



**SOUTH ASIA
INSTITUTE**

SOAS University of London



SSAI Annual Review 2018/19

www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute



TABLE OF CONTENTS



FROM THE DIRECTORS:

A NOTE FROM SSAI DIRECTOR, PROFESSOR EDWARD SIMPSON	2
A MESSAGE FROM SSAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AVINASH PALIWAL	3
A NOTE FROM THE OUTGOING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DR NAVTEJ PUREWAL	4
A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, DR SANJUKTA GHOSH	5
DEVELOPING RESEARCH AGENDAS	6
MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS	8
THE NOOR INAYAT KHAN DISSERTATION PRIZE	9
SSAI IN NORTH AMERICA	10
SSAI IN INDIA	11
ARTISTIC AND OTHER EVENTS	12
SOUTH ASIA PROGRAMMES AT SOAS	18
TRAVELLING SSAI MEMBERS	20
VISITING SCHOLARS AT SSAI	22
RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY SSAI SCHOLARS	24
SSAI STAFF PROFILES	28

Welcome to this Review of the events of 2018-19.



It gives me great pleasure to introduce the second annual review since I have been the Director of the SOAS South Asia Institute. It has been a busy year, notably with momentous elections in India, and the tragedies of terrorism in Sri Lanka. At SOAS, we have also been involved in rethinking the role of our institution in the

modern world, as we decolonise our practices and ask ourselves questions: who are 'we'? What do 'we' want to achieve?

SSAI has held consultations with many of our members over the last year on what the future might hold. Consequently, we have continued a rich programme of events and academic seminars. But we have also taken on more external consultancy work than ever before, launched a competitive seminar series, taken part in business and education summits, and lobbied hard for the interests of SOAS in a number of international and governmental settings.

Strategically, we have promoted South Asia-oriented scholarship at SOAS in the US and embarked on a profile-raising campaign in West Bengal. We also appointed Sanjukta Ghosh as Honorary Artistic Director to enhance our performance and musical offerings, which are so important for our outreach as well as our enjoyment. The SSAI and the other SOAS institutes also lead on research relating to climate change and infrastructure across the School.

In recent years, other universities have opened India or

South Asia initiatives and given money to self-promotion and hyperbole. Along with uncertainties in UK and international higher education this may, at the time, have taken away some of our confidence. I want to use this review to give a strong message: SOAS is one of the leading institutions in the world for the study of South Asia, for the cultivation of new scholars and ideas, and for building of partnerships based on trust and mutual respect.

As many of you will know, my job is made easier because I am carried by the strength and excellence of my colleagues. We represent the most extensive and diverse community of scholars working on South Asia of any university outside the region itself. Our members include many of the foremost scholars in their disciplines. We hold an unrivalled number of prestigious research awards. We advise and consult governments, NGOs and cultural industries. We are also cherished by our alumni.

Our growing number of partnerships with universities and research institutes in South Asia reflect the way we are beginning to do things differently. We have worked hard to develop mutually beneficial collaborations in both teaching and research. Behind the scenes, we have also worked towards securing philanthropic funding with an eye on the future and the sustainability some of our more specialised scholarship.

Please enjoy this review and see the pages that follow as evidence that SOAS is not only alive and well, but leading the field.

Edward Simpson, Director

“ At SOAS, we have also been involved in rethinking the role of our institution in the modern world, as we decolonise our practices and ask ourselves questions: Who are 'we'? What do 'we' want to achieve?”

A NOTE FROM THE INCOMING DEPUTY DIRECTOR



Committed to advancing South Asian Studies, the SSAI promotes cross-departmental synergies and engages with the world to enhance SOAS's global outreach. Though I understood these aspects earlier, it was only after I took up

the position of Deputy Director in March that I began to fully appreciate the depth and breath of SSAI's activities and impact.

These ranged from attracting bright and critical minds to join us as research fellows and students, hosting seminars and panel discussions with experts from within and outside SOAS, organising cultural events that reflect the diversity of the region, and work towards generating funds and explore postgraduate scholarship opportunities for students from South Asia, to consolidating existing relationships globally while forging new ones with institutions and people hitherto not engaged with.

Furthermore, to enable cross-departmental collaboration and to contribute towards SOAS's vision of decolonising education, we invited colleagues to share ideas for annual research seminar series and were delighted to support some of these ideas financially and logistically. These activities mark continuity in the SSAI's ethos to enhance diversity of thought and practice as well as deliver on research excellence.

The ongoing transition at SOAS impacted SSAI in the academic year 2018/19.

It offered us an opportunity to think about the institute's past, present, and future while considering our strengths and the prospective challenge that we face. The key challenge is to reconcile a simultaneous increase in our public profile and an enlarged portfolio of activities along with reduced administrative capacity that occurred due to the restructuring of professional services.

This challenge notwithstanding, AY18/19 was a year of positive additions for the institute. Dr. Sanjukta Ghosh joined us as Honorary Artistic Director. She has contributed towards SSAI's cultural and artistic outreach in the past, and has exciting plans to continue developing this strand of our activities.

Equally, we started initiatives with policymaking institutions such as the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). We will be hosting the first ever SSAI-FCO workshop on Connectivity and Security in South Asia in October 2019. Such engagements will broaden our policy engagement and develop SSAI as a dynamic platform for critical conversations with practitioners thereby deepening our policy impact.

None of this would have been possible without active support from our Director, Prof. Ed Simpson, working with whom is a delight and from whom I learn much. Our professional team (especially Sunil Pun and Jane Savory) worked hard to support the institute's activities all year round. My predecessor Dr. Navtej Purewal, whose excellent hard work over the years set a high standard of performance, helped pave the way for me to enter the role of deputy director with

ease.

On behalf of SSAI I would like to thank all our members, partners, friends, and well-wishers, whose excellence, enthusiasm, and support has truly made SSAI into a world-class institute on South Asian Studies.

Avinash Paliwal
Deputy Director

“ Committed to advancing South Asian Studies, the SSAI promotes cross-departmental synergies and engages with the world to enhance SOAS's global outreach.”

A NOTE FROM THE OUTGOING DEPUTY DIRECTOR

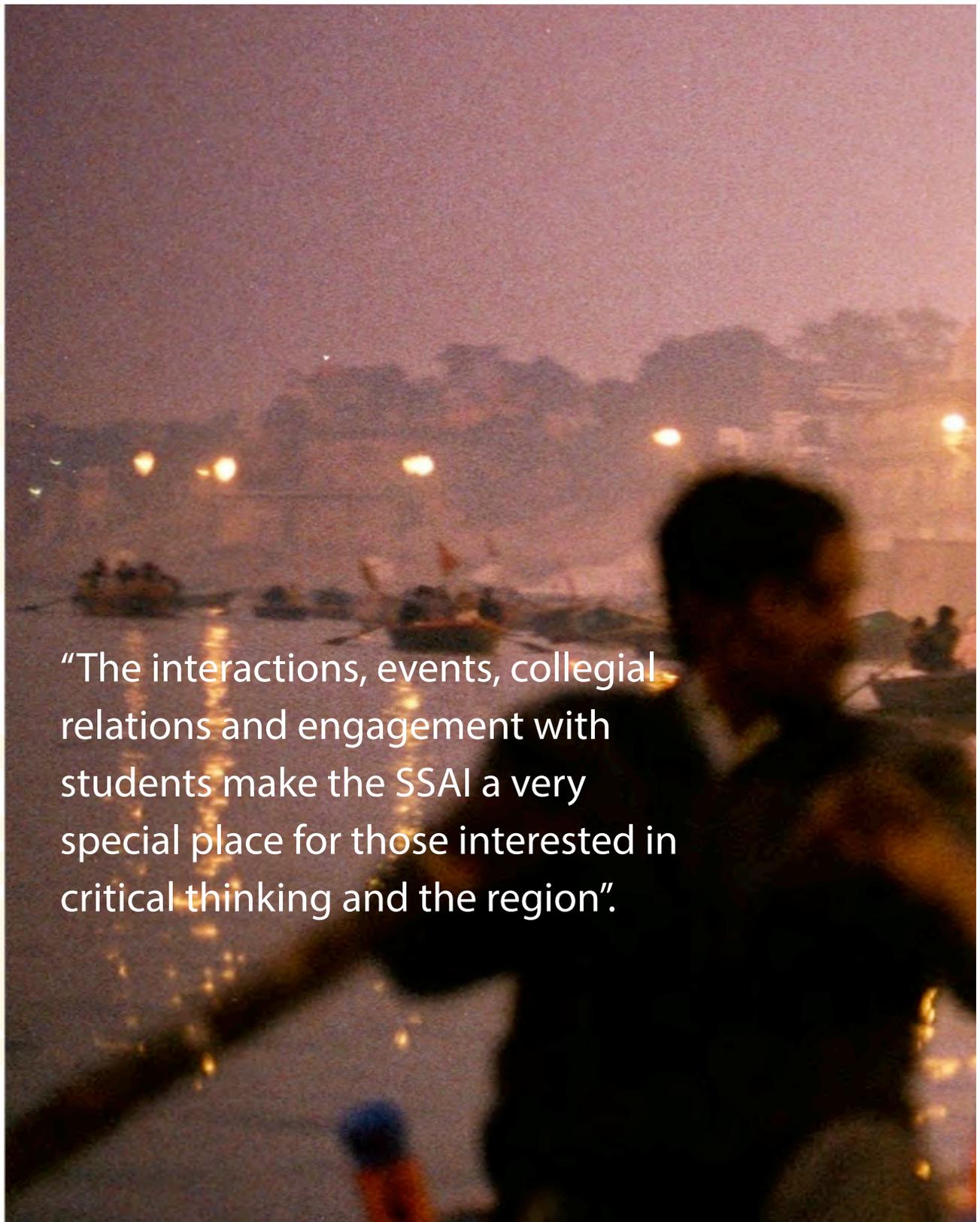


I stepped down from my my role as deputy director of the SSAI in early 2019, after nearly five very fulfilling years. Having once been a student of South Asia at SOAS in 1991/92, I joined SOAS in 2014 as the SSAI was being established and learned so much about the region and the significance of SOAS for South Asia as a focus of academic discussion and debate. I recently returned from Australia after taking up a Visiting Chair in Contemporary India at the University of Sydney where I was able to gain insights into how other parts of the world differently engage with South Asia. Since returning to SOAS from Sydney, I have joined the Department of Development Studies where I will continue to partake in South Asia-oriented teaching and research, but in a more student-facing capacity, which I am looking forward to.

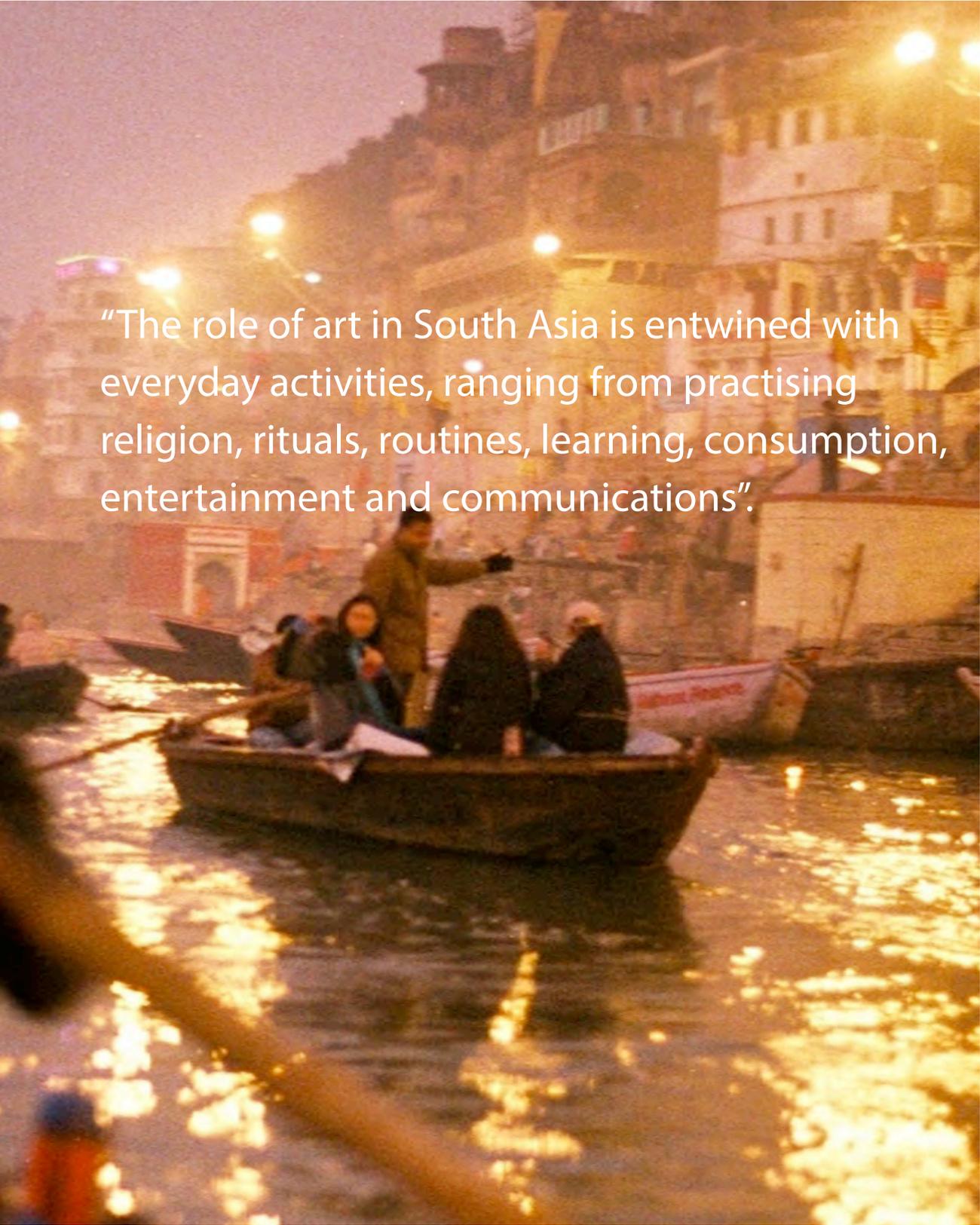
At SOAS, I have learned as much as I have taught and absorbed as much as I have shared. The interactions, events, collegial relations and engagement with students make the SSAI a very special place for those interested in critical thinking and the region. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with two directors of the SSAI, first Michael Hutt and then his successor Ed Simpson. My successor, Avinash Paliwal is already bringing in new angles from which to approach the region which greatly augments the SSAI's profile, and I wish him all the best in this role.

