteenth Century* (transcript, 2019) discusses community-building processes and genealogies in autobiographical writing by formerly enslaved men from the 1850s in the North American borderland between the United States and Canada.

Canada's popular moniker of "the Great White North" has long exceeded its reference to the land of ice and snow, assuming another metaphorical meaning in the context of the country's demographic. Despite the adoption of an official policy of multiculturalism in the latter half of the 20th century, to immigrant populations as well as BIPOC in Canada, the country has often proven less than welcoming both in diachronic and synchronic perspectives. This talk therefore considers short fiction by Black Canadian and second-generation Black authors that negotiates the intersections of Blackness, Canada, and belonging. On the one hand, their short stories posit experiences of discrimination and racism as facts in the daily lives of BIPOC in Canada despite its professions of a tolerant multicultural society. On the other hand, the authors also appropriate and claim Canada's geography to map histories, presents, and futures of a "Great Black North" that "remix[es]" (Mason-John and Cameron 2014) Canada's story as we know it.

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