



## Cowpath Crossings: Stories of Immigrant Indian Doctors in Muncie

by *Himaneer Gupta*  
Dept. of Political Science

Let's start with a "historical fact": "People stopped being human in 1913. That was the year Henry Ford put his cars on rollers and made his workers adopt the speed of the assembly line. At first, workers rebelled. They quit in droves, unable to accustom their bodies to the new pace of the age. Since then, however, the adaptation has been passed down: we've all inherited it to some degree, so that we plug right into joysticks and remotes, to repetitive motions of a hundred kinds."<sup>1</sup>

That quote, from Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex*, speaks to an inter-crossing of immigrants and industrialization in the early twentieth century.

Now, let's flash forward to the early twenty-first century.

"America?"  
"We lived in a very remote part of India, you know," recalls Saleem, a 50-year-old plastic surgeon in Muncie, Indiana, in

September 2003.

"Faizabad, that part of U.P. was quite far removed from the world."

"Then one day my father came in and said, 'You know that vice principal's son. He got a scholarship for 36,000 rupees—to go to America.' That was the pinnacle of achievement, going abroad. ..."

What does such a story tell us? For starters, we see, in Saleem's life in a relatively pastoral part of India, an imagined abroad: a cosmopolitan, sophisticated place where one finds one's self and succeeds. America was where, as Abraham Verghese tells it, doctors could "train in a decent, ten-story hospital, where the lifts are actually working"; "pass board-certification exams by one's own merit and not through pull or bribes"; "practice real medicine, drive a big car on decent roads, and eventually live in the Ansel Adams section of New Mexico and never come back to this wretched town ..."<sup>2</sup>

When Saleem left India to seek out that imagined abroad, he was traversing a well-worn path: 25,000

Continued on page 5

## Of Vitamins & Veils: An Interview with Dr. Maneesha Lal

On March 19, as part of its year-round colloquia series, the Center for South Asian Studies joined the Departments of Ethnic Studies, History, and Women's Studies in presenting Dr. Maneesha Lal. Her talk — "'Of Vitamins and Veils: Women Physicians, Transnational Medical Research, and the Framing of

Osteomalacia in Late Colonial India" — analyzed how discourses about the veiling and seclusion of Indian women and debates about vitamin deficiency diseases interacted to shape the identity of osteomalacia as a female malady in late colonial India. Beginning with a discussion of the medical research on osteomalacia conducted by British women physicians in the 1920s, Dr. Lal went on to trace the disease's heightened visibility and evolution through the

Continued on page 6



Dr. Maneesha Lal

### INSIDE

Director's Message...	2
CSAS Colloquia.....	3
Photo Exhibit.....	4
Letter from India....	8
Spring Courses.....	9
Spring Symposium....	10
Faculty News.....	12

## Winning Against All Odds

by Monica Ghosh

The Detroit Pistons and Sonia Gandhi—they exemplify the spirit that inspires the work of the Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS) at the University of Hawai'i: Winning against all odds. As a Detroit native who now lives in Honolulu, I remain loyal to my "hometown" teams. The

Pistons took their motto "Hard work pays off" and choreographed the perfect performance against all the LA Lakers' moves. Today the Pistons are the NBA Champions. Under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi, the Congress Party won the election in India—the "largest democracy in the world"—thereby displacing the conservative BJP government, which Salman Rushdie rightly called "extremists and ideologues." Through the commitment and participation of the affiliate faculty (some of whom serve on the Executive

Committee), the students, and friends of CSAS, the Center continues to strengthen support and develop interest in South Asian Studies generally, and expand those interests uniquely to connections with Hawai'i and the Pacific.

After two years as the Director, my work in this position draws to a close. This is a fine time for me to move on and out, the Pistons and Sonia are winners, and I've been promoted at the library. S. Shankar, Associate Professor in the English Department, was unanimously approved by the members of the Executive Committee as the incoming Director of the Center. Shankar has served on the Executive Committee and with his expertise the Center will continue to engage in critical discussions on issues relating to South Asia and South Asian Studies.