The sustained and steady work of the SSAI has been possible because of the hard work of the Centres and Programmes Office (some of whom are no longer working at SOAS) and, in particular, Jane Savory, the office manager, Sunil Pun, the SSAI Executive Officer, and Charles Taillandier-Ubsdell and Dorinne Tin Ming Kaw, to all of whom I am grateful. Finally, I wish to thank all of the well-wishers of the SSAI who have supported the events.

Dr Navtej Purewal
Outgoing Deputy Director



“The interactions, events, collegial relations and engagement with students make the SSAI a very special place for those interested in critical thinking and the region”.



“The role of art in South Asia is entwined with everyday activities, ranging from practising religion, rituals, routines, learning, consumption, entertainment and communications”.

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



I am very honoured to steer SSAI's rich portfolio of artistic activities with the collegial support of leading experts in languages, literature, music and the arts. It is my privilege to build on the institution's capacity to host some of the finest exhibitions, performances, workshops and talks that are popular both within and outside the campus. Prior to this role, I worked on SSAI projects, most notably bringing rural craftsmen from India to demonstrate

live religious art through workshops and a display that was held in the Senate buildings in October 2017. Bringing the potters from Kolkata's cultural complex Kumartuli onto the university campus for the first time, helped showcase the importance of artisans in creative industries and the role of festivals that connect international students with celebrations at home. Similar festive ideas will be explored for other regions in South Asia that bond the campus with the diaspora and enhance knowledge of local cultures.

The role of art in South Asia is entwined with everyday activities, ranging from practising religion, rituals, routines, learning, consumption, entertainment and communications. The sheer diversity of local cultures, oral traditions and languages, many of which are endangered or belong to minorities, need to be highlighted in the context of changing epistemic frameworks and pedagogic queries of the Global South. As India, given its population growth and economic potential, occupies a large portion of cultural partnerships with Britain, my aim will be to engage with multifarious regional arts that span national boundaries of knowledge and influence. SOAS campus is the ideal place to engage with the public, visitors and international scholars. SSAI will start a new weekend dialogic forum called 'Saanglap' for the diaspora, including members, friends, supporters and others interested in the region's vibrant cultural agenda, partnerships and policy.

Dr Sanjukta Ghosh

Honorary Artistic Director

DEVELOPING RESEARCH AGENDAS

Time, money and process: anthropological explorations of the infrastructural

On the 7th and 8th of June 2019, the SSAI has co-hosted a PhD student led workshop titled: Time, money and process: anthropological exploration of the infrastructural, co-organised by Prof. Edward Simpson and Ms. Elisa Tamburo. The event was co-funded by the SOAS China Institute, the Doctoral School, and the Centre of Taiwan Studies. The workshop gathered early career researchers from the UK and Germany together with three keynote speakers from the UK and USA, to discuss the latest theoretical and methodological thought on the theme of infrastructure from an interdisciplinary perspective. The format of the workshop over two and a half days allowed for presentations and thorough discussions on the papers and two roundtables methodological debates on researching infrastructure. A publication is likely to result from this workshop, which will include papers of regional expertise ranging from South Asia, to Africa and East Asia.



Epicentre to Aftermath Political, social and cultural impacts of earthquakes in South Asia



Researchers from Nepal, Pakistan, India, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA travelled to London to join the SOAS convenors and other UK-based researchers for this two-day conference on 11-12 January. Twenty-five papers were presented in panels on 'citizens, loss and reconstruction', 'recovery and development', 'governance, bureaucracy and politics', 'producing heritage', 'reading sources' and 'interventions'. Seventeen of the papers drew on research conducted in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, while others focused on the Great Bihar earthquake of 1934, the Gujarat earthquake of 2001, and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. On the Friday evening Dr Sara Shneiderman of the University of British Columbia delivered a public keynote lecture entitled 'Restructuring Life: political, social, and material transformation in post-conflict, post-disaster Nepal' to a packed audience in SOAS's Scholars and Alumni Lecture Theatre.

The conference schedule was creatively designed to ensure that there was plenty of opportunity

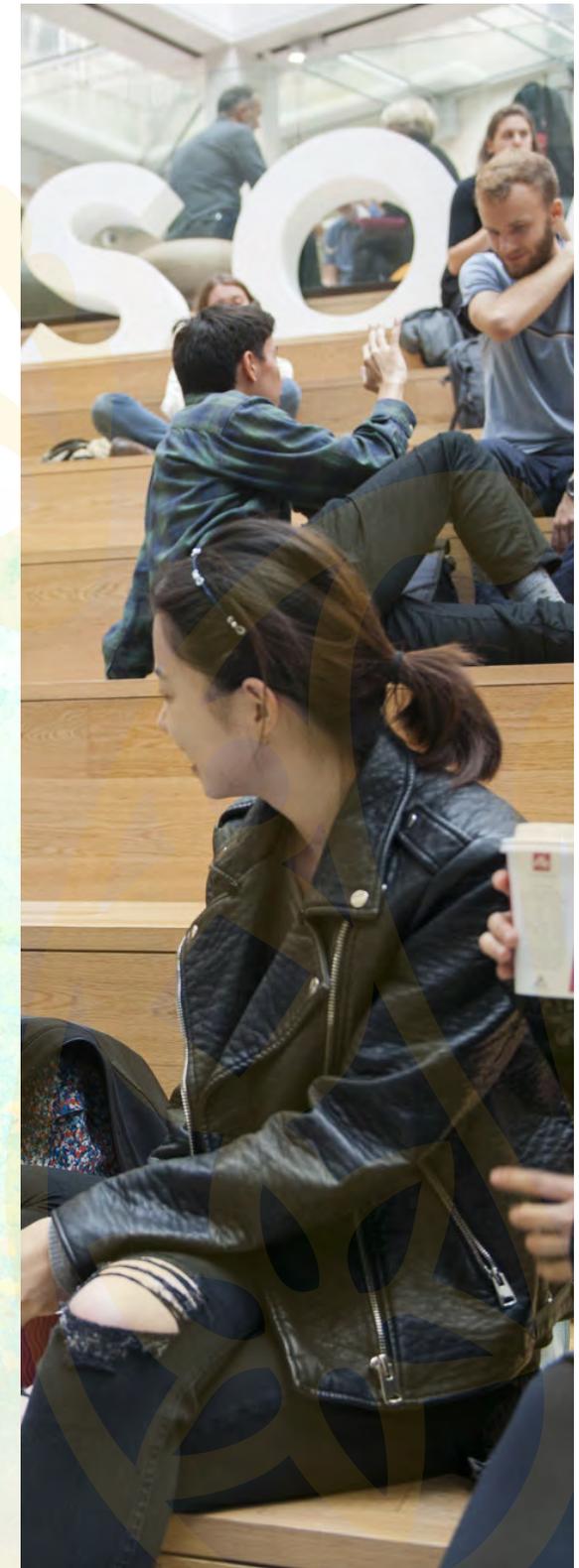
for those attending to share comparative insights outside the formal panel sessions. The conference was also treated to a screening of a meditative film sequence of heritage woodcarving, kindly shared by Britt Hatzius.

The conference was jointly organised and hosted by the SOAS South Asia Institute and the AHRC/GCRF-funded project 'After the Earth's Violent Sway' and it is intended that a selection of the papers presented will appear in published form in due course.

Afghanistan in Academia: Knowledge and Representation:

The Afghanistan in Academia: Knowledge and Representation conference held on 20th October 2018 brought together early career researchers working across disciplines within the field of Afghanistan Studies. The aim of the conference was to create a network of emerging scholars within the field, and learn about new and innovative research on the country, its people and the diaspora, in light of growing scholarship on the country since the fall of the Taliban regime.

Information about the conference spread far and wide, and the conference call for papers generated great interest, as abstracts from places as far apart as California to Calcutta were received. The themes of the papers presented throughout the day varied vastly, with pioneering scholarship on archaeology in Afghanistan to return migration and identity, and visual propaganda mechanisms of the country's former Communist government, to name a few. While the presentations, question



DEVELOPING RESEARCH AGENDAS

and answer sessions and discussions, over a typically Afghan lunch, also highlighted the great enthusiasm the field garners among students and researchers alike, despite, often times, its relegation to the peripheries of Central and South Asia within academia.

A follow-up workshop will be held in October of this year to mark 100 years since the end of the third Anglo-Afghan War and the recognition of an independent Afghanistan, with Dr Robert Crews of Stanford University as our keynote speaker



The Familiar Stranger Exploring Sindh-Gujarat (Dis)connections

Researchers from Pakistan, India, France, the USA travelled to London to join the SOAS convenors and other UK-based researchers for two-day conference on 18-19 January, 2019. Sixteen papers were presented in 6 panels on issues as diverse as what defines Sindhiness and Gujaritiness, to refugee

resettlement and poetry of those exiled by partition. An important aspect of the conference was bringing together scholars based in India and Pakistan in the same room, who otherwise due to geopolitical concerns would not have known about each other's work. The conference papers attempted look beyond the tropes that have now become established in studies of the partition of South Asia, by looking beyond Bengal and Punjab, at state making process that have been referred to as the 'long partition' that took decades to become established. The conference took view was that the critical year for the looking at the effects of partition on Sindh and Gujarat was 1971, and not 1947.

On the Friday evening Professor Farhana Ibrahim of the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi delivered a public keynote lecture entitled 'Remembering 1971 in Gujarat: Citizenship and (In)security across civil-military terrains' to a packed audience in SOAS's Brunei Gallery. The conference was also treated to a screening of a 'Everybody needs a tribe' a documentary film made by Doctor Sanderien Verstappen, of Leiden University about a unique gathering of Vohra Muslim families, a community of Gujarati Muslim, who travel from all over North America to meet distant relatives and make new acquaintances, and to celebrate their shared origins in the Gujarati Charotar region.

The conference was jointly organised and hosted by the SOAS South Asia Institute and The Centre for the Study of Pakistan, SOAS.

Decolonisation, not just a buzz word

SOAS South Asia Institute, in collaboration with theatre company Bhuchar Boulevard, hosted theatre performance exploring the concept of decolonisation at SOAS on 7/8th February 2019. The team spent several weeks interviewing people from the SOAS community (academics, students, alumni) and *Decolonisation: not just a buzzword...* was crafted from the edited interviews and performed as a headphone verbatim theatre piece with a panel discussion on both nights. We are heartened by the response and affirmation that verbatim was a great way to bring all the captured campus conversations into one public space so that people can 'speak to each other' through their recorded words. There was much debate afterwards and many of the interviewees expressed how powerful it was to see themselves reflected through the conduit of the actors' performances. As the piece is currently 'SOAS specific' and uses this as a microcosm for the wider conversations that are taking place, it was great to see the SOAS audiences 'seeing themselves' and the laughter of recognition and appreciation that SOAS is a place that enables conflicting and contested viewpoints to be shared. At the same time, people from outside the SOAS community expressed how the 'specificity' enabled them to think about decolonisation within their own areas and practice e.g. in conservatoire drama training, therapy and radio drama. This process has made us think about how to be more reflexive in our practice and our own personal experiences of how to decolonise. We look forward to the next stage of this collaboration.



MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

Arundhati Roy delivers the Noor Inayat Khan Annual Lecture at SOAS

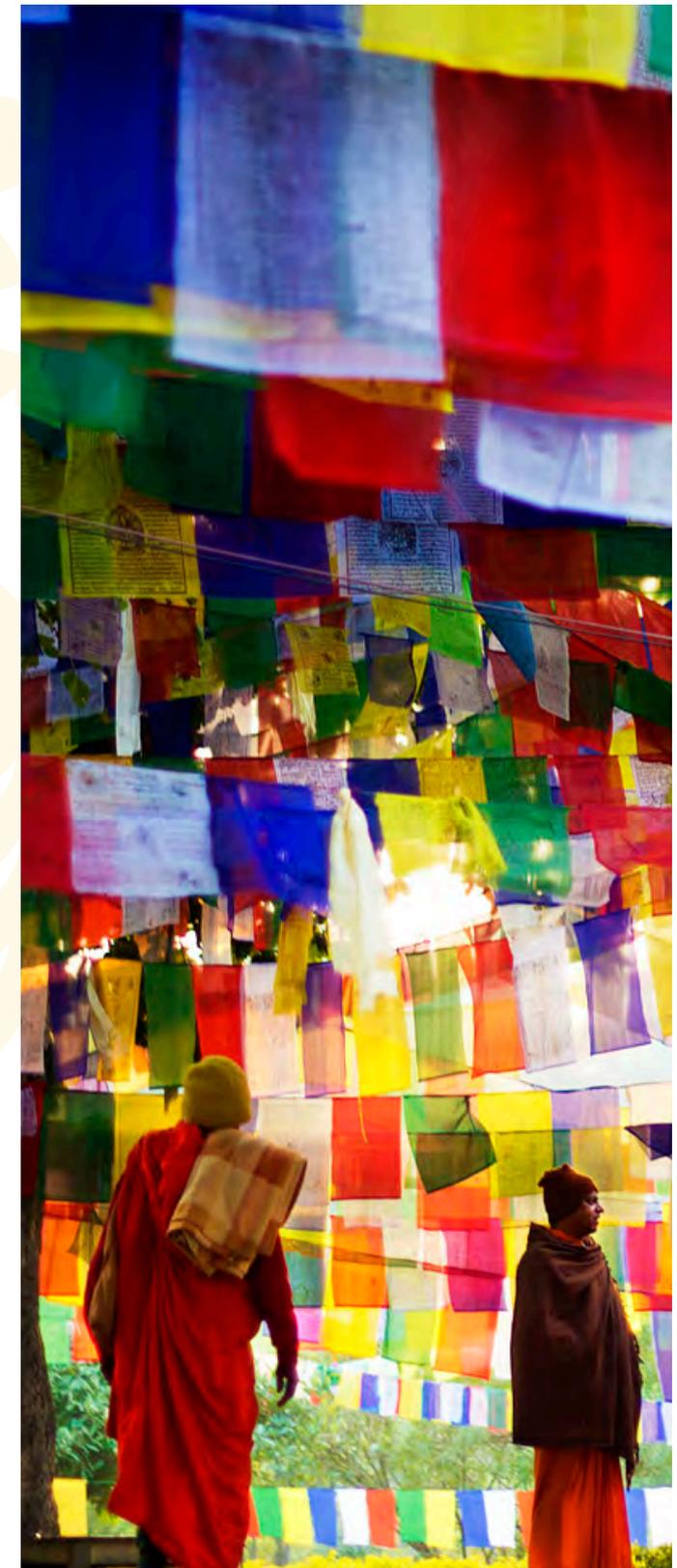


The SOAS South Asia Institute was pleased to have hosted renowned Booker Prize-winning novelist, writer, and public commentator Arundhati Roy on 6th October 2018 in the newly refurbished Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre. Her lecture 'Utmost Happiness and Utmost Sadness: The Diary of India Today' was held in collaboration with the Noor Inayat Khan Trust who sponsor an annual lecture at SOAS called the Liberte series in honour of Noor Inayat Khan. Arundhati Roy's talk stemmed from the title of her recent novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and gave a critical account of recent developments taking place in India. Joined by Professor Shohini Ghosh from Jamia Millia University, the lecture was followed by a conversation between Roy and Ghosh in which Roy shared personal reflections on her journey as a writer alongside her more political non-fiction writing as an activist in witnessing and commenting on injustice in its myriad forms as she sees it today in India. Due to popular demand a live streaming event was held alongside the lecture.

Watch the video recorded lecture *Utmost Happiness & Utmost Sadness: The diary of India nowadays*. here:
<https://youtu.be/0sGYyTxPP-s>

Defending Democracy from Exile: The Maldives Opposition 2012-2018 – talk by President Mohamed Nasheed of the Republic of Maldives

In a highly impactful talk to a fully packed KLT, former President of Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed shared a first-hand account of the Maldivian opposition's success in employing peaceful resistance against authoritarianism. When he won the country's first free and fair election in 2008, it came on the back of three decades of dictatorship. This budding of democracy was quashed in 2012 by a coup d'état involving anti-democratic elements, loyal to the previous dictatorship, within the military and police. Nasheed was subsequently sentenced to a 13-year prison sentence, which was decried around the world as a transparent manoeuvre to prevent him from challenging the Beijing-backed regime of Yameen Gayoom in the upcoming election polls. Living in exile between Colombo, Sri Lanka, and London, Nasheed led opposition efforts that included building a multi-party coalition, coordinating nationwide grassroots activism, global media engagement and international diplomatic measures such as the development of E.U. and U.S. Magnitsky sanctions reports. His talk on these subjects was followed by an open and on-the-record conversation with the audience and members from the media. It covered a wide array of issues ranging from geopolitics of South Asia and IOR, to China's growing influence in Maldives, and climate action as well as capital punishment in Maldives.



THE NOOR INAYAT KHAN DISSERTATION PRIZE

The Noor Inayat Khan Dissertation Prize:

Ila Ananya, who studied for an MA Gender Studies at SOAS University of London during 2017-18, has been awarded Noor Inayat Khan Prize for her 'outstanding' dissertation. The prize is awarded by the Noor Inayat Khan Memorial Trust and the SOAS South Asia Institute (SSAI) to a SOAS MA student working in the fields of History and Gender Studies with reference to South Asia.

Ananya was awarded the £1000 prize for her dissertation, "Notes on 'Seeing and Stepping Out: (In)Visibilizing Women's Bodies in Delhi's Universities.'"



The Noor Inayat Khan Memorial Trust is a UK trust established in the memory of Noor Inayat Khan, a descendant of the legendary Tipu Sultan and a secret agent in the Second World War.

For further details on the Trust, and information about scholarships available to SOAS students whose research focuses on South Asia, visit the SSAI scholarship pages.

About Noor Inayat Khan:

Noor's life is nothing less than an inspiration for anyone familiar with her story. She was born in Moscow in 1914 to an Indian father and an American mother. She began a career as a children's writer. However, as soon as World War 2 broke out, Noor stepped up to the rise of fascism in Europe. Setting her own career aside, she decided to join the British Special Operations Executive and head to France in a bid to support the Resistance. Noor became the first woman radio operator to be smuggled into occupied Paris and ended up saving the lives of many people without any fear for consequences. However, in 1944, Noor was captured and shortly after, executed at the Dachau concentration camp. Her actions have been recognised posthumously and she was awarded Britain's highest civilian award for Bravery, the George Cross, and the Croix De Guerre by France, a military honour in recognition of her heroic efforts.

Today, Noor's bust stands at Gordon Square, not very far from SOAS.

Noor lived very close to the square, at 4 Taviton Street. Spearheading efforts to ensure that Noor's legacy lives on is her biographer and the memorial's founder, Shrabani Basu, along with the Noor Inayat Khan Trust which includes, among others, Smita Tharoor and Aditi Khana. In

the biography of Noor, Shrabani records that she would often sit and read a book in one of the benches in the square and thus, to install a bust in the same square was, for Shrabani, liking 'bringing Noor back to the square.'

The spirit that Noor embodied in her life and death lives on at SOAS in many ways, thanks to the Noor Inayat Khan Memorial Trust.



Noor Inayat Khan
Memorial Trust

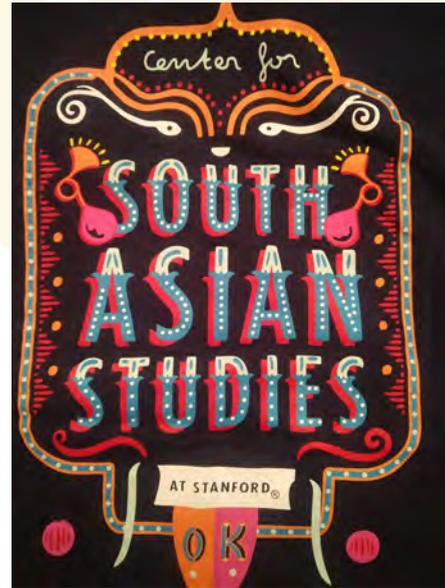
SSAI in North America 2019

by Edward Simpson

In 2018, we took the strategic decision to promote the South Asia scholarship of SOAS in North America in order to rekindle old connections and to make new friends. In October 2019, I took to the road with a fantastically rewarding and demanding schedule which took me clockwise from Toronto to Stanford.

South Asia

In Canada, I met with Directors and members of South Asia Institutes and Centres and other colleagues who research and teach on South Asia at the University of Toronto, York University (Toronto) and University of Guelph – and in the US Syracuse University, Columbia University, CUNY, The New School, University of Colorado, Stanford University, and at the universities of California in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Berkeley. At these meetings we discussed research, teaching and how regional studies fit (or not) within the agendas of university



education and fund-raising. Colleagues were particularly interested to learn more about 'decolonisation' debates on our campus and to think through the implications of these for the future of South Asia teaching and research. Some of these conversations have now been taken up by other colleagues.

Research

I also gave lectures on my own research at Toronto, Columbia, Stanford and at the universities of California in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Berkeley. Along the way, I squeezed in two conferences, two panels at the Madison South Asia Conference and an interdisciplinary conference on infrastructure called China Made at the University of Boulder in Colorado.

SOAS Alumni

In Toronto, I held individual meetings with some inspirational SOAS graduates; in New York I had a memorable evening with SOAS alumni, many of whom work for the UN; in Los Angeles 'pints with the prof' turned into dinner with another fantastic group of our former students; in San Francisco, I had the pleasure of meeting Laurence O. Michalak, Emeritus Professor at Berkeley and one-time SOAS Masters student and Dr Bharti Kansara, who is a long-time supporter of SOAS in California.

Overall

I met hundreds of new people and learned a great deal about the strengths and weakness of various South Asia programmes. Most of those I visited expressed interest in some form of future collaboration, suggesting that there is more we can do work directly with North American universities. I returned home in possession of what could be the world's largest collection of South Asia Institute/Centre branded raw cotton bags, but I also return confident in the knowledge that the SOAS South Asia Institute serves the interests of a much larger group of scholars than can be found on any campus in North America.



SSAI in India 2019

by Edward Simpson

In February, I took a multi-tasking trip to India as part of our South Asia strategy. Along the way, I met many incredible people and experienced a great deal of generous and warm hospitality. I found however that SOAS's reputation and the research and friendship of many of my colleagues are widely known across the country and opened many doors.

My journey started in Mumbai where I was honoured to present the keynote lecture at the second Khoja Studies Conference hosted by the University of Mumbai. I also met with colleagues from our partner institution the Tata Institute of Social Science, including Madhushree Sekher, Chair of the International Relations Office, and K.P. Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro, filmmakers and curators of DiverCity, a wonderful archive on Mumbai.

For a few days I stayed with CAMP, friends and research collaborators, to discuss plans for a film about road building in South Asia. As usual, they were in the middle of a million things. One of those things was a remarkable and creative campaign called Posters Unite which, in the run up to the national elections, has brought artists together to produce daily images designed to combat hate politics and to bring about a different future. In West Bengal, in less than a week, I delivered lectures at Vidyasagar University, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Visva-Bharati University (two), Sister Nivedita

University, University of Calcutta, Presidency University, Jadavpur University and a public lecture at The Asiatic Society. I was also fortunate to meet many university leaders, academics and hundreds of students and talk with them about intellectual life in their institutions, SOAS, studying in the United Kingdom, and, err, Brexit. At Presidency University, we agreed to renew our highly successful MoU through which we regularly exchange post-graduate students.

Along with Dr Sanjukta Ghosh, then an SSAI Research Associate and now our Honorary Artistic Director, I attended the Bengal Global Business Summit as honoured guest of the University of Calcutta to agree the terms of new MoU for joint research in the study of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences. The document was exchanged at a ceremony presided over by the Honourable Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Dr Amit Mitra, the Finance Minister. The Vice Chancellor of CU Sonali Chakravarti Banerjee and Dr Lipi Ghosh were gracious hosts.

Significantly, both at the Business Summit and elsewhere discussions also took place with government officers and a number of university Vice Chancellors about the renewal and expansion of the Bishwa Bangla Scholarships which allow two students from West Bengal to come to SOAS to pursue masters degrees. This scheme has been made possible by the generosity of the government of West Bengal and truly is a fantastic opportunity for students to study overseas and to experience SOAS



Edward Simpson and Sanjukta Ghosh with Satyam Roychowdhury (centre) and colleagues on a visit to Sister Nivedita University

education first-hand.

It was not all work, Bruce Bucknell, British Deputy High Commissioner Kolkata hosted the lively annual reception to mark the 67th running of Queen Elizabeth II Cup in collaboration with Royal Calcutta Turf Club. Mr G.M. Kapur and Nayantara Palchoudhuri, representative of the SOAS alumni network in the city, treated me to a piano concert in the Calcutta Museum followed by a friendly dinner in the Saturday Club. We also had tea and cake with generations of the alumni in the famous Flurys tearooms.

I had not been to West Bengal since 1991. Changes to the city made it largely unrecognisable to me as the low-rise Calcutta I remembered is now towering Kolkata much of which is painted Banerjee's blue and white!

The final leg of the trip was to Chennai to promote the campaign for Tamil Studies

at SOAS. I met K. Pandiarajan the Minister for Tamil Official Language and Culture and along with colleagues from TamilChairUK held a Press Conference at which I put forward the reasons why SOAS is the place to fund Tamil Studies and language in the United Kingdom.

