



Kwantlen Polytechnic University and
Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural
Studies Presents

**(Re)Imagining the Indian Ocean World: A
Symposium on Literature and Culture
October 24-25, 2023**



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Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies Presents

(Re)Imagining the Indian Ocean World: A Symposium on Literature and Culture October 24-25, 2023

A Hybrid Conference (all times are PST – Vancouver zone)

Please check your respective time zone.

Conference Convener: Dr. Asma Sayed

Conference Co-Convener: Dr. Pushpa Raj Acharya

Event Management Team: Zahra Mohamud, Lidia Bardina-Arnaud, Cathy Parlee, Dervla Hagan

Financial Support: Canada Research Chairs program (CRC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Office of the Provost

Tech Support: Christopher Croda, Sean Price, David Clarke

Media and Communications: Matt Hoekstra, Sucheta Singh, Byron Dueck

Volunteers: Sean Kirk, Aneil Sidhu, Hamad Nazar

Supported by: Faculty of Arts, Office of the Provost, Office of Research Services, and the Department of English

All attendees (in-person and online) must be registered.

Zoom links will be emailed to *registered* participants only. For cyber safety, please do not share the links.

For registration details, please see: <https://www.kpu.ca/reimagining-indian-ocean>

Conference Venue: KPU Surrey Campus, 12666 76 Avenue, Surrey

Note: Parallel Sessions will be held in:

Cedar Boardroom, Cedar Building, KPU Surrey campus = Zoom Room 1

Main Boardroom, Room # 213, Main Building, KPU Surrey campus = Zoom Room 2

Conference Centre, Cedar Building, KPU Surrey campus = Zoom Room 2



Territorial Acknowledgement: *We at Kwantlen Polytechnic University respectfully acknowledge that we live, work and study in a region that overlaps with the unceded traditional and ancestral First Nations territories of the Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt, and Kwikwetlem; and with the lands of the Kwantlen First Nation, which gifted its name to this university.*

In the cause of reconciliation, we recognize our commitment to address and reduce ongoing systemic colonialism, oppression and racism that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience.

Day 1: Tuesday, October 24

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.: Registration (Cedar Boardroom)

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.- Sessions 1 and 2

<p>Session 1 – Poetic Encounters in the Ocean (Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)</p> <p>Chair: Kirsten Alm</p> <p>Kawane, Fiana: “Mapping Afro-Asian Mobilities: Indian Ocean World-making in Meena Alexander’s Lyric”</p> <p>Saklikar, Renée Sarojini: “To Re/Imagine is to Resist: Indian Ocean Literature and Culture in Epic Fantasy in Verse”</p> <p>Som, Tathagata: “Home and the Indian Ocean World: Bangla in Jibanananda Das’s Poetry”</p> <p>Abraham, Renu Elizabeth: “Indian Ocean in Poetry: A War-Poem from Malabar on the Portuguese-Cutch War of 1663”</p>	<p>Session 2 – The Ocean and the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh (Main Boardroom and Zoom Room 2)</p> <p>Chair: Philip Aghoghovwia</p> <p>Kaur, Rajender: “The Climate Crisis and the Destructive Intimacies of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans in Amitav Ghosh’s Recent Fiction”</p> <p>Chambers, Claire: “The Indian Ocean in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh”</p> <p>Guragain, Khem: “Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanism: Reimagining History in Amitav Ghosh’s <i>In an Antique Land</i>”</p> <p>Kundu, Apala: “In the Wake of the ‘Ibis’: Charting Possibilities of ‘Wake Work’ in the Indian Ocean”</p>
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12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. – **Official Opening and Keynote** (Conference Centre and Zoom Room 2)

Blessings: KPU’s Elder-in-Residence, Lekeyten

Opening Remarks: Diane Purvey, Provost and Vice -President, Academic

Introduction of the Speaker: Shelley Boyd, Dean, Faculty of Arts

Chair: Asma Sayed

Keynote by M. G. Vassanji: “Worlds Looking Out: Porbandar and Dar”

2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Networking and Coffee Break (Conference Centre)

3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Sessions 3 and 4

<p>Session 3 – Fictionalizing the Ocean I (Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)</p> <p>Chair: Prabhjot Parmar</p> <p>Sayed, Asma: “Romancing the Indian Ocean: Interracial Relationships in Literary and Filmic Texts”</p> <p>Rajbhandari, Kritish: “The Smell of Rain and Timely Disasters: The Monsoon and Oceanic Environments in South Asian Fiction”</p> <p>Quinteiro Pires, Francisco: “Oceanic Ancestry and Internal Diaspora: How Nostalgia Imagines an ‘Indican’ Space and Future in Mia Couto’s <i>Sleepwalking Land</i> (1992)”</p>	<p>Session 4 – Traveling the Ocean (Main Boardroom and Zoom Room 2)</p> <p>Chair: Leanne MacDonald</p> <p>Damai, Puspa: “Oceanic Epistemologies: Pyrrard in the Maldives”</p> <p>Emmrich, Christoph: “Nepal by the Sea: Travelling the Ocean in Newar Storytelling”</p> <p>Muharram, Mohammed: “Arabian Seas’ Travels and Beyond: Traversing <i>Cities of Salt</i> through the Currents of Blue Humanities”</p>
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4:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. – Tea/Coffee Break

4:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Sessions 5

<p>Session 5: Gendering the Ocean (Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)</p> <p>Chair: Katrina Thompson</p> <p>Kapambwe-Mizzi, Mazuba: “The Representation of the Indian Ocean to Female Characters in <i>The Dragonfly Sea</i> by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor and <i>Out of Darkness, Shining Light</i> by Petinah Gappah”</p> <p>Kasembeli, Serah N.: “Gendered Trauma in Indian Ocean Neo-Slave Narratives”</p> <p>Parmar, Prabhjot: “From Panjnad to Ocean and Its Littorals: Representations of Indian Soldiers at Sea during the First World War”</p>
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6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.: Meeting of the Presenters, Chairs, and Volunteers (Cedar Boardroom)

Day 2: Wednesday, October 25

9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. – Tea/Coffee/Breakfast

9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. - Session 6: Plenary

Virtual Roundtable (Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)

“Of Monsters and Memories” – In Conversation with Authors of the Indian Ocean World

Panelists: Ari Gautier, Priya Hein, Preeti Samarasan

Moderator: Jyoti Mohan

10:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. – Tea/Coffee Break

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – Sessions 7 and 8

Session 7 – Cultural Exchanges I: Food, Music, and Cinema

(Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)

Chair: Jennifer Hardwick

Obeegadoo, Nikhita: “‘Following the Stars’: Migration, Labor and Identity in Contemporary Mauritian Cinema”

van der Linden, Neil: “The Musical Diaspora from East Africa Across the Indian Ocean”

Burke, Kathleen: “‘Spices’ Are Just One Side of the Story: Global Batavian Cuisine in the Dutch Empire in the Indian Ocean”

Session 8 – Spaces and Places

(Main Boardroom and Zoom Room 2)

Chair: Unita Ahdifard

Mjelde, Elizabeth: “Still/Moving: Maria Graham’s Indian Ocean”

Adhikari, Megharaj: “Subcontinental Flow: From the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean”

Sanogo, Manfa: “Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo’s Tana: A Tale of Two Cities”

12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. – Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.- Sessions 9 and 10

<p>Session 9: Cultural Exchanges II: Photography, Paintings, Journalism (Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)</p> <p>Chair: Dharitri Bhattacharjee</p> <p>Thiyagrajan, Nandini: “Enduring the Everyday: Tidal Life and the Agency of Water in Swastik Pal’s <i>The Tide Country</i>”</p> <p>Singh, Sweta and Vipin Solanki: “Indian Ocean Trade and the Jews of Malabar Coast: Diasporic Identities Through Folklore and Paintings”</p> <p>Patel, Zarina: “Journalism in the Indian Ocean World: Kenya and South Asia in the British Colonial Period”</p>	<p>Session 10: Fictionalizing the Ocean II (Main Boardroom and Zoom Room 2)</p> <p>Chair: Renée Sarojini Saklikar</p> <p>Acharya, Pushpa Raj: “The Imperial Wars in the Indian Ocean World: The Gurkhas as Storytellers”</p> <p>Banerjee, Arusharko: “Ghosts of the Indian Ocean World: A Select Study of Contemporary Island Fictions”</p> <p>Booluck-Miller, Pooja: “Unveiling the Chagossians’ Struggle for Global Justice: The Power of Comics in Exposing Humanity’s Untold Story”</p>
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3:00 p.m. to 3:30 – Tea/Coffee Break

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Sessions 11 and 12

<p>Session 11 – Archives and Identities (Cedar Boardroom and Zoom Room 1)</p> <p>Chair: Kritish Rajbhandari</p> <p>Compan, Magali: “<i>Incyelopédia of the Reunionese Continent: Alterna(ra)tive History</i>”</p> <p>Bhattacharjee, Dharitri: “M. V. Portman and Oceanic Separateness: Reclaiming Indian Oceanic Colonial Archives as Archives of the Sea”</p> <p>Ahmed, Imtiaz and Rakshanda F. Fazli: “Yemeni Diaspora in India: Formations of Transnational Identity”</p>	<p>Session 12 – Muslim Encounters in the Ocean (Main Boardroom and Zoom Room 2)</p> <p>Chair: Heather Cyr</p> <p>Thompson, Katrina Daly: “Intersections of Swahili-Islamic Marital Advice: Exploring the Indian Ocean World Through Gender Norms and Chronotopes”</p> <p>Ashraf, Muhammed Niyas: “Arabic-Malaysian Literary Culture and Arabo-Islamic Print Cosmopolis: The Circulation of Texts and Intellectual Encounters of Muslims in the South-West Indian Ocean”</p> <p>Awass, Omer: “Archipelagoes of Knowledge Across the Sea: The Transformation of Muslim Scholarly Networks in the Indian Ocean World”</p>
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5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Break

**6:00 to 8:00 – Book Launch and Reception – This event is in-person only.
(Cedar Conference Centre)**

(Registration for this event is separate from the conference registration as the event is open to the public.
Please register here: <https://www.kpu.ca/everything-there-is>)

“Everything There Is: In Conversation with M. G. Vassanji”

Opening Remarks: Shelley Boyd
Introduction of the Speakers: Diane Purvey
Interviewer: Asma Sayed
Moderator: Heather Cyr

Book Signing, networking, and reception

Please join Asma Sayed for a conversation with M. G. Vassanji who will speak about his latest novel *Everything There Is* “that vividly examines the seemingly incongruous worlds of science, religion and desire.”



ABSTRACTS

Keynote Abstract – M. G. Vassanji: “Worlds Looking Out: Porbandar and Dar”

Kathiyawad and Kutch on the west coast of Gujarat, peeping out into the Indian Ocean from the subcontinent as it were, have always had eyes on the world. Trade between Gujarat and the Swahili coast of East Africa has been ancient. It easily preceded European colonization of the region, which later encouraged immigration into it. I will look at this phenomenon in terms of history and cultural exchange and the formation of a distinct Afro Asian identity in modern times. I will then briefly consider the reverse emigration from East Africa into Gujarat.

Roundtable: “Of Monsters and Memories” with Jyoti Mohan, Ari Gautier, Priya Hein, and Preeta Samarasan

At a time when the Indian Ocean world is drawing attention this Symposium is a timely discussion of the cultural manifestations of the Indian Ocean World. In particular the Indian Ocean world is fascinating for its global connections, alliances and movement of people and commodities. The memory of these processes is preserved not only in histories, but also in the creative works of the artistic community- songs, dramas, fiction, poetry, art et al. Most accessible to global audiences, fiction from the Indian ocean world has encompassed narratives of indenture, servitude, and trans-national connections among other themes specific to the area. This Roundtable will consist of 4 Indian ocean authors. **Priya Hein** traces her origin to Mauritius and writes for children and young adults. Her work has been included in the educational curriculum in Mauritius as representative of the quintessential experience of life on an island in the Indian Ocean. **Preeta Samarasan** is from Malaysia and writes about the experience of South Asian immigration to Malaysia. Her work, the award-winning *Evening is the Whole Day*, detailed the experiences of an immigrant Indian family on Malaysia’s rubber plantations, and encompassed an extraordinarily vivid depiction of a multigenerational immigrant family, as well as Malaysia’s seamy underbelly. **Ari Gautier** is a novelist of Pondicherrian and Malagasy origin who has written about indentured labor sent to Mauritius and Réunion under the French colonial regime. The Roundtable proposes a discussion of these commonalities and differences, and of the peculiar nature of the Indian Ocean world, as well as a discussion of the Kreyol communities and the manifestations of ‘kreyolality’. **Jyoti Mohan**, who will lead the discussion, is a historian of French India and an immigration historian.