Another person who will be moving on is Stu Dawrs, the Coordinator for the Center. Stu gradu-

ates with his Master's in Library and Information Sciences. As the Coordinator, he managed all the day-to-day activities of the Center, including scheduling and publicizing the Colloquium Series. He designed an excellent poster for the Spring Symposium, and has updated the Center's web-

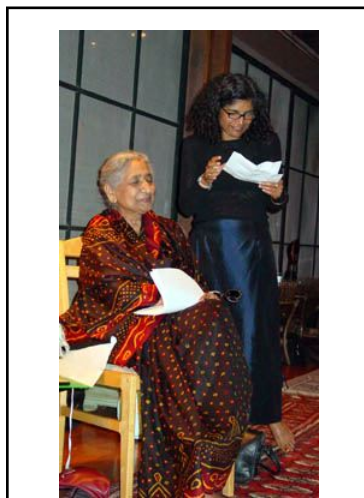
pages, making new materials available online and including PDF versions of the newsletter. Stu is both a friend and a colleague—working with him has been one of the best experiences I could ever have. Congratulations to Stu and best wishes for success in his career!

In my work as the Director I am eternally grateful for the enthusiasm, energy, and vitality of the members of the Executive Committee, who all take such pride in developing and supporting the content of South Asian Studies programs at this University. This year we've had an excellent Colloquium Series, which included visitors from other universities (Maneesha Lal—

Trinity College); and our own faculty (Monisha Dasgupta—Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies). The Spring Symposium this year, "Neoliberalism in South Asia: Culture, Gender and Labor," was the brainchild of S. Charusheela (Women's Studies), organized and arranged by a small planning committee, including Monisha Dasgupta, Kazi Ashraf, and Stu Dawrs, and funded by the generosity of the G.J. and Ellen Watumull Foundation, and the Sidney Stern Memorial Trust.

Over the last two years, I have had the pleasure of meeting and hosting some of the most dynamic thinkers in South Asian Studies, including Gayatri Spivak, Keya Ganguly, Akhil Gupta, Satya Mohanty, and Dina Siddiqi. At the Library, I believe my work as the South Asia Librarian has been greatly enriched by my experience as the Director of CSAS.

Aloha and best wishes for the summer.

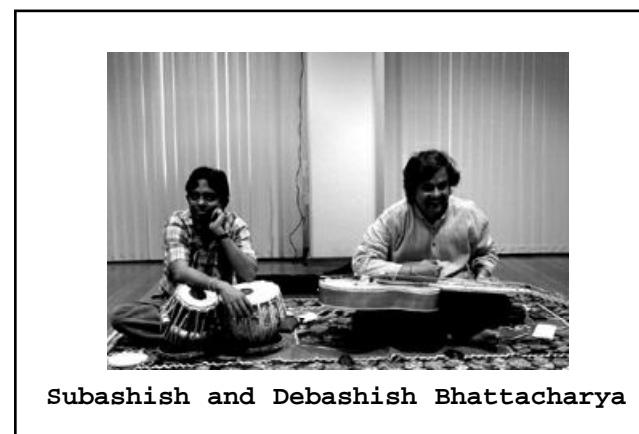


Monica Ghosh  
(standing) with  
Kamla Mankekar

## CSAS Colloquia Series

Debashish Bhattacharya is widely considered to be one of the world's greatest living guitarists. A master of the extremely challenging North Indian raga, Debashish further stands out for his choice of instrument—a direct descendant of the Hawaiian steel guitar.

First introduced to Calcutta by Hawai'i-born musician Tau Moe in the 1940s, the Hawaiian steel



Subashish and Debashish Bhattacharya

guitar has since been adopted by many Indian musicians. But beyond his amazing musical abilities, Debashish stands out in the Hindustani slide guitar community for the fact that he plays on several instruments of his own design, including the 22-stringed Dev Veena. Incorporating elements of the veena, sarod, sitar and Arabian kannur, the Dev Veena allows an emotional range far beyond that of a standard six-string Hawaiian steel.

