

First Bremen-Guelph Lecture

“Seeking Sanctuary: Mob Violence, Black Citizenship, and Anti-Lynching Activism in Canada”

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Abstract: In 1922, the Bullock case became an international cause célèbre that dramatically encapsulated the multiple forms of desubjectivation, dispossession, and violence historically experienced by Blacks in the United States and Canada. Matthew Bullock, a young African American man, fled to Hamilton, Ontario after his brother and cousin were lynched by a white mob on the outskirts of Norlina, North Carolina. Shaped by the enduring and eponymous images of black masculinity that emerged in the US South, the rhetorical strategies employed by black activists to garner public support for Bullock’s extraordinary petition for safety and justice reflected the highly constrained meaning of black citizenship in both nations.

In this lecture, Professor Ferguson will trace the political sophistication of black activists to use the press to re-shape white readers’ commonsense perceptions of national citizenship and identity. However, the repeated scene of weeping in black churches in Hamilton and Toronto, after the United States’ request for Bullock’s extradition was denied, was not an expression of black gratitude for sanctuary in Canada, as reported in the local newspapers, but a response to the strangled freedom and illegible humanity of black lives that the granting of sanctuary exposed.

Professor Jade Ferguson is an Associate Professor at the University of Guelph, Canada. Her research and teaching interests include 19th to mid-20th century American and Canadian literatures, Black cultural and literary studies, New Southern Studies, whiteness studies, and critical race theory. She is currently completing a manuscript on the cultural history of lynching in Canada, provisionally titled *Lynching in Canaan: Race, Violence, and Cultural Memory in Canada, 1880-1950*.

Tuesday, 25th April 2017 | 2:15-3:45pm
UNICOM 3, Haus Turin | Ebene 0, Seminarraum 4

All interested parties are warmly welcome!

Organiser: Bremer Institut für Kanada- und Québec-Studien (BIKQS)
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