PAPER ABSTRACTS:

Abraham, Renu Elizabeth, (O.P. Jindal Global University, India)

“Indian Ocean in Poetry: A War-Poem from Malabar on the Portuguese-Dutch War of 1663”

Before the emergence of history as a discipline in the Indian Ocean world, poetry served as the dominant mode for representing historical events. The *hikayat* from Southeast Asia, *utendi* from the Swahili coast, *hatan kavya* from Sri Lanka, and *pattu* from the Malabar coast are a few examples. Within the *pattu* mode from Malabar, history found expression in the *patapattu* or war-poem genre in Arabic, Malayalam, and the hybrid Arabic-Malayalam. Two war-poems from Malabar are notable for their representation of battles that involved both local and global stakeholders in the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean – the Arabic *Fath al-Mubin* and the Malayalam *Patapattu*, produced a century apart, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century respectively. My paper will focus on the *Patapattu* that offers a contemporary account of the Portuguese-Dutch war of 1663, from the perspective of one of the two royal families from Kochi that were involved in the battle. The paper will attempt to answer the following questions: How does the poem/song represent a historical event? How does it compare to contemporary Portuguese and Dutch records of the event? What implications do the views contained in the poem have for the historiography of the Indian Ocean?

Acharya, Pushpa Raj, (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Canada)
“The Imperial Wars in the Indian Ocean World: The Gurkhas as Storytellers”

The eastern Indian Ocean, the maritime highway to trade with China, has connected South Asia and Southeast Asia for centuries, and the regions have exchanged culture, religion, people, spices, and agricultural and luxury goods. In modern times, the British Empire connected the littorals of the eastern Indian Ocean with law and trade, with imperial officers, laborers, and soldiers. The Gurkhas, who have been recruited from Nepal into the British army since the nineteenth century until now, have fought the wars in the eastern as well as the western rim of the Indian Ocean. This paper will examine the Gurkha narratives from the eastern Indian Ocean rim and its littorals. In particular, it will look at the autobiographies, life writings, memoirs, letters, and interviews by former Gurkha soldiers about their experiences of wars, insurgencies, and violent conflicts in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and Borneo, Burma, Hong Kong, and East Timor since the World War II. The paper underscores the Gurkhas as storytellers and agents of history in the Indian Ocean World. In studying the Indian Ocean's historical events from the Gurkha narratives, the paper emphasizes the stories of the people often overlooked in broader geopolitical narratives. While laborers and migrants in the eastern Indian Ocean littorals appear in the works by historians like Sunil Amrith, this paper expands the field by studying the stories of the soldiers. The paper analyzes narratives such as *Gurkhas at War* and *Lāhureko Kathā* to respond to the following questions: How have these narratives portrayed wars in the Indian Ocean and its littorals? How have they reinforced or challenged the prevailing discourses on empire, race, and masculinity? What implications do they hold for the Indian Ocean Studies as a field?

Adhikari, Megharaj, (Florida State University, US)
“The Interconnectedness of Subcontinental Flow: Exploring the Relationship between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean”

This paper aims to delve into the intricate relationship between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean, focusing on the ecological, cultural, and socio-economic aspects of the subcontinental flow. By analyzing hydrological patterns, human interactions, and cultural materials, the argument highlights the transformative power of movement, cultural encounters, and environmental dynamics in shaping the region's past, present, and future trajectory. The paper advocates for a nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of the natural world, emphasizing the need to move beyond limited Eurocentric horizons and embrace a new vocabulary of eco-connectivity. Ultimately, the metaphor of water serves as a compelling framework for comprehending the subcontinental flow from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean. Drawing inspiration from Eduoard Glissant and Melody Jue's eco-critical work, this paper adopts a "Blue Humanities" approach to explore the efforts in connecting landlocked, mountainous countries like Nepal with the transoceanic economic and cultural spaces of the Indian Ocean. By employing metaphors of flow, climate, watershed, and snowmelt, the study also brings in Sunil Amrith's ideas to examine how the movement of people and ideas has shaped the subcontinent as a crucible of cultural exchange, ecological challenges, and vulnerability to natural disasters. Through an analysis of political and cultural materials, including documentaries such as *FLOW: For Love of Water* (dir. Salina and Berger, 2008), *The Weight of Water* (Vallangi and Phillips, 2020), the film *Deep Bay of Bengal* (dir. Borhan Khan, 2021), and even the "subcontinental" water cycle depicted in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (dir. Spielberg, 1981), this research argues for the emergence of a new eco-connectivity vocabulary that transcends Eurocentric notions of national borders. By embracing the water metaphor, we gain a compelling framework for comprehending the interconnectedness of the natural world and the subcontinental flow from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean. Through this exploration, this paper uncovers the fundamental connections that shape the climate and environment of the Indian subcontinent. The findings will have implications for meteorology, oceanography, hydrology, and ecology. Eventually, comprehending this interconnectedness is crucial for devising sustainable strategies for regional development, climate adaptation, and natural resources management in the face of changing climate and growing human influence on the fragile ecosystem.

Ahmed, Imtiaz and Rakshanda F. Fazli, (Aligarh Muslim University, India)
“Yemeni Diaspora in India: Formation of Transnational Identity”

Forming a transnational identity is a complex and multi-faceted process involving the intersection of various political, economic, social, and cultural factors across national borders. The Social Identity Theory offers a useful lens for understanding the complex process of transnational identity formation. This study explores transnational identity formation among the Yemeni diaspora residing in the Indian Ocean region. The Yemeni diaspora has a long history of migration dating back to ancient times, and their settlements around the Indian Ocean region are the result of trade, religious teaching, and labour migration. People from one of Yemen's largest governorates, Hadhramaut, left and travelled across the Indian Ocean region. A few of them settled in various parts of the region. From Indonesia to India in Asia, from Somalia to Mozambique in Africa during the Middle Ages, and later in Europe in the 20th century, these are all places where modern-day Yemeni descendants can be found. These diasporic communities have maintained their cultural, linguistic, and religious practises and developed a unique transnational identity beyond national boundaries.

The study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the historical and contemporary factors that have contributed to the formation of Yemeni diaspora communities around the Indian Ocean region?
2. How have the Yemeni diaspora communities in the Indian Ocean region maintained their cultural and religious practices while adapting to their host countries?
3. How have transnational social, economic, and political networks contributed to developing a shared transnational identity among the Yemeni diaspora communities around the Indian Ocean region?
4. How does the Yemeni diaspora's transnational identity influence their sense of belonging and connection to Yemen, their country of origin?

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology involving desk research and in-depth interviews, group discussion and first-hand observation with members of the Yemeni diaspora communities residing around India, particularly in Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. The data collected from this research will be analyzed using thematic analysis and will be used to explore the research questions.

Ashraf, Muhammed Niyas, (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)
“Arabic-Malayalam Literary Culture and Arabo-Islamic Print Cosmopolis: The Circulation of Texts and Intellectual Encounters of Muslims in the South-West Indian Ocean”

This paper explores how the publication and circulation of Arabic-Malayalam literature in the nineteenth century facilitated intellectual interactions and negotiated identities among Malabar Mappilas (one of the largest Muslim communities in South Asia) and a wider Arabo-Islamic cosmopolitan formation. I am attempting to delve into the Mappilas' extensive literary heritage by surveying two currents within their intellectual and academic networks as expressed in literary texts that influenced the spread of vernacular Islam. The development of Arabic-Malayalam script (Malayalam written in Arabic script) in the nineteenth century facilitated communication between the Arabic literary world and Mappila intellectuals, disseminating a wide range of Arabo-Islamic literature that had been translated, recounted, and printed in Arabic-Malayalam. Furthermore, the process of Mappila canonization of Muslim holy men and women was similar to that of Swahili Islamic Literature and the Hikayat literature of Southeast Asia. This was especially true of the Mappila poetic genres like *mālappāṭṭū* (garland songs that commemorate the miraculous stories of Sufi saints/Islamic as well as Mappila martyrs) and *qissappāṭṭū* (narrative songs of the histories of the Islamic prophets/local personalities/historical events in the community). As a part of transnational intellectual history in the global south, these distinct modes of textual circulation gave rise to the concept of a "Muslim print sphere," which refers to the diffusion of texts and ideas linking Muslim communities beyond geography and time. Using the concept of global South-Southeast Asian Arabo-Islamic Cosmopolis, this study of Islamic texts in Arabic-Malayalam provides a theoretical stepping stone for analyzing the vernacular textual patterns and dynamics in the trans-local Islamic literary realm. Several studies have examined the networks of Sufi scholars, ulama, pilgrims, and traders that link Muslim communities across the Arabian Sea. These networks are essential to

understanding the world along the coast of the Indian Ocean. Still, the pattern of literary networks, which is made up of intertextual links and scholarly networks of Islamic literary texts in South Asian vernacular languages like Malayalam, has not gotten nearly enough attention. This paper delves into how the dissemination of Arabic-Malayalam translations of Islamic texts shaped a Muslim literary formation, linking Mappilas to a larger Islamic cosmopolis. It focuses on the narratives of Islamic heroic figures, and the literary and cultural values emphasized in these works. I am attempting to locate the Mappilas within the vast and interrelated world of the Indian Ocean littoral, which served as a center for printed Arabic books, a universe of contemporary Islamic ideas, a nucleus for the intellectual and Islamic resistance to British colonialism, and a hub for Pan-Islamism. By placing them in this littoral grid, I attempt to demonstrate how printed texts and translated ideas primarily transported from Istanbul, Cairo, Mecca, and Bombay contributed to the development of a Pan-Islamic global public sphere in the Indian Ocean, thereby encouraging the emergence of a potential Muslim Cosmopolis in Kerala.

Awass, Omer, (American Islamic College, US)

“Archipelagoes of Knowledge Across the Sea: The Transformation of Muslim Scholarly Networks in the Indian Ocean World”

A community is archipelagic when human relationships within it are physically dispersed but are interlinked by bonds that traverse those spatial barriers. One such classification is an epistemic community whose formation is based on possessing a shared tradition of knowledge and its transmission across space and time. This paper will examine the dynamics of epistemic communities across the Eastern Indian Ocean, whose *raison d’être* is the cultivation and communication of Islamic scholarship. This body of Islamic knowledge, the formal basis for this epistemic community, is represented in a set of discourses that are the communicative medium transacted among its members. This transaction creates the shared discursive space that situates their relationships over the vast disjointed physical area of the Indian Ocean. More particularly, I will document the transformation in the contemporary character of the historical relationships between the shared epistemic communities in the Indian Ocean basins of Southeast Asia (Indonesia) and Western Asia (Arabian Gulf and Yemen). I do this by examining how this dissemination process of Islamic knowledge has changed in modern times.

This study is based on ethnographic research in Indonesia, where I interviewed students/scholars from this region regarding their experiences of pursuing Islamic knowledge in the Middle East. The study will show that there is a shift in the structural relations of these epistemic communities where the basis of interactions in colonial and pre-colonial times revolved around individual relationships and distinctive knowledge networks. In contrast, in the postcolonial period, the interactions centered more around knowledge institutions and amorphous associations. Yet, despite this structural shift, these communities still share the same discursive space that is the cultural basis for maintaining their ties across the Indian Ocean.

Banerjee, Arusharko, (Kidderpore College, Kolkata, India)

“Ghosts of the Indian Ocean World: A Select Study of Contemporary Island Fictions”

Sanjeev Sanyal’s scholarly work, *Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History* (2017) depicts in great detail the history of interactions between nations bordering the Indian Ocean, and thereafter goes on to rightly remark that the Indian Ocean is a turbulent point of contact, since its deadly tornadoes and cyclonic storms, along with innumerable naval battles and wars of colonization, had made it worthy enough to be referred to as the “ocean of churn.” Dotting this “ocean of churn” are two very important islands, namely the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and tear dropped shape island nation Sri Lanka. Both have been British colonies for extensive periods of time. While the British concentrated their efforts in constructing the infamous Cellular Jail, and later on the penal colony in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, large number of Tamils had been forced to migrate to Sri Lanka to work in the rubber plantations there. Likewise, during the Second World War, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had come under Japanese occupation, while in 1983 a Civil War erupted in Sri Lanka and the country was torn between the Sinhalese army and the Tamil extremist forces, better known as

Tamil Tigers. Both these islands suffered extensive damages to both life and property when a huge tsunami hit them on 26th December 2004. Since both the islands had witnessed the death of a very large number of humans, as well as non-humans over decades of conflicts, and natural calamities, this paper will analyze the voices of the undead or the ghosts, by referring to two contemporary works of fiction, namely Shubangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing* (2017), and Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* (2022). Both of these works of fiction are punctuated with the existence of the ghosts of both human and non-humans, who come to play considerably important roles.

