<u>**HCRGSA Conference 2024 Panel Abstracts**</u>

Culture and Identity: Individuals and Societies in Conversation
February 29-March 2, 2024
Department of History, Classics, and Religion
University of Alberta

<u>**Day 1: Thursday, February 29th**</u>

<u>**Session I:**</u> 10:50 am-12:30 pm

Contextualizing shame, stigma, and trauma

Chair: Tulika Singh

Sreya Paul and Enakshi Paul, Tripura University and The ICFAI University
"A Critique of Tuloni Biya (Practised in Assam, Northeast India): A Cross Cultural Analysis of Menstrual Customs"

This paper aims to understand the inherently paradoxical nature that exists in treating women as 'goddesses' reincarnate, while, binding them to the shackles of patriarchal norms to regulate their biological attributes; the ideation of Goddess Kamakhya as the symbol of purity and power, yet perceiving menstruating women as 'pollutants' and menstrual blood as 'horrific' or 'dirty'. It employs a content analysis method as secondary sources - academic journals, books, and online databases are used to gather information and analyze existing data. It brings out the contradicting ideas of menstrual celebrations, with special mention of the custom of 'Tuloni Biya'- the celebration of the first period in Assamese culture, in contrast to taboos reigning over the practices of menstruation. Likewise, this paper seeks to mention the positive and empowering aspects of embracing menstruation as a natural and important part of women's lives, as well as the cultural and social significance attached to menstruation in various societies. Additionally, it aims to debunk the taboos surrounding menstruation and promote a more open and inclusive dialogue about this natural bodily process. Thus, the paper begins with an exploration of cross-cultural customs of menstruation across the globe and brings out the similarities and differences with those practiced in Assam, in the Northeast region of India.

Jaishree, Jawaharlal Nehru University
"Exploring trauma and identity through the case study of Phoolan Devi"

Phoolan Devi (10th August 1963-25th July 2001) was an Indian bandit who later turned into a politician and was murdered while she was serving as an elected member of the Parliament. Born in the Mallah (low caste in Indian society), Phoolan faced firsthand discrimination by the Thakurs (high caste) of her village. She was married off as a child and abused (mentally, physically, and sexually) by her husband and in-laws. Later, while she was still in her teens, she was picked up by a dacoit group, where she was gang-raped multiple times over the years. As Phoolan grew up, she learned the ways of her abductors and became a dacoit herself, seeking revenge and exploring a new identity and a safe space for herself. When she decided to give up her violent life and join politics, her past identities caught up with the presentation of Phoolan as the Bandit Queen, a famous film by Shekhar Kapoor. Her rapes were put on the screen without her consent in the name of artistic freedom. The media trial declared her a nymphomaniac since the society could not see a rape survivor unafraid and confident.

Since Phoolan was illiterate, her voice was taken over multiple times by the so-called emancipators. Thus, the topic of this paper addresses the negotiation a low-caste woman undergoes with society to claim an identity of her choice. It presents the layered oppression (caste, class, and gender) Phoolan overcame to lead a respectable life.

P. Sankavi, Gobi Arts & Science College
"The impact of social stigma on disability: A critical analysis of Firdaus Kanga's Trying to Grow"

In this study, the exploration centres on the portrayal and representation of disabled individuals in Indian fiction written in English post-Independence. Within this literary landscape, there exists a noticeable scarcity of depictions involving disabled characters. When these characters do emerge, their presence tends to embody broader societal attitudes towards disability, often being portrayed as symbols or representations of the stigma attached to physical or mental impairments. Focusing the lens on Firdaus Kanga's work, specifically Trying to Grow, the analysis delves into the character of Brit, the disabled protagonist. Brit's character serves as a focal point for examining the multifaceted dynamics between societal perceptions of disability and an individual's quest for identity and agency. Throughout the narrative, Brit emerges as a resolute figure, striving to carve out a distinct and empowered existence despite the societal preconceptions that limit the potential of disabled individuals. The study aims to dissect Brit's journey, elucidating the complexities and nuances of his experiences in a society entrenched with prejudices against the disabled. Despite Brit's unwavering determination to challenge these societal norms and perceptions, the narrative reveals the formidable challenges and the profound impact of societal stigma. Through this analysis, the paper aims to offer insights into the intricate process of identity formation for individuals with disabilities, as well as the formidable obstacles they confront in their pursuit of acceptance, inclusion, and equality within society. Ultimately, the study seeks to deepen understanding of the broader implications of societal attitudes on the lives and aspirations of disabled individuals as reflected in literary representations.

Md Asif Khan, Jawaharlal Nehru University
"Reclaiming the right to say 'I': Shame, Self narration and Identity in Contemporary Dalit Autobiographies"

This paper will closely read two instances of contemporary Dalit autobiographies namely Yashica Dutt's 'Coming Out as a Dalit: A Memoir' and Sharankumar Limbale's 'The Outcaste' to examine how shame as an emotion and as an affect shape and interrupt articulations and construction of self in Dalit writing. Shame is a negative emotion associated with feelings of dispossession and extreme visibility. Located at and productive of the boundaries that differentiate and conjoin a self's personal world to the domain of the social, shame as an affect has implications for the building, maintenance, disruption and unraveling of selfhood.

The complex negotiations between shame and identity resists normative frameworks of narrativisation and therefore articulations of shame either take the form of absences or excesses in writing.

In Indian Literature, Dalit writing continues to carve a dissident voice which deconstructs and questions normative frameworks provided by a hierarchical Hindu Caste society. Dalit autobiographies reclaim the right to say I in the social and political field by invoking unjust experiences of oppression, shame and humiliation. And since such experiences become the disorienting kernel around which a Dalit self is constructed, these autobiographies are invariably characterised by a disproportionate affective discharge.

