

Research in Religious Studies Student Conference

May 5 – 6, 2018

SCHEDULE

All conference sessions are in Anderson Hall

SATURDAY May 5

- 8:00 – 9:10 **Light Breakfast and Registration** **AH 175**
- Session 1 Icons, Images, and Imagination** **AH 116**
Presiding: James Linville, University of Lethbridge
- 9:10-9:15 *OPENING COMMENTS*
James Linville, University of Lethbridge
- 9:15-9:45 *Apostle Proudhon and Saint Michel: Anarchist Appropriation of Religious Iconography in Nineteenth Century French Caricature*
Robynne Thompson, University of Alberta
- 9:45-10:15 *The Gospel According To Tarantino: Reconciling The Vernacular Through Parable In 'Pulp Fiction'*
Lara-Sophie Boleslawsky, University of British Columbia
- 10:15-10:45 *Truth To (His) Nature: Judaism in the Art of Simeon Solomon*
Karin Anger, University of Alberta
- 10:45-11:00 **15 Minute Break**
- Session 2A Non-Duality 1** **AH 116**
Presider: Atif Khalil, University of Lethbridge
- 11:00-11:30 *Non Duality from the Down Under: The Life and Pointings of Sailor Bob Adamson*
Forrest Freihaut, University of Lethbridge
- 11:30-12:00 *Nonduality According to Robert Wolfe*
Brittany Lewis, University of Lethbridge
- Session 2B Antisemitism** **AH 117**
Presider: James Linville, University of Lethbridge
- 11:00-11:30 *A Grain of Salt: Structure and Anatomy of Antisemitic Contagion Myths*
Logan Page, University of Lethbridge

11:30-12:00 *A History of Antisemitism in the US*
Sorcha DeHeer, University of Lethbridge

LUNCH 12:00-1:00

Session 3A PLACES TO GO, THINGS TO DO AH 116

Presiding: Jamie MacKenzie, University of Lethbridge

1:00-1:30 *Mao and Mañjuśrī, Politicians and Pilgrimage: Mao Zedong's Courtyard and the Recreation of Wutaishan*
Maggie Mitchell, University of British Columbia

1:30-2:00 *The Value and Agency of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple*
Lori Noel, Concordia University

FIVE MINUTE BREAK

2:05-2:35 *Learning to Sing and Dance: The Rituals of Tenrikyo and Soka Gakkai in Canada*
Emmett Chan, University of British Columbia

2:35-3:05 *Enhancing Buddhist Tourism in India: The Case of Sarnath*
Rutika Gandhi, University of Lethbridge

Session 3B QUESTS AND ENCOUNTERS AH 117

Presiding: James Linville, University of Lethbridge

1:00-1:30 *Finding the Elixir of the Soul: An Examination of Alchemy*
Nilou Davoudi, University of Calgary

1:30-2:00 *Discovery or Deception?: Fernand Navarra's 1969 Expedition and the Search for Noah's Ark*
Kevin Hogg, Queen's University

FIVE MINUTE BREAK

2:05-2:35 *Protection of other-than-human people as social actors: The Ktunaxa, Grizzly Bear Spirit, and Qat'muk*
Robynne Thompson, University of Alberta

2:35-3:05 *Touched by an Alien*
Kimberley Humphries, University of Lethbridge

3:05-3:20 15 Minute Break

Session 4A NON DUALITY 2

AH 116

Presiding:

3:20-3:50 *What Remains: A Look at Adyashanti*
Brittany Lewis, University of Lethbridge

3:50-4:20 *Gangaji - Shining Truth in the Shadow of Advaita Vedanta*
Jordan Wingfield, University of Lethbridge

**Dinner
Reservations Required**

5:30 p.m. AH 100

Keynote Address:

Prof. Jamie MacKenzie, University of Lethbridge
Shaman, Christian, Bureaucrat, Cop: Religion and Secrecy in Guatemala

SUNDAY MAY 8

Session 5A Islam and the Western Encounters

AH 116

Presider: Atif Khalil, University of Lethbridge

9:00-9:30 *Networks of Power: American Presbyterians and the Use of Girls' Education in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Egypt*
Jessica Gobran, University of Calgary

9:30-10:00 *The Fight or Flight Response Hijabi Style: A Phenomenological Approach to the Dichotomy between the Oppressive Hijab and the Liberating Hijab*
Lilian Al-Radi, York University