The present paper will shine the light of criticism on these undead / ghostly characters, as these ghosts have been forced into silence, by denying them a voice of their own. Likewise, the paper also attests to the fact that since the Indian word "bhoot" could refer to both spirits, as well as the past, the ghosts present in these two fictions also present an authentic source of facts about the past, clear of any biases. Likewise, the non-human ghosts could also reveal the extent to which humans intervened into the nature climate of the islands, and mercilessly destroyed local flora and fauna to make the islands inhabitable. Thus, the present paper would use a number of theoretical tools, drawn from post-colonialism, eco-criticism, and hauntology, to successfully analyze the narratives of the ghostly characters and present an alternative history of these islands, one that has not been recorded in the official annals of the history of the Indian Ocean.

Bhattacharjee, Dharitri, (Western Washington University, US)

"M V Portman and Oceanic Separateness: Reclaiming Indian Oceanic Colonial Archives as Archives of the Seas"

Maurice Vidal Portman spent close to a decade in the Andamans, a string of islands in the Bay of Bengal that the British occupied from 1858 to 1947. He was a British officer who served as a historian, anthropologist, and a photographer and felt naturally entitled to tame and discipline the Andamanese. In his 1887 book, *Manual of Andamanese Languages* (1887) a substantial portion of his translations in the 300 pages are orders, "Bring me that fruit," "carry my chair," "why is he sleeping?," "Wake him up." *Portman's Notes on Languages* (1898) and the two volumes of *A History of Our Relations with the Andamanese* (1899) that run well into a thousand pages are replete with careless glimpses of imaginaries, knowledge, worldviews, customs, community and a sense of self from the Andamanese that contrast with ominous reminders of them being "extinct" "almost extinct" and "about to die out," implying insignificance. The deliberate treatment of the Andaman Islands within the vast Indian Ocean as "no one's land" allowed for the consolidation of British rule decades before Portman arrived. It is not surprising then that in Portman's voluminous works, the sea is invisible and devoid of any oceanic epistemology. Portman's books have found their pride of place in the British archives. The historical development of the archive was crucial to the establishment of the modern sovereign state and in the case of the British, for both its metropolitan state and its colonial state, the archive was a repository of its official memory. To reclaim from the archive, a pristine and just, equitable historical past is impossible, especially if one seeks to construct the history of the ocean or oceanic people. What might be worth trying though is to extract from this official memory the methodologies that Portman adopted not just to demonstrate a hierarchical distinction between British "civility" and Andamanese "violence" but transposing on his unknowability rigid notions of oceanic separateness, inspired by notions of empty lands/islands. More than 100 years later, the Andamanese continue to live, surely with dwindling numbers, as if in defiance of Portman's premonition. This paper will rethink the archive, read "along" the grain (Stoler, 2018), to investigate the contours of methodologies that deliberately slot oceanic/islander/littoral people as insignificant, dead, and dying and suggest ways in which to reclaim it, albeit produced by colonialism, as an archive of the seas/oceans.

Booluck-Miller, Pooja, (University of New Brunswick, Canada)

"Unveiling the Chagossians' Struggle for Global Justice: The Power of Comics in Exposing Humanity's Untold Story"

Have you ever contemplated the repercussions incurred from the United States and the United Kingdom's

pursuit of domination over warfare? During the Cold War, the British government leased the Chagos Archipelago, a group of three inhabited islands (Diego Garcia, Peros Banhos and Salomon), to the Americans to build an overseas military presence in the Indian Ocean. The intricacies of this agreement, limited to both of the western countries and Mauritius, were shrouded in secrecy, intentionally withholding crucial information from the Chagossian population. Between 1965 and 1973, under the pretext of ceasing copra plantations and through the discontinuation of essential food supplies from neighbouring islands, the Chagossians were forcefully removed and displaced to Mauritius and Seychelles. In the past decade, Francophone literature has sought to illuminate through fiction the profound human cost associated with the pursuit of geopolitical dominance albeit with limited literary interest in the realm of indooceanic literature. Consequently, the comic book, *Rivage de la colère* by Laurent Galandon and Rachid Nhaoua, holds particular interest as it unveils, through compelling texts and illustrations, the ruse of the western world while revealing the losses and trauma endured by a Chagossian, Marie Ladouceur. This presentation thus aims to bring to the forefront the woes resulting from the involuntary displacement of a woman of colour whose individual and collective trauma will be analyzed through the lens of decolonized trauma theories. By delving into the complexities of her displacement, this study will explore the intersections of race, gender, and power dynamics, providing a nuanced understanding of the lasting impacts of displacement on the Chagossian population.

Burke, Kathleen, (New York University Shanghai, China)

“‘Spices’ Are Just one Side of the Story: Global Batavian Cuisine in the Dutch empire in the Indian Ocean”

The Dutch East India Company founded a maritime empire in the Indian Ocean because of food, intent, as it was, on monopolising the supply of plant parts into Europe, called ‘spices’ by early modern Europeans, but few others along the Indian Ocean littorals. Surprisingly few studies have examined the colonial food cultures that emerged in Company settlements in the Indian Ocean, reflecting the wider disconnections between gender and food history, on the one hand, and the historiographical concerns of economic, and later global, history on the other. This paper contributes to our understanding of shared consumption cultures across the early modern Indian Ocean. It examines a novel cuisine, global Batavian cuisine, which took shape in European colonial kitchens in the Dutch Company headquarters in Batavia. Shaped by ‘mestiza’ women partners of European men and enslaved, mostly male, cooks, it offers a unique window into how these actors negotiated the contours of colonial knowledge in domestic kitchens. This unequal exchange of knowledge resulted in new sets of culinary combinations, ingredients, technologies, and material culture which had never before existed in the same culinary context. It shows how these ‘subaltern’ actors participated in global processes of exchange, rendering colonial kitchens porous spaces shaped by the mobility of people, food commodities, material culture and culinary knowledge. The paper concludes by examining how this new colonial cuisine travelled the ports of the Company’s empire, and how the ongoing transformations of global Batavian cuisine illuminate the entanglements of colonial politics, culture, and identity.

Chambers, Claire, (University of York, UK)

“The Indian Ocean in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh”

This paper analyses representations of the Indian Ocean in the works of Amitav Ghosh, focusing in particular on *In an Antique Land* and *Sea of Poppies*. I argue that Ghosh’s oeuvre is preoccupied with the material geography of the Indian Ocean and the connections between the townships along its coastline. Ghosh’s interest in the Indian Ocean is established in his debut novel, *The Circle of Reason*, much of which takes place on a ship transporting migrants from India to an Arab island. In *In an Antique Land*, Ghosh portrays medieval trade along the Indian Ocean as a ‘shared enterprise’ and argues that the societies along the Mediterranean, Indian, and African coastlines constitute an ‘archipelago of towns.’ Similarly, *Sea of Poppies* links the indentureship system of the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic slave trade and examines the linguistic hybridization and dialogue between cultures that emerge from the colonial encounter. My paper highlights three resonant and significant ways in which *Sea of Poppies* intersects with, develops from, and contrasts with *In an Antique Land*. First, both books

examine the way in which the Indian Ocean altered from a site of collaboration and co-operation to a postcolonial world where exchange is less frequent. Second, language is a preoccupation in both books, with Ghosh demonstrating the literal enshrinement of the ‘dialogue’ between people from various racial and religious groups travelling in the Indian Ocean. Finally, in both texts Ghosh attempts to write a ‘history from below’, exploring the lives of former slaves, merchants, middlemen, and indentured labourers. I submit that Ghosh’s complex oeuvre confounds attempts at periodization and highlights the need for a model of belonging that moves away from national lines. The Indian Ocean provides a forum for erasing the divisive ‘shadow lines’ that Ghosh problematizes in many of his novels.

Compan, Magali, (University of Michigan, US)

“*INcyclopédia of the Reunionese Continent: Alterna(ra)tive History*”

This presentation examines the museum installation created by Reunionese artist Emmanuel Kamboo. In *INcyclopedia of the Reunionese Continent*, the artist transforms the world through textual and epistemological transfigurations. By questioning the discursive and institutional apparatus of the archives and the geopolitical world, he offers an alternative that portrays migrants of the past and present as heroes.

In 2017-2018 the Departmental Archives of Reunion Island hosted an exhibition titled *INcyclopédie du continent réunionnais* [INcyclopedia of the Reunionese Continent]. Through a myriad of illustrations, maps, objects, video recordings, and guided tours, artist Emmanuel Kamboo presented « fragments of the history of the continent of Reunion Island before the ‘great shrinkage’ of 1946 ». Kamboo presents alternative geography and geopolitics that elevate the ultraperipheral to the status of a central continent. This museum exhibit does not strive to articulate the world according to dominant theories in social sciences, but rather aims to comprehend and engage with a perpetually evolving world, with the objective of fostering emancipation.

The installation prompts the visitor to critically examine the complete discursive and institutional apparatus of the archives, the material object, as well as the visual representations or textual descriptions all of which exist to serve as custodians of an essential and authentic truth. In this reworking of the archives, *INcyclopedia* seeks to unsettle the viewer, who, destabilized, begins to question the institution of the archives, and ultimately becomes aware of their relations to the world. However, beyond this destabilization, the merit of this work lies in the transformation of the world through the act of creation, giving rise to new interpretive paradigms. Immersed in a coherent spatial ensemble, visitors embark on a journey of perceptive geography in the present, highlighting the richness and density of the history of Reunion Island. In the face of globalization and assimilation that besiege the island, *INcyclopedia of the Reunionese Continent* accomplishes a work of appeasement and, through textual transfiguration, offers an alternative history that, among other, portrays migrants of the past and present as heroes.

Damai, Puspa, (Marshall University, US)

“Oceanic Epistemologies: Pyrard in the Maldives”

Two overarching paradigms of analysis predominate the field of cultural studies and postcolonial theory - navigator as colonizer and native as immigrant informant. The first category of travelers belongs to those voyagers commissioned by European imperial courts and merchant companies to search for distant territories for commerce and colonization. The second category comprises of immigrants and native informants who serve as contact points for Western colonial powers. Francois Pyrard de Laval’s travel narratives published in two volumes provide a third alternative way of theorizing early modern travel and the Indian Ocean. While the Indian Ocean features only as a means for both colonial explorers and (immigrant) native informants who target colonies or metropole as destinations, in Pyrard’s narrative the Indian Ocean is made an end in itself, a site for an alternative knowledge production that this paper calls “oceanic epistemology.” Francois Pyrard (1578-1623) was a French navigator who travelled to South Asia from 1601 to 1611. In this paper, I examine volume II in which Pyrard narrates the circumstances of his arrival and sojourn in the Maldives islands.

The singularity of Pyrard's travel narratives is that they not only take us back to the era of early European explorations, but they also allow us to look at colonial exploration from an angle other than territorial conquest. Neither a colonizing navigator nor one who depends entirely on the translation of native informants, Pyrard learns Dhivehi and frees himself from prison in the Maldives. In *Routes*, James Clifford makes a distinction between being there (ethnography) and getting there (routes). Using that insight, the central argument that the paper makes is that Pyrard's travel narratives (being there) are profoundly shaped by his experiences at sea. His travel narratives allow a peek into the role the Indian Ocean played and all the fluidity of cultures, identities, and ideologies that such traveling resulted in. The oceanic epistemologies emerging from Pyrard's narratives challenge the colonizer/colonized or the east/west binary and they function as a site of an alternative knowledge production.

Emmrich, Christoph, (University of Toronto, Canada)
“Nepal by the Sea: Travelling the Ocean in Newar Storytelling”

Judging from the many instances in which the travelling protagonists of prominent stories the Newars have told each other over the centuries at some point in the narrative have to face a vast body of water, usually called sāgara or samudra, one would assume that this small ethnic group, historically at home in the Kathmandu Valley in the intra-montane region of the Himalayas, is indeed a people of intrepid seafarers. The rich corpus of prose literature composed in Sanskrit and in classical Newar in Nepal from the 14th century onwards, as well as the still flourishing oral storytelling tradition in modern Newar knows of enterprising traders braving oceans with frightening storms, reaching the shores of distant lands full of dangerous inhabitants, and bringing back home from beyond the sea both unbelievable riches and powerful enemies. Superhuman beings, such as flying bodhisattva horses and giant snake deities, are invoked and enlisted to bravely traverse these forbidding watery spaces, and many an unfortunate fellow Newar traveler meets his death by drowning. Often, the geographical location or the topographical shape of these immense and awe-inspiring water bodies may appear surprising, with Newar stories locating them north of the Kathmandu Valley, in Tibet, or somewhere southeast, in Assam, or assimilating them to phenomena more familiar to Himalayan audiences, such as wild rivers. Historically, the Newars have processed materials circulating all over South Asia, mostly sets of Buddhist storytelling in which travel, trade, and distant places feature prominently, including motifs, like the (Indian) ocean, that had to be dealt with primarily through the imagination. This paper will discuss the challenges of and the limits to what has been called the “localization” or “domestication” of South Asian Buddhist narratives in the Kathmandu Valley. Traders and monsters, bodhisattva horses and serpent deities may be easily transposable to the Himalayas. But oceans?