Along with his brother Subashish (himself an acclaimed tabla master), Debashish came to the University of Hawai'i in February as an Asian Studies Freeman Fund Artist In Residence. (Additional support was provided by Tradex, the National Organization for Traditional Music Exchange.) While here, the Bhattacharya brothers participated in a number of public events, including two concerts, several seminars and a CSAS brown bag presentation titled *Steel Guitar Comes Home: From Hawai'i to India and Back*.

### Spring 2004 Colloquium presentations

2/12/04

**Monica Ghosh (UH-Manoa)**  
*What's Eaten You?: Transposing Colonial Anxieties on Tigers*

2/26/04

**Debashish & Subashish Bhattacharya**  
*Steel Guitar Comes Home: From Hawaii to India and Back*



3/15/04

**Dr. Lee Siegel (UH-Manoa)**  
*Indra's Net: A Performative Presentation On Indian Magic*

3/19/04

**Dr. Maneesha Lal (Trinity College)**  
*Of Vitamins and Veils: Women Physicians, Transnational Medical Research, and the Framing of Osteomalacia in Late Colonial India*

4/02/04

**Dr. Monisha Das Gupta (UH-Manoa)**  
*Owning Our Lives: South Asian Immigrant Women, Law, and Rights Claims*



## Photo Journals of India

Initially presented as part of the Center For South Asian Studies' Spring Symposium, "Photo Journals of India: Two Students' Perspectives" went on to inhabit two floors of Hamilton Library during the months of May and June.

A collection of photographs taken by two graduate students, Matthew Lopresti and Nicole Marsh, "Photo Journals" documented two separate travels through India. There were three parts to the exhibit; One located on the first floor of Hamilton Library and two located on the fourth floor, in the foyer and reference areas of the Hamilton Library Asia Collection.

"In February, 2001, I joined my mother and ten other family members in India for a family reunion, a wedding, and a journey into the past. We stayed in Kolkata (Calcutta) for nearly a week before heading by train to Darjeeling.

Growing up, I heard many stories of Darjeeling's incomparable beauty, but also of the painful events of my family's forced removal and internment following the China-India border war of 1962. They were among the roughly 2,500 Chinese-Indians interned after this two-month conflict.

While we were in Darjeeling, we met several people who recognized my grandfather, mother and uncle. This was truly an amazing experience, and tears were shed on both sides as they began to fill the missing gaps.

My photos are only a tiny reflection of this journey and place."

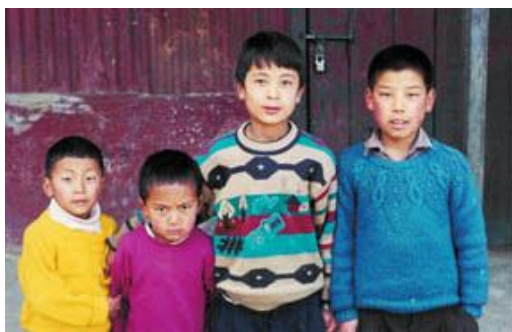
—Nicole Marsh, April, 2004



Outside what was "Park Restaurant" (1954-1962) before Chinese Internment, Darjeeling



Mehendi Ceremony, day two of the four-day Punjabi Wedding, Kolkata



Boys at school, Tibetan Refugees Self-Help Centre, Darjeeling



"Agra Sky", Taj Mahal  
Agra, Uttar Pradesh

Photo: M. Lopresti



"Cave #1", Ajanta Caves  
Fardapur, Maharashtra

Photo: M. Lopresti

Matthew S. Lopresti is currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. This past year has seen him travel from Honolulu to London, all across India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Cambodia.

Awarded a J. Watumull Foundation Scholarship for study in India in 2003, he traveled to Pune, Maharashtra, where he lived with a host family and studied as a language fellow in the American Institute of Indian Studies' advanced Sanskrit summer language program. August took him from Delhi to Honolulu to London and back to Delhi again. He finally unpacked his suitcases in Bihar, where he was a Lecturer of Buddhist Philosophy and Field Research Advisor for American university students studying abroad through the Antioch Buddhist Studies program. He was in India for seven months and spent another five weeks exploring Southeast Asia. He has been interested in photography ever since traveling to Paris in 1999.