This paper engages with the aforementioned texts to map their affective intensity by exploring the complex negotiations between shame, self narration and Dalit Identity and discussing how these texts articulate unspeakable events and preserve the disorientating power of shame by making novel choices in terms of their formal, thematic and political concerns.

Session II: 01:30-03:10 pm

Gender identity and sexuality

Chair: Dr. James White

Arabelle Wren Konrad, University of Alberta
"Buddhist Didactic Tales (Setsuwa) on Cross-Species Romantic and Sexual Encounters"

This paper investigates several examples of Heian and Kamakura period didactic literature (setsuwa) in which humans have romantic and sexual encounters with animals (here, "animals" refers only to characters who remain as animals for the entirety of the text, even if they are capable of shapeshifting). While there are tales of both men and women being involved in these

human-animal relationships, men tend to agree to the affairs while women are often forced into undesirable interactions, either by their parents or by the animal itself. Through the analysis of several short tales from the Nihon Ryōiki, Konjaku Monogatarishū, Shasekishū, and Kokonchomonjū, I argue that the differences in consent heavily depend on men's and women's identities in Heian courtship and marriage conventions. In short, men were expected to pursue women of lower status and to coerce possible lovers into sleeping with them, while women were expected to submit to their fathers and men of higher statuses. Finally, as setsuwa were used to teach readers various lessons, the use of untransformed animals in stories featuring human women may have been a way for compilers to teach their male audiences not to participate in traditions that involving forcing oneself onto women and to consider women's wishes.

Chris Aino Pihlak, University of Toronto
"A People's History of Transgender: Trans Subcultural Discourses Against the Transsexual-Transvestite Binary"

From the 1960s onward, a complex ecosystem of trans subcultures emerged throughout the Anglosphere. Trans people used correspondence, newsletters, and magazines, to connect across continents, and through these formats they discursively constructed how to understand transness. Typically, members understood gender and transness as binaries: one was male or female, and a transvestite or transsexual. Yet from the beginning, subcultural members resisted, problematized, and criticized such simplistic understandings. Out of decades of subcultural discourse, 'transgender' emerged as a conceptual container for a complex set of gendered practices, behaviors, and embodiments. Yet the importance of subcultural discourses on this identity-category is effectively absent from trans histories. In most narratives, a few 'Great People' of the trans community gift us with 'transgender' in the early 1990s.

I intervene against such a simplistic narrative and tell a 'people's history of transgender' through the illumination of decades of inter-community discourse that led to 'transgender.' I will speak to the initial binaristic understanding of transness in the 1960s between purportedly temporary transvestic cross-dressers and permanent transsexuals, to the increasing contestation and desire for terms to describe gendered embodiments that went against this binary, and by the 1980s the increasing presence of transgender, transgendered, transgenderists, and transgenderal community members. My talk concludes with the subcultural 'arrival' of transgender in 1995. In this year the editors of the largest subcultural periodical changed its name from the TV-TS [Transvestite-Transsexual] Tapestry to The Transgender Tapestry.

Alexandra Daria Zybinova, University of Alberta
"Politicizing Gendered Discourse: Women's Participation in the 2011 Tahrir Square Protests"

This paper explores how discourse is utilized to construct a gendered identity in Egypt, both by political and independent agents, while negotiating women's political participation. Specifically,

it focuses on the 2011 revolt against the incumbent government and the protests at Tahrir Square, Cairo. During that time, women's political participation was possibly at its peak, with women intermingling with men in public spaces and gender roles seemingly suspended. Simultaneously, these events are infamous for the high rates of sexual assaults on women, perpetuated in some cases by protestors, in some by the state, and in others by by-standers looking to capitalize on the political unrest. These included "virginity tests" that were enforced onto the female protestors who were detained, which were later brought into the courts and the media by the victims, which is atypical for Egypt where victims of sexual violence are less likely to come forward due to shame, especially so publicly. Another tactic was "circles of hell", where a woman would be separated from the group and surrounded by dozens of people who would sexually assault her. To counter these, volunteers organized counter-units, striving to ensure safety of the female protestors.

By analyzing the discourse of these events in media through official statements as well as first person accounts, and drawing from scholarly work on how the female body in Egypt has historically been used as the site of political conflict, this paper will consider how gendered identity is constructed for political aims.

Rou Li, University of Alberta
"Female Identity in Modern China: The Dialogue Between Ling Shuhua and Literary Communities"

In the era of modernity and the widespread dissemination of print, Chinese women transcended the traditional dichotomy of nei and wai (內和外, means inside and outside), challenging the long-established gendered division of labor. They actively engaged in the literary sphere, traditionally reserved for men. This research aims to shed light on the development of women's identities through their participation in literary communities, exploring the ways in which individual women and groups contribute to the fluidity of identities. Specifically, this investigation centers on the formation of Ling Shuhua's identity through her interactions with two influential literary communities: the Crescent Moon Group in China and the parallel community in England, Bloomsbury. These two renowned literary circles played a simultaneous role in shaping Ling Shuhua's identity, influencing both her personal life and career trajectory. By examining pivotal aspects of her life, notably in marriage and writing, and delving into the literary ideologies of these communities, this study investigates how female intellectuals like Ling Shuhua navigated the construction of their public identities within intellectual spheres that had been inaccessible for centuries. This research contributes to our understanding of the transformative journey undertaken by female individuals as they grapple with constructing public identities in uncharted intellectual territories. The dialogue between Ling Shuhua and these literary circles serves as a valuable lens through which we can comprehend the evolving roles, positions, and thoughts of women in modern societies.