I also had opportunity to visit the famous Madras Institute of Development Studies and to interact with A.R. Venkatachalapathy, the Officiating Director. I would like to thank Benjamin Niran Viktor and Mr Shiva for looking after me and making my stay extremely comfortable.

The most cherished moment of the trip was in Midnapore at Vidyasagar University where I was hosted by my former SOAS PhD student Amit Kisku, who is now head of the Anthropology Department. Amit has flourished, in no small part I would like to think because of the time he spent at SOAS.

Dance and Music, Film, Theatre and Literary Events

SSAI hosted numerous visiting artists from India giving talks, demonstrations and performances pitched to the wider public and marking important socio-cultural celebrations worldwide. A selection of these is reviewed here:

Odissi Dance by Janhabi Behera



On 08 September 2018, in association with SPICMACAY -- one of India's well-known non-political cultural movement, a distinctive Odissi dance recital by Janhabi Behera, was held immediately following her receipt of the prestigious Bismillah Khan national award. Known to be a stylish soloist and as repertoire dancer of the highly acclaimed Orissa Dance Academy, she adheres to the teachings of Gurus Aruna

Mohanty, Ramesh Chandra Jena, Yudhisthir Nayak and the legendary late Gangadhar Pradhan. She is also a panel artiste of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations and the national broadcast Doordarshan.

Janhabi presented Odissi, a classical dance form from Orissa, elucidating the compositions Varshavisara and Madhurastaka. Both these dances demonstrate the pure rhythmic body works representing the ancient temple sculptures of Eastern India. She talked through different standing postures and fluid movements incorporating Indian raagas (non-western melodic frame). The hand gestures and elaborate footwork initiated through rhythmic stages leading to 'Moksha' or liberation were juxtaposed with abhinaya/ acting or storytelling through dance. These included the romantic disposition of Lord Krishna known in Indian folklore, the eternal spirit of Gita Govinda representing the emotive union of Radha and Krishna in mythology. The first dance Madhurastaka based on traditional Sanskrit composition related to Krishna's playfulness as an infant, the defeat of the evil serpent Kaliya and the cosmic order of beauty. It is choreographed by Padmashree Pankaj Charan Das, directed by Guru Smt. Aruna Mohanty and the music composition by Guru Harihar Panda. The second abhinaya Varshavisara depicts the arrival of monsoon as a relief to drought and for those waiting in despair. She performed the anxious wait and thrilling separation by a skilful exercise of romantic yearnings using music composition by Guru Ramahari Das.

The interactive performance through a sonic journey of thunder, lightning, and rain kept the audience rapt. The two acts were carefully chosen to demonstrate the fluidity of movement, gestures and thematic content based on innovative raagas. The traditional essences of the Eastern Indian state steeped in temples, deity, rituals and sculptures continue to influence Janhabi's training and teaching in Orissa. She spoke to students about newer emotive renderings of the legendary Krishna that appeal to the coastal environmental challenges.

Cosmic Idol to Ideal: A Passage of Durga to Nava Durga

The dance presentation of Nava Durga showcasing nine forms of cosmic energy represented in the Markandeya Purana was launched in the UK for the first time. The final segment was performed in SOAS on 27 October as 'Cosmic Idol to Ideal: A Passage of Durga to Navadurga' by Ragasudha Vinjamuri and a team of eight dancers from Sanskruti, with choreography by Dr Uma Rama Rao.

Dr Sanjukta Ghosh briefed the background Cultural Connects Week: Durga Utsav held in the previous year displaying precise craftsmanship by Kolkata's Kumartuli potters in making a modular Durga that could be changed on its head for a new form. The Navadurga dance as a sequel, replicated this principle of interchange, coinciding with the month of Navaratri – a celebration of Durga beyond Bengal to other regions in India.



Beyond the mainstream warrior representation and its recent resurgence, Nava Durgas are nine manifestations of Durga's attributes, depicting her as an ideal than an idol. Durga is shown as the epitome of feminine energy as Shakti that combats negative vices such as arrogance, greed, hatred, and selfishness, for establishing a moral order in society. Different Indian classical dance forms such as Kuchipudi, Bharatnatyam, Mohiniyattam, Odissi and Lavani showed the forms of divine power. The dance used different weapons and objects which stand for different traits and transitions.

Apart from cultural connotations, the dancers demonstrated the multi-faceted role of women in society. The performance

ARTISTIC AND OTHER EVENTS

highlighted a modern context to women's empowerment by bringing in additional nine participants as Queens championing social causes representing the well-known pageantry 'Mrs India UK' led by Aditi Gupta. They spoke about the ruling nine evils affecting society and the multi-faceted gender roles to deal with child labour, illiteracy, domestic violence, drug addiction, FGM, human trafficking among other issues.

7th March Foundation



The SOAS South Asia Institute in partnership with 7th March Foundation hosted the second Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Lecture on the 7th of March 2019.

The second lecture of the series was delivered by Sohela Nazneed, Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, titled 'Contentious Empowerment? Women as agents of change in Bangladesh'. Applying a historical lens Sohela explored the roles played by women's movement's negotiation with the Bangladeshi state, national and international actors to secure gender equality outcomes. She also reflected on the national and international factors that created opportunities to promote women's empowerment, and how national and regional economic and political shifts may positively or adversely influence the choices and pathways for Bangladeshi women to advance their interest and change the future.

The lecture gave us an important opportunity to welcome guests from the Bangladeshi community in London to SOAS and from the Bangladesh High Commission.

Creating 'Yogi and Ghat': A Baithak in Classical Music

On the International Day of Happiness, 17th March 2019, SSAI music baithak in association with Sangeet Foundation UK saw Barnali Chattopadhyay, the acclaimed panel artist of the All India Radio and Doordarshan, present her distinctive classical renditions incorporating fusion trends in Bollywood. The evening highlighted the therapeutic role of classical music that is breaking new grounds in research on communities affected by trauma and violence in society. Drawing from her albums Yogi and Ghat she demonstrated songs blending romanticism with spirituality. Sanju Sahai, one of the finest and sought after tabla maestros performing for 47 years, who teaches music in SOAS, brought the representative tabla Gharana to life, which had been around for

240 years. Ustaad Surjeet Singh Aulakh and Sunil Jadhav accompanied the memorable evening with sarangi and harmonium respectively.

Barnali's repertoire stems from the renowned musicologist Kumar Prasad Mukhopadhyay (Agra Gharana); training from Thumri vocalists such as Vidushi Purnima Chaudhuri, Shobha Gurtu and Padma Vibhushan Girija Devi. At SOAS, Barnali demonstrated the repeated sound patterns in thumri (the erotic lyric of Indian classical music), the mystic energy of structured notes yielding to emotions. Her gayaki through Sufi, Thumri and Bhajan makes a powerful appeal for social change. The 2000-year-old city of Benaras and its river ghats – the traditional hub of musical knowledge influences her eclectic style and performance of regional songs that explore the feminine transcendental spirit.



Film, Theatre and Literature

Narratives of Power and Liberation: Rabindranath Tagore's Dance Theatre

Dr Saibal Basu of IMAN Center for Cultural Research and Performance (West Bengal) gave a solo performance in ten Acts, an ensemble of Tagore dance drama characters in Chitrangada, Shyama and Chandalika (Oct 2018). Basu's repertoire of impressions ranged from Ananda in Chandalika, the Ardhanareeswara image suggesting the binaries of gender orientation in Chitrangada, the conjugal violence from Shyama and the pitcher girl as Prakriti/Nature in Chandalika. Following the tutelage by Acharya Mohan Singh, his experimental performance focused on voices from the margins in society, the inescapable caste, patriarchy and traumas of constructed gender identity. With rich props, costume, jewellery and brilliant execution of body movements, the evening was marked by memorable soundtracks, live singing in Bengali, interspersed with semantics, pure rhythm and music.

The performance is the first of its kind, with interchanging gender roles in a single artist, who combined Tagore's dance-dramas (Nriya Natya) with original verses, translation and explanations. Saibal Basu's performance was a centenary tribute to Rajeshwari Dutta who was a music lecturer at SOAS in the 1970s, and an early exponent of South Asian ethnomusic, known for Tagore's direct appreciation of her singing talent.



Rabindranath Tagore and the English Romantics

Celebrating the month of Paus/December in the Bengali calendar which is marked by a popular rural fair 'Paus Mela' in Rabindranath Tagore's erstwhile home and global educational centre Shantiniketan, excerpts from a documentary film was screened followed by a talk on Tagore's poetry. The film *Images Unbound, Life and Times of Tagore* directed by Mujibar Rahaman, the well-known film-maker of Kolkata on 'inspirational lives for future generations', captures different strands of Tagore's literary thoughts influenced by internationalism and travel.

The film screening was followed by a talk on Rabindranath Tagore and the English Romantics expanding the theme of international influences on Tagore. Manjubhash Mitra who has been a

visiting scholar at Univerzita Karlova (Prague) and a Reader in Bengali at Presidency University (West Bengal) provided comparative analyses of the English Romantic poets and Rabindranath Tagore, pointing to some direct borrowings influencing Bengali literature.

The seed of lyricism and romanticism was contained in medieval Vaishnava poetry or Radha-Krishna Padavali. But in Tagore, Bengali romantic and lyric poetry blossomed fully incorporating expressions of the self and the omnipotence of imagination. Following the trail of Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Coleridge, Tagore's poetry retains originality depicting the divine quality of love, beauty connected with good and truth, and the restorative power of nature. Like the English Romantics, poetic metres were followed, and rhyming was melodious; sadness, restlessness and discontent, desire for the new, awareness of a supreme and celestial presence and great love for mankind were other Romantic attributes in Tagore, who also blended ideas from the Upanishads.

Mitra who has published widely on Tagore, poetry and other aspects of Bengali literature, recited verses in Bengali with his own English translations that kept the audience glued to a thoughtful and philosophical literary evening.





ARTISTIC AND OTHER EVENTS

Ismat Chughtai's 'Lihaaf' - A Theatrical Narration



Several literary and performative sessions led by eminent writers, actors and scholars brought out the role of Progressive writers' movement dominant in the second half of the twentieth century. First in line, honouring the International Women's Day in March 2019, was a solo dramatic narration of Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf* (1942) by Roli Arun, a theatre artist and co-founder of the Bangalore based Playtonik. The Director of Playtonik's production Deeban Chakravarthy was present to join the interactive panel discussion led by the writer, playwright, translator Rukhsana Ahmad, co-founder of Kali Theatre and SAADA. Roli Arun's forty-five minutes monologue, using her own devices and dramatic techniques on empowerment brought out the realities of child sexual abuse in a bespoke stage, set in the environs of the noble's inner household. Drawing on regional Awadhi Hindi and Urdu, her expressions morphed to capture the representative ethnographic material in Chughtai's story, which Roli later described is part of her own induction to local culture and life experiences among similar Indian characters. Ghalib's ghazal and lullaby lyrics of Irshad Kamil sung in plain voice by Arun Rangaraju added to

the emotive ambience. The evening brought out Playtonik's vision of working with the ideas of Chughtai who remains an iconic feminist writer on conservative feudal relations relevant both in the past and the present. The discussion touched on the tormented decade of India and Pakistan's Independence and Partition, times when women's voices were diminutive to scale up the moral dilemmas of a same-sex relationship, domestic abuse and its imprint on the victim's memory.

Music and the Radical Impulse: The IPTA Tradition and Beyond

Another concluding session on Progressive artists was held towards the end of the summer term by Sumangala Damodaran, who visited SSAI from Ambedkar University, Delhi. She delivered a lecture-demonstration on the IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association) that developed through the nation's transitional period in politics and culture. Sumangala sang songs and reflected on eight decades of radical music, since the 1940s, exploring the myriad meanings of popular and indigenous genres of the IPTA musical tradition across India. She questioned the underlying assumption of the historic progressive movement as losing direction by shifting the gaze from texts to the power of music, artistic expression and its creative assimilation. Her work began with archiving and documenting the relatively marginal music and singing entering the fold of the IPTA as alternative voices of nationalism. Drawing a rich cultural canvas of plurality, the progressives acquired the 'radical impulses' defined by the very nature of their work, mode of questioning

and answering the topical political issues of the time. As we moved through the political timeline of anti-colonial struggles, global forces of emancipation from class and race, the post-colonial trauma of India's Partition, decades of food insecurity, excesses of India's Emergency and the rising tide of majoritarianism, cultural radicalism assumed newer proportions and appeal. This long-drawn process of the radical as accumulated knowledge inherits from the intensive past -- pre-Partition community songs, post-independent cultural icons such as Salil Chowdhury, Hemanga Biswas, Bhupen Hazarika and continues to innovate with current crowd pullers like Madan Gopal Singh and Shubha Mudgal. Damodaran ties the Indian experience with global influences such as Paul Robeson on Assamese song and teases out contemporary India's youthful desire to embrace Dalit voices for pops like Danger Chamar. Referring to her monograph *Radical Impulse: Music in the Tradition of the IPTA*, she brought out the historical pointers to the emancipatory popular and contemporary radical trends in music.



