Other Centres of Excellent Arts and Humanities Research in India

- Centre of Advanced Study, Department of English, Jadavpur University (added July 2011)

The Centre of Advanced Study, Department of English, Jadavpur University, is the premier research centre for English Studies in India. In its long and distinguished history, the Department has attracted some of the best scholars and researchers in India. Past heads of department include Subodh Chandra Sengupta, Kitty Scoular Datta, and Sukanta Chaudhuri. Its chosen field of research for the UGC-CAS Programme is ‘Textuality and Culture’ (second phase: ‘Cultural Transactions’), and the work of its members has ranged from the Renaissance to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, translation, the history of the book, literature and psychoanalysis, subaltern literatures and oratures, media, gender, travel, popular literature, creative writing and theatre studies. The Centre has an active publishing programme supported by the University Grants Commission, and the collaborative research of members is brought out by publishers such as Permanent Black, Orient Blackswan, Seagull, and Oxford University Press.

The new academic fields created by the Centre have had a significant impact on arts and humanities research in India. Among these are the study of textual and print culture and the history of the book, leading to the path-breaking series on book history, Print Areas (CAS and Permanent Black, 2004), Moveable Type (2008), and New Word Order (2011), edited by Swapan Chakravorty (now Director, National Library of India) and Abhijit Gupta (creator of the online Short-Title Catalogue and Location Register of Early Bengali Books). Gupta has co-edited the Oxford Companion to the Book (2010), with contributions from Chakravorty and Rimi B. Chatterjee, whose Empires of the Mind (OUP, 2006), won the SHARP de Long prize for the best work in book history, and who has also published three novels. In textual studies, Sukanta Chaudhuri’s acclaimed Metaphysics of Text came out in 2010 (Cambridge University Press). The Department hosts the UGC-ASIHSS project archive on East-West encounters in the history of the book in Bengal.

Other fields in which the Centre researches are theatre studies, directed by Ananda Lal, editor of the prize-winning Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre (currently Director, Rabindranath Study Centre), media, culture studies, and popular literature, led by Nilanjana Gupta (currently Dean, Faculty of Arts), orality, material cultures, gender studies, travel, and literature and psychoanalysis (Nilanjana Deb, Chandreyee Niyogi, Paromita Chakravarti and Santanu Biswas) and graphic novels (Abhijit Gupta and Rimi B. Chatterjee). Several interdisciplinary Research Schools and Centres in the University, such as the School of Media, Communication and Culture,
the School of Women’s Studies, the School of Cultural Texts and Records, the School of Languages, and the Rabindranath Tagore Study Centre, have been founded and directed by members.

The Centre also publishes in traditional areas of strength like Renaissance Studies, Romantic and Victorian Literature, and Translation. Research students are intensively trained in methodology, and Latin and Greek classes are taken by Amlan Das Gupta, head of the Department, director of the School of Cultural Texts and Records, and creator of its Archive of North Indian Classical Music.

The impact of Europe upon India, both in the earliest period of contact and under colonialism, leading to radical transformations in all spheres of material culture and imaginative and intellectual activity, has been a major field of study. Current research projects include the building of a research archive on *Shakespeare in Bengal*, led by Paromita Chakravarti, an archive of travel and migration, led by Nilanjana Deb, and *Commodities and Culture in the Colonial World*, a Leverhulme Trust funded International Network Project with King’s College London, University of Exeter, New York University, Witwatersand University, and the University of Technology, Sydney, led by Supriya Chaudhuri. A *Digital Archive of Renaissance Travellers to India* was created in collaboration with the University of Liverpool, and the Centre worked on *Renaissances across Cultures* with the School of Advanced Studies, University of London. A new translation of Machiavelli into Bengali is being produced in collaboration with the University of Naples (L’Orientale). An international network on literature and sport, with the Universities of Leeds and Paris-Sorbonne, is under way. The Department hosts two specialised research centres, the Centre for Victorian Studies, led by Shanta Dutta, and the Renaissance Resource Centre, founded by Sukanta Chaudhuri; the independent Centre for Studies in Romantic Literature was set up by the Department’s Malabika Sarkar.

The Centre of Advanced Study sponsors research in all its areas of strength, and hosts international conferences, workshops and lectures. It welcomes scholars and researchers from other institutions in India and abroad, and has an active Visiting Fellowship programme, enabling intense and productive academic interaction at both individual and institutional levels. Recent visiting fellows include scholars from Harvard, Cambridge, Paris-Sorbonne, Pune, and Delhi, as well as noted creative writers, artists and film-directors. Visiting speakers are also regularly hosted.

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*Additions to this list are subject to external independent peer review*