Session 5B Holocaust Studies

AH 117

Presider: James Linville, University of Lethbridge

9:00-9:30 *Agency and Abuse in the Holocaust: Expanding the Dialogue Around Sexualized Violence Against Jewish Women*
Jamie Lewis, University of Lethbridge

9:30-10:00 *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Bringing Nazi War Criminals to Justice and the Hunt for the Ones That Got Away*
Jenna Simoneau, University of Lethbridge

10:00-10:15 **15 Minute Break**

Session 6 SUPPRESSIONS AND ASSERTIONS AH 116

Presiding: James Linville, University of Lethbridge

10:15-10:45 *Methods and problems in the study and practice of brainwashing as a means of maintenance of followers in New Religious Movements*
Kimberley Humphries, University of Lethbridge

10:45-11:15 *Midwives and Their Craft in Early Modern Europe*
Bailey Harray, University of Lethbridge

11:15-11:45 *Reclamation of Faith: Queer Responses to Christian Creationist Anti-Gay Doctrines*
Jamie Lewis, University of Lethbridge

Closing Remarks: James Linville

AH 116

Abstracts

The Fight or Flight Response Hijabi Style: A Phenomenological Approach to the Dichotomy between the Oppressive Hijab and the Liberating Hijab

Lilian Al-Radi, York University

This essay will outline the dichotomy of the perceptions attached to the Hijab; namely, perceptions from a Northern American societal position, and the accounts provided by Muslim Women in North America. Due to the complexities that accompany the discourse of the Hijab in North America, I apply the theoretical framework of phenomenology to help understand the mutually exclusive distinctions. Since 9/11 there has been a noticeable change in the sentiments Westerners have towards Muslims. In much conservative media, and in the political scene, it has become increasingly normalized to express hostile opinions about Muslim people and Islamic tradition. In relation to Muslim women, this hostility tends to have a particular focus on the practice of wearing a hijab. The hijab, in the eyes of many North American non-Muslims, has become a symbol of the oppression of women.

This separation can be depicted as a form of 'othering', which is not unique only to North America but is a worldwide phenomenon. The different implications facing women whom wear a hijab can be categorized under the "fight or flight" response, as described by the physiologist Walter B. Cannon. However, the etic pressure of assimilation yields surprising outcomes for the Muslim women, shielding them from the hegemonic burden

Truth To (His) Nature: Judaism in the Art of Simeon Solomon

Karin Anger, University of Alberta

Judaism occupied an interesting place between acculturation and tradition in late nineteenth century Britain. This meant Jewish artists had to reconcile tradition and modernity while grappling with the changing nature of what is meant to be Jewish in Europe. This study will examine a gay Jewish artist, Simeon Solomon, who began working as a Pre-Raphaelite around 1860. His works show a strong interest in historical study, carefully rendered naturalistic scenes, as well as topics from classical, medieval, and biblical texts; these were typical interests to Pre-Raphaelites. Solomon also created many works revolving around explicitly Jewish themes, often creating overtly Jewish images, highly unusual among the generally explicitly Christian movement. Judaism was clearly an important subject to Solomon as he dealt with it frequently in his works. This article will deal with how Solomon constructed and dealt with his own identity as a Jew in a modern, and heavily Christian, environment. In addition to living between acculturation into the ubiquitously Christian Victorian British society and his identity as an Orthodox Ashkenazi Jew, Solomon was gay.

These identities play out in a fascinating way in his dealings with religious subjects, especially in conjunction with the modernist tendencies of Pre-Raphaelite style. There was certainly a tension in Solomon's relationship with his Judaism as both a gay man and an Englishman, but Jewishness remains something he explored rather than abandoned. This article will be a close examination of how Solomon's work dealing with Jewish subject matter shows a desire to integrate into British society without abandoning his Jewish identity, or his homosexuality. These aspects of Solomon's work are interdependent. Some of Solomon's work with Jewish subjects allowed him to come to terms with his homosexuality, and even celebrate this aspect of himself as holy. His works deal with the complexities of his identity as Jewish and homosexual in a manner where neither was shameful, but rather, sources of inspiration.