Displacement, diaspora, and collective memory

Chair: Prof. Heather Coleman

Jing Yang, University of Alberta
"The Failed Conversations between Britain and China: Macartney's Embassy at the onset of Modernity"

Macartney's Embassy (1792-1794) is the first British diplomatic expedition to China, with the goal of improving trade communications with China as well as providing an important opportunity to portray China. The embassy's failure was attributed to the emperor's ignorance, cultural incompatibilities, and empire clashes (Zhu 1989, Peyrefitte, Clingham 2, Hevia 1993). The first goal has been failed, but not the second. This study will look at the success of the second goal, which is based on the first. The Embassy members' extensively publication of travel writings is said to be based on their direct experience of individual manners and cultural observation experiences. And their writing is authentic, fair, and objective. They define China as unmodernized, a declining civilization, and a society in need of rescuing by a modern civilization such as the one conducted by Britain. Their publications enrich the western shape two opposing understandings of Chinese culture and are read for political and cultural purposes. Their portrayals of China by Embassy members affected both the western understanding of China at the dawn of modernity and the Chinese understanding of modernity to the present day.

Baktash Goudarzi, University of Alberta
"Russo-Persian Cross-Border Interactions (1800-1917)"

This paper focuses on the dynamic nature of Russo-Persian cross-border contacts in southeastern Caucasus and southwestern Central Asia over the course of the nineteenth century until the collapse of the Tsarist state in February 1917. It draws inspiration from Borderland Studies to examine the Russo-Persian interactions in this period. These interactions fall into three specific categories: Russian deserters to Iran, the attempts to rein in the nomads living in the Russo-Persian borderlands, and the existence of large Persian communities in the Russian Empire. This paper demonstrates the significance of these interactions in understanding the two neighbours' relations. It also argues how these interactions shaped and facilitated the implementation of Russia's imperialist policies in Qajar Iran. In the case of Russian deserters to Iran, it shows how due to the Russo-Persian cross-border interactions, military and cultural expertise was transformed from the Russian Empire to Iran and vice versa. The case of nomads in the Russo-Persian borderland and Tehran's contribution to the expansion of the Russian Empire into southwestern Central Asia challenges the conventional binary understandings of the

metropole and the colony. Finally, this paper demonstrates how the assimilation of prominent Persian noble families in the Russian aristocracy, the granting of Russian citizenship to many Persian merchants, the existence of thousands of Persian labour migrants in the Caucasus, and a large group of Persian students studying in the prestigious universities, academies, and schools of the Russian Empire worked in the favour of the expansion of St.Petersburg's influence over Qajar Iran.

Nakita Valerio, University of Alberta
"Remembering the Departure of Moroccan Jews"

Before the end of the Second World War, Morocco's Jewish community numbered 240,000 people and was one of the largest and oldest populations of Jews in the Arab-Muslim world. Between 1948 and 1968, the vast majority of the Jewish population left the country. As a narrative, the plotline of departure seems straight-forward: a large group of people who came to see themselves as belonging to one another lived in Morocco and then, over a period of two decades, almost all of them left. It is the question of why they left which gives rise to competing memories, expressed in three main theatres: the historiography, the testimonies of émigrés themselves, and popular performative media. How is the causality of the departure of Moroccan Jews is remembered in these three domains? How do they reference and respond to one another? And why this is the case? This paper shows that there are seven main narrative forms about the departure and that each of these forms is accompanied by a prelude and a post-script which inform the basic narrative of the cause of the departure in different ways. By examining who remembers what, according to the discursive, ideological environments in which these memories are formed, as well as what is diminished or silenced in each of these memories, this study contributes to understanding how individuals interact with, shape, and are shaped by their societies, as well as informing a growing body of research on the effect of the contemporary moment on historical memory.

Rachel Schmalz, University of Alberta
"Does Ethnicity Matter? Explaining the Relationship between Russia, Ukraine, and Crimea"

In 1954, the Soviet government announced the transfer of the Crimean Peninsula to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Russia nor Ukraine could have predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union less than four decades after the transfer, but it was consequential in determining the fate of Crimea. Over the past sixty years, Crimea has been in Soviet Ukraine, independent Ukraine, and illegally occupied by the Russian Federation. During these periods, the three main ethnic groups were Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatars - and each of these ethnic groups made claims of autonomy in Crimea. In my research, I aim to examine how the different ethnic groups in Crimea have created a Crimean identity that doesn't represent any official nationalism.

I argue that in Crimea, there is a unique regional consciousness that is not solely Russian, Ukrainian, or Crimean Tatar.

This project will connect the current literature with newspaper articles, population censuses, and official documents in the Soviet Union, Ukraine, and Russia. By looking at sources produced in Crimea or about the Crimean population, I will create a narrative that is not Russian, Ukrainian, or Crimean Tatar-centric. My research will break down the Crimean Peninsula into three time periods: Crimea in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1954-1990), Crimea in independent Ukraine (1991-2013), and Crimea under Russian occupation (2014-2022). During each of these periods, Crimea developed as part of the larger state (Soviet Union, Ukraine, and Russia) and also evolved independently as a region. Using a comparative history approach, I will be able to show the evolution of identity in Crimea.

