



The Black Atlantic Reconsidered: Black Canadian Writing, Cultural History, and the Presence of the Past

Winfried Siemerling

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Readers are often surprised to learn that black writing in Canada is over two centuries old. Ranging from letters, editorials, sermons, and slave narratives to contemporary novels, plays, poetry, and non-fiction, black Canadian writing represents a rich body of literary and cultural achievement. *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered* is the first comprehensive work to explore black Canadian literature from its beginnings to the present in the broader context of the black Atlantic world. Winfried Siemerling traces the evolution of black Canadian witnessing and writing from slave testimony in New France and the 1783 "Book of Negroes" through the work of contemporary black Canadian writers including George Elliott Clarke, Austin Clarke, Dionne Brand, David Chariandy, Wayde Compton, Esi Edugyan, Marlene NourbeSe Philip, and Lawrence Hill. Arguing that black writing in Canada is deeply imbricated in a historic transnational network, Siemerling explores the powerful presence of black Canadian history, slavery, and the Underground Railroad, and the black diaspora in the work of these authors. Individual chapters examine the literature that has emerged from Quebec, Nova Scotia, the Prairies, and British Columbia, with attention to writing in both English and French. A major survey of black writing and cultural production, *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered* brings into focus important works that shed light not only on Canada's literature and history, but on the transatlantic black diaspora and modernity.

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