The Gospel According To Tarantino: Reconciling The Vernacular Through Parable In 'Pulp Fiction'

Lara-Sophie Boleslawsky, University of British Columbia

Though often regarded as lewd, salacious, and obscene, there is more to the dialogue in Quentin Tarantino's 1994 Pulp Fiction than meets the eye (or ear). Peppared with pop culture references, linguistic analyses of cheeseburgers, and anecdotes where family heirlooms are found in 'low' places, 'Pulp Fiction' is a film that requires active listening

and a mind open to the possibilities of layered meaning inherent in these verbal exchanges. This paper frames discussion of 'Pulp Fiction's' dialogue around the concept of 'parable', exploring the nuanced allegorical nature of parables and their ability to impart knowledge in an obscure, yet profound manner. Using Jülicher's categorization of biblical parables in the Synoptic Gospels as a starting point, the definition of 'parable' in the case of Tarantino is expounded and applied to two distinct examples in the film. By conceptualizing parable as a dialogue-driven narrative with allegorical influence, the implications of the scene where Vincent and Jules discuss the 'Royale with Cheese' and the segment in which Butch learns about his father's gold watch can be examined further. Despite the crude language used by the screenwriters Tarantino and Avery in these two scenes, the exchanges give way to powerful considerations about the role of consumerism and family-driven moral values respectively. Whether we agree with the methodology of delivery or not, Tarantino conveys valuable insights into these themes and they should not be taken lightly.

The second part of this paper addresses whether Tarantino's dialogue can be considered a form of 'vernacular', especially in relation to the structure of the film. A comparison between 'Pulp Fiction's' jumbled chronology and the Gospel of Matthew reveals that both are structured around their 'parables' in order to effectively communicate their teachings. While Tarantino does not imitate the exact structure of the Gospel of Matthew, a reading of the two pieces in context of one another illuminates certain parallels, as the speech and dialogue in both seem to propel the action forward. Ultimately, to dismiss Tarantino's cleverly crafted dialogue as mere vulgarity is to disregard the knowledge and meaning imparted therein.

Learning to Sing and Dance: The Rituals of Tenrikyo and Soka Gakkai in Canada
Emmett Chan, University of British Columbia

Rituals in many religions serve to create the bases on which commitment and trust are formed. These bonds of commitment and trust are significant to the creation of lasting communities. Through a combination of literature and fieldwork, I explore how two Japanese New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Canada serve as examples of how high cost rituals, in contrast to low cost rituals, make forming and maintaining vigorous religious communities increasingly difficult.

The two Japanese NRMs I will examine are Soka Gakkai International (SGI), which was founded in the early 20th century, and Tenrikyo, which was founded in the 19th century. While there has been some research into how SGI and Tenrikyo have attempted to globalize, the case of Canada remains largely understudied. I examine the ways in which new followers of Tenrikyo and SGI in Canada learn the rituals of the respective religions. I hypothesize that non-Japanese followers are less reluctant and find it easier to learn the ritual chanting of SGI because it only involves chanting and many resources are available in English. On the other, I hypothesize that non-Japanese followers are more reluctant to learn and have considerable difficulty when learning the complex dance, song and instruments used in rituals in Tenrikyo.

Finding the Elixir of the Soul: An Examination of Alchemy
Nilou Davoudi, University of Calgary

In a quest to discover the secrets of nature and to gain knowledge of the celestial wonders, three important historical fields of study emerged – magic, astrology, and alchemy (Hanegraaff 2013, 21). Alchemy developed in the late Hellenistic period as a "laboratory practice concerned with the transmutation of material substances" (24). The essential notion was based on an Aristotelian philosophy of nature which suggested that "it should be possible in principle to change any substance into any other [substance] (transmutation) by experimental means" (24). In the nineteenth century, a scholar named Mary Anne Atwood claimed to have discovered the "great esoteric spiritual knowledge" (Principe and Newman 2001, 389) of alchemy thus introducing the concept of spiritual alchemy. Spiritual alchemy was based on the idea that "the physical transformation of metals required that the alchemist first transform himself" (390). The notion influenced the twentieth-century theorist Mircea Eliade who explored the science of metallurgy and the connection with the sacred in the practice of alchemy. The focus of this paper will be to examine

the theory of alchemy in the three Western religions of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity in order to explore how the practitioners regarded the sacredness of the universe and the relationship with the Divine. The theories of Eliade will also be assessed to argue that metallurgy and the subsequent practice of alchemy were connected to an understanding of the universe and thus the sacred.