### Crossings, cont. from Page 1

Indian medical doctors — along with 20,000 scientists and 40,000 engineers — had set up shop in America between 1966 and 1977, the year that preferential immigration status for physicians ceased.<sup>3</sup>

"America?" says Malati, age 47, who grew up in Kanpur, not far from Saleem's Faizabad.

"When I was little, I would read all my mom's British magazines and stuff," recalls Malati in October 2003. "So all I ever thought was 'Hah, I need to grow up and go live in England.'"

Malati and her husband, Ravi, left India in 1984 so Ravi could take up a residency at a hospital in Scarborough, England. Four years later, their second son was born, and opportunities for physicians, particularly foreign physicians, had dried up.

"The medical system in England was like a pyramid. If that many people started at the bottom, only one person could reach the top level. The rest had to go back to their countries.

"So we were thinking, 'What shall we do? Once you're done with your residency, that's it.'

"And then one day Ravi hears from his sister in Detroit that there are residencies available at Henry Ford hospital. "So he goes there and gets interviewed, and gets selected. He comes back to Scarborough, and says, 'hey, we're going to the U.S.'"

Henry Ford hospital in Detroit. The assembly line churns out another immigrant take on the American Dream, a dream whose components, some would argue, were assembled by Fordist culture itself.<sup>4</sup> But in Malati's story, a sub-theme surfaces: loneliness, a feeling of an almost forced displacement. From child-

hood, she had imagined an England of "fine clothes, nice dishes, books, fashions." Actually living in England came with the sad realization that "abroad" was not how she had pictured it. But returning "home" was out of question. The only choice left was to follow the path her husband's two sisters already had taken. Onward to America.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this paper, I talk story. I explore a couple of stories, stories of two immigrants who once resided within a couple hundred miles of each other and found that their paths crossed as they came to be rooted in a town in the Midwest. Talk story, a conversational way of speaking popular in Hawai'i, offers a mode to show how notions of neoliberalism, transnational capital, and global labor flows get

Continued on Page 13

**Maneesha Lal, continued from page 1**

1930s and 1940s, paying particular attention to shifting problems of diagnosis, etiology, and treatment. She also argued that osteomalacia—a disease characterized by a softening of the bones — provides a unique lens through which to examine the paradoxical role occupied by British women in the racially stratified and gender segregated Indian medical profession, a role that yet gave them access to national and transnational networks of medical research. In addition, Dr. Lal showed how—at a time when seclusion was increasingly contested in imperial, nationalist, and feminist discourse and practice—osteomalacia illustrates the rising influence of Western medical evidence as Indian feminists seized such evidence to bolster their own demands for purdah's reform.

Dr. Lal received her Ph.D. in History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania, and at the time of her presentation was a visiting professor at Trinity College. She has published several articles and book chapters on medicine in colonial India and is currently working on her book manuscript, *Purdah and Pathology: Women Physicians in Colonial India*. The following conversation took place immediately after her talk, and included CSAS Director Monica Ghosh and Dr. Monisha Das Gupta, associate professor of Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies at the University of Hawai'i.

**Monica Ghosh (MG):** Your talk was very interesting, and I think you're coming from a very different perspective—it seems the potential is there for a great deal of other work on the topic, too.

**Maneesha Lal (ML):** There are some students in graduate school who are getting interested in this, and there are some people working on it, but the challenge I think is to have a history of medicine perspective, as well as women's history, women and gender, and social and cultural history of South Asia. Trying to integrate those is not so easy; and then also looking at what's happening in Britain. ...

**MG:** Yes, whatever you do raises all these questions that are almost impossible for a single project to take on, but they open up that door.

**Monisha Das Gupta (MDG):** I was very interested in your comment that this was a new field in terms of South Asian history. Who are the other people working in it?