Day 2: Friday, March 1st

Session IV: 10:00-11:40 am

Mythical, warfare, linguistic, and philosophical literature

Chair: Dr. Dagmar Wujastyk

Varun Somasekhar, Jawaharlal Nehru University
"Role of identity in ancient Indian warfare"

This paper studies the contrasting war strategies and fighting methods of Vanaras' clan and Ravana demon king with reference to their identities' in the war fields of the Ramayana. Vanaras' forces incorporated an amalgam of apes and humans fighting strategies that were reflective of unconventional weapons with irregular warfare to fight against the Demon army. Ravana army uses witchcraft for psychological strategies and destructive weapons for emotional havoc for Rama forces.
I am inspecting Hanuman's Vanara identity as a half-human, half-ape animal to identify how it helps in surveillance of the defensive mechanisms and covert operations in the Ravanas' fortified city. In the Mahabharata text, I illustrate psychological warfare tactics that varied depending on intelligence information in the war situation. The paper also explores "how Krishna's strategies" contributed to the psychological defeat of the first three top army generals of the Kauravas. I examine the legal text Arthasastra in order to make a comparison between the epics' instances.
In conclusion, I argue that both conflicts of epic war fought and won with the use of covert operations and psychological warfare strategies rather than the employment of weaponry.

Samuel Minden, University of Alberta
"Fire on the Water Beneath the Red Cliff: An Analysis of The Biography of Zhou Yu and the Battle of Red Cliff in the Sanguozhi and its Legacy"

This paper will examine the tellings of the Battle of Red Cliff and the life of Zhou Yu within three parts. The first part will focus on the account we have from Sanguozhi or The Records of the Three Kingdoms, the significance of the account and its history, and its subsequent adaptions in literature, specifically Song Dynasty poetry, and the way in showing how even in these more pro-Zhou Yu and Wu accounts of the battle, the ideas that would come to dominate later tellings was emerging. The second part focuses on the development of the versions of the story from the Yuan and Ming dynasties (c.1276-1644) that culminates in the creation of the novel Sanguozhiyanyi or The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, where the of the Battle becomes the conflict between Zhou Yu and Zhuge Liang (181-234 CE) over who is the greater strategist becomes the narrative focus in the telling and paints Zhou Yu in a more denigrating and unflattering light. In particular, focus will be given to the way in which commentators such as Mao Zonggang (c.1632-1709) reframed the popular imagination of the battle to be a clash between Good represented by Liu Bei and Evil represented by Cao Cao with little to no room with Sun Quan and his faction between these figures of legend. Ultimately, the purpose of this paper is examine the way in which this famous battle has been remembered and the narratives that have shaped its history.

Deepro Chakraborty, University of Alberta
"On the *Varṇaśikṣāsaṅkṣepa*: Exploring an Unstudied Medieval Sanskrit Text on Phonetics"

Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, a highly productive author in fourteenth-century Kashmir, is best known for his extensive literary contributions. Among these, *Stutikusumāñjali*, a comprehensive collection of hymns dedicated to Śiva, stands as his most celebrated work, and is currently the only printed text attributed to him. In addition to the *Stutikusumāñjali*, Jagaddhara authored various texts, including a work on Sanskrit grammar called the *Bālabodhinī*, an in-depth commentary on the Kashmiri recension of the Sanskrit grammar *Kātantra*, along with several shorter works. One of these unexplored works of Jagaddhara is the *Varṇaśikṣāsaṅkṣepa*. As suggested by its title, *Varṇaśikṣāsaṅkṣepa* serves as an abridged version of a larger work known as the *Varṇaśikṣā*, which focuses on articulary phonetics. The work *Varṇaśikṣā*, also known as *Varṇoccāraṇaśikṣā* or *Āpiśaliśikṣā*, is attributed to Āpiśali, a grammarian lived before the fourth century BC. The sole existing manuscript of *Varṇaśikṣāsaṅkṣepa* is housed in the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar. This manuscript of the *Varṇaśikṣāsaṅkṣepa* belongs to a larger codex that includes *Varṇśikṣā*, alongside various other linguistic works. In this presentation, I embark on the first comprehensive exploration of *Varṇaśikṣāsaṅkṣepa*, relying solely on the available manuscript

material. This endeavour aims to shed light on the content and significance of these texts, contributing to a deeper understanding of Jagaddhara's scholarly legacy.

Ge Ge, University of Vienna
"Authorship and Authoritativeness of the Vaiśeṣika Tradition"

The virtuous and erudite sage Kaṇāda is regarded as the author of the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* (VS), which is the most fundamental treatise of the Vaiśeṣika tradition, making him the founder of that tradition. However, the authoritativeness of VS is not merely attributed to the sage but also to the Lord (*īśvara*), as seen in some major commentaries on VS 1.1.3. In this way, the Lord becomes the ultimate source of the knowledge transmitted in the Vaiśeṣika tradition.

Although existing studies have already uncovered certain aspects of the founder of the Vaiśeṣika tradition by collecting and examining the various names and legends associated with Kaṇāda, insufficient attention has been paid to the authoritativeness of VS and its relationship to authorship. This paper fills the gap by analysing the identities of the dual creator of VS and their relation to the authoritativeness of this work on the basis of relevant textual sources. Descriptions of Kaṇāda indicate that he is a knowledgeable sage who creates VS. However, human authorship alone is inadequate to lend credence to the authoritativeness of the work in the light of theology. The aim of this paper is to deepen our understanding of the identity of the founder of the Vaiśeṣika tradition through the lens of the authorship and authoritativeness of VS. In order to emphasise the authoritativeness of VS, the identity of the creator of the Vaiśeṣika system of knowledge has been gradually refined and strengthened by different authors over the centuries.

Session V: 11:50 am-1:30 pm

Monolingualism, indigeneity, and voices of empowerment

Chair: Adrian Wawrejko

Arpan Bayan and Satyajit Pramanik, University of Hyderabad
"Health and Healing at Bay: Unravelling a Layered Narrative of the Colonial Encounter in Eastern India"

The colonial encounter in South Asia, as in other places, involved creating differences, both socio-cultural and epistemological, between the British colonizers and the colonized people to establish institutional and ideological hegemony of the former. The dominant framework of the extant historical scholarship views science as a cultural and universal phenomenon, but this renders the "centre-periphery" equation problematic for peripheral societies in the colonies. The

story of how the colonizers disrupted the indigenous people's traditional health and healing practices is complex and intertwined. However, recent research has challenged the idea that the cultural clash resulted in a simple and unified outcome. Instead, it's been revealed that many factors were at play, including the impact of colonial ideology and policies, tensions between the metropolis and the periphery, and the establishment of scientific outposts.