A History of Antisemitism in the US
Sorcha DeHeer, University of Lethbridge

Recent studies from Bnai Brith, the anti-defamation league, and national statistics organizations have reported an increase in anti-Semitic ideology and action across the United States and Canada. Social media and news organizations have shown a rise in public support for white power movements, as well as alt-right political organizations. This paper looks at the history of white power movements, holocaust denial, and producerism in the populist radical right primarily and their correlation with anti-Semitic ideology and violence. I argue that social, political and economic unrest or uncertainty are the leading causes of surges in antisemitism in the United States. Economic recession, international conflict, cultural shift and political changes have all been followed by people fearing for their way of life or a reason behind their troubles. More recently, the elections of former U.S president Barak Obama and current president Donald J. Trump, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the shift from a labor-based economy to an information-based one have taken center stage. I will address the role Donald Trump and his staff play in the in the Furthermore, I show that similar happenings in Canada are influenced by the U.S political arena. To do this I examine a variety of news sources, white power social media content as well as scholarly texts and articles.

Non Duality from the Down Under: The Life and Pointings of Sailor Bob Adamson
Forrest Freihaut, University of Lethbridge

Robert Adamson, known affectionately as 'Sailor' Bob, is an Australian non-duality teacher who focuses on pointing individuals towards an intimate recognition of their inner self. Adamson had gone to India in his youth and came under the guidance of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, an Indian Advaitin master, who pointed him to his inner essence. Upon recognition of this 'still essence,' Adamson was released into the unbound freedom of his inner being, which only provoked him to aid others in their self-discovery. I will elucidate Adamson's method of teaching nondual spiritual practice, examining the salient aspects he emphasizes and the others he ignores. Further, I will reveal the notable similarities and substantial differences Adamson possesses in relation to classical nondual traditions (like Advaita or Zen), while I will also explore his relation to other modern non-dual spiritual teachers, showing how and where his method varies.

Enhancing Buddhist Tourism in India: The Case of Sarnath
Rutika Gandhi, University of Lethbridge

For many Buddhists, pilgrimage sites associated with significant events in the Buddha's life are deemed most important. There are three primary Buddhist sites located in India, including Bodhgaya and Sarnath. Among these sites, Bodhgaya has seen the most progress due to the Indian government's efforts to promote Buddhist tourism in Bihar, and its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The advancement of Sarnath's tourism, on the other hand, is lagging behind. Based on my fieldwork in Sarnath, I will be discussing some of the impeding factors that have affected Buddhist tourism in Sarnath.

Networks of Power: American Presbyterians and the Use of Girls' Education in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Egypt
Jessica Gobran, University of Calgary

The presence of colonial powers in Egypt throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries significantly impacted the lives of Egyptian women. In particular, various historians surmise that the American Presbyterian missionaries were critical to the Egyptian trajectory to modernity, especially through their prioritization of girls'

education. Though illiteracy and lack of education plagued both girls and boys in Egyptian society, the missionaries championed the education of the former, which placed women at the heart of their efforts in Egypt. At the surface, this suggests that the missionaries sought to liberate Egyptian women by providing them with an equal opportunity for educational advancement. However, a closer examination of the American Presbyterians reveals that evangelical networks of power, which were framed both by Orientalism and an evangelical concept of domestic morality, motivated the initiative for girls' education. This paper will argue that girls' education was a tool through which Islam could be subverted, inculcating instead an evangelical ethos in the girls, and priming them to become the idealized domestic, American Presbyterian woman.

Midwives and Their Craft in Early Modern Europe
Bailey Harray, University of Lethbridge

Midwives in early modern England were not subjected to witchcraft accusations due to their duties as extensions of the Church of England. This is evident in first understanding the role of the Church and Christianity in witchcraft accusations, its role in midwifery, and how midwives are stereotyped as witches regardless of their profession. Midwives' connection to the Church granted them amnesty from accusations, as accusing a midwife of witchcraft was essentially an accusation against the Church. Yet their position in both society and history created an association between witchcraft and their profession, adding stigma to the already stereotypical witch. Midwives role in early modern Europe was arguably one of the most important ones, and their association with witchcraft constitutes a blot on a noble profession. In taking into account the inconsistencies between Christian theology and witchcraft accusations, the concept of midwives as witches can be dispelled, allowing for a further inquisition into the inaccuracies of the early modern witch hunts.