**ML:** There are people like David Arnold—he's published a book called *Colonizing The Body*; there's also Mark Harrison, who wrote *Public Health in British India*. There've been people who've published articles on particular aspects of women and midwifery: Geraldine Forbes, a well-known women's historian, edited *The Memoirs of Dr. Haimabati Sen*, which was

translated by Tapan Raychaudhuri. It's a fascinating memoir of a Bengali woman who was a widow... Medical education was stratified in India—there were different levels of degrees available. The five-year was the MBBS, but there were people that were also trained as hospital assistants. So Haimabati Sen was trained at somewhere near the hospital assistant level, and she worked

at Lady Dufferin hospital—one of these hospitals that was set up under the Dufferin Fund—but she faced a lot of discrimination. We find that many of these women were entering into the public sphere at a time when that was still relatively rare. Even in women's hospitals, initially under the Dufferin Fund patients had to be inspected by male civil surgeons, which caused a lot of problems because women physicians would have promised their purdah patients that purdah would be followed, and then sometimes men would come on the wards and they often weren't as sensitive to those requirements. So women physicians negotiated that issue quite often.

So there are articles here and there, but the few books and edited collections like David Arnold's and Mark Harrison's have really focused on general kinds of topics—they've been the first forays into this question. David Arnold's book has chapters on smallpox and plague and cholera—some of which he published as articles—and it talks some about the women's medical movement but very briefly, just a few pages. Gender hasn't really been a central theme in the history of medicine that's been done—not even in the work that's



been done on the history of tropical medicine, which is a growing field: People who have been historians in medicine have been interested in the development of tropical medicine and how the establishment of entities like the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine are linked to imperial concerns.

**MG:** And actually here in Hawai'i, tropical medicine is the big interest...

**MDG:** I was thinking that people working in Hawaiian and Pacific Studies here might have found your talk interesting because of the missionary presence and the colonial connections. ...

**MG:** Yes, there is the connection between Hawai'i and the U.S., while in places like Fiji, there is the link with South Asia during this period of heavy movement among indentured laborers, and all of this going back to Britain.

**ML:** There have been studies by people like Ralph Schlomowitz and Lance Brennan, on diseases that accompanied some of the indentured laborers. I teach a course called "Disease, Medicine and Empire," but there we start from the Columbian exchange, looking at the effects of 1492, how the old and new worlds came together, and the effects of smallpox, particularly on eliminating the indigenous population. And then we look at some of the diseases associated with the slave trade, and we look at the development of tropical medicine as a specialty—the setting up of these institutions, medical missionaries, the role of women physicians ... but I haven't focused on Hawai'i actually.

**MG:** How did you develop your specialization?

**ML:** I went to University of Chicago as an undergraduate, where I started out as a Chemistry major. I really liked chemistry, but I was also very intrigued by a course I had called "Self, Culture and Society." It was just amazing: We were reading Marx, Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*—keep in mind this is as freshmen—we read most of *The Gift*,

and I just got fascinated with culture and its effect on individuals and how societies were organized. Especially because of my bi-cultural background: It was a way of thinking about those issues in a way I'd never thought of them before.

At the time, I didn't think I'd really focus on India. I took some courses in anthropology and found I was more interested in those issues. I worked in a bio-chemistry lab for a while and found that I really didn't like that, and then I took a won-

derful class taught by Jean Comaroff called "Medicine and Culture"—she's a medical anthropologist as well. I worked on anorexia nervosa in the U.S., on the kinds of metaphors and themes that were present in the way it was represented in popular magazines like *Glamour* and *People*. It was just fascinating the way they presented the patient before and after—this was in 1985, just when anorexia was becoming really prominent. That made me think 'maybe I want to

do something different,' so I switched to that in the end of my junior year; then I wrote my B.A. honors thesis on the naming of anorexia in late Victorian Britain.

Again, there wasn't a South Asia focus, but after college, I went to India for a year. It was from there that I thought I would go back to graduate school to combine history of medicine, science, South Asia, women and gender—[laughs] that's what I wrote in my applications.

