



ANNOUNCEMENT

Visiting Public Humanities Faculty Fellow, 2019-2020 on the theme, *Strange Weather*

Daniel McNeil

Daniel McNeil (Ph.D. History, University of Toronto, 2007) will be the first person to hold the Visiting Public Humanities Faculty Fellowship. He brings to the position many years of experience nurturing interdisciplinary communities, fostering innovations in pedagogy, and leading public outreach work in Canada (as an Associate Professor of History at Carleton University and Visiting Professor in the Department of the Humanities at York University), the United States (as Ida B. Wells-Barnett Professor of African and Black Diaspora Studies at DePaul University), and the United Kingdom (as Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Hull and Newcastle University).



How might the Humanities contribute to the critical discourse on energy and climate?

At the Humanities Institute, McNeil will build upon his award-winning teaching, research and outreach work on Black identities that work within, across, outside and against the nation-state. Two of the research projects at the intersection of environmental humanities and critical race studies that McNeil will pursue are *Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture* (co-edited with Y. Meerzon and D. Dean) and *How Culture Lives: An Unofficial History of Multiculturalism and Shy Elitism*.

The first project will address the proliferation of stereotypes that attempt to reduce and fix refugees, migrants and racialized minorities to a few, simple, essential characteristics. It draws on historically informed and forward-looking approaches to the arts, humanities, social sciences and public affairs that ask critical questions about the use of the term 'climate refugees' in our contemporary culture. In particular, it will demonstrate how the term 'climate refugees' has been used in a manner that recycles and redeploys notions of environmental determinism and a natural hierarchy of development that represented colonial Others as passive objects in need of aid, expert management, and surveillance.

The second project will demonstrate the power of history and the historical process in generating critical questions about the environmental metaphors of 'floods', 'swamping' and the 'winds of change' that have framed and oversimplified discussions of immigrants and immigration in the Canadian public sphere. It will draw on archival research to shed new light on three periods of Canadian history: 1971-1983 (a formative period after the official promulgation of multiculturalism); 1984-1993 (the institutionalization of multiculturalism as anti-racist and pro-business); and attempts to mobilize multiculturalism in support of national cohesion post-1993. It introduces 'shy elitism' as a new keyword in critical multiculturalism studies to deepen our understanding of state work that has 1) nudged and encouraged the public to defer to prominent, respectable figures in elite institutions and celebrate the recipients of 'prestigious' and 'important' awards, and 2) granted awards, credentials and patronage to 'accessible' work that advances 'harmonious race relations' by repressing material that is presumed to be too elitist, esoteric or radical for 'ordinary Canadians.'

A note about this fellowship

The Visiting Public Humanities Faculty Fellowship is intended to foster knowledge exchange between the academy and the public. It is a component of the Jackman Humanities Institute's research commitment to public scholarship, Humanities at Large, which has received support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the Humanities for 2019-2022. Humanities at Large brings humanities research out of the classroom and university press, and into the broader public realm for discussion, debate, and examination across multiple media platforms, and makes space in the academy for the knowledge of communities.

For more information: <https://humanities.utoronto.ca>

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