Discovery or Deception?: Fernand Navarra's 1969 Expedition and the Search for Noah's Ark
Kevin Hogg, Queen's University

The search for Noah's Ark dates back centuries and has been discussed by such figures as Josephus and Marco Polo. The possibility of tangible evidence of the biblical narrative has long been a source of hope and inspiration, as shown by claims of discoveries of the Shroud of Turin and fragments of the cross of Jesus. Fernand Navarra is famous for his 1955 and 1969 expeditions on Mount Ararat, both of which supposedly uncovered wood from the ark. Although the tests have brought mixed and inconclusive results, Navarra's 1969 claims sparked further exploration and brought comfort and excitement to a world troubled by the ongoing Vietnam War and that morning's announcement of the Manson Family murders.

Methods and problems in the study and practice of brainwashing as a means of maintenance of followers in New Religious Movements
Kimberley Humphries, University of Lethbridge

The Anti-Cult Movement is a mostly American based community that preaches against New Religious Movements. New Religious Movements, colloquially referred to as 'cults,' have been on the rise in America since the 1960s, where many citizens found that organized and 'traditional' religions did not suit their spiritual or religious belief systems and needs. There was also a huge increase of Eastern religions being introduced into Western American society, being heavily romanticized and seen as 'exotic,' many people flocked to those religions and communities, seemingly abandoning American Christianity and Judaism. Because of this loss of Christian attendance there became concerns over the 'powers' that these NRMs had over their converts and followers. 'Cults' were seen to have charismatic leaders whom persuaded and coerced impressionable people to join their group and religion. For the government and law enforcement at the time, claims of brainwashing was a means for them to scare people away from these 'devilish' New Religious Movements, but the theory of brainwashing is still highly contested in today's science and social science fields. Studies of brainwashing and coercion are used by the Anti-Cult Movement as proof of the dangers of these religions, ignoring the studies that claim to disprove the use and/or effectiveness of brainwashing. In this presentation I will be analyzing the difficulties in studying the idea of brainwashing, and how the

practice of brainwashing is a lot more restrictive than commonly thought. I aim to look at both sides of the brainwashing argument and come to a relatively stable conclusion on the application of study methods and of brainwashing in and of itself.

Touched by an Alien

Kimberley Humphries, University of Lethbridge

In 1966, the abduction story of Betty and Barney Hill was published into a book by a man named John G. Fuller. This publication sparked people from all over America, and beyond, to share stories of abductions that they had experienced. This phenomenon, of alien contact, is almost strictly a Western experience, though a few experiences have been reported outside of Western communities, and at varying times throughout history. This discrepancy in reports of abduction makes it difficult to study the validity of these claims, however the question of whether or not these abductions actually happened is beside the point. Whatever it is that these experiencers/claimants/abductees have witnessed has affected them enough to offset many of their belief systems and how they live their lives. There are many factors that go into a research project in phenomenology, and a few issues that we must address. After I address some problems in research, I will be examining claims of abductions, how abductions have affected claimants' lives, how alien abductions interact with religious beliefs, why aliens have such a fear mongering effect on many, and a few other related topics. In this I show the difficulty in studying phenomena, but why it is still important to attempt.

Nonduality According to Robert Wolfe

Brittany Lewis, University of Lethbridge

"Do not expect that Self-realization, or awakening, will be a "dramatic event." (When you awaken from sleep in the morning, it is not a dramatic event.) Phenomenal conditions or experiences come and go; what you are seeking is undramatically always ever present - it is not a "special experience." The above description is enlightenment according to modern nondual spiritualist Robert Wolfe. Following the likes of Krishnamurti, Ramana Maharshi, the Buddha, and even Jesus, Wolfe has developed his own writings on nondual spirituality. While hesitant to label himself a teacher or spiritual guide, Wolfe does situate himself as someone who has seen the True nature of reality and feels compelled to assist others. In my own research, I am focusing on the qualities of Wolfe's teachings in comparison to other religious/spiritual dogma that is closely related – such as Buddhism – as well as comparing Wolfe's work to other modern nondual teachers – such as Krishnamurti. While nonduality is challenging to discuss (as many modern nondual spiritualists assert that language is a barrier to describing the indescribable), I attempt to provide a summary of Wolfe's practice and method in attaining the nondual realization, his sources of authority according to his texts, as well as his attitude towards various teachers and texts.