This paper aims to explore the nuanced and multifaceted narrative surrounding the medical encounter during colonization and examine its broader implications for the colonized communities. It argues how, while institutionalizing the colonial medical system, the British Indian government was not only making use of indigenous practitioners like Kavirajas, Vaids, Hakims, or Dais for that matter, particularly during the outbreak of a war or epidemic but also incorporating several indigenous drugs and remedial procedures within the paraphernalia of western pharmaceutical inquiry. In conclusion, this study identifies a fetishization trend that started with the Orientalist view of India's ancient past. This view treated indigenous knowledge as mere "artifacts," eventually influencing the emerging middle-class consciousness in Bengal and Assam during the late nineteenth century. This paper will demonstrate how indigenous practices created new structures by reinforcing previous hierarchies.

Wanyixiong Hua, University of Alberta
"The Monolingual Defense: Why Chinese Writers said "No" to Second Languages"

There is a popular scholarly criticism about Chinese writers today are not willing to learn a second language, and this lack of desire to learn a second language is detrimental to the quality of contemporary Chinese literature. While this conference paper concurs with the observation of the said criticism, it intends to focus on why there are fewer Chinese writers who are polyglots now, compared to the earlier part of the 20th century, even though the resource of learning a second language is more available today than in the past. To answer this question, I will first historicize the legacy of the Hundred Days' Reform in 1898, highlighting how the Reform created a new language for the ordinary Chinese to understand the world; and how this new Chinese language started a pivotal shift of focus of the Chinese literature from the capital cities to the periphery. Secondly, I will demonstrate how the Second Sino-Japanese War only accelerated this pivotal shift of focus through the juxtaposition of Japanese and Chinese mentalities: Tenkô, a Japanese mentality defined by abandoning the self-identity; and conversion, a Chinese mentality identified by the need for preserving the self-identity through resistance. Lastly, I will examine Mao Zedong's vision of literature and art in relation to the framework of Tenkô versus conversion. The analysis leads to the conclusion that monolingualism among Chinese writers is a conscious choice, an active defiance against modernity (westernization) and a way to revitalize Chinese culture.

Colby Parkilla, University of Alberta

"This "Tract of Land is Hereby Reserved … As a Public Park and Pleasure Ground … for the People of Canada": Rocky Mountains Park, the Creation of a Euro-Canadian Pleasure Resort, and the Resistance of Indigenous People"

Established on November 25, 1885, Banff National Park is the oldest and most visited National Park in Canada, with over 4.5 million tourists visiting annually. Throughout the park's 138-year history, the discourse surrounding who the park is for and belonged within has continually shifted. The Rocky Mountains Park Act of 1887 establishes that the park was to be a "pleasure ground for the … people of Canada." However, "people" in the eyes of the Canadian government, Banff residents, boosters, and the Canadian Pacific Railway, was not intended to be inclusive, but exclusive. During the park's formative decades between 1885 and 1930, the "people" who were viewed as belonging in Banff was largely restricted to wealthy Britons, British-Canadians, and Americans. Meanwhile, Indigenous Peoples were purposefully excluded from the park and attempts were made to restrict their employment in Banff's tourism economy despite their image and presence being integral to the marketing of Banff as a "wilderness" pleasure ground for the wealthy. I will explore the attempts made by Banff residents, boosters, and other invested parties to fashion Banff as a pleasure resort for wealthy Britons, British-Canadians, and Americans and demonstrate the various ways Indigenous Peoples undermined this characterization of Banff and reasserted their presence in Banff. In doing so, I aim to highlight how Indigenous Peoples not only fought to remain present in Banff, but also how their involvement in Banff's tourism economy destabilized the characterization of Banff as a Euro-settler pleasure resort.

Robyn Marie Clarke, University of Waterloo
"Harmonies of Empowerment: Unveiling the Dynamic Interplay of Fan Clubs, Women's Identity, and the Triumphs of Iconic Musicians in Historical Context"

This comprehensive historical investigation examines the pivotal role played by fan clubs in shaping the identity of North American women during adolescence, with a particular focus on the influential musicians Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and The Beatles. Musician fan clubs emerged as dynamic outlets in the mid-twentieth century, allowing women to articulate and project their desired gender identity. The clubs also created space for the evolution of their aspirations and goals, particularly in the face of shifting cultural, social, and geopolitical landscapes marked by political upheavals and changes in international relations. This research explores this symbiotic relationship, arguing that the triumph of internationally renowned white male musicians was directly linked to the agency of female fans within these clubs.

By leveraging the leadership and unwavering dedication of female fans, Sinatra, Presley, and The Beatles strategically propelled their careers. This strategic alliance highlights a fascinating interplay between fan culture, women's empowerment, and the professional trajectories of iconic

musicians. Through a nuanced exploration of historical contexts, this study uncovers the intricate dynamics that facilitated this mutualistic collaboration. The insights gleaned offer a richer understanding of the evolution of fan-artist relationships across different decades.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on the social and cultural significance of fan clubs and fangirls, illustrating how these entities functioned not only as hubs for collective fandom but also as empowering platforms that catalyzed the success of white male musicians like Sinatra, Presley, and The Beatles. This study adds depth to our understanding of the intricate relationships between music, gender identity, and societal dynamics across diverse historical landscapes.