Guragain, Khem, (York University, Canada)
“Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanism: Reimagining History in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*”

Amitav Ghosh proficiently presents Indian Ocean not just as a mass of water that gives access to the travellers but also as a “symbol of universal humanity” in his novel, *In an Antique Land*. Writing the stories of those who have traversed the Indian Ocean and inhabited its shores Ghosh not only challenges the hegemonic nationalist historiography that deliberately undermines the significance of the common people and their place in history, but also attempts to interrogate the nation-states which have been engaged in glorifying their past and ignoring the histories outside of their “territories”. This paper explores why ocean as a transnational space becomes a central troupe in Ghosh's re-imagining of histories and what nuances does he offer through the untold stories of the forgotten people and their historical links to many parts of the world. Ghosh's discovery of an Indian slave Bomma unfolds a story of 12th century trade and cross-cultural, cross-national mobility across the Indian ocean, the space which Sugata Bose calls as an “interregional arena of political, economic and cultural interaction” (6). The journey across the Indian Ocean through the trails of Bomma leads Ghosh to uncover a twelfth-century cosmopolitanism counterposed to the idea of modern nation-states and their insular vision of narrow boundaries, which delimitate various cultural, linguistic, racial, and political differences, and

undermines the heterogeneity of cultures and peoples. Ghosh departs from writing the novels about “the regularity of bourgeois life,” and maintains the dignity of individuals and their stories as worthy of a history. I argue that the idea of Indian Ocean as a site of interregional human interconnections not only interrogates the notion of homogeneity of the nation-states but also reinforces the importance of writing “history from below”.

Kapambwe-Mizzi, Mazuba (Independent Scholar, Lusaka, Zambia)

“The Representation of the Indian Ocean to Female Characters in *The Dragonfly Sea* by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor and *Out of Darkness, Shining Light* by Petinah Gappah”

Fourteen African countries border the Indian Ocean, including Island nations like Mauritius, Comoros, Reunion, Tanzania and more. According to Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor who wrote *The Dragonfly Sea*, the Indian Ocean is “unique compared to any other ocean in the world because it is mathematical and consistent.” She uses the ocean as the setting for part of her book which takes place on an island called Pate, off the coast of Kenya. Zanzibar, another Island off the coast of the Indian Ocean is recalled many times in *Out of Darkness, Shining Light* by Halima, a cook to explorer and missionary David Livingstone, who is part of the team of porters that lived and traveled with him through his final years and death. As a child of a concubine to a high ranking of Zanzibar in her previous life, Halima has a complex relationship with the ocean.

The ‘Representation of the Indian Ocean to Female Characters in *The Dragonfly Sea* (2019) by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor and *Out of Darkness, Shining Light* (2019) by Petinah Gappah’ is a paper and presentation that will explore the role of the waterbody in the books through its various female characters including Ayaana, her mother Munira, and Halima, respectively. Some of the roles include mediator, wife, matchmaker, and captor. The paper and presentation will also highlight one of the sub-themes of the symposium, particularly the ‘ideas of the Asia’s and Africa’s in literature and culture of the Indian Ocean World’, as it will explore the relationship between China and Pate/Kenya through Ayanna’s journey. As the author has stated in previous interviews, “We are neighbors to China if you consider the Indian Ocean”. It will also briefly mention part of the inspiration behind the character of Halima, the Arabian Princess from Zanzibar Emily Ruete, whose memoir which was written in the 1880s is one of the earliest examples of women writing about the Indian Ocean.

Kasembeli, Serah N., (Mzuzu University, Malawi)

“Gendered Trauma in Indian Ocean Neo-slave Narratives”

This chapter uses the metaphor of the ghost in Yvette Christiansë’s neo- slave narrative *Unconfessed* to seek for a language that can explain trauma, and a conceptualisation that can be used to understand the afterlives of colonialism and slavery in Indian Ocean cultures and by extension in African studies. *Unconfessed* is a neo-slave narrative in which the author went to the Cape Town Archive to source for the information of a woman named Sila, who had been a domestic slave at the cape and imprisoned 14 years at Robben Island for killing her son Baro. I borrow from experiential and embodied methodologies such as those of feminists Patricia Hill Collins and Christina Sharpe to understand both the embodiments of trauma in the Indian Ocean and how its genderedness is useful to understand the afterlives of slavery in the Indian Ocean. How does the publication of the novel years after the Indian Ocean slavery by an author of slave ancestry be useful to understand the trauma of slavery, its histories and its afterlives? In this way, I explore the trauma of slavery as not just an individual singular past, but a collective and intergenerational present and future. In essence, how can we trace trauma back to slavery and back again to the present? The discussion brings into conversation trauma in history, literature, gender and psychology to open up conversations on trauma and historical remembrance, and what uncovering history for the people of the Indian Ocean world looks like. This analysis of trauma in *Unconfessed* explains trauma in impossible motherhood and in the continued intergenerational subjectivity of people slave ancestry.

Kaur, Rajender, (William Paterson University, US)

“The Climate Crisis and the Destructive Intimacies of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans in Amitav Ghosh’s Recent Fiction”

In no other writer’s work is the intimacy of the four continents, and further, the intimacy of the oceans that connect them, illustrated as powerfully as in Amitav Ghosh’s oeuvre. And although the Indian ocean has constituted an important backdrop in most all of his work beginning with *In an Antique Land*, it is in his most recent works (*The Great Derangement* (2017), *GunIsland* (2019), *The Nutmeg’s Curse* (2021)) that he has more assertively drawn attention to the historical linkages of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic worlds in tracing the roots of our contemporary climate catastrophe to the massive scale of racialized violence that underwrote a resource extractive western colonialism and its plantation economies. While *Gun Island* links vast swathes of space and time to narrate not just the connected histories of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean worlds through the tale of the *Bonduki Sadagar* but also the Oceaened earth itself, teeming with life and crisscrossed by the migratory routes of different species, including humans, all part of anthropomorphic mobilities induced by climate change, in *The Nutmeg’s Curse* Ghosh traces our contemporary planetary crisis to the discovery of the New World and the maritime passage to the Indian Ocean. More specifically, it through the travels of the nutmeg from Indonesia to the US, that Ghosh connects Indian ocean worlds to the Atlantic drawing lessons from the past for our times in arguing that the “chief theatre of the planetary crisis will be the Indian Ocean” as the major powers of the region and the world maneuver for geopolitical supremacy.

Kawane, Fiana, (University of British Columbia, Canada)

“Mapping Afro-Asian Mobilities: Indian Ocean World-making in Meena Alexander’s Lyric”

Multiple Oceans from the Atlantic, the Pacific to the Indian have operated as sites of Asian mobility and migration under juridical regimes of surveillance across centuries (Renisa Mawani). While scholarship on Indian Ocean literature has offered sustained readings such as Indian Ocean novels’ “anarchival drift” (Kritish Rajbhandari) and “circulatory form” (Vilashini Cooppan), my paper contributes to the new and emergent poetics of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Indian Ocean lyric. Through transnational poet Meena Alexander’s “Indian Ocean Blues” poems, I articulate the possibilities and limits of an oceanic purview’s promise to move away from the solidity of mapping and congealed attachments to forms, literary and otherwise. As a series of fourteen poems, the “Indian Ocean Blues” poems exist at multiple sites of publication across *Black Renaissance* (2013), *Indian Literature* (2013), and *Atmospheric Embroidery* (2018). Largely structured as non-rhyming quatrains and non-narrative articulations of travel between then-Bombay and Port Sudan to reunite with a father posted as a meteorologist, Alexander offers a complex example of what Jonathan Culler calls lyric’s mediation of the “formation of subjectivity.” I propose “hydropoetics” as framework of reading Meena Alexander’s engagement with Indian Ocean worlds in the larger context of her oeuvre that references multiple bodies of water from lakes, rivers, to seas. The paper contributes in a two-fold manner: firstly, in the specific context of South-South relations, I foreground Alexander’s hydropoetics of the Indian Ocean lyric as a vital feminist intervention that nuances post-Bandung Afro-Asian narratives of affiliation. Secondly, by exploring how Alexander’s Indian Ocean lyric aesthetic combines biography with imagination, I offer a reading towards “a shift from an individual sense of the Ocean to an intellectual project” (Smriti Srinivas), pertinent to the critical work of (re)imagining the Indian Ocean world.

Kundu, Apala, (University of Pittsburgh, US)

“In the Wake of the ‘Ibis’: Charting possibilities of ‘Wake Work’ in the Indian Ocean”

The figure of the ship looms large in the ‘wake work’ that Christina Sharpe performs within the discourse of transatlantic chattel slavery. Sharpe, and other Black scholars, have applied the metaphor of the wake to the figure of the ship (and its hold) to theorize about the Black diasporic being’s resistance and persistence in the face of perpetual death in a past that is present. ‘Wake work’ wakes us up to the realization that although the Black diasporic non/being “experienced, recognized, and lived subjection, [they] did

not *simply* or *only* live *in* subjection and *as* the subjected” (Sharpe, 4). How, and to what extent, can wake work, with its origins in the Atlantic, be ethically translated or applied to an Indian Ocean paradigm? Sharpe herself hopes that “the praxis of the wake and wake work might have enough capaciousness to travel and do work” (22) that she hasn’t imagined or anticipated yet. If the optic was to change from transatlantic chattel slavery to colonial trajectories of indentured labour and convict transportation across the Indian Ocean, would ‘wake work’ be an adequate tool to unpack the lives and deaths of these diasporic non/beings? How can ‘wake work’ help us to think about or re-imagine movements or journeys across the Indian Ocean, individual or collective? Is the analytic itself receptive of/to modifications, transformations or transgressions when/if applied to a different optic? Taking up a reading of the Indian Ocean novels, *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke* by Amitav Ghosh, my paper attempts to answer these questions.

van der Linden, Neil, (Amsterdam)

“The Musical Diaspora from East-Africa across the Indian Ocean”

I would like to present a talk on music cultures that spread through migration from East Africa across the Indian Ocean and its branches, through voluntary migration – related to trade, voluntary employment and pilgrimage – as well as for a considerable part via slavery. From earliest known times on slavery was practiced by empires around the Indian Ocean as well as by invading powers from elsewhere, like the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. During centuries descendants from African migrants have created local music genres and musical rituals that they assembled from elements that their ancestors had transported from their ancestral cultures. Quite a number of these kinds of music are still being practiced nowadays. For instance Zar in North-East Africa and in South-Iran and on the island of Qeshm, the music of the Habshi (Arabic for Abyssinians) alias Sidi in India and Pakistan, Afro-Baluch music, Manja, Baila and other genres on Sri Lanka, Sega from Mauritius, the Seychelles and Reunion, Afro-Turkish music in Izmir, several genres along the Omani coast, pearlfisher-music in Bahrain and Kuwait, the Nuban-ensembles in the Emirates and Iraq, Liwa across the Peninsula and female (!) Afro-Arabic stars of the seventies and eighties from Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi-Arabia. A rich variety that conveys how far spread the migration reached, how diverse its constituents were and how diverse culture rooted in Africa around the whole of the ocean still is. The talk will also connect the geographical and cultural dots, something that often can be complex due to historical, political, social and cultural taboos. In relation to this, the talk will also tentatively assess the self-awareness of communities of African descent around the Indian Ocean.

Mjelde, Elizabeth, (De Anza College, California, US)

“Still/Moving: Maria Graham’s Indian Ocean”

The title chosen for Maria Graham’s *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh and London, 1812) prepares readers to expect description of a succession of days and nights reported from a single place. Graham’s narrative, however, is international in scope, recounted from diverse environments, and dynamic, since the author conveyed a continual state of relocation. This paper identifies the relationship between stasis and motion as a primary source of tension in *Journal of a Residence in India*. What emerges from an interrogation of this relationship is an understanding of Graham’s book as less an account of residency than a claim of knowledge: about people, cultures, and land along the Indian Ocean littoral.