What Remains: A Look at Adyashanti

Brittany Lewis, University of Lethbridge

"This revelation beings with the recognition that you are not your mind, and you are not your ego or your personality. In fact, you are something much, much vaster." Taken from one of Adyashanti's many books written for the popular audience, this passage emulates the essence of his teachings. The key to true freedom, to Adyashanti, is the recognition and understanding of our attachment to the mind and ego and how to return to a state of non-attachment that has always been there. For the purpose of this research, we have categorized Adyashanti as a teacher of Modern Nondual Spirituality (though he would certainly disagree with any label). The core of Adyashanti's teachings - what he is pointing to - does not seem to be much different from that of the Zen Tradition or other more modern nondual teachers. They all express that there is something intrinsic, or internal, within all of us that we have somehow misplaced or veiled over with layers of the ego or a construct of the self that hides our true nature. While they may differ in how one works to pull back the veil and return to this nondual wholeness present everywhere at all times, most of these teachers (including Adyashanti) recognize the fundamental existence (if it can be said to exist) of this "wholeness" (if we can even define it with language at all).

Reclamation of Faith: Queer Responses to Christian Creationist Anti-Gay Doctrines
Jamie Lewis, University of Lethbridge

Please note: this paper is currently being written for RELS 3000, and the abstract and title will likely change slightly by its due date of April 16th.

Even as secular society becomes increasingly accepting of queer lives and relationships, Christian Creationists have been at the forefront of a religious assault against them, teaching that homosexuality is an affront to God's will and therefore a grievous sin. In response, many queer people have abandoned Christianity and organized religion as a whole. However, these movements toward atheism should not mislead us into thinking that queer people have no spiritual needs. In an effort to continue the work of social scientists to deem queer people's spiritual identities as important as their sexual ones, this paper seeks to better understand the responses of queer people to anti-gay Creationist doctrines. In particular, this paper focuses on the queer Christians who wish to maintain or reclaim their faith. It proposes that although many queer Christians successfully find safe spaces and communities in which to practice their faith, continued attacks by anti-gay Christian ministries remain at the forefront of their ideologies.

Agency and Abuse in the Holocaust: Expanding the Dialogue Around Sexualized Violence Against Jewish Women
Jamie Lewis, University of Lethbridge

This paper explores the jarring and complicated thesis that even as Jewish women experienced horrific sexualized violence at the hands of the German forces during the Holocaust, they also used their sexuality as a means of expressing what little agency they had left. German conceptions of Jewish women are discussed, followed by an extensive investigation into the ways in which Jewish women navigated this brutal climate. Recognizing the intersections of power, agency, gender, sex, and Antisemitism, this paper contributes to the ongoing battle for the recognition of women's experiences in the Holocaust. Challenging both the ongoing stigmatization of the use of sex as a means for survival, and the romanticizing of women's Holocaust testimonies, the paper does not seek to sensationalize or essentialize, but rather to honour the women who have shared their stories, and to increase empathy and understanding for contemporary sex workers and survivors of sexualized violence.

Mao and Mañjuśrī, Politicians and Pilgrimage: Mao Zedong's Courtyard and the Recreation of Wutaishan
Maggie Mitchell, University of British Columbia

The veneration of a Mao Zedong statue at Mount Wutai, one of China's most sacred Buddhist sites, demonstrates how arguments for the site's importance have evolved since the mountain's early association with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Rather than examining contemporary Wutaishan solely in light of its historical Buddhist importance, a case of Mao veneration demonstrates that post-Cultural Revolution Wutaishan features in discussions of Chinese national identity in new ways. This paper uses the presence of Mañjuśrī, telling of miracle tales, state patronage, and non-Buddhist narratives as four categories from which to understand what narratives take primacy at contemporary Wutaishan. Of these, the veneration of Chairman Mao demonstrates that state patronage and non-Buddhist narratives feature most heavily at Wutaishan today.

