

PANJABI &
PAHARI-POTHWARI
LANGUAGE & LITERATURE
FESTIVAL

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JAAG

13TH MAY 2023



JAAG is an intergenerational event: a space for different generations to communicate, learn from and question each other.

In the spirit of Literature Must Fall, JAAG promotes literature as being for everyone, everywhere and everyday. Literature connects our pasts and present; we build on the literature that has come before. However, JAAG isn't just about nostalgia and celebration. It's not about fixing and fetishising language, literature and culture - we have to constantly interrogate these.

Jaag is not about coming together for one day and brushing over hierarchies between us, but facing and centring these with compassion, an open heart and self-reflection to allow for longer term conversations. Jaag is a space to go deep; learning across what is different and shared, interrogating our assumptions and connecting with others who are similarly passionate about Panjabi and Pahari-Pothwari language and literature.

How can we honour our emotional connection to fragile and precious languages and literatures that are so often devalued while reflecting how and who these might continue to hurt?

The day will explore this question (and more) through heartfelt performances, workshops and conversations about language and literature that foreground the white supremacist, ableist, heteronormative, classist, casteist and patriarchal world we are all embedded in.



- Jaag aims to be a space where everyone feels welcome, safe and valued. Racism, casteism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, discrimination or harassment of any kind, against any individual or group of people will be met with zero-tolerance and the audience member or performer/speaker will be asked to leave.
- Please be on time. The programme of events will be taking place across two sites next to each other, Handsworth Library and South and City College. Please ensure you check the programme flyer and/or posters on the day for timings and room numbers. You will be permitted into the event after it has started but please aim to minimise any disruption.
- Please be supportive of each speaker and audience member when they are sharing by showing kindness and helping them feel at ease.
- If you do not wish to be photographed/videographed at the festival, please ensure your lanyards are visible.
- If you wish to take photos of the event(s) or film them, please do not photograph or film anyone wearing a lanyard including potential speakers or performers.
- This is a family friendly festival; no alcohol or drugs are permitted onsite.
- Food and drink will be available to purchase onsite. Please ensure that you dispose of waste in the designated areas.

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9.30-10.30: WELCOME & ADDRESS

LOCATION: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

WELCOME
FROM KAVITA BHANOT

&

OPENING ADDRESS
BY NUZHAT ABBAS

'KOOK FARIDA KOOK'

NUZHAT ABBAS (SHE/HER)

Nuzhat is an activist, writer, poet, narrator, singer, educator and social worker. She has published many books in Panjabi and Urdu for both children and adults. She has also produced a CD and booklet, 'Singing Together in Urdu and Punjabi'. Nuzhat jointly produced three documentaries titled 'Voice of Pakistani Women' for the Ministry of Youth and Women Pakistan and is currently working as a Diversity and Inclusion Officer with the Peeples Center.



WELCOME

ALL DAY: PERFORMANCE ART CHA WALI BY ROO DHISSOU

This is the bike Dhissou uses to perform her piece Cha Wali, a political act critiquing the caste, class and gendered associations of labour in India and rural Panjab. Dhissou takes the bike into the city, serving people fresh Indian tea and transforming the role of the 'Cha Wali' through Langar- the community kitchen of a Sikh Gurdwara, which serves meals to all free of charge. This performance is an act of service and a gesture of equality. Help yourself to a cup of home made cha and enjoy the festival!



ROO DHISSOU (SHE/HER)

Roo is an artist and doctoral researcher who works with communities, diasporas and her own histories. Using socially engaged practice, craft, cooking, performance and installation she explores how communal and individual identities are formed. Roo has shown work at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, New Art Gallery Walsall and The Blucoat in Liverpool. She is working on a practice-based PhD fully funded by AHRC UKRI. Her title is 'Cultural Dysphoria: exploring British Asian women artists' experiences through arts practices.' Roo is the recipient of several awards, most notably the Tate Liverpool artist award 2020.



10.30-11.30: DISCUSSION

TRANSLATING SAIF AL-MALUK BY MIAN MUHAMMAD BAKHSH

LOCATION: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

Saif al-Muluk is a spiritual epic poem, the magnum opus of Sufi saint Hazrat Mian Mohammed Bakhsh rehmatullah alaih, the Rumi of Kashmir. Originally entitled Safar-ul-Ishq, 'the Journey of Divine Love', the allegory follows the quest of Prince Saif al-Muluk of Egypt to find his beloved, the fairy princess Badi-ul-Jamal of the mythical kingdom of golden Shahrstan. This poem can be read on many levels and it plays on the complex intertwining between ishq-e-majazi (mundane love between humans) and ishq-e-haqiqi (divine and spiritual love); Mian sahib says that each and every line of the poem is embedded with mystic secrets. In spite of being close to the hearts of most British Pakistanis and Azad Kashmiris, renowned throughout the subcontinent, particularly in the Panjab and Kashmir, it has not yet been translated to English in its entirety. This discussion explores our journey in understanding Mian sahib's verses, nuances we have discovered in Mian sahib's poetry, and his overall lessons for humanity.

NABEELA AHMED (SHE/HER)



Nabeela is a writer, storyteller, multilingual poet and spoken word artist. She writes and shares her work in English, Urdu and Pahari. Her poetry was the main feature of Keighley Arts and Film Festival in 2020. She has had poems published in England, America, Pakistan and India. Her poetry manuscript was shortlisted by Verve Poetry Press in 2022. She teaches creative writing and multilingual poetry workshops through the National Literacy Trust, Authors Abroad and her local library and schools.

MEDIAH AHMED (SHE/HER)

With an MSci in Astrophysics and a PhD in Biophysics, Mediah's love of theatre was sparked while participating in the Unheard Voices writing workshops at Royal Court. Her first piece, REPENTANCE, ran for two weeks as part of ANGLE at the Bush. She has poetry published in the SALIDAA and Keats House Poets' anthologies and monologues in the HEAR ME NOW anthology. Her last theatre venture was BABYLON BEYOND BORDERS at the Bush. In the last couple of years, Mediah started to learn more about her Panjabi roots through history and ancestry which led her to connect with the Panjabi Sufi Poets.