Maria Graham collected information through direct observation, interviews, and research which she disseminated as knowledge by means of deft application of discourse. But to what end? Sharply aware of Britain’s military dominance in what she called “the Indian Seas,” how does Graham’s travel narrative hold up if utilized as a document of the ramifications of British colonialism in the region?

In the case of Graham’s visual and verbal representation(s) of Sri Lanka, art historical analysis and examination of the gendered literary tropes she relied upon to communicate observation reveal that Graham recognized the violent impact of Britain’s presence upon the island. She visited Sri Lanka twice in 1810 during a cessation of

wartime hostilities between colonial troops and Kandyan soldiers inland, and it was not only Graham's willingness to acknowledge a burned and recovering landscape but her omission of description of women which communicated her understanding of the vulnerability of local people and land. This is especially apparent when set alongside published works by other artists and writers who visited or lived in Sri Lanka during the British-Kandyan wars.

Muharram, Mohammed, (Thamar University, Yemen)

“Arabian Seas’ Travels and Beyond: Traversing *Cities of Salt* through the Currents of Blue Humanities”

This paper explores the oceanic travel narratives within the seminal Arabic novel *Cities of Salt* (1984) by Abdul Rahman Munif through the lens of Blue Humanities.

Drawing upon the pioneering work of Steve Mentz (*Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719*), Kilian Kleinschmidt (*Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait*) and Astrida Neimanis (*Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*), the paper analyzes the novel's depictions of life in the Indian Ocean World, examining how the sea both shapes and is shaped by human activities. Munif's narrative portrays the profound transformation of societies bordering the Indian Ocean, from a traditional, maritime-focused economy to an oil-dependent one. This transition reveals the intricate dynamics of human-ocean interactions, economic transitions, and their impacts on culture and language. The novel also provides an account of voluntary and forced migration, transnationalism, and trade, set against the backdrop of the shifting tides of power during the oil boom. The linguistic transitions embedded in the narrative testify to the cultural exchanges facilitated by the Indian Ocean. In the era of climate change, *Cities of Salt* offers a historical perspective on the ecological relationships that are crucial to understanding the cultural dimensions of climate change in the Indian Ocean region. Through Blue Humanities, the paper delves into the layered history of maritime ecology and its influence on literature and culture in the Indian Ocean World.

Obeegadoo, Nikhita, (University of British Columbia, Canada)

“Following the Stars’: Migration, Labor and Identity in Contemporary Mauritian Cinema”

Mauritian cinema is a nascent industry with much to say about the invisibilized aspects of the island's reality. For example, *Simin Zetwal* (2023), Mauritian filmmaker David Constantin's latest film, is the first creative work to grapple with the contemporary reality of migrant labour on the island. The movie traces the discourse of “a better life abroad” through two distinct narratives that eventually merge. Rony is a Creole man who lives with his ailing and alcoholic father in a Mauritian *cit e*. His dream is to move to Canada, which he imagines as the polar opposite of his natal land: It is cold, and there are jobs. Ajeya, for her part, is an Indian migrant who works in the Mauritian textile industry under exploitative circumstances: for example, her employer holds employees' passports hostage in his office, and refuses to let them leave unless they pay back dubious “debts”. My presentation explores how the collision of Rony and Ajeya's trajectories, and the subsequent interweaving of their stories, brings up crucial questions regarding migration, labor and the insular economy. I argue that the movie's nocturnal shots of sugarcane fields and Hindu temples function as powerful symbols of the invisibilized resonance between contemporary labor migration to Mauritius and the country's past of indentured labor. Additionally, I propose that Rony's own identity as the product of an intermarriage between the two biggest *communaut es* in Mauritius -- his (deceased) mother was Hindu, and his father Afro-Mauritian/Creole -- complicates both imagined and real resonances across the Indian Ocean. Finally, building upon past scholarly work on indentured labor (Carter and Torabully; Torabully) and working bodies in Mauritius (Lionnet), as well as upon theoretical reflections on implication and complicity (Rothberg), I ask: What kind of ethical interrogations do such resonances bring up?

Parmar, Prabhjot, (University of the Fraser Valley, Canada)

“From Panjnad to Ocean and Its Littorals: Representations of Indian Soldiers at Sea during the First World War”

At the onset of the First World War when troops from undivided India (with a large number from Punjab), set sail from Bombay and Karachi harbours to different theatres of war, for many it was their first time on the sea. On board the military flotilla, crossing the proverbial *kala pani* [black waters], what were the experiences of these soldiers? What did they think about the vast ocean that narrowed into the Gulf of Aden, as they journeyed either south to the British/German East Africa or west to Alexandria or Marseilles via the Suez Canal? Other than brief references in some of the censored letters of Indian soldiers, personal experiences of British officers, and regimental war diaries, scant regard was paid to record experiences of the colonial subaltern (most of whom were illiterate peasants). Drawing from selected archives and literary texts, including M.G. Vassanji’s *The Book of Secrets* and Mulk Raj Anand’s *Across the Black Waters*, this paper focuses on representations of the Arabian Sea and its littorals as sites of departure, arrival, battles, and escapes. Primarily focusing on Indian soldiers and the First World War, I examine how authors use memory, oral testimonies, archives, and imagination to chart the mostly uncharted-in-literature experiences of soldiers. A close reading of the selections reveals their engagement with the sensory—chiefly, visual and sonic oceanscape—to articulate uncertainty, fear and fearlessness, bravado and bravery, and yearning—for home and the loved ones. Juxtaposing archival images with the textual, I argue that the authors articulate what was overlooked in Eurocentric works, giving space and voice to the almost forgotten. Whereas some attention is paid to “kinship networks” (Jean Francois and Jeychandran), selected works also highlight the role of colonial soldiers as instruments of repression in East Africa—coast and away from it.

Patel, Zarina, (Awaaz Magazine, Kenya)

“Journalism in the Indian Ocean World: Kenya and South Asia in the British Colonial Period”

In the period of British colonialism in East Africa, immigrants from the Indian sub-continent made a significant impact on the ideology and politics there. I propose to highlight the primary and significant role played by Journalism in this process; and give brief biographies of some of the major players in these encounters. The first newspapers to be printed in East Africa in 1892 were missionary newspapers which represented the colonisers’ ideology. India had been ‘colonized’ several centuries earlier and the resistance there had established a vibrant newspaper enterprise since 1780.

The *Samaachar* was the first Indian newspaper to be founded in Zanzibar in 1900. In 1899, the privately run *East Africa and Uganda Mail* came on the scene and soon became the mouthpiece of the virulently anti-Indian racist views of the white settlers. The Indian-owned *African Standard* launched in Mombasa in 1901 took on the racism of the European press resulting in the latter’s closure four years later. In 1911, the *Indian Voice* covered the interests of the Indian community. About 1920 the *East African Chronicle* delved into the unjust colonial laws affecting Indians as well as Africans. Its press also printed *Tangazo*, the first Afro-Indian press collaboration. This saw the beginning of colonial repression of the radical Indian-owned newspapers, the first imprisonment on a charge of sedition and deportation of newspaper editors on trumped-up accusations. *The Democrat*, the *Kenya Daily Mail*, the *Colonial Times* and others followed suit, some of the journalists of the *Daily Chronicle* (Est.1947) were not only stridently anti-colonial and outrightly political but had socialist leanings. The *Ghadar* circulated clandestinely from 1912 the *Kirti* (Worker) advocated for an end to foreign domination and supremacy of the worker/peasant sector. The relentless colonial persecution of these newspapers and their editors is evidence of the efficacy of their messaging.

Quinteiro Pires, Francisco, (New York University, US)

“Oceanic Ancestry and Internal Diaspora: How Nostalgia Imagines an ‘Indican’ Space and Future in Mia Couto’s *Sleepwalking Land* (1992)”

This paper approaches the meaning of nostalgia in Mia Couto’s 1992 novel *Sleepwalking Land* by examining

the concept of oceanic ancestry and the potential for shaping a utopian future unencumbered by the legacy of Portuguese colonialism. The book portrays a deteriorating in-between space marked by a bloody civil war in Mozambique. It also illuminates a shared oceanic ancestry through the interaction between Kindzu, a Black African man, and Surendra, an Indian immigrant. A dialogue between the two characters reinforces their imagined common heritage when Surendra refers to the Indian Ocean by proclaiming: “We are of the same race, Kindzu: we are Indicans” (Couto 18). These men do not belong to a continent, but a vast, ever-changing ocean where historical threads intermingle and their origin is too intricate to be clearly traced. Kindzu is also the author of a notebook about the independence of Mozambique in 1975 and the country’s struggle for stability. While fleeing from a refugee camp, Muidinga, an amnesiac child and victim of the Mozambican civil war, found the notebook after Kindzu died. By reading it, Muidinga makes sense of his own displacement, “the feeling that one is homeless, disconnected from one’s physical and social environment” (Howes 7). He also experiences the effects of an internal diaspora and a form of presentism in which the tomorrow looms more as a threat than a promise. However, as Muidinga learns tales about collective memory in Kindzu’s notebook, he envisions a future in the deteriorating liminal space of the war. As this article argues, an “Indican” ancestry catalyzes a utopian future mimicking the fluidity of oceanic movement in opposition to an easily traceable, fixed past. Moreover, it claims that an oceanic ancestry reshapes the imagination of temporality and space beyond the detrimental remains of Portuguese colonialism and civil war in Mozambique.

Rajbhandari, Kritish, (Reed College, US)

“The Smell of Rain and Timely Disasters: The Monsoon and Oceanic Environments in South Asian Fiction”

In *Unruly Waters* (2018), Sunil Amrith argues that “Climate is woven into the fabric of Indian social, economic, political thought in a way that is in not (or is no longer) elsewhere”. One could extend this claim to include the arts and literature of South Asia. From ancient Kālidāsa’s *Meghaduta* (4-5 century) to medieval Persian poetry to modern novels in Anglophone and vernacular languages, the experience of monsoon affects the text whether in terms of mood, emotions, structure, or plot. How do we read climate in such texts not just as inert background against which the human drama unfolds but as a force that informs and inflects the literary form and function? Building on the recent work in *Blue Humanities* on the ocean as both interpretive environment (Melody Jue 2020), this paper explores the intersections of the Anthropocene and postcolonial critique by reorienting South Asian texts toward their climatic milieu. It examines how oceanic environments—specifically ocean-regulated atmospheric patterns such as rain, monsoon, and humidity on land—shape the narrative form and themes in South Asian novels. Specifically, I analyze the portrayal of the monsoon and storms in Arundhati Roy’s *God of Small Things* (1997) to trace the ways in which the Indian Ocean shapes the texts’ ecological poetics and subaltern politics. I argue that their South Asian setting brings not only the region’s unique history shaped by colonial and postcolonial processes, but also its unique environment regulated by the Indian Ocean to bear on the narrative trajectory of the novel. The ocean, thus, emerges as an agentic force and acts in conjunction with the (human) historical and cultural forces. Drawing on Dipesh Chakrabarty’s (2021) and Ian Baucom’s (2020) characterization the Anthropocene, this paper will argue that the forces of the monsoon confronts us with the mismatched temporalities of the Anthropocene, the entanglements of planetary agency with the social, political, and economic structures of human history.

Saklikar, Renée Sarojini, (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Canada)

“To Re/Imagine is to Resist: Indian Ocean Literature and Culture in Epic Fantasy in Verse”

The year is 2087 and the time-travelling demigoddess, Bramah, a locksmith, is back on planet Earth, helping seed savers and resisters survive climate change and global inequality. Bramah, hero of the epic book series, THOTJBAP, is based in part on representations of myth, legend, and culture derived and re-purposed from the contact zone of the Indian Ocean, specifically the state republics of Gujarat and Maharashtra, and the city of Shillong, in counterpoint to the ancient empire of Rome as well as a dystopian meta-aggregate, Consortium. This is the world of an epic fantasy in verse whose literary purpose is to connect readers to themes of eco-

catastrophe, injustice and resilience.