ARTISTIC AND OTHER EVENTS

The 1947 Partition Archive – by Kamaldeep Singh Sandhu, Citizen Historian

In this introduction to the 1947 Partition Archive, citizen historian Kamaldeep Singh Sandhu unpacked the purpose and technique to create an oral history archive that documents stories from survivors of the Partition. The archive's aim is not only to preserve the stories for future generations but also to empower the partition witnesses and their families to re-write the existing narratives as well as to bring the knowledge of Partition into wider public consciousness by documenting, preserving and sharing eye witness accounts from all ethnic, religious and economic communities affected by the Partition of British India in 1947. The event generated much interest among the South Asian community in London, and also attracted similar oral historians working on other parts of the world.

Understanding Lashkar-e-Tayyaba by Prof. Christine Fair - co-hosted with CISD

This event was a launch of Prof. Christine Fair's latest book on the Pakistani jihadist group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT). Curated as a panel discussion, the event saw top Pakistan experts such as Dr. Matthew Nelson (SOAS), Dr. Ayesha Siddiqi (SOAS), Dr. Walter Ladwig (KCL), and Dr. Sarah Ashraf (LSE) discuss and debate the finer nuances of this path-breaking volume that reveals little-known aspects of how the LeT functions in Pakistan and beyond. The book does so by translating and commenting upon a range of publications produced and disseminated by Dar-ul-Andlus, the publishing wing of LeT. Only a fraction of LeT's cadres ever see battle: most of them are dispatched on nation-wide 'proselytising' (dawa) missions to convert Pakistanis to their particular interpretation of Islam, in support of which LeT has developed a sophisticated propagandist literature.

This canon of Islamist texts is the most popular and potent weapon in LeT's arsenal,

and its scrutiny affords insights into how and who the group recruits; LeT's justification for jihad; its vision of itself in global and regional politics; the enemies LeT identifies and the allies it cultivates; and how and where it conducts its operations. Particular attention is paid to the role that LeT assigns to women by examining those writings which heap extravagant praise upon the mothers of aspirant jihadis, who bless their operations and martyrdom. It is only by understanding LeT's domestic functions as set out in these texts that one can begin to appreciate why Pakistan so fiercely supports it, despite mounting international pressure to disband the group.

Youth and Prefigurative Politics in India by Prof. Craig Jeffrey

In this fascinating session Prof. Craig Jeffrey, Director of the Australia India Institute and Professor of Geography at the University of Melbourne, spoke about the politics of reaching ahead, which is known as a form of prefigurative politics. Based on research

in the north Indian village of Bemni, Jeffrey offered three core arguments. One, he stressed upon the importance of youth as an interstitial generation, a type of informal peer-peer mentoring. Two, benefits of prefigurative politics is that it provides a basis for experimentation. And three, prefigurative politics is often associated with a type of prolepsis – audacious reaching ahead – among political subjects. Attended by researchers from within and outside SOAS, the session generated constructive debate and discussion. It offered scholars from disciplines other than geography and anthropology an opportunity to engage with the concept of prefigurative politics and consider its salience beyond Bemni. Jeffrey's much acclaimed previous work on youth, politics, development, education and inequality in India has focused on similar themes. He is author of seven books including *Timepass: Youth, Class and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford University Press 2010) and *India: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP 2017).



Pongal Celebrations 2019

On 16 January 2019, the SOAS South Asia Institute welcomed members of Tamil Chair UK, the SOAS Tamil Society and A.S Rajan, Minister of Coordination from the High Commission of India to SOAS to mark the Harvest Festival of Pongal and Thiruvalluvar Day. They were joined by Professor Edward Simpson, Dr Navtej Purewal, Pro-Director Professor Steve Hopgood and Dr Meera Sabaratnam.

The statue at the Russell Square entrance to the campus was presented to SOAS in 1996 and has since become a focus for both Tamil communities across the United Kingdom and passing tourists. His secular poetry is brought together in the *Tirukkural*, a collection of 1330 couplets detailing the everyday virtues and vices of an individual. This year's event was particularly special as the fund-raising campaign for Tamil Studies at SOAS has gathered significant momentum.

SOAS South Asia Institute's appreciation for Dick Alford (former Secretary of the Charles Wallace India Trust)



On 7th of December the SOAS South Asia Institute hosted a reception in the Paul Webley Wing of SOAS in appreciation of Dick Alford, who

stepped down as Secretary of the Charles Wallace India Trust after fifteen years. It was an emotional evening for the many who had been touched by Dick's care and diligence. He has put his own friendly and supportive mark on the Trust and is held in the highest regard by the many fellows who have come to study in the UK as a result. He is replaced as Secretary of the Trust by Shreela Ghosh.

Shreela Ghosh's career in the creative industries has been exceptionally rich and varied. Over the past 30 years she has worked in Dance, Theatre, Film and TV, Visual Arts, Heritage and Literature. She has delivered large-scale cultural development programmes in the UK and South Asia. In 2011, Shreela joined the British Council and became the first Regional Director Arts for South Asia.

In 2018 she decided to move on from the British Council and is delighted that in her new role she will be able to continue to foster the interests of talented young Indians and to work with the trust's longstanding partners in both India and the UK.

The SOAS South Asia Institute wishes Dick the best for his latest retirement and Shreela the best in her new role.

'From Kabul to Kolkata: Of Belonging, Memories, and Identity'

SOAS South Asia Institute, in collaboration with SOAS Brunei Gallery, Sussex Asia Centre, American Institute of Afghanistan Studies, Peace Training and Research Organisation, Chr. Michelsen Institute, and European Research Council hosted a photography exhibition by Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz from mid-October to mid-December 2018 at SOAS Brunei Gallery; 'From Kabul to Kolkata: Of Belonging, Memories, and Identity'.

Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz, two journalists cum photographer, embarked on a 3-year long project to tell the story of a century old social transformations among the Afghan community in Kolkata.

The exhibition demonstrated a specific intra-Asian connection between Afghans and Indians that highlights larger historical pattern of trans-Asian migration, cultural resilience and transformation, and shifting senses of self, community and home.



SSAI Director, Edward Simpson exchanges a Memorandum of Understanding with Sonali Chakravarty Bondhopadhyay, the Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University in the presence of Mamta Banerjee and Amit Mitra at the West Bengal Global Business Summit.



SOUTH ASIA PROGRAMMES AT SOAS

The SSAI provides an enriching environment for students coming to SOAS to study the region of South Asia with our active schedule of seminars and events throughout the academic calendar. In addition to modules being offered as options throughout the school as a part of more discipline-based degrees, there are various ways that students can more specifically explore South Asia at SOAS through formal study*:

01

MA Intensive South Asian Studies (2-year) – School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics

This course is an exciting opportunity to develop an understanding of South Asia that is of the greatest possible depth and sophistication, and is based upon cultural and linguistic fluency as well as advanced training in an academic discipline. Students study a South Asian language and a relevant discipline and spend a semester at a partner university in a South Asian country.

02

MA South Asia area studies (1-year) – School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics

The MA in South Asian Studies provides exceptional opportunities for advanced study of one of the world's most diverse and important regions.

Students can choose to concentrate on pre-modern or modern South Asia and can acquire a basic knowledge of one of the area's languages.

The degree provides a wide-ranging interdisciplinary analysis of the South Asian countries – India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Disciplines available include Politics, Economics, Anthropology, Law and History.

The programme attracts students from a variety of backgrounds. While some wish to broaden their previous studies or experience of South Asia, others approach the programme without having a South Asian element to their first degree, but with a desire to focus their previous training on the region.

03

MSc Development Studies (Contemporary India pathway) – Department of Development Studies

The programme attracts applications from students with a variety of academic and experiential backgrounds.

We welcome applications from those who have worked in a broad field of development, but also from students without relevant work experience who can demonstrate a strong interest in, and understanding of, development issues.

04

Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD)

The programme is delivered by the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD) in association with the FCO's Diplomatic Academy, using a combination of multi-disciplinary teaching, cutting-edge research and public discussion of diplomacy and international politics in a globalised world.

This programme is available as a Masters, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate level.

* Please contact the respective departments for information pertaining to these programmes.

05

MA Global Security and Strategy (Online)

The MA in Global Security and Strategy takes a critical view to traditional strategic studies, encompassing Africa, Asia and Middle East approaches to grand strategy for peace and security, conflict resolution, international collaboration, war technologies and disarmament.

Modules covering South Asian Region:

1. Indian Foreign and Security Policy
2. Afghanistan: Strategic and Geopolitical Perspectives
3. Economy, Politics, and Society: South Asia
4. Pakistan: Religion, Politics, and Security

TRAVELLING SSAI MEMBERS

Dr James Mallinson



Dr James Mallinson spent a month-long trip to India in January 2019. The first two weeks were spent in Delhi and Rajasthan visiting manuscript libraries and speaking at the Jaipur Literary Festival (together with SOAS colleague Dr Daniela Bevilacqua). In between talks at the festival, Dr Mallinson made visits to the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum in the City Palace to consult its manuscript collection, which is overseen by Dr Giles Tillotson, formerly Reader in History of Art at SOAS, now occupant of a beautiful office in the heart of one of India's most visited tourist attractions. The collection has not been formally catalogued but there is a digitised list of over 10000 manuscripts. Among various interesting works Dr Mallinson was delighted to find an entry for the Yogabhāskara, an important medieval yoga text which was thought to have been lost. He is now writing an essay on this manuscript for a forthcoming book on treasures of the palace collection and plans subsequently to edit and translate the text.

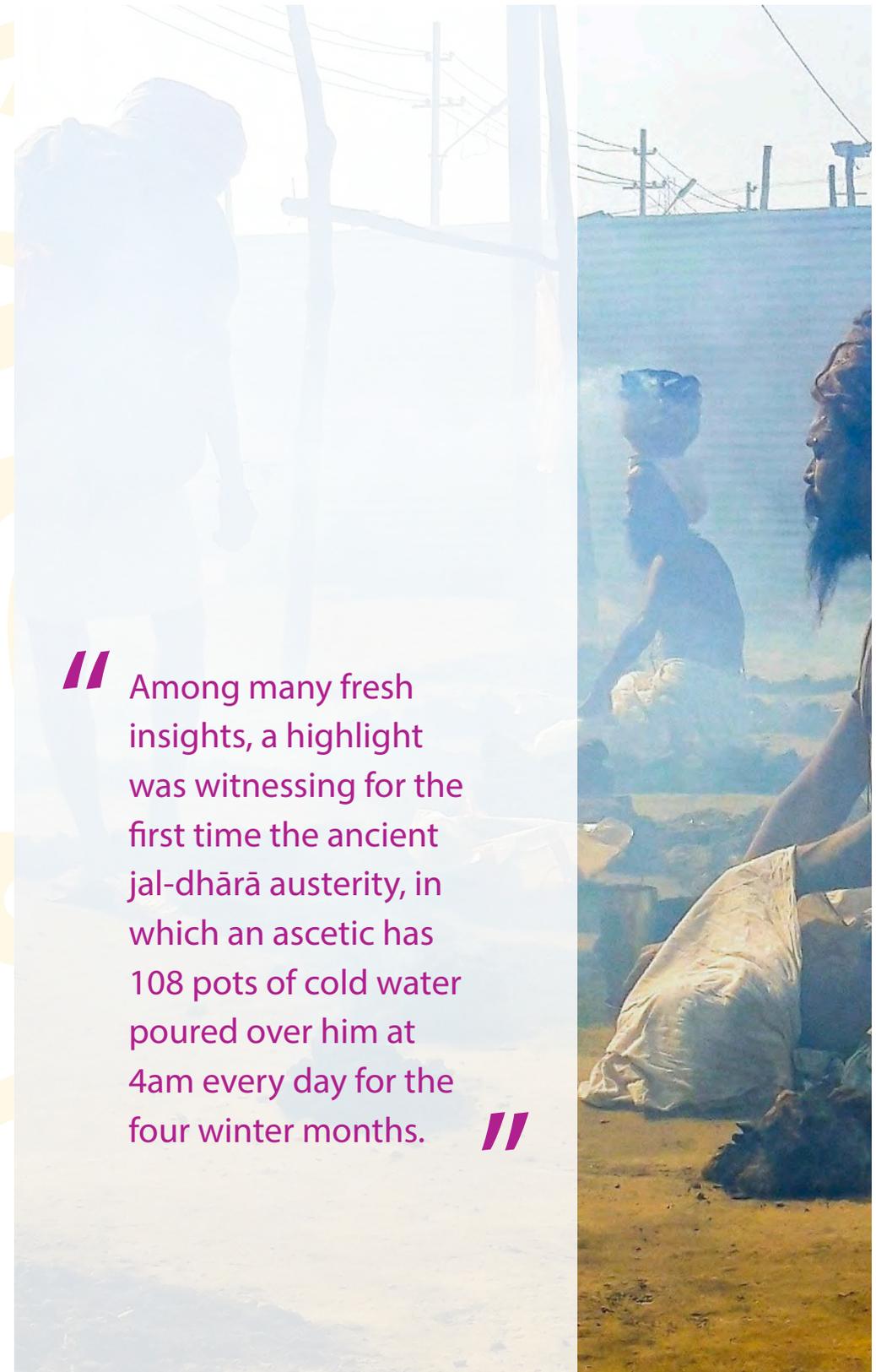
After Jaipur, Dr Mallinson spent ten days at the Kumbh Mela festival together with his colleague on the Hatha Yoga Project, Dr Daniela Bevilacqua. Staying in the heart of the camps of the traditional ascetics, they caught up with old yogi friends and made several interesting new ones. Among many fresh insights, a highlight was witnessing for the first time the ancient jal-dhārā austerity, in which an ascetic has 108 pots of cold water poured over him at 4am every day for the four winter months.