AWAIS HUSSAIN (HE/HIM)



Awais is a student of Linguistics at the University of York. He is an avid researcher of family history for over ten years and is the founder of Mirpur Heritage, a charity which aims to preserve and promote the heritage, arts, culture, history, genealogy, language, and literature of the Mirpuri community. He has extensively researched the genealogies of this region and is actively involved in numerous collaborative projects, notably with the Australian Indian Historical Society and the Newpakhistorian Ethnology and History of Panjabi Tribes.

10.30-12.00: **WORKSHOP**

REFLECTING ON EMOTION IN PANJABI MUSIC AND LYRICS

LOCATION: APACHE INDIAN ROOM

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

This session will talk about the role of emotion in Panjabi musical lyrics, how GS developed his interest in the field and how we can hone our creative lyric writing skills. There will be a chance to listen, learn, ask questions and create.

SHURANJEET SINGH (HE/HIM)

Shuranjeet is the founder and director of Taraki, a movement working with Panjabi communities to reshape approaches to mental health. Also from Handsworth.



GS NAWEPINDIYA (HE/HIM)

GS is a music director, songwriter and composer from Handsworth, Birmingham. He has worked with a range of national and international creatives in the Panjabi music industry.



10.30-12.00: WORKSHOP

SPACE, PLACE AND REFUSAL IN PANJABI WOMEN'S POETRY

LOCATION: ROOM 125

*This event is mainly in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

This workshop will specifically look at the poems of Nasreen Anjum Bhatti and Amrita Pritam and consider how the authors articulate women's relationship to space and place and how this is linked to refusal of social constructions of gender and identity. It will also involve reading and discussing poetry and using poetry as inspiration. Expect to engage in conversation, take part in writing exercises and to be guided in writing two poems of your own.

MANJOT DHALIWAL (SHE/HER)

Manjot is a writer, educator and researcher. She is currently in the final year of her PhD at the University of Sussex. Her research looks at South Asian women's identities and family histories. She works as a freelance poetry workshop acilitator and doctoral tutor and is currently putting together a poetry project for South Asian women in the Southeast.



11.00–12.00: CONVERSATION

MIGRANT WRITERS, BRITISH CHILDREN: BRINGING PANJABI AUTHORS INTO THE FRAME

LOCATION: COLLEGE LIBRARY

***This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.**

This is going to be an intimate conversation between two British South Asians, who will explore the relationship with their parents' writing and the social and political impact of writers who write in their language of birth.

Virinder's father was an avid writer in Panjabi who wrote numerous short stories (published in 6 collections from 1981 to 2010). He was also an educationist and produced learning materials for Panjabi. Further information:

<https://punjabilanguagedevelopmentboard.wordpress.com/home/>.

Hardish's parents, Jasvir Kang and Bhajan Birk were authors and activists. It is Jasvir's book of short stories and poetry in Panjabi that Hardish will be speaking about at the festival. Further information: <https://jasvirkang.com/>

VIRINDER KALRA (HE/HIM)



Virinder is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick. He is the author of several articles and books concerning Panjab, Panjabi and the Panjabi diaspora. The wide range of his academic work is underpinned by an account of processes of resistance through the gambit of cultural and political organising. Adopting a Gramscian framework that takes the imbrications of culture and politics as point of departure, his studies share a concern for people's organising in the context of social cleavages along the lines of race, gender, class, caste and nation.

HARDISH VIRK (HE/HIM)

Hardish began his career as a theatre playwright, director and producer in the early 1990s. Alongside this he worked in music production, DJ, club nights and fashion shows. He went on to audience and organisational development projects, working with theatres, arts centres, festivals, museums and art galleries in the UK and Europe. Over the last two years he has been working with Coventry Artspace on a South Asian heritage project called, 'Stories That Made Us'.



11.30-12.00: TALK
SECURITISING LANGUAGES
LOCATION: ROOM 127

*This event is mainly in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

When we talk about languages, we are also talking about its speakers and communities. My talk will be around the construction of languages associated with Muslims and/or ethnic minorities as problems requiring securitisation through specific measures. Quite often languages become a filter to talk about race without talking about race.

KAMRAN KHAN (HE/HIM)

Kamran is the director of the MOSAIC research group on multilingualism and an Associate Professor of Language, Social Justice and Education at the University of Birmingham. He is the author of 'Becoming a Citizen: linguistic trials and negotiations' (Bloomsbury, 2019). His research interests include citizenship, security in relation to race and language.



12.00-12.30: TALK

LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND BELONGING

LOCATION: ROOM 109

*This event will be in English.

Kuljit will be presenting his reflections on the way Panjabi and English are woven into the identities that he carries/performs. He will use a combination of family photographs and artwork to frame his continuing personal journey to (re)connect with his 'mother tongue'.

KULJIT SINGH (HE/HIM)

Kuljit is the project lead for the Open Minds Project, a positive and progressive wellbeing hub for LGBTQ+ people with Panjabi or South Asian heritage. He is also a psychiatrist, multimedia artist and educator. Kuljit identifies as a gay man and was born and raised in the UK.



12.00-12:30: TALK

BRINGING OUR LANGUAGES TO THE CLASSROOM VIA LINGUISTICS

LOCATION: ROOM 127

*This event is mainly in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

According to Professor Anita Abbi, an expert in South Asian linguistics and endangered languages, the most important task a grammar and lexicon of any language accomplishes is establishing the identity of its speakers. Multilingual and multicultural communities exist through their language as does their culture and history. British South Asians have a shared heritage in terms of language, culture and geography, but present-day communities vary in their degree of bi-/multilingualism due to sociolinguistic factors, migration patterns, language attitudes, ideologies, and politics inherited from British India. In light of this, I'm conscious of the lopsided ratio of the two languages in my life [Pahari-Pothwari and English], and even more conscious of the status of the subcontinent languages in multilingual Britain; how they arrived and how they are spoken and continue to interact with English. In this talk, I introduce activities on how we can begin learning and teaching community languages via creative translation activities and linguistic features of the language itself. The activities will be demonstrated via Pahari-Pothwari.