Much of the work on the history of medicine in India has been done by anthropologists: People like Charles Leslie and then Paul Brass wrote important articles on Ayurveda. So there have been those works that have been very useful. Charles Leslie has done some very interesting work on how Ayurvedic medicine—how, as it adapted to the Western medical model, there were certain groups that tried to keep it very pure and resisted any kind of adaptation or integration with western medicine, while others were more promoting a kind of

---

“Gender hasn't  
really been a  
central theme in  
the history of  
medicine that's  
been done.”

---



## Hindustan Kaise Hai?

by Isaac Souweine

**H**industan kaise hai (How is India)? The question is deceptively simple, the answers predictably flaccid, propped up by the interpretive crutch of cliché.



Holi in front of the Jagdish Mandir in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Comforting abstractions have been exchanged for oppressively concrete facts, and a corresponding loss for words. Not that your preconceptions simply vanish upon arrival; without them there could be no constructing of yourself and your environment, no being “you in India.” But whereas before these categories and concepts played in an autonomous world of thought, now they are kept busy and breathless assembling and integrating a rush of sensory input: sights and smells and sounds and everywhere a visual field punctuated by bright and shocking difference, from the unflinching stares of the people to the enticements of the exuberant signage. Expanding, combining, rearranging, solidifying: your

frame of reference, and with it a part of yourself, pulsates in phenomenal exchange.

Of course, things do settle down after a while; with experience comes familiarity and even a modicum of comfort. You get used to things: the pressing heat, the stark landscape, the chaotic roadways, the ubiquitous temples. But if this process of acculturation is reassuring, it also portends more substantial challenges ahead; beyond mere survival lie the pitfalls of comprehension, interaction, meaning. If anything, adaptation exacerbates your coming difficulties; by reducing superficial difference it highlights fundamental discontinuity: between you and this place; between you and different visions of yourself; between you and the world.

You came toting clichés, stylized portraits and catch phrases, but now you know better, know something of the feel or taste or sound behind the glib phrase or telling story. Your clichés begin to sound rough and passé; their smug tone catches in your throat and mars the appearance of your printed page. Easy words reveal their brute intentions of synopsis cum possession; you are reminded forcefully about the urge toward ownership that lies deep within the quest for knowledge. In moments of seeming clarity, you repudiate your accumulated stock of facile understandings, but this only leaves you feeling alone and

adrift, either speechless or else capable of speaking only rudimentary sentences of consternation: “Ye kya hai” (what is this?); “Maim kaun hum” (who am I)?

That which troubles and eludes you is deeply entwined with the richness of human culture in all of its massive facticity. You have come to understand and engage with India but the task overwhelms you, for this ‘India’ that you covet spans dizzying landscapes of meaning, from the tangible physicality of climate to the vast sweep of human activity: religion and politics and warfare and agriculture and art and architecture and so on. Hundreds of millions of people implicated in vast networks of cultural practice constructed upon on layers of complex historical fact:



The Holi is set aflame.

the collective effect is bewildering. Moreover, that which appears from a distance as a coherent whole is actually riven with fault-lines and points of contestation; what you can’t comprehend turns out to not even exist.

Humanity is a kind of enormous family, such that human cultural worlds bear deep family

resemblances. This generic commonality gives license for the cautious employment of categories like religion and politics and economic development, organizing principles that help prevent sensory overload. What’s more, globalization is daily reducing the magnitude of cultural difference by increasing global traffic in all manner of ideas and images; India for a westerner is not quite the absurdly fantastic and utterly removed outpost it once was. But in the end, difference still rules the day, a fact that turns you into a stranger who is strangely in between, too involved to simply let go of the need to understand, too removed to be capable of mustering satisfactory explanations. Everything

from the music and the clothing to the regional identities and religious ideologies are over-determined and culturally embedded in ways that restrict your comprehension. Thus, you come to appreciate the sounds of the veena but never figure out when to raise your hand in praise; you master the grammar of Hindi but never get any of the jokes.