Session VI: 2:30-4:10 pm

Forms of art and shaping of identity

Chair: Dr. Kristen Burton

Michael Gillingham, University of Alberta
"The Pastor Has No Clothes: NakedPastor and Evangelical Deconstruction"

Canadian David Hayward, former Presbyterian pastor, is the artist and online personality responsible for the website nakedpastor.com. With his artwork, blog posts, and videos, Hayward represents what some have called a movement of "deconstruction" by certain Christians in North America. Linked to what might be termed "post-evangelical" or "exvangelical" authors, thinkers, and practitioners, Hayward and his colleagues represent a sharp critique of conservative evangelical Christianity in North America as well as a vision for a possible new path forward for the Christian faith. After discussing Hayward and his work, I want to provide a picture of the broader "post-evangelical" or "exvangelical" movement in the hopes of more clearly defining its terms and scope. I hope to end with a brief discussion of the term "deconstruction" and how it is being used by both supporters and critics of this movement, comparing it with the term as employed by thinkers like Martin Luther, Martin Heidegger, and Jacques Derrida.

Tamane Takehara, School of Art Institute of Chicago
"Love, Desire, Pleasure, and Frills: Queer Dismemberment in Mori Mariko's Birth of a Star"

Sugar, spice, and everything nice formulate Mori Mariko's 1995 duratrans Birth of a Star at first glance. The star is a saccharine promise for pleasure, luring you in as a delectable confectionary costumed in vibrant, candy-like colors. She is unity, a pulverized emulsion of innocence in her playful reference to the colorful, youthful characters shown on children shows; and of sexual

gratification in her promise of power, so long as you consume her. Shifting our gaze from her bubble-gum pink legs to her face- we see the "blot". Piercing, her Gaze. We curdle- the bubbles recede and protrude at once, patterns clash, blood glows like swollen ghosts under her fleshy membrane. She unhinges her virgin whore mouth, and consumes.

This paper will attempt to expand queer praxis beyond the explicitly queer and male subject, examining the shojo character and its retention of queer transience through space and time alongside the sociopolitical, and personal constellations leading up to, and constructing Mori's Birth of a Star. Mori's extensive aesthetic and formal references to shojo culture, and its role in fracturing desire from reality traces back to lesbian history and its virtual experiences between a reality that dismembers their existence, and the ephemeral fantasy of lesbian expression. I argue the work is not only conceived from dichotomy- Japan, Mori, and the Artist- but represents a suspension. Love, desire, and pleasure burst like embers at our fingertips when we weld our gaze to the Star. We must take that hellfire, and transform.

Ronit Ghosh, University of Chicago
"Mapping Jazz in India and India in Jazz: Improvisations and Encounters"

Studying jazz in early twentieth century India involves tracking its myriad routes, its multiple mediations and the discursive horizons it forged and within which it operated and still operates. Even a cursory glance at the ways in which jazz has unfolded over specific locations and across boundaries firmly establishes the status of jazz as a shifting signifier, always spilling over, adapting to and in a promiscuous proximity with local genres and practices of musicking, both subsuming and reshaping not only repertoires, but also the very cultural attitudes towards what music and music-making mean. This presentation looks at the little-attended-to moments during the mid-twentieth century when American popular music rubs sonic shoulders with a plethora of other musical and performative genres within the complex soundscape of colonial modernity in India and asks whether the "Indian" in "Indian Jazz" is just an adjective, which otherwise denotes an essentially African American musical genre. To address this question, the presentation engages with the personal archives of the Chicago jazzman Roy Butler, who was among the most important and influential figures during the late-colonial jazz age in India. Engagement with the personal archives of Butler, I hope, will bring out the ways in which Indian Jazz during the late-colonial period was less an achieved form and more a result of complex financial, racial, technological, linguistic, and most importantly racial negotiations of colonial metropoles in India during the

1930s.Jazz, I try to show, resides in local histories and travels of musicians and is the result of complex cultural negotiations, always occupying a space of liminality and working often as a trope that makes visible histories of migration, appropriation, globalization, and diaspora.

Vincent Veerbeek, University of Helsinki

"Marching to Their Own Drum: United States Government Boarding School Bands and Identity Formation among Native American Musicians, 1880-1918"

When the United States government established a network of boarding schools in the late nineteenth century as part of their attempts to assimilate Native American people and erase their cultural identities, music played a central role in this settler-colonial project. Marching bands were particularly significant in shaping the sound and culture of these schools, and officials viewed them as a powerful tool of assimilation. In reality, however, students used music to develop their own identities both as Indigenous people and as Americans. The importance of marching bands to identity formation at government boarding schools is particularly evident in the stories of former pupils who later led their own school bands and taught the next generation of Native Americans.

In this conference presentation, I will discuss the experiences of several Native American marching band directors to demonstrate how different individuals approached questions of individual and collective identity in the context of music education, settler colonialism and assimilation. In my research thus far, I have identified over sixty Indigenous musicians who spent part of their careers leading school bands and navigating the at times contrasting demands of their own communities and mainstream American society. Better understanding this diverse group of Indigenous musicians and the approaches they took to the boarding school system adds a new layer of complexity to this story and centers Native American experiences. Finally, it demonstrates how young Native Americans used boarding school education to participate in US society on their own terms and make themselves heard.