The proposed presentation will document creative practice and poetics, which seek to explore and extract from Indian Ocean oral histories, literary archives, family letters and documents, textures, language, and identities. These are used to twist/subvert normative notions of what is epic and heroic. As well, scholarly investigations into Indian Ocean ancient world economies and archaeological finds (Raoul McLaughlin, Matthew Adam Cobb, William Dalrymple, and Anita Anand (c.f. their podcast *Empire*) are excavated for the purpose of re-imagining “east” to “west.” In building such a world, research about the Indian Ocean, including colonial and post-colonial moments, and the way these have been recorded, imagined, constituted and conceptualized, all inform the “verse/ology” of saga and character development: the presentation will give examples from both this creative process and the story engendered by such imaginings. A key presentation point will be the discussion of how epic tropes and language can be re-thought in the context of equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

Sanogo, Manfa, (Kalamazoo College, US)

“Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo’s Tana: A Tale of Two Cities”

Much scholarship on African cities focuses on urban pathologies ranging from high criminality to poor planning and management, overcrowding, impoverishment, or unemployment. The overemphasis on these social ailments in scholarship, especially postcolonial literary scholarship, creates an epistemic culture where other equally important urban phenomena such as environment, fashion, architecture or sports are often overlooked. What can an African urban space in literature tell us besides being a poverty-ridden space with dysfunctional infra and supra structures?

In this presentation, I look at this question through the prism of the creative and autobiographical works of Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo. Rabearivelo is a prolific Malagasy writer who documented life and customs in colonial Madagascar in his creative work and in his private diaries. However, a strange pattern emerges as one reads these fictional and autobiographical resources: while the diaries abound with exhilarating adventures of the author in the streets of Antananarivo, the creative works seem to be confined to enclosed or generic spaces. In this presentation, I try to make sense of the (lack of) representation of the cityscape in Rabearivelo’s writings. Rabearivelo was well acquainted with many literary conventions and was certainly not short of literary creativity; then how can real life (his diaries) be more picturesque than fiction (his novels or poetry)? Is this “authorial bipolarism” a reflection of schism between the author’s privileged access (as the national poet) to the city and restricted access of the rest of the colonized Malagasy population? Or is it a symptom of the underlying trauma of colonization on the Malagasy population?

Sayed, Asma, (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Canada)

“Romancing the Indian Ocean: Interracial Relationships in Literary and Filmic Texts”

As Africans were taken to the Indian subcontinent, mostly as slaves, and South Asians moved to Africa either as indentured labourers or in search of better economic prospects, complicated and complex socio-cultural exchanges took place. Literary and filmic texts have imagined these interchanges involving Africans and Asians in a number of ways. This paper will examine the postcolonial literary and filmic representations of migration across the Indian Ocean. Focusing on two novels by M. G. Vassanji - *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* and *The Magic of Saida* - and Hindi film *Razia Sultan*, the paper seeks to study the way these texts present erasure of personal desires during periods of political turmoil. All three texts showcase interracial love relationships between Africans and Asians. The novels also present the underrepresented stories of Africans in India and the valuable contributions of Indians to African history. Personal narrations unfold in the context of political histories, including the ugly legacy of colonization, slavery, and racism. On the other hand, the film depicts the ambiguous relationship between the historical figure of an Indian Queen, Razia, who ruled over Delhi in the 13th century, and her Black slave, Yakut. Set amid a number of political situations and ranging in time from the 13th to the 19th century, these texts offer an understanding of the intricacies of migrations imagined across national and racial boundaries. They interweave racial identities with the personal passion, but either show the

inter-racial relationships as ‘failed’ endeavours, or as an idealized romance which is imagined from the lens of colonizer’s exotic lens.

Singh, Sweta and Vipin Solanki, (Sharda University, India)

“Indian Ocean Trade and the Jews of Malabar Coast: Diasporic Identities Through Folklore and Paintings”

Since ancient times, commercial opportunities along the Indian Ocean trade route led to settlement of Jewish traders along the southernmost parts of the western coast of India, also known as the Malabar coast. These Jewish traders belonged to varied places across the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea regions who periodically traversed through the Indian Ocean to trade in spices, ivories, and other valuable commodities at the time. Apart from these early settlers, it was 16th century onwards, that diaspora from European countries settled in the Malabar region in the background of inquisition and expulsion. These European migrants or self-proclaimed ‘White Jews’ (based on their skin colour), also known as Paradesi (meaning foreigner) introduced social hierarchies within the Jewish community, and portrayed a superior image over Malabari or Native Jews, calling them descendants of slaves and servants, which served against the basic ethos of the concept of Judaism.

Another important part of the Jewish identity in Kerala is the idea of ‘purity’ of the community (which was a feature of the host Hindu religion in relation to caste-based identities). This paper is an attempt to investigate the discourse of identity-building by the Jewish community of Kerala, which had been divided into two sub-communities- ‘Malabaris/natives/blacks’ and ‘Paradesis/foreigners/whites’- through oral history and visual history narrative building using folklores and paintings. The folklore of the Jewish community establishes sacred place and time of origin by connecting Jerusalem with Shingly (ancient imaginary place of Jewish settlement on western coast of India) and by omitting their engagement with the local population. Apart from the notion of origin, maritime trade connection and strong ties with the local rulers is another theme that shall be delved upon, which ultimately reflects on the financial needs of the community. This paper argues that history through folklore and other oral sources helps one to peep into the self-understanding of communities and has the capability to look between the remembered and the unremembered history.

Som, Tathagata, (University of Calgary, Canada)

“Home and the Indian Ocean World: Bangla in Jibanananda Das’s Poetry”

The Indian Ocean has inspired poets and writers for millennia, giving rise to complex notions of identity and belonging. However, the influence of the Indian Ocean World on writers from the eastern Indian Ocean, especially the Bay of Bengal, remain understudied. The Bengal delta has a rich history of interconnections with the larger Indian Ocean littoral, as is exemplified by numerous Bengali linguistic, religious, and cultural practices. In this paper, I investigate the role of the Indian Ocean in the Bengali poet Jibanananda Das’s (1899-1954) idea of belonging to his homeland “Bangla,” which refers to the modern-day West Bengal in India and Bangladesh. Writing towards the end of the British raj in India, Das conceptualizes his homeland by drawing on oceanic networks and connections predating Western modernity. Although Bangla refers to a terrestrial demarcation, I argue, its relation to the world is mediated by an oceanic imaginary drawn from the history of the larger Indian Ocean World. This way of imagining the home effectively destabilizes the established trend in postcolonial studies to look at identity through the lens of the nation-state, which is itself a terracentric concept with fixed boundaries. If the Indian Ocean is seen as a method in addition to a place, a “world,” and an “interregional arena,” as Sugata Bose terms it, then what is the effect of using the lens of the Indian Ocean World to conceptualize the homeland by Das? What is the relationship between Western modernity and Das’s vision of human history mediated by the Indian Ocean? Finally, how do oceanic imaginaries help us rethink identity and belonging during the current climate crisis? These are some of the questions I address in my paper.

Thiyagarajan, Nandini, (Acadia University, Canada)

“Enduring the Everyday: Tidal Life and the Agency of Water in Swastik Pal’s *The Tide Country*”

The Bay of Bengal looms large in Swastik Pal’s photography project *The Tide Country*. Its presence is a natural part of coastal life in the Sundarbans and also an encroaching threat, a metonym for geopolitical displacement that spills into the frames of the photographs. Pal’s project documents everyday life in the Sundarbans, with a particular focus on islands that are sinking or shrinking due to rising ocean waters and erosion. The photographs bear witness to the fact that life continues to endure on these islands by portraying the textures of everyday life from colorful, patterned sarees and white school uniforms to umbrellas, fish nets, branches, and bricks. Pal also confronts us with the textures of water itself: from the expansive and calm surface of the ocean water surrounding the islands to the muddy, reddish-brown water that splashes past the camera lens, magnifying the unique qualities of water in the Sundarbans.

There are two main aims of my paper: First, to explore how Pal represents a way of living—human and nonhuman—in the Sundarbans that both struggles to continue and wrestles with a harsh imperative: migrate or drown. Second, to think through the agency of water, to envision the Indian Ocean “as more subject than object” (Khan 9). The Indian Ocean expresses the danger of the interregional encounter, as the effects of climate change flow towards the Sundarbans. When oceans rise, freshwater increases in salinity, and people in this deltaic region live “a form of life that is likely coming to an end.” (Khan 4). In this paper I argue that the Sundarbans exemplify the precarity caused by climate change in the Global South and echo Kyle Powys Whyte’s understanding of the “dystopian future” (207) that Indigenous communities already inhabit, as the lands in their stories and histories disappear.

Thompson, Katrina Daly, (University of Wisconsin-Madison, US)

“Intersections of Swahili-Islamic Marital Advice: Exploring the Indian Ocean World through Gender Norms and Chronotopes”

In this paper, I examine the representation of the Indian Ocean World in Swahili-language Islamic marital advice, encompassing oral and written traditions from the late 19th century through the early 21st century. Specifically, I focus on how advice-givers signal the enactment of marital advice in different times and places, including public and private settings within the Indian Ocean region. Additionally, I explore the influence of marital norms from various historical periods and geographical locations on the advice, particularly emphasizing the revered marital practices of Prophet Muhammad and the often-criticized modern West.

Moreover, my research delves into the explicit and implicit prophecies embedded within the advice, offering predictions about the consequences of enacting such guidance. Notably, successful marriages are believed to please God, while non-compliance with the advice is anticipated to lead to suffering, particularly for women. By drawing on various sources, such as Islamic marriage manuals written by and targeted at men and oral advice shared among Swahili women, I demonstrate the intricate intersections between Islamic marital guidance, gender roles, cultural norms, and varied chronotopes within the Indian Ocean World.

My study contributes to a broader understanding of the Indian Ocean region as a contact zone that has generated diverse forms of texts, including the understudied genre of marital advice. Furthermore, it sheds light on how Islamic marital advice reflects the dynamics of the Indian Ocean World, its histories, identities, and encounters while also prompting a re-evaluation of gender equity.

BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS AND SESSION CHAIRS

Keynote Speaker: M. G. Vassanji – M. G. Vassanji is one of Canada's finest and most celebrated writers. He is the author of ten novels, three short story collections, two travelogues, a biography, and numerous articles. He has twice won the Giller Prize as well as the Governor-General's Award – two of Canada's top literary awards.

Bios of Presenters

Abraham, Renu Elizabeth

Renu Elizabeth Abraham completed her Ph.D. in early modern studies as part of the TEEME (Text and Event in Early Modern Europe) programme from the University of Kent and the University of Porto. She is currently employed as Assistant Professor of History at O. P. Jindal Global University in Sonipat, India. Her research focuses on the medieval and early modern period, the Malabar Coast, the Indian Ocean, history writing, maritime history, and Portuguese expansion in the Indian Ocean.

Acharya, Pushpa Raj

Pushpa Raj Acharya is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Kwantlen Polytechnic University. He holds a PhD in Comparative Literature and South Asian Studies from the University of Toronto. His research focuses on the novels and the states in Nepali, South Asian, and Anglophone World Literature.

Adhikari, Meghraj

Megharaj Adhikari is a PhD student in Florida State University. He holds an M.Phil. in English from Tribhuvan University. He received Water Funds for Excellence in Literature Graduate Award in 2023.

Aghoghovwia, Philip

Philip Aghoghovwia teaches in the Department of English at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. His teaching, research and ethical commitments are in environmental humanities, postcolonial literatures, energy and water studies, and politics of resource extraction in the postcolonial world. His work explores literary depictions of place and community life in the context of resource extraction, especially concerning oil and water.

Ahdifard, Unita

Unita Ahdifard teaches in the Department of English at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her research interests include early modern/ 18th-century English literature, travel literature, postcolonial theory, and critical race and gender studies. She is particularly invested in literary constructions of women writers and travellers between England, Persia, and Mughal India from the 1750s-1850s.

Ahmed, Imtiaz

Imtiaz Ahmed is a Maulana Azad Senior Research Fellow at the Department of West Asian and North African Studies, Aligarh Muslim University. He is working on "Yemeni Diaspora in India". He has presented many papers on migration, cultural integration, and geopolitics at national and international forums. He has visited Malawi, Africa, as an intern on a project on India-Africa relations. He has done fieldwork and engaged with the Indian community in Africa. He is an honorary president of the West Asian Studies Society at Aligarh Muslim University, India. In July, he will travel to the University of Cambridge, UK to present his research paper on "Yemen and its crisis role of GCC."

Alm, Kirsten

Kirsten Alm, Ph.D. teaches at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her research focuses on Canadian and American ecopoetics, examining themes of place and displacement in the cross-border intersections of literary traditions along the West Coast. One of her current projects investigates how authors employ transgenerational

memory to create webs of literary connection between British Columbia's Lower Mainland and places around the Pacific Ocean.

Ashraf, Muhammed Niyas

Muhammed Niyas Ashraf submitted his doctoral thesis at Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. He teaches History at GITAM School of Social Sciences in GITAM University Bengaluru. His Ph.D. project unravels Arabic- Malayalam devotional poetry of Malabar Muslims in the nineteenth century Indian Ocean Littoral. In 2019, he was a DAAD visiting fellow at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research includes print and literary culture in the Indian Ocean, vernacular textual tradition, and Islamic intellectual history among others. He recently published a monograph 'Islamic Reformism and *malayāli* ummah in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Kerala, South West Indian Ocean' (SASNET Lund University, 2020).