Professor Michael Hutt

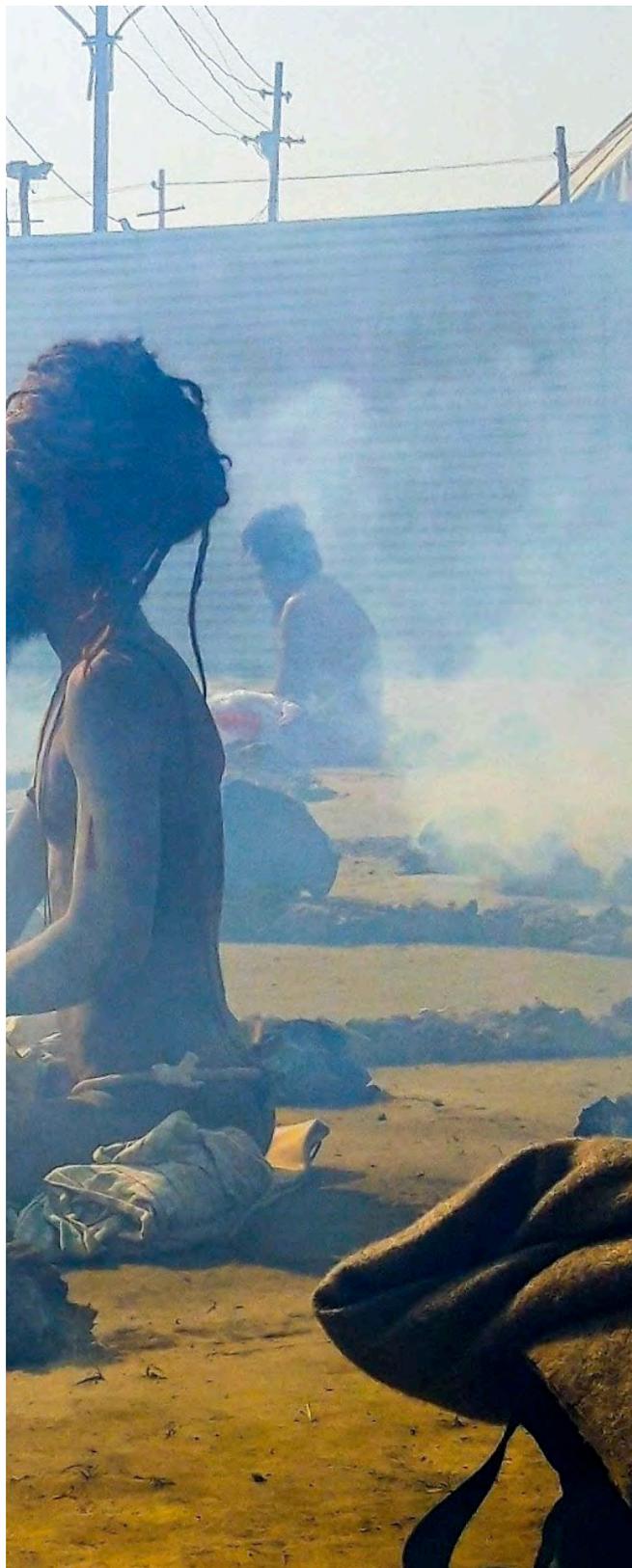
Michael Hutt, Professor of Nepali and Himalayan Studies, has returned from a six-week research visit from Nepal as part of the project 'After the Earth's Violent Sway', funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund through the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project investigates the cultural and political impacts of the April 2015 Nepal earthquake and of earlier earthquakes in Nepal

During the trip, Michael visited the hill villages that were at the epicentre of the 2015 earthquake and almost completely destroyed.

For further info, see the project blog: <https://sway.soscba.org/blog/>



“ Among many fresh insights, a highlight was witnessing for the first time the ancient jal-dhārā austerity, in which an ascetic has 108 pots of cold water poured over him at 4am every day for the four winter months. ”



TRAVELLING SSAI MEMBERS

Professor Navtej Purewal

Navtej Purewal, Reader in Political Sociology and Development Studies, presented for the Ma & Morley foundation scholars programme at the University of Newcastle in Australia which supports students from indigenous/aboriginal/marginal communities in Australia.



The session was presented as part of the foundation's theme 'Peace, demilitarisation and cultural respect' with the Australian Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Tej provided the background and analysis of the ongoing conflict and recent escalations in South Asia between India and Pakistan in terms of borders, nationalism and militarisation. The day focused on the global context of the movement to ban nuclear weapons, Australia's refusal to sign the ban treaty, and the South Asian region as a 'hot spot' of nuclear nationalism with India and Pakistan being two out of nine countries possessing nuclear weapons. ICAN is a global civil society coalition which has campaigned to promote and bring into full implementation the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. ICAN won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 for its work.

Professor Bhavani Shankar

Bhavani Shankar worked on two major projects set in South Asia, 'Sustainable and Healthy Food Systems' (SHEFS) funded by the Wellcome Trust, and 'Market Intervention for Nutritional Improvement' (MINI), funded by the Gates Foundation.

These have required quite a lot of travel, particularly in rural Bihar, but also to other parts of India as well as Bangladesh. A long-running project, 'Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia' (LANSA) also came to an end in early 2019.

These projects have results in 8 journal articles being published during this year. I gave keynote lectures in 2018 at the EAT Asia-Pacific Food Forum in Jakarta and at the Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research, Mumbai.

We have also won some new funding as part of a consortium - the GCRF-funded 'Action Against Stunting' Hub that includes an India study site.



Charles Wallace India Trust Fellowship at SOAS, 2018-2019

Dr Anwesha Sengupta



Assistant Professor, Institute of Development Studies Kolkata

It was an honour and a great privilege to receive the Charles Wallace India Trust Fellowship at SOAS University of London. I reached London on January 22 (2019) and I spent next three months in the city. Richard Alford and Shreela Ghosh of Charles Wallace India Trust and Jane Savory and Sunil Pun from SOAS South Asia Institute were extremely helpful with all the logistical details. Therefore, settling down in London and at SOAS was not difficult at all.

During my three months stay at London, I worked extensively at the SOAS Library. My research focuses on the process of implementing Partition (1947) in India and Pakistan. As a scholar based in India, I have very limited access to the books and reports that

are published from Pakistan on this topic. But the SOAS Library has an excellent collection of such books and reports. This fellowship gave me an opportunity to consult this collection. Moreover, I also consulted the archival collection at SOAS where I found the collection titled “India: A People Partitioned” very useful. The CWIT-SOAS fellowship also provided me with an opportunity to work at the British Library. The India Office Records (IOR) and the Manuscripts under the Asia Africa Collection are very useful for my research. I found the Fortnightly and the Weekly Reports sent by the British Deputy High Commissioners from Kolkata and Dhaka between 1947 and 1950 particularly useful. I also found various reports published by the East Pakistan Government on matters of jute trade. Since I look into the economic consequences of Partition for East and West Bengal, these records were extremely helpful.

At SOAS South Asia Institute, I had opportunities to interact with a number of faculty and researchers who were generous with their time and comments. I discussed my work with Professor Edward Simpson, the director of the South Asia Institute and received very useful feedbacks. I also had the opportunity to interact with his PhD students. Discussing my work with the research associates of the South Asia Institute – Dr. Priyanka Basu and Dr. Sanjukta Ghosh – was also very productive. I attended the seminars and events organised by the South Asia Institute. Moreover, I attended three lectures at the history department of SOAS. These lectures were very interesting and relevant to my work. I had the opportunity to

discuss my work with Dr. Eleanor Newbiggin from the history department which was very useful. Being in London provided me with the opportunity to meet some of the UK based researchers working on my field, including Prof. Ananya J. Kabir and Uditi Sen.

At SOAS, I delivered a lecture titled “Living on the Edge: The Platform Refugees of Calcutta, 1950s-1960s” (20 March, 2019). The lecture was chaired by Professor Edward Simpson. It was an intellectually stimulating experience as I received very useful feedback and important questions from the audience and from the Chair. Eleanor Newbiggin from the history department, Shreela Ghosh and Richard Alford from Charles Wallace India Trust and others attended the lecture.

I also used this opportunity to visit museums and old bookshops in London. Visiting the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, National Gallery and the Tate Modern were enriching experiences. I also spent a considerable time exploring a number of bookshops near SOAS and BL, including Judd, Skoob, Waterstones, London Review of Books and Houseman.

The three months that I spent at SOAS were exciting and intellectually stimulating. I am very grateful to Charles Wallace India Trust and SOAS South Asia Institute for this lovely opportunity. I particularly want to thank Shreela Ghosh and Richard Alford from CWIT, Prof. Edward Simpson, Jane Savory, Sunil Pun and Dorinne Kaw from the South Asia Institute, SOAS for their time, support and encouragement.

The SOAS South Asia Institute, through the generous support of the Charles Wallace Trust, annually awards two visiting fellowships for a three-month long association with SOAS. These fellowships are awarded to one scholar each from India and Pakistan. It is awarded to those academics who are ready to make the most of a short period of study and discussion at SOAS. Applications are encouraged from those scholars who have had no or little opportunity to do research outside their countries.

Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust Fellowship at SOAS, 2018-2019

Dr Umber Bin Ibad

Associate Professor, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) Lahore

It was an honor to receive the Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust Fellowship at SOAS University of London. From the very first day, I found everyone around me very accommodating and convivial. Mr. Tim Pritchard and Mubashir Sheikh from Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust and Sunil Pun from SOAS South Asia Institute were extremely helpful with all the logistical details. I was all set after reaching London on 11 June 2019 for having an exciting research experience.

During my three months stay, I worked extensively at the SOAS Library. My research focuses on the “religious tourism: Identity, Pilgrimage and Borders” in Pakistan. SOAS has a big library with the extensive collection of research material helping me develop my project in archival as well as theoretical ways. The CWPT-SOAS fellowship also provided me with an opportunity to work at the British Library. The India Office Records (IOR), especially the Foreign Office Correspondence and Sanitation Reports, along with the Records of the Hajj were very useful. I also found rare Manuscripts and the research journals of nineteenth and twentieth century useful for my research.

At SOAS South Asia Institute, I had opportunities to interact with a number of faculty members and researchers who were generous with their time and comments. I discussed my work with Professor Edward Simpson, the director of the South Asia Institute and received very useful feedbacks. I also had the opportunity to discuss extensively my work with Dr. Tej Purewal. Her feedback gave me plenty of insights to



improve, especially my methodological position.

Working at SOAS also gave me opportunity to get exposed to the multi-disciplinary academic environment even outside SOAS. Along with attending the seminars and book launches at SOAS I was able to attend and participate in some of the related academic activities. I attended a seminar at Glasgow university. I attended another seminar at the university of Warwick. I went to Cambridge to attend a talk by Hussain Ahmed Khan on the meaning of heritage.

I was invited at the University of Bath for a day conference on the Memory, Culture and Disputed Territories. I presented my developing research and received important feedback.

I also used this opportunity to visit museums and old bookshops in London. Visiting the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, National Gallery and the Tate Modern were enriching experiences. I also spent a considerable time exploring a number of bookshops near SOAS and BL, including Judd, Skoob, Waterstones, London Review of Books and Houseman.

The three months that I spent at SOAS were exciting and intellectually stimulating. I am very grateful to Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust and SOAS South Asia Institute for this lovely opportunity. I particularly want to thank Mubashir Sheikh from CWPT, Prof. Edward Simpson, Tej Purewal and Sunil Pun from the South Asia Institute, SOAS for their time, support and encouragement.

SOAS Charles Wallace India and Pakistan Fellowship

For more information please visit:
www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/scholarships/fellowship/

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY SSAI SCHOLARS

Almut Hintze: Living Zoroastrianism

Almut Hintze co-edited a volume in honour of Maria Macuch, the historian of Sasanian law. Together with the team of the Multimedia Yasna (MUYA), the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute and Dr Sarah Stewart, the team put on an exhibition on Living Zoroastrianism in the Foyle Gallery within SOAS's Brunei Gallery (Oct.-Dec. 2018).

The exhibition also formed part of the Bloomsbury Being Human Festival in November 2018.

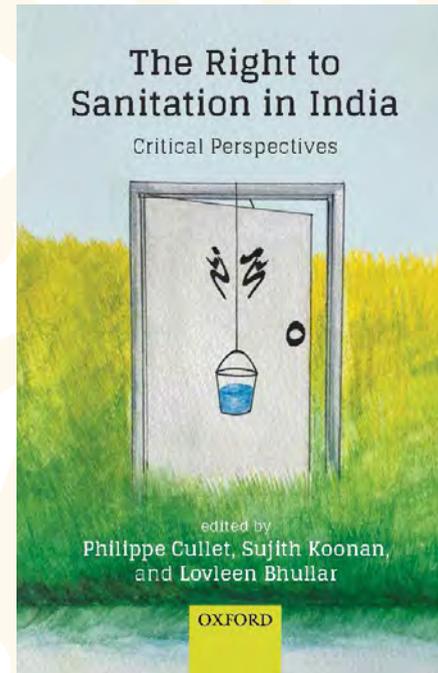


Rahul Rao: 'Out of Time: the queer politics of postcoloniality';

Rahul Rao gave talks on his forthcoming book 'Out of Time: the queer politics of postcoloniality', which explores the politics of contestation of antisodomy laws in Uganda, India and the UK. These included public lectures in Copenhagen and Brussels, as well as a seminar in Yale University's South Asia Studies Council Colloquium Series. He has also spoken about his work on the politics of controversies around statues of public figures (many in India) on a number of occasions, including at a public event at the LSE. Recent publications include a review article surveying literature on the politics of time and temporality in international relations in Millennium: Journal of International Studies, and a review of Jasbir Puar's recent book 'The Right to Maim', offered from a decidedly Indian perspective, on The Disorder of Things blog.