FARAH NAZIR (SHE/HER)

Farah is an academic linguist and community-engaged researcher interested in Pahari-Pothwari. Farah's research interests are in South Asian languages, language description, language attitudes, codeswitching and language creativity. She is always looking for new ways to engage her work with the community in a meaningful way so we can better understand ourselves, both individually and collectively.



12.30-2.30: WORKSHOP

MULTILINGUAL POETRY WORKSHOP: DISCOVERING NEW AVENUES TO EXPRESS ALL YOUR LANGUAGES, WRITTEN OR SPOKEN

LOCATION: ROOM 114

*The event facilitator is fluent in English, Pahari-Pothwari and Urdu. She will run the event based on the language which all the audience can understand and there will be moments of language mixing.

This workshop will begin by sharing some poems in Panjabi and Pahari; some via video and others performed live. The discussion will cover themes of dismantling hierarchies and how writing in your mother tongue can present challenges which are not present when writing in English. Participants will then be guided and encouraged to write poems in their mother tongues; reminding them that this can be a space where instead of leaving much of themselves at the door, they must bring all of them to the page. Those who wish will have the opportunity to share their poems and everyone can listen to each other's work.

NABEELA AHMED (SHE/HER)

Nabeela is a writer, storyteller, multilingual poet and spoken word artist. She writes and shares her work in English, Urdu and Pahari. Her poetry was the main feature of Keighley Arts and Film Festival in 2020. She has had poems published in England, America, Pakistan and India. Her poetry manuscript was shortlisted by Verve Poetry Press in 2022. She teaches creative writing and multilingual poetry workshops through the National Literacy Trust, Authors Abroad and her local library and schools.



12.30-1.30: PERFORMANCE
'SAHIBAN SPEAKS' PREMIERE
LOCATION: PINK ROOM 1

*This event is mainly in Panjabi.

Sahiban Speaks: The voices of Heer, Sohni, Sassi and Sahiban from the land of five rivers, Panjab come alive through this musical-poetry performance by Rupinder Kaur and Vibis Bhatia.

RUPINDER KAUR (SHE/HER)

*Rupinder is a multidisciplinary artist. Her work often focuses on womanhood, language and history. She is particularly interested in exploring the feminine narrative and gaze through the power of storytelling with her different artistic disciplines. Rupinder's debut poetry book *Rooh* (2018) was published with Verve Poetry Press. Rupinder's one-woman show *Imperfect, Perfect Woman* debuted at Wolverhampton Literature festival in 2022. She also wrote a paper on Amrita Pritam (Routledge India: *Writer Provocateur Series*.) Rupinder co-wrote and acted in the short film 'The Two Artists' which will be premiering at the UK Asian Film Festival. Rupinder is currently working on experimenting with dance and poetry through being awarded the Developing your Creative Practice grant.*



VIBS BHATIA (SHE/HER)

Vibs is an upcoming Brit-Indian artist, born and raised in Birmingham. She specialises in fusion music singing in Hindi, Panjabi and English alongside playing guitar. More recently spending time in the Orchestral Qawwali Project team, she's developing her range in Sufi and Qawwali genres. Vibs channels her passions for climate change and sustainability working in consulting full time and runs an online campaign - South Asians for Sustainability.



12.30–1.00: TALK

ORAL HISTORY & THE STORY OF US

LOCATION: ROOM 125

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

What do we really mean when we speak of an Oral History? What are we transmitting? Is it art, culture, tradition, knowledge, stories of old, language, poetry, anecdotes, songs, or wisdom? Some of these things may have aesthetic or artistic value for us today. But some of these things, we perhaps feel, aren't even that relevant today. This talk will look at the nuances of our conceptions of what oral history means to us today and how what we consider it to be has implications for what it can produce, i.e., what stays and what is lost. Drawing on experiences of collecting and archiving oral histories from South Asian diaspora communities in the UK, Imran will explore the potential, as well as the pitfalls, of working to gather oral histories, as we continue to tell the stories of us.

IMRAN ARIF (HE/HIM)

Imran is an educator and social scientist. He currently works as Director of Education for a group of Islamic supplementary schools, as well as programme coordinator for a group of Museums. Who we become and how we get there is an overarching theme of Imran's work.



12.30 – 1.00: TALK

**SUFI LITERATURE – DALIT LITERATURE:
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

LOCATION: ROOM 127

*This event is in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

Sufi literature is seen as synonymous with medieval Panjabi literature and yet we all know that this is not always the case. What we know of Sufi literature is literature sans caste/class/gender politics of both West and East Panjab feudal classes who have always maintained a hegemony of Panjabi literature. Lip service is often paid to Dalit literature, at least in Indian Panjab. This talk will go into the history of the Sufis and of Dalits to illustrate the missing chunk of Dalit literature, a black hole hiding in plain sight.

AMARJIT SINGH (HE/HIM)

Most people are likely to describe Amarjit as a cultural revolutionary 'Radical Baba' who always likes to have the last word when commenting on anything to do with Dalits, their history and culture. Amarjit has been an anti-caste and anti-racist activist for as long as he can remember, whether in the foundries of Smethwick or giving a talk on Dalit history at Oxford. He is currently engaged in a long-term project on writing the alternative history of Dalits.



1:00–1.30: TALK

CONNECTING/DOCUMENTING GENEALOGIES IN THE BRITISH MIRPURI COMMUNITY

LOCATION: ROOM 125

***This event is in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.**

Do you ever wonder where your ancestors came from? Are you curious about your family history, but don't know where to start? Join us for an enlightening talk on how to connect with your South-Asian roots, especially if you're from the Mirpur District of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and surrounding northern Pakistan. This talk will guide you through key concepts such as village networks, naming conventions, available records, research methodologies, oral history, and genetics. It will share fascinating insights into the speaker's personal journey, as well as overall advice and methods for research and how to begin tracing your family tree.