Awass, Omer

Omer Awass is an associate professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American Islamic College in Chicago, IL. He completed his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Temple University. His current research interests center on religion, modernity, and globalization. He has been carrying out field research on contemporary fatwas across the Muslim world to assess how they are negotiating their postcolonial realities. His book *Fatwa and the Making and Renewal of Islamic Law* is published by Cambridge University Press (2023). He has recently published articles in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Journal of World-Systems Research*, *Journal of Critical Historical Studies*, and the *Sociology of Islam Journal*. He has spent more than thirteen years of his life studying, researching, and teaching in various African and Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Morocco, Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania. In the summer of 2022 and the winter of 2023, he studied Mandarin in Taiwan. This undertaking is paving the way for his long-term research project in comparative civilization between China and the Muslim World.

Banerjee, Arusharko

Arusharko Banerjee is faculty in the Department of English, Kidderpore College, Kolkata, India and an independent researcher. He had obtained his MPhil research degree in English from Vishwa Bharati, Shantiniketan, in 2019, under the guidance of Prof. Debarati Bandyopadhyay. He had also completed his Postgraduate degree in English from Jadavpur University in 2016, and his Undergraduate degree in English from Presidency University in 2014. His research interests include historical fiction, post-colonialism, eco-humanism, and climate fictions. The author has presented his research papers at both national and international conferences and published his works in journals of both national and international repute.

Bhattacharjee, Dharitri

Dharitri Bhattacharjee is Assistant Professor of South Asia/Indian Ocean History at the History Department of the Western Washington University.

Booluck-Miller, Pooja

Pooja Booluck-Miller is an Assistant Professor in Francophone Literatures at the University of New Brunswick, Canada. She is interested in female authors' representation of migration and trauma in African, Caribbean and Indo-Oceanic Literatures. Her current project is on the representation of migration in Francophone children's literature.

Burke, Kathleen

Kathleen Burke received her PhD in History and Food Studies from the University of Toronto and is presently a Research Fellow of Global Asia at New York University Shanghai. In 2023, she won a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship from the European Union. Her current book project explores trans-imperial connections in global food cultures in the early modern Indian Ocean, highlighting how local women shaped the

continuity of culinary knowledge across Portuguese, Dutch, and English maritime empires, connecting historiographies which are rarely investigated alongside each other. Her most recent publication is “‘I Hope it Tastes Good’: Gender, Race and Class in Colonial Kitchens in the Dutch Indian Ocean Empire”, which was published in *Gender & History*.

Chambers, Claire

Claire Chambers is Professor of Global Literature at the University of York, where she teaches literature from South Asia, the Perso-Arab world, and their diasporas. She is the author of several books, including *Britain Through Muslim Eyes* (2015), *Rivers of Ink: Selected Essays* (2017), and *Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels* (2019). She edited *Dastarkhwan: Food Writing from Muslim South Asia* (2021), co-edited *A Match Made in Heaven* (2020), and co-authored *Storying Relationships* (2021). Claire was Editor-in-Chief for a decade of the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Compan, Magali

Magali Compan, Associate Professor, received her Ph.D. in French from the University of Michigan. She specializes in the Francophone literature and culture of the Indian Ocean. She has published articles on founding (post)colonial literary figures of Madagascar Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo and Jacques Rabemananjara and on the contemporary postcolonial, postnational, writings of Francophone writers such as Jean-Luc Raharimanana, Ananda Devi, Shenaz Patel, Natasha Appanah, and Nassuf Djailani. She is the co-editor of *Land and Landscapes in Francographic Literature* (2007) and the editor of *Visualizing Violence in Francophone Cultures* (2015). In 2020 she published a book entitled *Iles Intimes: Expression de l'iléité dans l'océan Indien Francophone* (2020). She is currently working on an edited volume entitled “Convergences Océanes” which will be published with the Presses Universitaires Indianocéaniques in 2023.

Cyr, Heather

Dr. Heather Cyr is Chair of the English Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University where she has taught first-year courses as well as children's and Young Adult literatures since 2011. Her research focuses on place and space in children's literature. Her current project is a co-edited annotated teaching edition of *The Secret Garden*.

Damai, Puspa

Puspa Damai is Associate Professor of English at Marshall University, West Virginia, USA. His articles have been published in journals including *CR: New Centennial Review*, *Discourse*, *Postcolonial Text*. He is the founding editor of *Critical Humanities*.

Emmrich, Christoph

Christoph Emmrich is Associate Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Toronto. He engages with Nepalese, Burmese, and Indian Buddhism and Jainism, and with Sanskrit, Pali, Newar, Burmese, and Tamil literature. In his work, among the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal), the Burmese and Mon in Yangon, Mandalay, and Mawlamyine (Burma), and among the Jains in Tamil Nadu (India), he addresses questions of resemblance and resistance, transfer and translation, mimesis and memory, institution and event. His latest book *Writing Writes for Newar Girls: Marriage and Menarche in Kathmandu Valley Ritual Manuals* is forthcoming with Brill.

Fazil, Rakshanda F.

Rakshanda F. Fazli is a professor at Department of West Asian and North African Studies, Aligarh Muslim University. She has obtained her MA, M.phil. in Geography and Ph.D. in West Asian Studies (Geography) from Aligarh Muslim University. She was awarded a fellowship under the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) in 2008 to attend the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation, ITC, Enschede, the Netherlands and several times to attend short courses on Remote Sensing and GIS in IIRS, Dehradun, India. Her area of interest is Population, Resource Development (Natural and Human Resources), Migration, Remote

Sensing and GIS. She has published research articles in international and national journals of academic repute and chapters in books. She was the Project Director of a Research Programme conducted in 2018-2020 (Rs. 22,00,000) sponsored by ICSSR, New Delhi, India, titled "Dynamics of Return Migration: A Case Study of India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries". She has been invited to present papers and deliver lectures at international and national conferences, workshops and courses. Prof. Fazli has visited the UK (University of Cambridge & University of Oxford), France, The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium for academic purposes.

Gautier, Ari

Born in Antananarivo in 1965, Ari Gautier is a French writer and poet of Indo-Malagasy origin. Dedicated to giving Pondicherry its rightful place on the French literary map, Ari Gautier is committed to increasing Indian-francophone literature's visibility in the world. *Carnet Secret de Lakshmi* and *The Thinnai* are his two first works on the history of the city where he spent his childhood. His most recent publication is *Nocturne Pondichéry*, a collection of short stories on postcolonial Pondicherry. He currently lives in Oslo.

Guragain, Khem

Khem Guragain is PhD from York and M.A. from Toronto Metropolitan University. His research looks at the emergence of Dalit and Adivasi literatures and their intervention in the nationalist discourse. Khem suggests that Dalit and Adivasi/tribal literature destabilise the hegemony of the elitist discourse and transcends the analyses of postcolonial theorists and subaltern historians who fail to acknowledge the centrality of caste in South Asian society and its contradictions, inconsistencies and injustices inflicted upon the marginalized. Caste, subaltern and subalternity are some of the major areas of Khem's research interest. He has taught various graduate and undergraduate courses, and presented papers at MLA, SALA, CACLALS, ACGS, and South Asia Conference.

Hardwick, Jennifer

Dr. Jennifer Hardwick is a dyslexic educator and settler scholar living on unceded Coast Salish territories. She is cross-appointed faculty in the Policy Studies program and Department of English at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Jen's interdisciplinary research focuses on settler colonial policy, inclusive education in policy and practice, and Indigenous literary, media, and performance arts.

Hein, Priya

Born in Mauritius, Priya Hein has published several children's books and short stories, and has contributed to a number of anthologies. In 2017 she was nominated by the National Library of Mauritius for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. She was selected for the Women's Creative Mentorship Project for the University of Iowa International Writing Program as an emerging writer. Her debut manuscript *Riambel* won the 2021 Jean Fanchette Prize. She was recently named by *Electric Literature Magazine* as one of twelve Mauritian Women Writers one should read. Priya's work is important not just as the story of women, but also as an account of childhood in Mauritius. Her work is used as part of the school curriculum in Mauritius!

Kapambwe-Mizzi, Mazuba

Mazuba Kapambwe-Mizzi is an Independent Researcher from Lusaka, Zambia. She graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Africana Studies in August 2020 from the University at Albany (State University of New York). She also received her Bachelor of Arts in Africana Studies from the same university. Her research interests include contemporary African literature written by women, African fashion in museum collections, and African art history. She has spoken at conferences at the European Conference for African Studies at the University of Cologne (2023), The Victoria and Albert Africa Fashion Conference (2022), The University of Helsinki (2021) and more.

Kasembeli, Serah N.

Serah N. Kasembeli is a lecturer at Mzuzu University and has a PhD in English Studies, Stellenbosch University. She is a cultural studies scholar, with research on Indian Ocean slave histories and trauma, race,

epistemic violence, and its repair. Her research interest and practice enhances engagement with silence, historical erasure and invisibility of indigenous knowledges. She is also a research consultant, creative writer, and She is an Andrew Mellon and Lisa Maskell fellow.

Kaur, Rajender

Rajender Kaur is Professor of English at William Paterson University, New Jersey. Her research and teaching interests are interdisciplinary and focus on gender, class, social justice and environment issues in South Asian, and South Asian American literatures and culture, early American studies, and postcolonial theory and literature. She is co-Editor most recently of *India in the American Imaginary, 1780- 1880* (2017). Currently she is at work on a monograph on *India in the Early Republic*, a study of the traffic of goods, people and ideas between the US and India as represented in print culture and literature from colonial times to the late 19th century.

Kawane, Fiana

Fiana Kawane is a Killam scholar and PhD candidate in English Language and Literatures at the University of British Columbia. She received her MA in English literature from the University of Toronto. Her dissertation is titled, "Toward lyric disunities: Late modern political ecologies of South Asian diasporic poetry, 1970s to 2000s." Her research interests include modern South Asia, global anglophone poetry, political ecology, and affect theory. At UBC, she is a Centre for Migration Fellow and Centre for Climate Justice graduate affiliate. As a dance artist-choreographer trained in Kathak, she prioritizes public access to art, community-engaged practices, and art-research intersections.

Kundu, Apala

Apala Kundu is a pre-doctoral Mellon fellow in her fifth year of Ph.D in Literary and Cultural Studies at the Department of English, University of Pittsburgh. She is also pursuing a Master's certificate in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies in the GSWS program at Pitt. Currently she is working on her dissertation titled "T-read-ing Waters: Navigating Postcolonial Mobilities in Indian Ocean novels." Her research interests include postcolonialism, migration/diaspora and mobility studies, Indian Ocean literature, gender and sexuality studies, graphic narratives, and pedagogy.

van der Linden, Neil

Neil van der Linden is specialised in Arabic Middle-Eastern art and culture, including music, theatre and visual art. Formerly Neil worked as dramaturg for the Rotterdam Municipal Theatre and the Holland Festival. From 1989 on he was also secretary to the Dutch Arts Council in the film, theatre and music departments. Starting with a research visit to Iraq, for a Dutch weekly, on the state of the antiquities after the Iran-Iraq and the Iraq-Kuwait wars, followed by music and theatre research in Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, from 1994 on he shifted his work field to cultural exchange with the Middle-East. He brought many Dutch musicians and theatre makers to the Middle-East and vice versa he introduced many artists from the Middle-East to The Netherlands and around. He programmed festivals and contributed to festivals such as the Festival de la Musique Sacrée in Fes and the Timitar festival in Agadir, Morocco, the Sounds of Arabia Festival, the Book Fair and the New York University Abu Dhabi in the UAE, the opera houses of Cairo and Damascus, the Beiteddine festival in Lebanon, and festivals in Iran. He initiated long-lasting cooperations between Dutch musicians and theatre makers and musicians and theatre makers from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, Saudi-Arabia and India. In the Netherlands he worked in these fields for the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and the Paradiso concert venue Amsterdam. He regularly writes reviews for the world music magazine *Songlines* and he contributed sections on the music of Egypt and Iraq for the *Rough Guide to Music* and the *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*. Currently he is carrying out research on the musical legacy of sub-Saharan East-Africa, partly through slavery, tot the worlds around the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and on the emerging alternative pop music from the Gulf region related to the region's traditions. He has taught incidentally on this topic in Segou (Mali), Muscat, Tehran, Abu Dhabi and at Amsterdam University. He is advisor to the Aga Khan Music Awards.