The Value and Agency of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple
Lori Noel, Concordia University

For the Padmanabhaswamy temple in India, the aspects of agency and value are a large part of its identity. Because of controversies regarding the treasures found in the temple's vaults, the future of the objects is uncertain. This uncertainty is mostly because we can't seem to agree on its past. This project examines the temple's history, identity, value, and the potential level of its autonomous power and agency. Who owns it and what is it worth? Who has authority over the value of a religious object or space? For the Padmanabhaswamy temple, the questions of

ownership and authority have long been present. Can we determine ownership of objects belonging to the gods? At what point do spiritual materials, government politics of authority, and even questions of morality intersect?

The Padmanabhaswamy temple honours the Hindu god Visnu. Deep within its walls are various vaults which house objects given as gifts to the deity over the past 300-400 year. The objects are valued in the billions and range from Roman coins, ancient relics, pure gold adornments for the shrines, artifacts from the Napoleonic era, and more. The temple is under jurisdiction of the Travancore family (previous royal rulers of the city). Although the family still holds social and political power within India, they are losing a slow battle for the authority over the temple's enormous wealth. A power struggle has emerged between local and international governments, as well as scholars, priests, archaeologists, and devotees, all of whom have an opinion about the vaults' contents and where and to whom they belong. Even the temple has something to say about it. Near the door of the most heavily sealed vault is an inscription which warns intruders against opening the vaults with threat of the wrath of the god. Many Hindu temples are regarded as not only being in worship of the deity, but the god's literal abode. The god is metaphysically and physically present. The Padmanabhaswamy temple is Visnu's home. The treasure, the temple argues, is his.

This project endeavours to understand how the religious significance of the temple, in combination with its political and social contexts and histories, can help to answer current questions concerning its future. Do the many facets of the temple create a comprehensive identity that can have agency and authority over its own ownership and future? Can this identity be more powerful than the historical, aesthetic, and even monetary qualities of the Padmanabhaswamy temple?

A Grain of Salt: Structure and Anatomy of Antisemitic Contagion Myths
Logan Page, University of Lethbridge

The stories that antisemites tell each other, and anyone who will listen, serve the same world-constructing function as the myths and fables of any other worldview. These stories calibrate the orienting system of the believer, the map they use to navigate the world, in such a way as to produce the horrific behaviour we have seen directed at the Jewish people throughout history and in myriad cultures. There is a class of antisemitic myth which is particularly prevalent: the contagion myth. These myths, centering around disease, impurity, and defilement show up with great frequency in antisemitic propaganda. Why is this particular type of myth so easily transmitted, so easily believed, and so long lasting? There is evidence to suggest that the contagion myth template is so frequently repeated because it maximizes on certain psychological predispositions, essentially exploiting bugs in the human hardware to propagate itself and manipulate the behaviour of believers. In this paper, we explore these potential 'bugs' and how they are exploited by this particular type of myth in an effort to understand why some people adopt antisemitic views, and why those views lead to such serious behavioural consequences.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Bringing Nazi War Criminals to Justice and the Hunt for the Ones That Got Away
Jenna Simoneau, University of Lethbridge

In the aftermath of World War II, the Allied forces were left to determine the fate of the Nazi officers and war criminals who remained after the conflict. A selection of Nazi leaders, such as Adolph Hitler himself, opted to take their own lives before they could be captured by the Allied forces. Still, more Nazi officials were arrested, tried, and convicted of war crimes. The Nuremberg trials were a historically unique solution to an unprecedented event, and the legislation produced in support of these trials remain valid international laws maintained by the United Nations today. However, there were many Nazis who resisted arrest and remained free and at large for considerable lengths of time before being captured by judiciary forces. War criminals like Adolf Eichmann managed to flee former Nazi territories through well-travelled smuggling routes. Their destination, Italy, allowed for the implication of the Catholic Church in the flight of Nazi fugitives. Eventually, these individuals would be relocated to South or North America, some even settling in Canada, where they would live under assumed names as national citizens. Eichmann himself took refuge in Argentina for an entire decade, before he was illegally abducted by Israeli agents to be put on trial for his crimes. The

purpose of this paper is to illustrate that justice against Nazi Germany was a strong, worldwide priority after the war. The need for justice was so great that international laws were made, modified, and broken in the pursuit of Nazi prosecution, and men were hauled across the world to face punishment for their crimes.