AWAIS HUSSAIN (HE/HIM)

Awais is a student of Linguistics at the University of York. He is an avid researcher of family history for over ten years and is the founder of Mirpur Heritage, a charity which aims to preserve and promote the heritage, arts, culture, history, genealogy, language, and literature of the Mirpuri community. He has extensively researched the genealogies of this region and is actively involved in numerous collaborative projects, notably with the Australian Indian Historical Society and the Newpakhistorian Ethnology and History of Panjabi Tribes.



1.00–1.30: TALK

INTERROGATING CASTE IN POPULAR PANJABI MUSIC

LOCATION: ROOM 127

*This event is in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

This talk will investigate present discussions around the question of caste in popular Panjabi music, which mainly centre around jatt caste hegemony. However, while addressing dominant discourse around the hyper visibilisation of jatt identity in Panjabi music, this talk will most crucially address the question of the invisibilisation of Dalit Bahujan identity in the field of cultural production. It is important to ask the question: why have there been no Dalit Bahujan artists before the entry of Dalit singers in 2009, in the arena of Panjabi music? Or, if historically there has always been an active participation of Dalit Bahujan singers, music directors, lyricists, etc. in the networks of music production, why does their contribution and role either remain hidden or subsumed by the dominant aesthetics of jatt identity?

KOONAL DUGGAL (HE/HIM)

Koonal is Visiting Research Fellow in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. He was Leverhulme postdoctoral research fellow in the project Gurus, Anti-gurus and Media in North India (2019-2022). He is co-editor of Gurus and Media: sound, image, machine, text and the digital (forthcoming, UCL Press, 2023). Prior to joining the University of Edinburgh, he taught for three years in the Department of Art History and Art Appreciation at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. His research interests revolve around the politics of caste, religion, media studies, and popular visual culture.



2.30–3.30: PERFORMANCE

MADE IN ~~INDIA~~ BRITAIN (EXCERPT AND Q&A)

LOCATION: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

*The short excerpt and Q&A will be performed in BSL and Spoken English.

Rinkoo is a deaf Panjabi boy from Birmingham, living in a world that wasn't made for him. Through pain and laughter, Roo narrates the impact of ableism and racism throughout his childhood and adult life, leading him to confront one key question: "Where do I belong?" A coming of age story about discovering your community and the journey that follows. Come and be immersed in Roo's world as he navigates across borders and grapples with his sense of identity. Director Tyrone Huggins & Dramaturge Daniel Bailey.

Confident and Charismatic - The Stage

★★★

Barpaga is a remarkable storyteller - FestMagazine

★★★★

Powerful Physicality - Liam O'Dell

★★★★★

Winner of Mervyn Stutter's Spirit of the Fringe Awards 2022

Winner of The Deaf Excellence Award, The Neurodiverse Review Award

RINKOO BARPAGA (HE/HIM)

Rinkoo is a Deaf British born multidisciplinary artist, who uses British and urban sign language. Throughout his 15-year career, he has been involved in media creation and has worked for the BBC, ITV, MTV as well as independent media productions. He is also involved in stand-up comedy, which he developed in America. Rinkoo inspires deaf people, specifically disadvantaged deaf people of colour. His award-winning documentary 'Double Discrimination' was filmed in Handsworth, Birmingham and interviewed the Deaf community; using urban sign language to describe race discrimination. Rinkoo is brave, and willing to use his art practice to tackle taboo subjects & confront audiences with difficult issues. Rinkoo has made two solo shows, "Am I Funny? The Life and Signs of a Deaf Comedian" (2015) and "Made In India/Britain" (2019) both funded by Arts Council England. In 2017 Rinkoo was awarded an opportunity to explore his new play, 'Chocolate'.



2.30–3.30: WORKSHOP**'MAEE SANU KHEDAN DE': PERFORMANCE AS A LIBERATING EXPERIENCE****LOCATION: SPORTS HALL**

The sixteenth-century poet Shah Hussain often celebrated the 'Khedan' or simply put, 'the play' or 'playfulness' in his poetry. Abuzar Madhu has carefully designed a theatre workshop which embraces the spirit of 'Khedan'. In this workshop, participants will be encouraged to let go of preconceived ideas of social and gender binaries as well as the indoctrinated behaviour of a body living under post-colonial realities. The workshop aims to act as a playground for participants as they go on a journey to explore themselves and shed layers of conformity.

ABUZAR MADHU (HE/HIM)

Abuzar is a Panjab-based performing artist in theatre, poetry and writing. His work centers on decolonizing the body and mind by facilitating embodied knowledge and connection to culture and the land. For the last eight years, he has worked with Sangat Theatre Group, using theatre as an activism tool in local communities. He also regularly teaches theatre to school and university-going students. In addition, Abuzar is currently completing his Masters in Cultural Studies from NCA. For this, he is researching the relationship expressed in folk poetry between the local communities that live on Ravi River and the river itself. He is also exploring the impact of colonisation on this relationship and how this has changed the way communities presently live and relate to Ravi River. Abuzar's work in this area also drives him into activism to raise awareness of the environmental and cultural issues relating to Rivers.



2.30 – 3.30: CONVERSATION**EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE IN THE PAKISTANI AND KASHMIRI COMMUNITY****LOCATION: ROOM 127**

***This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.**

What do you mean when you speak of multilingual stress? Karamat and Farah's conversation interweaves personal journeys and navigation of living within a monolingualising ideological state and how it has impacted our languages and the role of education within it. They will discuss their experiences of speaking their mother tongue in white monolingual spaces and the sometimes invisible expectation of speaking only in one language at a time. They hope to open discussions on who sets the boundaries of languages, the perceptions of codeswitching and multilingualism, and how despite the generational difference between Karamat and Farah, the "speak English" imperative continues to echo. The conversation will end with a Q&A.

FARAH NAZIR (SHE/HER)

Farah is an academic linguist and community-engaged researcher interested in Pahari-Pothwari. Farah's research interests are in South Asian languages, language description, language attitudes, codeswitching, and language creativity. She is always looking for new ways to engage her work with the community in a meaningful way, so we can better understand ourselves, both individually and collectively.