Philippe Cullet: The Right to Sanitation in India

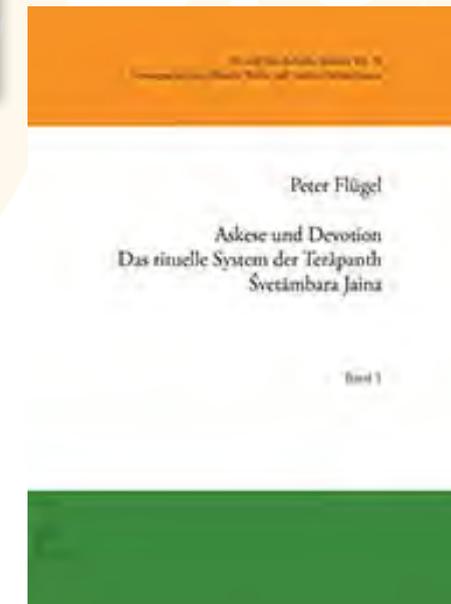
Philippe Cullet edited Right to Sanitation in India – Critical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, 2019) with L. Bhullar & S. Koonan eds, both SOAS PhD alumni; published 'Model Groundwater (Sustainable Management) Bill, 2017: A New Paradigm for Groundwater Regulation', 2/3 Indian Law Review 263 (2018) and wrote opeds on water law and policy in The Print and the Shillong Times.



Peter Flügel : Asceticism and Devotion: The Ritual System of the Terāpanth Śvetāmbara Jaina , Röhl Verlag, 2018

The two-part monograph Asceticism and Devotion: The Ritual System of the Terāpanth Śvetāmbara Jaina, based on fieldwork and archival research mainly conducted in Rajasthan in 1992-93, describes history, philosophy, organisation, ritual system, and influence of a 'protestant' Jaina mendicant order that doctrinally rejects image-veneration and from 1949 onward pursued

a modernist agenda. Jainism as a lived religion is analysed here for the first time as a dynamic social system with regard to an individual Jaina sect that self-referentially reproduces itself through selective networks of actions and communications connecting itinerant mendicants and their devotees. The work is both an ethnography and a contribution to the comparative sociology of knowledge. The empirical investigation focuses on the documentation and historical contextualisation of religious practices, the overall aim of the study is a better theoretical understanding of the effects of social forces on the structure of thought by way of an exemplary investigation of current processes of change and modernisation in the Jaina tradition.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY SSAI SCHOLARS

Peter Flügel :

Contributions to Jaina Studies: Jaina Schools & Sects, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2019

The twelve articles assembled in this first volume of the author's Collected Papers in Jaina Studies, written in English, were published as journal articles and book chapters between 1996 and 2016. They are reproduced here in almost identical form, though an attempt was made to eliminate typographical errors and minor mistakes. Three articles, chapters 2, 6, and 11, which, on request, were first published without the use of diacritical marks, have been changed back to their original format. In a few cases, the biographical data of recently deceased individuals were updated.

The articles address aspects of the history, doctrine, organisation, and ways of life in Jaina mendicant orders, sects and schools, following an overview of the contemporary monastic traditions. The majority are outcomes of a long-term research project, covering a period of over 30 years, on the aniconic or amūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbara Jaina traditions, which had been neglected by modern scholarship and, with the notable exception of the Terāpanth and the Śramaṇa Saṃgha, are still almost unknown even in India itself. Two articles pertain to the Akrama Vijñāna Mārga, a new syncretistic religious movement, combining Sāṃkhya ontology with Jaina soteriology.

Amina Yaqin: Contesting Islamophobia: anti-Muslim prejudice in Media, Culture and Politics

SOAS University of London's Dr Amina Yaqin, Senior Lecturer in Urdu and Postcolonial Studies, has co-edited a new book on anti-Muslim prejudice in media, culture and politics.

Contesting Islamophobia: anti-Muslim prejudice in Media, Culture and Politics is co-edited with SOAS research student, Dr Alaya Forte (Centre for Gender Studies) and Peter Morey (University of Birmingham). This book is an output of the Muslims Trust and Cultural Dialogue research project, funded by the RCUK, led by Professor Morey in collaboration with Dr Yaqin as partner and Dr Alaya Forte as research assistant. The publication has received generous support from Professor Abdel Haleem (SOAS Centre for Islamic Studies).

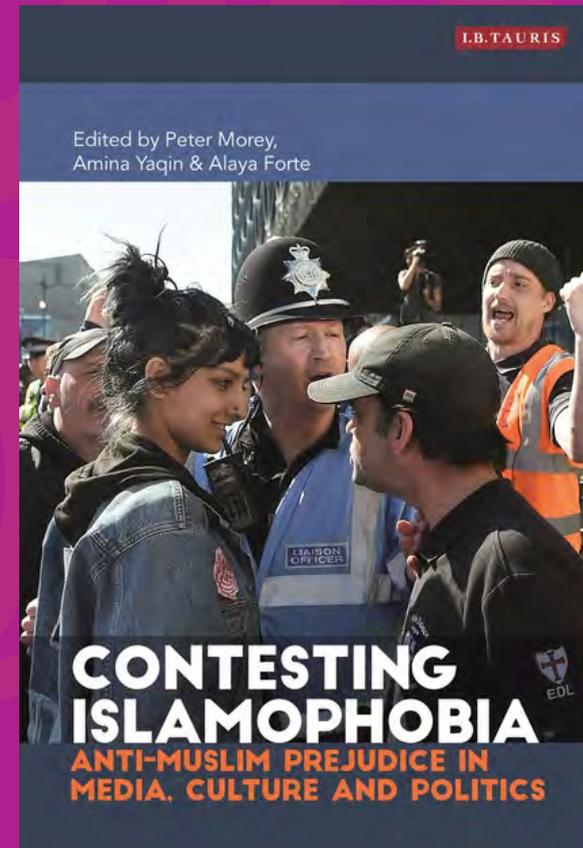
The book reveals the way in which Islamophobia's pervasive power is being met with responses that challenge it and the worldview on which it rests. The volume breaks new ground by outlining the characteristics of contemporary Islamophobia across a range of political, historic, and cultural public debates in Europe and the United States.

Chapters examine issues such as: how anti-Muslim prejudice facilitates questionable foreign and domestic policies of Western governments; the tangible presence of anti-Muslim bias in media and the arts including a critique of the global blockbuster fantasy series Game of Thrones; youth activism in response to securitised Islamophobia in education; and activist forms of Muslim self-fashioning including Islamic feminism, visual art and comic strip superheroes in popular culture and new media.

Drawing on contributions from experts in history, sociology, and literature, the book brings together interdisciplinary perspectives from culture and the arts as well as political and policy reflections. It argues for an inclusive cultural dialogue through which misrepresentation and institutionalised Islamophobia can be challenged.

The volume includes a chapter by Dr Yaqin entitled 'Islamic Feminism in a Time of Islamophobia: the Muslim Heroines of Leila Aboulela's Minaret and Elif Shafak's Forty Rules of Love'.

Further information on the book can be found on the publisher's website. Dr Yaqin will be in conversation about the book at the Bradford Literature Festival 'Islamophobia from Street to State' on 6th July.



SSAI STAFF PROFILES

Anthropology



Institute Director:
Professor
Edward Simpson
**Professor of
Social Anthropology**

Expertise: Infrastructure development in South Asia; Islam in South Asia; politics, ethnography and society in Gujarat; social theory and the Indian Ocean; disaster and reconstruction anthropology; post-colonial rural change.
Email: es7@soas.ac.uk



Professor David Mosse
**Professor of Social
Anthropology**

Expertise: India, especially Tamil Nadu and Adivasi western India; caste and religion, Dalit politics, vernacular Christianity, environmental history, common property resources, indigenous irrigation, participatory rural development, aid agencies, anthropology of development.
Email: dm21@soas.ac.uk



Damian Walter
Senior Teaching Fellow

Expertise: Nepal; shamanism and ritual practice; anthropological theory, past and present.
Email: dw4@soas.ac.uk



Emma Crewe
**Professor of Social
Anthropology**

Expertise: South Asia and the UK; anthropology of institutions (including the UK parliament and development NGOs), international development, policy, planning and practice, technology, gender, children's rights, violence and inequality.
Email: ec154@soas.ac.uk

Development:



Professor
Jonathan Goodhand
**Professor in Conflict &
Development Studies**

Expertise: South & Central Asia; complex political emergencies, humanitarian aid; NGO capacity building; aid, conflict and development.
Email: jg27@soas.ac.uk



Dr Richard Axelby
Research Associate

Expertise: Natural resource use, citizenship and identity, and the politics of development.
Email: ra39@soas.ac.uk

Dr Feyzi Ismail
Senior Teaching Fellow

Expertise: NGOs and social movements, politics and development in Nepal & South Asia, global protest and change, alternatives to neoliberalism and imperialism.
Email: fi2@soas.ac.uk



Dr Navtej Purewal
**Deputy Director, SOAS
South Asia Institute**

Expertise: IFeminist scholarship and gender in South Asia; reproductive rights; girls' education; neoliberalism and social policy; bordering processes in Punjab across India and Pakistan
Email: np39@soas.ac.uk



Anna Larson
Research Associate

Expertise: Democratisation in Afghanistan and other conflict-affected states, with a focus on gender and democratic institutions (elections, political parties and the legislature).
Email: al46@soas.ac.uk



Dr Jens Lerche
**Reader in Agrarian &
Labour Studies**

Expertise: India; labour, social movements and globalisation; labour and the ILO; labour and caste in India; agrarian political economy.
Email: jl2@soas.ac.uk



Dr Alessandra Mezzadri
**Senior Lecturer in
Development Studies**

Expertise: International trade, global commodity chains; production networks and industrial systems; informality and processes of labour informalisation; inequality and social structures of oppression; gender, feminisms and reproduction; the political economy of the garment industry; the political economy of India
Email: am99@soas.ac.uk



Professor
Peter P Mollinga
**Professor of
Development Studies**

Expertise: South Asia, Central Asia; comparative political sociology of water resources and development; technology and agrarian change; boundary work in natural resources management; interdisciplinary social theory.
Email: pm35@soas.ac.uk



Professor Tom Selwyn
**Professorial Research
Associate**

Expertise: Tourism/pilgrimage with regional interests in Palestine/Israel and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
Email: ts14@soas.ac.uk



Dr Paolo Novak
**Lecturer in
Development Studies**

Expertise: Trans-nationality with reference to migration; refugee regime; borders and NGOs
Email: pn4@soas.ac.uk



Professor Nigel Poole
**Professor of International
Development Policy**

Expertise: Agri-health and nutrition, natural resources and food value chains, poverty reduction
Email: n.poole@soas.ac.uk

SSAI STAFF PROFILES



Professor
Bhavani Shankar
Professor of International
Food, Agriculture
and Health

Expertise: Analysis of economic drivers of over and under-nutrition, nutrition transition, dietary policy evaluation, impact assessment and the role of agriculture in enabling better nutrition and health.
Email: b.shankar@soas.ac.uk



Dr Subir Sinha
Senior Lecturer in
Institutions and
Development

Expertise: Institutions of development, NGOs, social movements; the environment, common property institutions and resource use.
Email: ss61@soas.ac.uk

Economics:



Dr Antonio Andreoni
Senior Lecturer
in Economics

Expertise: Production structures and capabilities; Learning, Organisations & Innovations; Automation & Robots; Industrial Eco-systems; Linkages, Diversification & Industrial Renewal; Financialisation of Manufacturing; Political Economy of Industrial development; political settlements and corruption; Structural Economic Dynamics; Global Policy
Email: aa155@soas.ac.uk

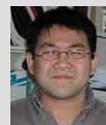
Dr Sonali Deraniyagala
Lecturer in Economics

Expertise: South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; technical change and productivity in manufacturing; industrial policy, the impact of trade liberalisation on manufacturing performance
Email: sd11@soas.ac.uk



Professor Mushtaq Khan
Professor of Economics

Expertise: Institutional Economics and political economy; the economics of rent seeking, corruption and patron-client networks; late industrialisation and the state
Email: mk100@soas.ac.uk



Dr Satoshi Miyamura
Senior Lecturer in the
Economy of Japan

Expertise: South & East Asia, especially India & Japan, Development Economics, Labour economics and Institutional economics, Labour-management bargaining; Research Methods in Economics
Email: sm97@soas.ac.uk



Dr Pallavi Roy
Lecturer in
International Economics

Expertise: Political Economy of Growth, governance and liberalisation in developing countries, corruption, Institutional Economics, Industrial policy, politics of austerity in Europe and the Euro crisis.
Email: pr16@soas.ac.uk



Financial &
Management Studies
Professor Pasquale
Scaramozzino

Professor of Economics
Expertise: Macroeconomics, applied econometrics, fiscal policy.
Email: ps6@soas.ac.uk