Day 3: Saturday, March 2nd

Session VII: 9:30-11:10 am

Identity in Classical material and literary evidence

Chair: Prof. Margriet Haagsma

Dustin Berndt-Setter, University of Alberta
"Challenging the Spartan 'Mirage' by Redefining the Greek Standard for Burials"
Ancient sources, like Plutarch, have written on the Spartan burial practices by depicting them as 'unique' through the acceptance and practice of intracommunal burials compared to extracommunal burials. Through the portrayal of Spartan burials in ancient sources, such as Herodotus, Plutarch, and Pausanias, Sparta was depicted as being the exception to the Greek

standard . However, the ancient sources on Spartan burials are not reliable, thus, resulting in modern scholars relying on material evidence to infer an accurate prediction about past societies . This paper will address the flaws and inconsistencies within the ancient sources' description of Spartan funerary practices and illustrate how Sparta was a part of the Greek 'standard'. This will be accomplished by using recent archaeological evidence showcasing extracommunal and intracommunal burial practices from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period to contradict the existing ancient sources illustration of Sparta's 'unique' burial practices. Furthermore, this paper will compare Sparta with its neighbouring poleis, Corinth and Argos, to show how their archaeological evidence also depicts the mixture of intracommunal and extracommunal practices from the Archaic to Classical period. Thus, I argue that the preconceived 'unique' intracommunal burial practices of Sparta are inaccurate based on the archaeological evidence, which instead supports that the Greek standard utilized a mixture of intracommunal and extracommunal burial practices.

Caden Hanrahan, University of Washington
"Athena's Epiphanies in the Odyssey: A Study of Gender and Status in Homeric Society"

In Homer's Odyssey, Athena acts though the medium of disguised divine epiphanies to manipulate social situations to achieve her goal of bringing Odysseus back to Ithaka. Her epiphanies illuminate the mortal social structures and the sociopolitical dynamics of Homeric society. In other words, Athena alters her form based on the mortals she is interacting with in specific circumstances, taking into account their gender, status, and age. Athena's variety of presentations reflect the way she is gendered in myth, displaying both masculine and feminine associations despite the fact that they are highly distinct in the Homeric world. When Athena appears to mortals, she integrates herself into the mortal world in the form that achieves the best social dynamics based on the circumstances. Depending on her the situation, she takes a variety of forms: man, woman, familiar friend, stranger. Her choices are deliberate. In order to ensure safe effective contact with mortals, she accounts for gender and status during these interactions in order to respect social boundaries and to build new, and maintain pre-existing, relationships. This paper covers Athena's interactions with Telemachus as Mentor and Mentes, the feminine forms she takes on with Nausicaa and Penelope, and Athena as the shepherd who meets Odysseus on Ithaca. The gender and status of the mortal form Athena takes is key to how she influences characters of different genders and ages, and, therefore, the success of her plan for Odysseus to return to Ithaka.

Sophie McGurk, Trinity College Dublin
"'A Certain Greek Kinship': Ireland, Ancient Greece and Hibernian Philhellenism"

The study of Classics in Ireland, and the respect it commanded, dates back to the beginning of the Middle Ages. However, it was not until 1976, that W. B. Stanford released his seminal work,

'Ireland and the Classical Tradition'. This was a work that was the first of its kind, in what Stanford rightly called a "neglected field". This work is essentially a catalogue of classical interaction in Ireland. It is useful and provides a chronological and interdisciplinary overview of the classical in Ireland. However, my paper aims to show how terms like the 'Irish Classical Tradition' are, in fact, lacking and do not portray the tensions that arise from the complex and unique cultural mosaic that is present in the history of Irish classicism.

My paper will illustrate how I see classicism in Ireland as three-fold: as resulting indirectly and with literature at its root yet remaining pervasive in society and civic life; as consistently philhellenic; and as characterised by non-specialists in popular opinion. For this reason, in my research, I have elected to use a new term to denote this very non-traditional tradition: 'Hibernian Philhellenism'. My talk will examine the factors that have contributed to my designation of this term and offer an exploration into the unique relationship that Ireland has to Greek antiquity, a relationship that was once referred to by J. M. Synge as a "certain Greek kinship."

Alex Nguyen, University of Pennsylvania
"What's in a Name, Telamonides?: Telamonian Teucer's Dual Ethnicity, Bastardy, and Agency"

In Homeric epic and Greek tragic scholarship, the character of Teucer, son of Telamon, has often been reduced to being fuel for the progression of others' narratives. Rarely is Teucer's independent narrative the main subject of discourse, and when it is, his illegitimacy – born of a Greek king and an enslaved Trojan – is the chief concern. I argue that Teucer's Greco-Trojan identity specifically should be considered the most prevalent aspect of his character and makes him an invaluable perspective for both Iliadic and tragic narratives.

The tragic and epic audience is constantly reminded of this dual identity in his appearances. Being the son of Achaean lord Telamon and Trojan princess Hesione, the Iliad's central conflict involves first cousins from both sides of his family — Achilles, his father's nephew, and Hector, his mother's. Teucer's split ethnicity contributes to the Iliad's central theme – intimate representation of both belligerents. Homer points to his mother's identity in several allusions to wider epic tradition, which Apollodorus and Diodorus' (Hellenistic historians of myth) accounts reflect. Sophocles and Euripides play on his internal and external conflict in the Ajax and the Helen, respectively. The continuation of this leitmotif in his postbellum development in other works, such as Lycophron's Alexandra, is a primary factor in the resolution of his tale. Ultimately, Teucer's ethnic identity eclipses his bastardy in narrative and thematic importance, and by eventually taking ownership of both, he breaks both Trojan and Achaean molds, standing as a figure of excellence in his own right.

Session VIII: 11:20-1:00 pm

Landscapes, ecosystems, and local/national identities

Chair: Prof. Liza Piper

Srishti Bhatia, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), India
"Dynamic Paradoxes: Tribal Identity, Modernity, and Pedagogy in Assam's Tea Tribes"

The present study critically engages with the normativity of tribal pedagogy by exploring the intricate dynamics between culture, modernity, education, and pedagogy in the context of tribal communities. Specifically, the study focuses on the Tea Tribes of Assam, a unique-heterogeneous community that experienced socio-spatial dislocation during the colonial era. The study aims to understand how the tea plantations workers negotiate their cultural identity while embracing mainstream modernity, thereby challenging prevailing assumptions about tribal pedagogy.