**KARAMAT IQBAL (HE/HIM)**

Karamat was born in the mid 1950s, Mirpur District of Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. At home he spoke his mother tongue, Pahari. He attended Urdu medium school here for 7 years, where he also learnt some Farsi, Arabic and English. Age 12, Karamat was sent to England. From his early life here Karamat was mentored by Mahmood Hashmi, a fellow Kashmiri who had founded Urdu journalism in the UK, with the weekly Mashriq (East). Later, Hashmi edited the Urdu /English Saltley News. This was where, age 16, Karamat began his writing with an Urdu article. Hashmi continues to be the inspiration for Karamat's reading of Urdu and speaking of Pahari. During his PhD Karamat was able to explore the negative educational context for bilingualism especially in relation to minority languages. Recently Karamat (with fellow editor Professor Tahir Abbas) commissioned a chapter on bilingualism by Dr Farah Nazir, for their book on multicultural education.



2.30 – 3.00: TALK

JUGNI ON FIRE: JUGNI'S RESISTANCE – FREEDOM OR FANTASY? A MUSICAL CELEBRATION AND INTERROGATION OF JUGNI ACROSS TIME AND SPACE'

LOCATION: ROOM 125

*This event is mainly in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

Through music, stories and discussion, this event follows Jugni through time and space, unpacking the history and perspective of this popular tradition in Panjabi oral literature and music. Literally a female firefly or an ornament, Jugni has taken on various forms over the years; from resistance to Queen Victoria's jubilee flame as a symbol of colonial oppression to Sufi Jugni as the inner voice or spirit that connects, through love, with God. From Heer to a fiery modern woman, Jugni today is often literally a bold woman who doesn't give a damn. In music, from folk to pop, from rock to bhangra, in Indian and Pakistani films, this Jugni travels from villages to towns to big cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Lahore and western cities such as Birmingham and Southall. While the focus on Jugni as female has been seen as feminist, Jugni's freedom and resistance, through a male gaze, can also be questioned. (A version of this presentation was developed with the support of Shadow Heroes)

KAVITA BHANOT (SHE/HER)

*Kavita is ECR Leverhulme Fellow at Leicester University and lives in Birmingham. Her fiction, non-fiction and academic writing has been published and broadcast widely, including the 2015 landmark essay 'Decolonise not Diversify'. She has edited three short-story collections, including *Too Asian, not Asian Enough* (Tindal Street Press) and *Book of Birmingham* (Comma Press) and is co-editor with Jeremy Tiang, of *Violent Phenomena: 21 Essays on Translation* (Tilted Axis). Her first novel won third prize in the *SI Leeds Literary Prize*. Her translation of Anjali Kagal's Hindi stories *Ma is Scared* (Comma Press) won a *Pen Translates Award* in 2021. For the last ten years she has been a reader and mentor with *The Literary Consultancy*. Kavita co-founded the *Literature Must Fall* collective and festival and is currently writing a book titled *Literature Must Fall: Resisting Literary Supremacy*. All her work centres the politics of reading and writing.*



3.00–3.30: TALK

(UN)MAKING THE REGION: MUSICAL IDENTITIES IN AND AROUND PANJAB

LOCATION: ROOM 125

*This event is mainly in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

The geographical contours of British colonial Panjab (1849-1947) continue to shape contemporary notions about the imagined boundaries of the Panjab region of South Asia, especially visible in 'Panjabiyat' linguistic and cultural movements. This presentation questions the fixity of Panjab as a bounded and musically distinct region, by evaluating the trajectories of musicians, performing artistes and traditions widely identified as 'Panjabi', but which have their origins in locales on the periphery of mainland Panjab: among others, Sindh, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir in the hills. Arguing for a relational view of the region, it maps the cross-regional circulation of performing artistes in the broader region of northwest India and Pakistan to question both Panjabi cultural hegemony and also the notion of Panjab as a culturally homogeneous space.

RADHA KAPURIA (SHE/HER)

*Radha is Assistant Professor in South Asian History at Durham University. A historian of gender and culture in South Asia, her first book, *Music in Colonial Punjab: Courtesans, Bards, and Connoisseurs 1800–1947* (Oxford University Press, 2023), features a diverse cast of figures, from musicians, bards and courtesans, to kings, colonisers, missionaries, scholars and social reformists. Her current research project, begun during a Leverhulme Early Career fellowship at the University of Sheffield (2019–2022), is on the impact of the 1947 Partition on musicians' lives in India and Pakistan.*



3.30-4.30: PERFORMANCE
CYCLING TOWARDS FREEDOM

LOCATION: PINK ROOM 2

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

A one-woman show that follows a young Kashmiri woman who, feeling burnt-out and disconnected, goes on the road to rediscover the ancestral knowledge within, finding belonging and liberation in nature. Farha invites you in to become part of her journey, sharing a cup of chaa and a story.

FARHA BI (SHE/HER)



A creative thinker, community organiser and social justice activist, Farha breathes life into wild dreams! She loves to slow-travel; exploring different ways of (un)learning, (re)centring ancestral knowledge found in daily practice and connections with land. Growing up in 1980's Birmingham and 1960's Kashmir simultaneously, she has mastered the art of time travel.

SHAVENA VIGNESWARA KUMAR (SHE/HER)

Shavena is a singer and musician from London who is trained in Carnatic music, spent some time as a jazz singer and draws from these and other influences to create vibrant, soulful compositions.



3.30-4.30: PERFORMANCE

'ALLAR BALLAR BAVAY DA' STORIES AND SONGS FOR CHILDREN

LOCATION: HANDSWORTH LIBRARY (CHILDREN'S ROOM)

*This event is mainly in Panjabi but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

During this performance, Nuzhat will be talking about the role of festivals in a Panjabi context and bringing people from diverse backgrounds together to learn from each others' experiences. She will also be sharing some of her own personal experiences. The session will offer some practical activities like colouring, props and singing lullabies and reading stories in Panjabi.