History



Professor
Michael W. Charney
Professor of Asian
and Military History

Expertise: The history of Buddhist societies in South and Southeast Asia and of culture, technology and warfare in colonial Africa and Asia.
Email: mc62@soas.ac.uk



Dr Roy Fischel
Lecturer in the history
of South Asia

Expertise: History of precolonial South Asia, Muslim polities and societies; The Deccan, 1300-1700; South Asia and the early modern Muslim world
Email: rf26@soas.ac.uk



Dr Eleanor Newbigin
Senior Lecturer in
the History of Modern
South Asia

Expertise: History of modern South Asia, particularly the transition to independence; gender, family and law in colonial and post-colonial India
Email: en2@soas.ac.uk



Dr Mandy Sadan
Reader in the History of
South East Asia

Expertise: Ethnicity and conflict in mainland South East Asia, cultural production, non-national histories of Eastern Himalayas and South East Asian Massif and the South, South East and East Asia border worlds of Burma
Email: ms114@soas.ac.uk



Dr Shabnum Tejani
Senior Lecturer in the
History of Modern
South Asia

Expertise: Nineteenth and Twentieth century social and intellectual history, particularly of the Bombay Presidency; communalism and nationalism in India; debates around secularism and religious intolerance.
Email: st40@soas.ac.uk

History of Art & Archaeology



Dr Crispin Branfoot
Reader in the History
of South Asian Art &
Archaeology

Expertise: Architecture, sculpture and painting in South Asia, especially in southern India; pilgrimage and sacred geography; material religion; colonialism and material culture.
Email: crispin.branfoot@soas.ac.uk



Dr Fiona Buckee
Research Associate

Expertise: Design and formalistic development of Indian temple architecture, Latina temple spires from the Vastushastras (Indian texts detailing the 'rules' of Indian architecture).
Email: fb13@soas.ac.uk

SSAI STAFF PROFILES (CONTINUED)



Dr Heather Elgood, MBE
Course Director of the
Diploma in Asian Art

Expertise: A specialist in Persian, Jain, Sultanate and Mughal manuscript painting as well as the ritual arts of Hinduism.
Email: he2@soas.ac.uk

Languages And Cultures



Ms Sahana Bajpaie
Senior Teaching
Fellow in Bengali

Expertise: Bengali Language
Email: sb165@soas.ac.uk



Dr James Caron
Lecturer in Islamicate
South Asia

Expertise: Islam in South Asia; Afghanistan and Pakistan; Indo-Persianate sociocultural history; transnational non-Western history; activism and social movements.
Email: jc84@soas.ac.uk



Professor Rachael Dwyer
Professor of Indian
Cultures & Cinema

Expertise: Hindi Cinema; Indian popular culture; Indian film; Hinduism; new middle classes; Mumbai/Bombay; Gujarati language and literature; Gujarati diaspora, especially UK & East Africa; comparative Indian literature
Email: rd3@soas.ac.uk



Professor Michael J Hutt
Professor of Nepali and
Himalayan Studies

Expertise: Nepali literature; the Nepali media; Nepali politics; Bhutanese refugees
Email: mh8@soas.ac.uk



Mr Aishwarj Kumar
Teaching Fellow in Hindi

Expertise: Hindi Language
Email: ak5@soas.ac.uk



Dr Stefanie Lotter
Research Fellow
and Co-Investigator,
'After the Earth's Violent
Sway: The tangible and
intangible legacies of a
natural disaster'

Expertise: Nepali society and culture; museology; social and cultural anthropology of the Himalayan; elite studies; heritage studies
Email: sl70@soas.ac.uk



Dr David Lunn
Simon Digby
Postdoctoral Fellow

Expertise: 19th and 20th century Hindu and Urdu literature; cinema; music; journalism; North Indian literary history; intellectual history; literary translation
Email: dl24@soas.ac.uk



Dr James Mallinson
Senior Lecturer in
Sanskrit and Classical
Indian Studies

Expertise: Sanskrit, Poetry and Ethnography of Yoga
Email: jm63@soas.ac.uk



Rakesh Nautiyal
Senior Lecturer in Hindi

Expertise: Hindi Language
Email: rn17@soas.ac.uk



Professor Francesca Orsini
Professor of Hindi And
South Asian Literature

Expertise: Hindi literature; North Indian literary cultures; Hindi; Urdu
Email: fo@soas.ac.uk

Krishna Pradhan
Senior Lecturer in Nepali

Expertise: Nepali Language
Email: kp15@soas.ac.uk



Naresh Sharma
Senior Lecturer in
Urdu & Hindi

Expertise: Urdu & Hindi Language
Email: ns19@soas.ac.uk



Dr Lidia Wojtczak
Senior Lecturer in Sanskrit

Expertise: Sanskrit
Email: lw24@soas.ac.uk



Dr Amina Yaqin
Senior Lecturer in Urdu
and Postcolonial Studies

Expertise: Urdu language and literature; post-colonial literature and theory; gender studies; South Asian literatures in English; feminism in a Third World context; gender and politics in Pakistan
Email: ay@soas.ac.uk

Law



Dr Samia Bano
Senior Lecturer in Law

Expertise: Muslim Family law in the UK & Europe, Family Law, Multiculturalism, Citizenship, Islamic Jurisprudence and Human Rights, Feminist and Critical Social and Political Theories, Issues concerning the rights of Muslim women and Gender Equality
Email: sb169@soas.ac.uk



Professor Philippe Cullet
Chair, Centre of Law,
Environment and
Development

Expertise: Law and environment, law and natural resources, intellectual property, water, human rights, international law, India
Email: pc38@soas.ac.uk



Dr Vanja Hamzić
Senior Lecturer in
Legal History and
Legal Anthropology

Expertise: Law and Society of South Asia (especially Pakistan), South East Asia (esp. Indonesia) and West Africa (esp. Senegal); Islamic Law; Legal and Social History; Legal and Social Anthropology; Gender, Sexuality and the Law; Colonialism and Slavery in the 18th and 19th Centuries; Marxism; Critical Theory; Law of Tort; Global Law/Governance; Cold War Studies
Email: vh1@soas.ac.uk

SSAI STAFF PROFILES (CONTINUED)



Dr Kanika Sharma
Lecturer

Expertise: Law and colonialism; law and society in South Asia (especially gender issues); Law, image and architecture; Psychoanalytic jurisprudence; Critical legal theory
Email: ks72@soas.ac.uk

Dr Mayur Suresh
Lecturer in Law

Expertise: Anti-terror laws (particularly of South Asia); law and anthropology; legal theory (particularly on theories of emergency legality); sexuality and gender identity in South Asia
Email: ms148@soas.ac.uk

Media & Film

Dr Somnath Batabyal
Lecturer in Media in Development and International Journalisms



Expertise: South Asia with a focus on India; transnational news spheres with a special focus on India; Development discourses in India and its articulation in mainstream and alternate news forums; environmental politics.
Email: sb127@soas.ac.uk



Murali Shanmugavelan
Senior Teaching Fellow

Expertise: India, Tamil Nadu; caste (and media); Dalits; mass media; critical media theory; mobile phones; digital media practices including mobile apps; ethnography of communication and media; social anthropology
Email: ms147@soas.ac.uk

Music



Professor Richard Widdess
Professor of Musicology

Expertise: History and theory of Indian classical music; dhrupad; Newar music of Nepal; historical ethnomusicology; analysis of musical performance; cognitive approaches to music; music and meaning; music and religion
Email: rw4@soas.ac.uk



Dr Richard Williams
Lecturer in Ethnomusicology

Expertise: Music of South Asia; Hindustani classical music; historical ethnomusicology; cultural history; historical musicology and musical aesthetics; lyric, song, and musical literature; music and gender; music and religion; history of emotions
Email: Richard.williams@soas.ac.uk

Politics & International Studies



Dr Rochana Bajpai
PhD Research Methods Seminar Co-Convenor

Expertise: Contemporary political theory, particularly multiculturalism; methodology, particularly political ideologies; modern Indian politics
Email: rb6@soas.ac.uk



Sutha Nadarajah
Lecturer in International Relations

Expertise: International Relations theory, international security; global public policy; North-South relations; civil wars; peace processes; peacebuilding; securitized development; politics of the 'War on Terror', international financial regulation.
Email: sn22@soas.ac.uk



Dr Matthew J Nelson
Reader in Politics

Expertise: Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Thought, South Asia, Islam, non-elite politics, democracy.
Email: mn6@soas.ac.uk



Dr Rahul Rao
Senior Lecturer in Politics

Expertise: International relations theory, critical theory (especially postcolonial and queer theory), comparative political thought, gender and sexuality, South Asia
Email: rr18@soas.ac.uk



Dr Avinash Paliwal
Lecturer in Diplomacy and Public Policy

Expertise: India in Afghanistan from the Soviet Invasion to the US Withdrawal, India's foreign policymaking towards Myanmar since Independence (1947).
Email: ap88@soas.ac.uk



Dr Simona Vittorni
Senior Teaching Fellow

Expertise: Nationalism; South Asian politics; modern Indian politics
Email: sv4@soas.ac.uk

Study of Religions:



Dr Peter Flügel
Reader in the study of Religions

Expertise: Jaina Studies; South Asian History & Culture; Anthropology & Sociology of Religion
Email: pf8@soas.ac.uk



Dr Sian Hawthorne
Lecturer in Critical Theory and the Study of Religions

Expertise: Narrativity; Cultural Memory; Religion and Gender; Feminist Historiography; Postcolonial theory; Postsecularism and gender; Intellectual history in the study of religions.
Email: sh79@soas.ac.uk



Professor Almut Hintze Zartoshty Brothers
Professor of Zoroastrianism

Expertise: Professor Hintze takes an interest in all aspects of Zoroastrianism, the religion of pre-Islamic Iran.
Email: ah69@soas.ac.uk

SSAI STAFF PROFILES (CONTINUED)



Professor Ulrich Pagel
Deputy Head of the School of History, Religions and Philosophies

Expertise: History of Buddhism in Tibet, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Kanjur Studies, Vinaya, Religions of Central Asia, Tibetan, Sanskrit.
Email: up1@soas.ac.uk



Dr Theodore Proferes
Senior Lecturer in Ancient Indian Religions

Expertise: Vedic language and religion; Indian Philosophy
Email: tp17@soas.ac.uk



Professor Gurharpal Singh
Professor of Sikh and Punjab Studies

Expertise: Politics; Religious Studies; Development; Politics and Corruption; Sikh studies; multiculturalism; transnationalism and development
Email: gs41@soas.ac.uk



Dr Vincent Tournier
Seiyu Kiriya Lecturer in Buddhist Studies

Expertise: Buddhism in Ancient and Early Medieval South Asia
Email: vt6@soas.ac.uk



Professor Cosimo Zene
Professor in the Study of Religions and World Philosophies

Expertise: Anthropology of religion, theory in the study of religions, continental philosophy, Gramsci and religion, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, minorities (Dalits), mysticism and heresy, non-Western Christianities, Mediterranean anthropology; South-Asia (India, Bangladesh), Sardinia, world philosophies.
Email: zc@soas.ac.uk

Professorial Research Associates



Professor Peter Robb
Emeritus Professor, Department of History, School of History, Religions and Philosophies

Expertise: The history of modern South Asia; early Calcutta, c.1780-1830, Indian agrarian history, especially Bihar and Eastern India.
Email: pr4@soas.ac.uk



Professor Werner Menski
Emeritus Professor, School of Law

Expertise: Classical and modern Hindu law; Muslim Law; Laws of South Asia; Family law; Comparative law; South Asians in the UK; Immigration law; Ethnic minorities
Email: wm4@soas.ac.uk

Research Associates



Dr Jennifer Ung Loh
Research Associate

Expertise: Gender and sexuality, particularly in India; LGBT movements; gender and law
Email: jl99@soas.ac.uk

Dr Ayesha Siddiq
Research Associate

Expertise: Civil-military relations in South Asia, Philosophical linkages between South Asia and the Middle East with an emphasis on transfer of knowledge since the late 18th century.
Email: as155@soas.ac.uk



Dr Raghav Kishore
Research Associate

Urban and health history. Currently working on the role of India in the formation of the World Health Organisation, c. 1948-1960
Email: rk24@soas.ac.uk



Sanjukta Ghosh
Research Associate

Expertise: Food security, migration and international development
Email: sg83@soas.ac.uk

Library and Information Services



Burzine K Waghmar
Senior Library Assistant (Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services)

Expertise: Indo-Iranian History, Historical Geography and Philology; Languages and Religions of Late Antiquity; Pakistan studies
Email: bw3@soas.ac.uk



Farzana Whitfield
Subject Librarian (South Asia & Development Studies)

Email: fq@soas.ac.uk



The South Asia Institute welcomes individuals and groups with an interest in South Asian studies who would like to get involved with our activities.

CONTACTING THE SSAI

Email: Email us at ssai@soas.ac.uk to receive our weekly e-bulletin.

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7898 4390

Facebook: Like us or follow our page at www.facebook.com/SouthAsia.SOAS

Twitter: Follow and interact with us: [@SOAS_SAI](https://twitter.com/SOAS_SAI)

Webpage: www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/

Blog: blogs.soas.ac.uk/ssai-notes

Address: SOAS South Asia Institute
Fourth Floor, Brunei Gallery
SOAS, University of London
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