The study acknowledges the paradox faced by tribal communities as they navigate the tension between preserving their identity, values, and culture and engaging with the demands of modernity. Unlike other tribal groups, the Tea Tribes' perspective is shaped by their forced relocation from states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh to tea plantations in Assam. This century-old process of spatial displacement and subsequent integration into a new environment has resulted in a complex process of self-reconstitution and transformed aspirations. While individual nostalgia for their ancestral land remains, the collective focus of the Tea Tribes has shifted towards seeking state intervention for socioeconomic development.

To investigate these dynamics, the study adopted a qualitative research methodology. It involves in-depth interviews, group discussions, and observations to capture the lived experiences, perspectives and aspirations of the Tea Tribes, tea estate managers, owners, and other stakeholders. The data collected has been analysed through thematic analysis, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between education, modernity, development, displacement, and ecology in shaping tribal identity and pedagogical practices.

By critically examining the experiences and perspectives of the Tea Tribes, this study aimed to challenge existing approaches to tribal pedagogy and offer insights into the complexities of negotiating culture within educational contexts. The findings contribute to theoretical discussions on the intersections of culture, modernity, and education, while also informing policy and practice in fostering inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches for tribal communities.

Rajashree Samal, IIT Bhubaneswar
"Sustaining Identities: Ecotourism and Cultural Dynamics in Chilika Lagoon, India"

Ecotourism, as a growing business, not only functions as an economic engine but also plays an important role in forming and negotiating individual and societal identities. This research seeks to investigate the intricate dynamics of identities within the realm of ecotourism from an economic standpoint. Lake Chilika in eastern India is a fascinating case study because of the diverse cultural heritage and the mutually beneficial connections between local people and the growing ecotourism industry. The research utilized a mixed-methods design, delving deeply into how cultural narratives contribute to the maintenance or transformation of local identities while also shaping the ecotourism experience for visitors using qualitative interviews, questionnaires, and the analysis of secondary data. The reciprocal relationship between economic factors and identity formation in ecotourism is a complex and underexplored area that merits dedicated scholarly attention. The study aims to provide insights into the economic impact of identity dynamics within this sector by examining how identities influence tourist preferences, destination choices, and overall engagement with ecotourism activities. Furthermore, the research will explore the economic relevance of historical identities in the context of ecotourism, examining how heritage and cultural narratives contribute to the economic sustainability of ecotourism destinations. Insights for policymakers, local communities, and academics alike can be gleaned from this study of the complex relationships between culture, identity, and ecotourism.

Chris Chang-Yen Phillips, University of Alberta
"The National Interest: How the Royal Ontario Museum failed (and then succeeded) to collect fossils in the Burgess Shale"

In the Burgess Shale fossil deposits of BC's Yoho National Park, rich underwater ecosystems are preserved that present invitations to reframe our past beyond national identities. In the 1970s though, permit negotiations between scientists and park managers embedded the fossils deeper into the iconography of Canadian natural heritage. In this talk, Chris Chang-Yen Phillips will share his research about two different requests that Royal Ontario Museum paleontologist Desmond Collins made to collect these fossils in the 1970s: one that was denied, and one that succeeded. Initially, Collins underestimated the sway of the "wilderness" discourse and the influence of the Geological Survey of Canada over Parks Canada officials. Later, he adapted to this reality by appealing to the discourse of Canadian nationalism, and by securing the Geological Survey of Canada's endorsement. Parks officials found this second request impossible to refuse, because they could not imagine a way to deny a Canadian museum access to fossils already on display in Washington and London. They welcomed the Royal Ontario Museum team to the Burgess Shale in 1975, opening the door to decades of research and exploration for Cambrian fossil sites throughout Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Massive reshuffling of continents, body plans, and climates can be seen by comparing these fossil beds to their modern locations. The organisms in them pre-date both the nation-building efforts of the

colonial Canadian state and humanity itself. Yet these negotiations reveal how crucial the discourses of nationalism and heritage can be for scientists entering park spaces.

Connor J. Thompson, University of Alberta
"The Identity of the Pioneer: Representations of the Canadian Prairie Pioneer by Grant MacEwan"

The pioneer had tremendous symbolic resonance throughout North America during the mid-twentieth century. On the Canadian Prairies, pioneers were celebrated at events such as the Calgary Stampede, Saskatchewan's Pion-Era, and local commemorations, and it was often claimed that the pioneers "built the foundations" of the Prairie provinces, and thereby, part of the Canadian nation. Among the leading historians and chroniclers of the pioneer was Grant MacEwan, whose position as a historian, politician, and agriculturalist afforded his sayings on the pioneer a wide audience. MacEwan was also a vegetarian who repeatedly expressed concerns about exploitation of the earth's limited resources – some of which was directly related to pioneer history. The idealized role of being a caretaker or steward of the land competed with MacEwan's admiration for pioneers who "broke the land." In this paper, I will explore several key examples of how MacEwan represented the pioneer in the mid-twentieth century, a time when he wrote some of his most influential works on pioneer history. He was also Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, thus providing him many opportunities to speak at ceremonial occasions throughout the province. Through my analysis, I will demonstrate that, despite a practically hegemonic perspective on pioneer history at this time, even amongst settlers like MacEwan, there were counternarratives about the meaning of the pioneer during the mid-century.

Conference organizing committee members

Adrian Wawrejko (wawrejko@ualberta.ca)

Ashland Douglas (ardougla@ualberta.ca)

Tulika Singh (tulika2@ualberta.ca)