NUZHAT ABBAS (SHE/HER)

Nuzhat is an activist, writer, poet, narrator, singer, educator and social worker. She has published many books in Panjabi and Urdu for both children and adults. She has also produced a CD and booklet, 'Singing Together in Urdu and Punjabi'. Nuzhat jointly produced three documentaries titled 'Voice of Pakistani Women' for the Ministry of Youth and Women Pakistan and is currently working as a Diversity and Inclusion Officer with the People Center.



3.30-4.30: DISCUSSION

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

LOCATION: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

This panel discussion seeks to interrogate fictional representations of 'brown' love by examining the ways in which our 'love' stories can reinforce harmful beliefs which malign those on the margins further; from Bollywood to Bend It Like Beckham and so much more. Come, let's unfall in love together.

AAISHA AKHTAR (SHE/HER)

Aisha is a Birmingham-based writer, researcher, curator, and event producer. She is currently the Artistic Lead at Ort Gallery, supporting artists and creatives in their professional development and artistic practice via Warmth. She also organises Hayati, a Muslim-centred open mic event based in Balsall Heath, Birmingham showcasing local poets and performers. She was one of the co-organisers of the Literature Must Fall festival and at present is the co-lead of Literary No F*cks, a reading group which seeks to demystify and desacralize literature. Her interests include anti-colonial / alternative and care-centred approaches to making, producing, and engaging with art and literature; as well as pop culture, the gaze, disability, language, love, and emotion.



KAVITA BHANOT (SHE/HER)

Kavita's fiction, non-fiction and academic writing has been published and broadcast widely, including the 2015 landmark essay 'Decolonise not Diversify'. She has edited three short-story collections, including Too Asian, not Asian Enough (Tindal Street Press) and is co-editor of Violent Phenomena: 21 Essays on Translation (Tilted Axis). Her translation of Anjali Kaja's Hindi stories Ma is Scared (Comma Press) won a Pen Translates Award in 2021. For the last ten years she has been a reader and mentor with The Literary Consultancy. Kavita co-founded the Literature Must Fall collective and festival and is currently writing a book titled Literature Must Fall: Resisting Literary Supremacy.



PAKEEZAH (SHE/HER)

Pakeezah is an arts professional based in Bradford. Her work is in community engagement and cultural programming, with a background in literature and postcolonial theory. She has held roles in various cultural organisations across the North, including MIF and Bradford Literature Festival. She was part of the team which successfully delivered Bradford's bid to be UK City of Culture for 2025, and is currently Community Engagement Manager at Amal, a charity that looks to change the narrative around Muslims in the UK through co-created arts and culture.



JASBER SINGH (HE/HIM)

Jasber is a participatory action researcher and lecturer at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, where he co-convenes a Masters level module on participatory action research. His current research focuses on how the right to food, food sovereignty and environmental actions engages with race/caste-gender. Jasber earlier worked as a youth worker and community-based researcher, advocating with environmental and social justice NGOs. Whilst working at a race equality organisation in South London, he used civil, legal and restorative justice to provide solidarity and support to people experiencing harassment and violence. He has also initiated actions against far-right activities, developed participatory action research with Black Minority and Ethnic communities and co-founded a refugee youth group in Woolwich. In South India, with two NGOs, he documented and challenged how racism/casteism undermined food, gender and land rights. He is a trustee for the Anne Matthews Trust.



3.30-4.30: TALK

A STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO PANJABI LEARNING

LOCATION: ROOM 125

*This event is mainly in English but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

In the world of research, scholarship on the Panjabi language has been scarce. Keeping this fact in mind, I have tried to take a small step in the direction of composing a text where Panjabi could be explained and understood using its structural units, putting them in a certain sequence that I believe is logical. With my book as a reference, this talk will delve into the unique characteristics of the language and script, aiming to deepen our understanding of it.

KANWAL DHALIWAL (HE/HIM)

Kanwal is a renowned painter, sculptor, translator and author. He has a B.F.A. Painting from the College of Art, Chandigarh, India, along with an MA in Art in Architecture from the University of East London. He also has a Diploma and Masters in Russian language, and completed an internship at Pushkin Institute of Russian (UGC Scholarship) Moscow (USSR).



4.30-6.00: WORKSHOP & PERFORMANCE

APNI BOLI, APNI PEHCHAAN

LOCATION: COLLEGE LIBRARY

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

Come for chai and nibbles and join our fun multi-lingual poetry performance and poetry writing workshop 'Apni Boli - Apni Pehchaan' (Our Language - Our Identity). There will be discussions about the importance of our mother tongue and what language means to you. We'll read some poems about language and identity. All participants to write down four lines of poetry or prose in any form with help from the Punjabi Women's Writing Group. There will be an opportunity to share what has been written at the end of the session.

KULI KOHLI & THE PUNJABI WOMEN'S WRITING GROUP (SHE/HER)

The Punjabi Women's Writing Group (PWWG) was formed in 2018 and is led by Kuli. It is the only poetry group which is dedicated to and run by Punjabi Women. Over the past five years the group have worked together to create and share poetry, completed a variety of commissions and performed their poetry at events across the West Midlands. During lockdown PWWG connected virtually with Boundary Way Project and took part in a series of commissions, including creating poems inspired by Boundary Way Allotments, a collection of Winter themed poems and a collaboration with Komlaish Achall (member of PWWG artist/photographer) to explore stories about the traditions of Masala Chai. As a natural progression from this, for 'Dear Tomorrow, Dear Wolverhampton' members of PWWG were invited by Boundary Way Project and Komlaish Achall to create poems for an art installation 'Forecast' which has recently been exhibited at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.



4.30–6.00: DISCUSSION

HIERARCHIES OF LANGUAGES

LOCATION: COUNCIL CHAMBER

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

Languages of the world are fighting for breadcrumbs within the hierarchies of languages, which cannot be understood without talking about the hierarchies of gender, caste, class, and age. Where are we within such hierarchies? The discussion will open with a conversation between the Sociologist Virinder Singh and the linguist Farah Nazir, who will dissect this question by first reflecting and sharing on their personal experiences of the hierarchical structure of languages. Not only will they discuss the nature of language practices in our communities, but the role of language politics informing the status of a given language. The role of state provision in language attrition (loss or reduction of language due to English dominance) in the UK and the role of women as language preservers due to patriarchal confinement and lack of formal education within our communities will further frame their discussions and welcome the audience to contribute and share their perspective.