Protection of other-than-human people as social actors: The Ktunaxa, Grizzly Bear Spirit, and Qat'muk
Robynne Thompson, University of Alberta

On November 2, 2017, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) rendered a decision on Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia (Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations), dismissing the appeal of the Ktunaxa Nation Council. The SCC decision permits the development of a proposed ski resort in an area of the Jumbo Valley in British Columbia. The proposed resort would be situated within Qat'muk, an area of the Traditional Territory of the Ktunaxa First People. Qat'muk is home to the Grizzly Bear Spirit and is the place where grizzly bears go to dance and heal. The proposed ski resort would entail the development of permanent overnight human accommodation in Qat'muk, irreversibly causing the Grizzly Bear Spirit to leave the area and impeding use of the land by grizzly bears. The case can be characterized as a conflict between the protection of Indigenous religious freedoms and settler economic interests, representing the significant implications of differing ontologies; one in which land and place have real spiritual agency and another in which religious practice is individualized and privatized. This presentation will explore the relationships between the Grizzly Bear Spirit, grizzly bears, the land, and humans from the perspective of anthropology-beyond-the-human. Acknowledging spirit, animal, land, and human as social actors provides a foundation for tracing inter-being corporate and kin relations, politics of exchange, and semiotic modes shared between the Grizzly Bear Spirit, grizzly bears, the land, and humans. More broadly, this paper explores the legal and political implications of not taking informants and their ontological realities seriously.

Apostle Proudhon and Saint Michel: Anarchist Appropriation of Religious Iconography in Nineteenth Century French Caricature
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This presentation focuses on the sociopolitical, religious, and ideological complexities of state transitions in nineteenth century France demonstrated through satire and caricature. I question why political images that signify seemingly anti-institutional ideologies appropriate religious, specifically Christian, iconography. Furthermore, do caricatures, functioning as icons, prompt anarchist meditation or action? To address these questions I investigate Honoré Daumier's caricature, P.J. Proudhon, 1849 and Alfred LePetit's Louise Michel, 1880. Daumier's caricature depicting French anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon represents the figure as an apostle and similarly, Alfred LePetit's icon of Louise Michel, a leader of the Paris Commune, imbues the figure with sainthood. Examining the relationships between the secularization and anti-clericalism, gender and violence, and the rise of Marxism and French anarchism provides links to the moralizing and legitimizing functions of print culture. The belief in the morality and spirituality of ideological figures, created through appropriation of religious symbolism, imbues the caricatures with spiritual embodiments of the idealized political leaders. In conclusion, I attempt to contribute to discourse concerning the purpose of satire in both a historical and contemporary context as tools that contain the power to provoke thoughts, actions, constructions of identity, and ultimately, to alter religious or transcendent realities.

Gangaji - Shining Truth in the Shadow of Advaita Vedanta
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The self-proclaimed enlightened person, Gangaji, holds that liberation, or the actualization of some higher truth beyond our reality is readily available to all beings with no need for any doctrine. As a child, she claims to have been always searching for happiness in life, and only found it through her teacher Poonjaji while traveling in India. It is from his teachings that Gangaji sees the world as inherently non-dual, and seeks to spread the non-teachings to all who seek to listen. Though modern in time, her ideas are starkly reminiscent of older thinkers such as Sankara and Gaudapada, who made their names through the ideas of radical non-dualistic philosophies known as Advaita Vedanta.

The aim of this research paper is to quantify the beliefs and ideals held by Gangaji in relation to three targeted questions that triangulate her place in relation to the older philosophies of Sankara and Gaudapada. Translated works such as *The Sri Sankaracharya* (1949), and *The Gaudapada-Karika* (1953) will be used to express these ideas. Her past life will be briefly covered, followed by the systematic breakdown of themes and ideas held in the core of her beliefs reflected in a series of her written works, such as *Hidden Treasure* (2012), and *You Are That* (2007). Finally, her stance on the role of teachers, practices, and scriptures on the journey to becoming enlightened will be explained and how this differs or coincides with past thinkers of Vedanta. In addition, other philosophies that seem to coincide with her own will be discussed, such as Daoism and Buddhism. With this, the summation of her works will be boiled down into a form that is more easily understood and gives definition to the seemingly elusive ideas held by Gangaji and other thinkers like her.