MacDonald, Leanne

Dr. Leanne MacDonald is a faculty member in the English Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her research focuses on gender identity in Old and Middle English religious texts, and her teaching interests revolve around understanding the legacies of the Middle Ages in the twenty-first century.

Mjelde, Elizabeth

Elizabeth Mjelde has studied and interpreted for more than two decades imagery by colonial artists who traveled or lived along the Indian Ocean littoral. Focusing on resistance to British rule in Sri Lanka in the early nineteenth century, she completed a doctoral dissertation in 2016, the basis for an essay included in *Violence, Colonialism, and Empire in the Modern World* (Palgrave, 2018). Mjelde has benefitted from support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (U.S.) and contributes to scholarly journals in the U.K. and Europe. She teaches art history at De Anza College in Cupertino, California.

Mohan, Jyoti

Jyoti Mohan completed her PhD in history in 2010 from the University of Maryland. She has published *Claiming India: French Academics and the Preoccupation with India in the Nineteenth Century* (2018) on the academic construction of the image of India in France. She is currently working on a manuscript comparing how India was represented in World Fairs and Expositions in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and a project on the history of South Asians in the US.

Muharram, Mohammed

Mohammed Muharram is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at Thamar University, Yemen, and is currently a visiting postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Postcolonial and Intercultural Studies at the University of Bremen on a fellowship sponsored by the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He is the author of the recent book, *The Arab Writes Back: Orientalism, History and the Canon* and he is editing *Arabic Literature as World Literature* (Bloomsbury). His postcolonial interests expand to environmental humanities, most notably the blue humanities. He teaches at the University of Bremen courses such as “Narratives of Ocean Cultures” and “Narratives of Sea Migration”. With Steve Mentz and Sandra Young, Dr. Muharram is co-editing *The Bloomsbury Handbook of the Blue Humanities*. He is an associate member of the interdisciplinary research networks *Fiction Meets Science*, *Oceanic Humanities for the Global South*, and *Environmental Justice (EnJust)*. On his Twitter page, he regularly shares the most up-to-date scholarship in the field. Before coming to Germany in 2021, Dr. Muharram taught English literature at Philadelphia University in Jordan and many other universities in his home country Yemen. He received his PhD from the English and Foreign Languages University, formerly The Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad, India.

Obeegadoo, Nikhita

Nikhita Obeegadoo is Assistant Professor of Languages and World Literatures at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She holds a PhD in Romance Languages and Literatures from Harvard University, as well as a BS in Computer Science and a BA in Comparative Literature from Stanford University. Dr. Obeegadoo is a specialist in contemporary francophone and world literatures. Her current book project, “Silence of the Seabed,” explores contemporary literatures of oceanic migration in the Indian Ocean and Caribbean.

Parmar, Prabhjot

Prabhjot Parmar is Associate Professor of English at University of the Fraser Valley located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded land of Stó:lō in Abbotsford. Her research and teaching interests include postcolonial literatures with a focus on South Asian literature and cinema, Partition, and Indian soldiers in WWI; through these, her work is strongly linked with community work and social justice. She is the co-editor of *When Your Voice Tastes Like Home: Immigrant Women Write* and has published articles on resistance poetry, dementia and music, Partition, Bollywood, and history of Punjabi Cinema.

Patel, Zarina

Zarina Patel (MCSP, EdM Harvard, Spurs MIT) is the author of *Challenge to Colonialism – The Struggle of Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee for Equal Rights in Kenya*; *Unquiet – The Life and Times of Makhan Singh*; *The Stormy Petrel – Manilal Ambalal Desai*; *The In-Between World of Kenya’s Media – South Asian Journalism 1900-1992*. She is the Managing Editor of *AwaaZ* magazine - launched in 2002 it has to date published 60 issues. The initial emphasis on South Asian leaders in Kenya’s anti-colonial struggle has expanded to minority and diversity concerns. In 1991, she single-handedly saved Jeevanjee Gardens from being ‘grabbed’; Jeevanjee, her maternal grandfather, had donated the park in 1906 to the then colonial Government for the residents of Nairobi.

Quinteiro Pires, Francisco

Francisco Quinteiro Pires is a journalist and Visiting Assistant Professor in Latin American and Brazilian Literature and Culture at Boston University. He holds a Ph.D. in cultural and literary studies from New York University. Titled *Sensory Colonialism: The Production of Spaces and Memory in Afro-Luso-Brazilian Cinema*, his book project focuses on the connections between literature and a host of films produced in Portuguese and Creole-speaking societies during the first two decades of the 21st century. It investigates the sensory representation of geographies, temporalities, and bodies in audiovisual and literary works from Portugal, Brazil, and Lusophone Africa. His articles were published in the *Journal of Lusophone Studies*, *Luso-Brazilian Review*, and *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies*.

Rajbhandari, Kritish

Kritish Rajbhandari is Assistant Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College, Portland, Oregon, USA. His research interests lie at the intersection of South Asian and African literature, Indian Ocean cultures, postcolonial theory, and critical ocean studies. His publications can be found in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, *Research in African Literatures*, *Comparative Literature*, and *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. He is currently working on a book project examining contemporary narratives of cross-cultural encounter, migration, and exchange in the Indian Ocean. Engaging with critical ocean studies and oceanic humanities, it raises aesthetic and epistemological questions about the representation of sea and history in Indian Ocean literatures.

Saklikar, Renée Sarojini

Renée Sarojini Saklikar is the author of five books, including the award-winning *Children of Air India* and *Listening to the Bees*. Her poetry, essays and short fiction have appeared in many literary magazines and anthologies, including *Exile Editions*, *Chatelaine*, *The Capilano Review*, and *Pulp Literature*. The latest volume of her epic fantasy in verse, *Bramah’s Quest*, continues The Heart of This Journey Bears All Patterns (THOTJBAP) series. Renée Sarojini was poet laureate for the City of Surrey 2015–2018 and is the co-founder & curator of *Lunch Poems at SFU*. She teaches creative writing at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Samarasan, Preeta

Preeta Samarasan was born in Malaysia and won scholarships to complete High School and University in the US. Initially enrolled as a PhD student in Musicology, Preeta's career took a turn in 1999 when she began to write her first novel, *Evening is the Whole Day*. Completed in 2008, the novel won the Hopwood Novel Award, was a finalist for the Commonwealth Writers Prize 2009, and was on the longlist for the Orange Prize for Fiction. Her short story, “Our House Stands in a City of Flowers” won the Hyphen Asian American Short Story Contest in 2007.

Sanogo, Manfa

Manfa Sanogo is an Assistant Professor of French at Kalamazoo College. His research investigates the forces of creolization in the Indian Ocean. More specifically, he studies the process of cross-fertilization between metropolitan French literary canons and the indigenous literature of France’s former colony of Madagascar. His

satellite interests include the narratives of sports, such as soccer, and urban organization in postcolonial African literature.

Sayed, Asma

Asma Sayed is the Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies in the Department of English at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She specializes in postcolonial and diasporic literatures with a focus on narratives of exile and displacement from South Asia and East Africa, as well as feminist literary and cultural studies related to these geographies. Her publications include five books and numerous articles in a range of periodicals, anthologies, and academic journals. She was inducted as a member of the College of the Royal Society of Canada in 2020.

Singh, Sweta

Sweta Singh is a faculty at the Department of History, School of Social Sciences, Sharda University, India. She holds a Ph.D. degree in Medieval History from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She specializes in the discourse of Jewish diaspora of Cochin, and the socio-cultural and economic aspects related to the Malabari Jewish community. Dr. Singh has presented and published her work at various national and international platforms. Diaspora, Maritime History, Indian Ocean Trade and Cochin Jewish community are some of her major academic and research interest areas. Her latest publication is a chapter in an edited e-volume- *Yeni Israiliyat: Doguda Yahudive Israil Calismalari*, Selcuk University, Turkey.

Solanki, Vipin

Vipin Solanki is an Assistant Professor at Sharda University, specializing in the fields of Human Geography and Environmental Geography. With a Ph.D. from Lovely Professional University, India, and possesses a deep understanding of the complex interactions between human societies and their physical environment. With over four years of experience in teaching and research, Dr. Solanki has made significant contributions to the academic community. His research focuses on the impacts of human activities on the environment, with an emphasis on sustainable development and the preservation of natural resources. Dr. Solanki's expertise lies in analyzing the spatial patterns of human settlements, land use, and environmental degradation. Dr Solanki had published 11 research papers in international and national journals.

Som, Tathagata

Tathagata Som is a PhD candidate in the department of English at the University of Calgary. His research interests are environmental humanities, postcolonial studies, South Asian literatures, and Bangla literature. His scholarly work has appeared in *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, *The Goose*, and *The Bloomsbury Handbook to the Medical-Environmental Humanities*.

Thiyagarajan, Nandini

Nandini Thiyagarajan is an Assistant Professor of English at Acadia University. Her research focuses on the relationships between race, animals, and nature. She has published in *Modern Fiction Studies*, *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals in Literature*, and *South Asian Review*.

Thompson, Katrina Daly

Katrina Daly Thompson is Evjue-Bascom Professor in the Humanities and Professor of African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with additional affiliations in Religious Studies, Anthropology, and Gender & Women's Studies. They are the author of *Zimbabwe's Cinematic Arts: Language, Power, Identity* (2012), *Popobawa: Tanzanian Talk, Global Misreadings* (2017), and *Muslims on the Margins: Creating Queer Religious Community in North America* (2023), as well as the co-editor (with Erin Stiles) of *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast* (2015).

Call For Papers

The following is the CFP that was distributed for soliciting papers for this conference.

By Dr. Asma Sayed and Dr. Pushpa Raj Acharya

The 'world' in the Indian Ocean World is plural. The fluid space of the Indian Ocean and its territorial rim refer to the worlds of Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australia. It also includes the linguistic, literary, cultural, and imaginative worlds created by the interconnectedness, networks, relations, and exchanges, which have existed from ancient and medieval to contemporary times. During and after the colonial period in the region, the forces of capital and labour have "re-/de-territorialized," or one could even propose "oceanized," the Indian Ocean World with the nexus of knowledge, power, and imagination. In the era of neoliberal globalism and new geopolitical struggles, the Indian Ocean region and the littoral countries have gained a renewed interest as they remind us of one of the greatest networks, mobility, and traversal that shaped the socio-economic structures not only in the region but also in the western world. Yet, we do not know much about the ramifications of the interconnections especially in the context of literature and culture. The stories of the colonial and postcolonial interactions in this cosmopolitan "interregional arena" remain untold (as Sugata Bose refers to it in *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, 2006). We hear more about Afro-Asian encounters with the West, about the Atlantic Ocean World, but our reading of the history as an encounter with and among the regions of the East might provide us with a different set of possibilities of interpretation and analysis (Gaurav Desai – *Commerce with the Universe*, 2013). Looking at the interregional encounters and interactions from ancient to modern times will shed light on under-explored areas in postcolonial studies. In fact, the studies of the Indian Ocean World may even provide "a key to understanding Asia's future" (Sunil Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants*, 2013). This symposium calls for papers on areas such as language, literature, art, music, film, culture, and oral traditions in the Indian Ocean World. We hope that the studies in literature and culture from the Indian Ocean region will make us rethink how the processes of interaction and encounter function, what the areas and the subareas represent, how we understand Africa and Asia, and how we reinterpret arts and letters from the region.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Representation of the Indian Ocean World in the ancient, medieval, and contemporary literature
- Emergence of the Indian Ocean as a contact zone that produces literary and cultural works
- Interaction of literary and other cultural forms (for example, music, film, and visual art) from the Indian Ocean region
- The colonial and postcolonial movements in the Indian Ocean and its rim; the way they have been recorded, imagined, constituted, and conceptualized, and responded to; the way they reveal the story of migration (voluntary and forced), diaspora, transnationalism, and trade
- Formations of multiple histories and identities as a result of encounters in the Indian Ocean World
- Rethinking the Indian Ocean Studies in the context of equity, inclusion, and anti-racism
- The ideas of Asias and Africas in literature and culture of the Indian Ocean World
- Linguistic transitions and transformations in the Indian Ocean region
- Representations of climate change in literature and arts in the context of the Indian Ocean World
- Transnational food narratives in the context of the Indian Ocean World
- Travel narratives, space, and cityscapes in the Indian Ocean World
- Operations of imperialism and capital in the Indian Ocean area and their impact on literature and culture

We welcome papers that engage with these and other possible questions in the Indian Ocean Studies and accommodate different national, literary, and disciplinary contexts. Papers may explore literary, visual, or other forms of textualities.