VIRINDER KALRA (HE/HIM)

Virinder is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick. He is the author of several articles and books concerning Panjab, Panjabi and the Panjabi diaspora. The wide range of his academic work is underpinned by an account of processes of resistance through the gambit of cultural and political organising. Adopting a Gramscian framework that takes the imbrications of culture and politics as point of departure, his studies share a concern for people's organising in the context of social cleavages along the lines of race, gender, class, caste and nation.



FARAH NAZIR (SHE/HER)

Farah is an academic linguist and community-engaged researcher interested in Pahari-Pothwari. Farah's research interests are in South Asian languages, language description, language attitudes, codeswitching, and language creativity. She is always looking for new ways to engage her work with the community in a meaningful way, so we can better understand ourselves, both individually and collectively.



4:30-5:00: TALK

VAGHDI AAE RAVI: THE SACREDNESS OF WATER IN PANJABI AND RENEWING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RIVERS

LOCATION: ROOM 125

*This event is mainly in Panjabi but the speaker is multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

This talk investigates the discrepancies that exist between the River Ravi's one-time sacred status amongst the Panjabi populace and its current use as the disposal site for raw sewage and industrial waste water after Indus Water Treaty. Abuzar Madhu, who has travelled extensively along the banks of the Ravi, narrates the story of many contradictions: of the river people who continue to deem the contaminated water of the river as holy with special life-preserving qualities; of the urban population settled in the metropolises along the Ravi completely oblivious towards the dying river; and of the promising resistance movement that has emerged in the wake of the Pakistani government's plans to build planned cities along the river's bank.

ABUZAR MADHU (HE/HIM)

Abuzar is a Panjab-based performing artist in theatre, poetry and writing. His work centers on decolonizing the body and mind by facilitating embodied knowledge and connection to culture and the land. For the last eight years, he has worked with Sangat Theatre Group, using theatre as an activism tool in local communities. He also regularly teaches theatre to school and university-going students. In addition, Abuzar is currently completing his Masters in Cultural Studies from NCA. For this, he is researching the relationship expressed in folk poetry between the local communities that live on Ravi River and the river itself. He is also exploring the impact of colonisation on this relationship and how this has changed the way communities presently live and relate to Ravi River. Abuzar's work in this area also drives him into activism to raise awareness of the environmental and cultural issues relating to Rivers.



4.30–5.30: CONVERSATION**SAMURAI, SINBAD AND SCIENTISTS: WRITING SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, HISTORY AND HORROR IN PANJABI****LOCATION: APACHE INDIAN ROOM**

*This event is mainly in English but the speakers are multilingual so there may be moments of language mixing.

I have in effect had to invent my own Literary movement, which I have named Vachitarvaad, a concept close to transrealism mashed with magical realism and Science Fiction. I have tried to introduce many literary techniques that are familiar in the English language, yet appear not to have been used in Panjabi Literature. I never write in the same genre or style twice though there are some broad themes that permeate all my fiction, including but not restricted to Gender inequality, Casteism, Racism, Religious intolerance and the negative aspects of Panjabi culture we ignore. Samurai is a novel wholly written in the first person and compares and contrasts 16th Century Japan with a Dystopian Panjabi future. Sindbad is a purely Sci Fi tale which uses other worlds, aliens and cultures as Metaphors for what is happening in Panjab. And my latest release (April 2023), Haul, is a gothic style horror story exploring dread, the protagonists are British Asians and it is set in the UK. I am attempting to encourage the UK Panjabi youth to start reading and writing the kind of Panjabi books that speak to them.

ROOP DHILLON (HE/HIM)

Rupinderpal Singh Dhillon or Roop Dhillon (ਰੂਪਿੰਦਰਪਾਲ ਸੰਘਿ ਢਿੱਲੋਂ) is a British Panjabi writer of fiction and poetry. He writes in several genres, but all in Panjabi, aiming to reflect our British (English influenced) Panjabi dialect and syntax as much as possible. Dhillon became interested in writing in Panjabi after learning the Gurmukhi alphabet in his thirties. His debut novel, Neela Noor, was published in 2007 and has now published several novels and collections of short stories and poetry. His work confronts social issues including racism, gender bias and incest. In his later novels such as the experimental gothic novel O, he employs a genre he calls Vachitarvaad, which encompasses science fiction, fantasy, horror and magic realism.

**RADHA KAPURIA (SHE/HER)**

Radha is Assistant Professor in South Asian History at Durham University. A historian of gender and culture in South Asia, her first book, Music in Colonial Panjab: Courtesans, Bards, and Connoisseurs 1800–1947 (Oxford University Press, 2023), features a diverse cast of figures, from musicians, bards and courtesans, to kings, colonisers, missionaries, scholars and social reformists. Her current research project, begun during a Leverhulme Early Career fellowship at the University of Sheffield (2019–2022), is on the impact of the 1947 Partition on musicians' lives in India and Pakistan.



6.00–7.30: PERFORMANCE

'KALA DORIA': REVISITING PANJABI AND POTHWARI WEDDING SONGS

LOCATION: PINK ROOM 1

*The singing is in Pothwari and Panjabi. Discussions are mainly in English.

A lively sangeet night with a twist! We'll be singing traditional folk songs to the beat of the dholki and having thought-provoking discussions about emerging themes, issues and even any troubling lyrics. We'll also be creating alternative versions of the songs together.

ABDA KHAN (SHE/HER)

Abda is a lawyer turned writer and author of the novels 'Stained' (2016), and 'Razia' (2019). Khan writes commissioned pieces (short scripts, poetry, fiction and non-fiction) for various publications, organisations and projects. She runs creative writing courses, and produces and directs a variety of creative projects. In 'Sidelines to Centre Stage' (2019) she delivered writing workshops to survivors of domestic violence and to female ex-prisoners whose work was shared (anonymously) on stage. Her latest production was 'Tappay Tales' (2022), a community-based project which explored traditional Pakistani/Panjabi folk songs through creative writing, which culminated in showcase performances, a book and a short film. Khan is a Desi Blitz Arts Ambassador, a Lloyds Bank Women of the Future Ambassador, and she won British Muslim Woman of the Year in 2019.



6.00-7.00: CONVERSATION

SHAMS REHMAN FROM JAMMU KASHMIR TV HOSTING LIVE PAHARI BEHTAK: GAP SHAP

LOCATION: HANDSWORTH LIBRARY

*This event is in a mixture of Pahari-Pothwari and English.

Shams Rehman from Jammu Kashmir TV will be hosting a live show called 'Pahari Behtak: Gap Shap', in which he will discuss stories and poetry written by Daalat Ali, Parveen Khan and Tariq Mehmood, alongside their writing journey.

SHAMS REHMAN (HE/HIM)



Shams is an independent researcher, broadcaster, programme Director of Jammu Kashmir TV, Pahari Podcaster, writer, social activist, multilingual translator, Director Alliance of Kashmiri Arts (AKA), Content Director LokVision

DAALAT ALI (HE/HIM)

After studying for a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Service Management at the Manchester Metropolitan University (1994), Councillor Ali completed an MA in Ethnicity and Racism at the University of Leeds. He has pursued roles as a Laboratory Technician, interpreter and multilingual publicity officer for UNICEF and the Government of Azad Kashmir, as well as local government project management roles. A part time lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University since 2011, Councillor Ali has published a number of papers on Equality and Public Services. He was elected Labour Councillor for Kingsway in 2010 after previous employment as a Council Welfare Rights and Information Officer from 1986-1992. He is involved in extensive voluntary activities and is a founding member of the Kashmir Research Centre, the Kashmir Youth Project, Rochdale and the Kashmir Broadcasting Corporation.



PARVEEN KHAN (SHE/HER)



Born in Azad Kashmir, Parveen came to the UK to London at a young age. She has been employed in various sectors and is currently working for a charity supporting unpaid South Asian carers who have a family member with dementia. Over the past few years, she has found her voice writing and performing her poetry to a live audience.

TARIQ MEHMOOD (HE/HIM)

Tariq's first novel, *Hand On The Sun* (Penguin, UK, 1983.) dealt with the resistance to racism by young migrants to the UK in the 1970s and 1980s. His second novel, *While There Is Light* (Carcanet, UK, 2003) was set against the backdrop of the case of Bradford 12, where 12 young men who defended their community were charged on conspiracy offences and all 12 were acquitted. Tariq was one of the leading defendants. His third novel *You're Not Proper*, published by Hope Road, This is set in an English town seething with Islamophobia and won the Francis Lincoln Diverse Voices award. Tariq also co-directed the award-winning documentary *Injustice*, about deaths in British police custody. Tariq teaches at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.



7.30 – 8.30: POETRY EVENING WITH OPEN MIC
HOSTED BY GULLY COLLECTIVE

LOCATION: HANDSWORTH LIBRARY

NAFEESA HAMID (SHE/HER)



Nafeesa is a poet; playwright; educator; performer; and creative producer. She was born in Pakistan, bred in Birmingham and uses the intersectionality of her identities to inform her work. Her debut poetry collection Besharam (2018, Verve Poetry Press) was highly commended in the Forward Prizes 2019. She is published in Forward Poems of the Decade 2011-2020 (2021, Faber Poetry). She is also published in The Things I Would Tell You: British Muslim Women Write, a (2017, Saqi Books) edited by Sabrina Mahfouz. Nafeesa has appeared on BBC Bitesize, BBC Radio 4 Comedy and The Verb.

KAMIL MAHMOOD (HE/HIM)

Kamil is a poet and spoken word artist, singer/songwriter and creative producer born and raised in Birmingham. His work explores identity, community, Islam, the British Pakistani diaspora, masculinity and power dynamics. His debut collection, Mute Men, was published by Verve Poetry Press in 2019. He is co-founder of Gully Collective; a space connecting and supporting South Asian creatives. He was shortlisted for the Oxford Brookes International Poetry Prize in 2021.



AAYUSHI (SHE/HER)



Aayushi is a British-Indian folk singer-songwriter from Walsall. She writes strikingly tender songs, blending soulful vocals and poetry with delicate acoustic guitar. She regularly plays on stages across the Midlands, and her music has appeared on platforms such as BBC West Midlands and Spotify's 'Most Beautiful Songs in the World' playlist.

NABEELA AHMED (SHE/HER)

Nabeela is a writer, storyteller, multilingual poet and spoken word artist. She writes and shares her work in English, Urdu and Pahari. Her poetry was the main feature of Keighley Arts and Film Festival. In 2020. She has had poems published in England, America, Pakistan and India. Her poetry manuscript was shortlisted by Verve Poetry Press in 2022. She teaches creative writing and multilingual poetry workshops through the National Literacy Trust, Authors Abroad and her local library and schools.



If you would like to contribute to the open mic, please contact
jaagcollective@gmail.com

ORGANISERS: THE JAAG COLLECTIVE

KAVITA BHANOT (SHE/HER)

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CHARAN KAUR (SHE/HER)

Charan is an events coordinator based in the West Midlands. She has experience of working in various corporate industries as well as being an educator. She has previously conducted a historical research project in India called "Women, Violence, and Memory", which focused on oral histories related to violence experienced by women during the Partition of India. She has also collaborated with the Asian Rationalist Society where she researched and developed the 'Hindustan Ghadar Party' exhibition and compered the proceedings of three public events held in various venues across Birmingham. She has a BA in History and an MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.



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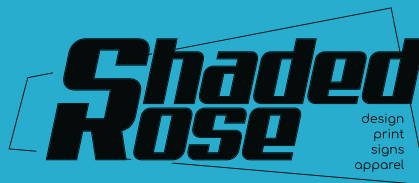
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