Perplexity of the sort you find here can be productive, cathartic, spiritually enriching; it can also be frustrating, disconcerting, oppressive. At its best, such perplexity generates breakthroughs of insight, at its worse, sheer paralysis. But perhaps these two poles are not as dissimilar as they first appear. India leaves you deluged by the incomprehensible

and awash in the ridiculous. In disgust, you insist that you don’t belong here, that your high-minded ideals about inter-cultural exchange or global consciousness are nothing but arid delusions. And yet somehow it is in these very moments of darkness that a certain sense of honesty and humility arise to recharge and reinvigorate you. Purged of ebullient romanticism but holding fast to a considered idealism, you find the strength to persevere in an enterprise whose very elusiveness is perhaps its greatest virtue.

*Isaac Souweine’s travel abroad was funded in part by a J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India, which he was awarded in Spring 2003.*

### Fall 2004 Courses

ES 360	Immigration to Hawaii	TR 12:00-1:15	M. Das Gupta
ES 380	Field work in Ethnic Studies	TBA	M. Das Gupta
ES 418	Women and Work	W 1:30-4:00	M. Das Gupta
HNDI 101	Elementary Hindi	MWF 8:30-9:55	TBA
HNDI 201	Intermediate Hindi	MWF 3:00 - 5:30	TBA
IP 373	Vedic Hindu Mythology	MW 2:30-3:55	R. Sharma
SNSK 181	Introduction to Sanskrit	TR 9:00-10:15	R. Sharma
SNSK 281	Intermediate Sanskrit	TR 11:00 - 12:15	R. Sharma
SNSK 381	Third-Level Sanskrit	MW 10:30-11:55	R. Sharma
PHIL 750	Seminar in Indian Philosophy	M 12:45-3:15	A. Chakrabarti
POLS 339	Feminist Theory	MWF 10:30-11:20	S. Charusheela
REL 662B	Indian Religions	W 12:30-3:00	R. Lamb
WS 151	Intro to Women’s Studies	TR 9:00-10:15	M. Das Gupta
WS 361	Women and Intl Econ Developmnt	MWF 9:30-10:20	S. Charusheela
WS 418	Women and Work	W 1:30-4:00	M. Das Gupta
WS 439	Feminist Theory	MWF 10:30-11:20	S. Charusheela
ASAN 202	Intr Asian Studies: S/SE Asia	MWF 12:30-1:20	B. Andaya
ASAN 393	Field Study: South Asia	TBA	R. Trimillos
ASAN 624	Culture and Colonialism	T 3:00-5:30	M. Sharma
APDM 418	Costumes/Cultures of S & SE Asia	TR 10:30-11:45	TBA





## Neoliberalism in South Asia: Culture, Gender and Labor



Paula Chakravartty

history, including Akhil Gupta (Stanford University), Dina Siddiqi (Columbia University), Paula Chakravartty (U-MASS Amherst), Purnima Mankekar (Stanford University), and a host of others. A further, previously unanticipated benefit of the Symposium is the fact that, following his visit in April, Akhil Gupta has expressed interest in serving as a Freeman Visiting Faculty member in Fall 2005.

Below is the complete listing of participants and events from this year's Symposium.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- **Akhil Gupta** (Professor of Cultural And Social Anthropology, Stanford University): "Theorizing the State After Liberalization."
- **Dina Siddiqi** (International and Public Affairs, Columbia University): "Globalization, Sexual Harrassment and Worker's Rights in Bangladesh."
- **Paula Chakravartty** (Assistant Professor of Communication, U-MASS Amherst): "High-Tech India: Labor, Liberalization and Transnational Politics"



Dina Siddiqi, Paula Chakravartty, Monisha Das Gupta, Nandita Sharma and S. Charusheela (from left) during a break in the proceedings.

In the 1980s and 1990s, South Asian countries adopted neoliberal policies that led to increased foreign investment, export-oriented economies, and cuts in public spending. With these transformations, South Asia has become increasingly enmeshed in global and gendered flows of culture and labor.

The 21st Annual Spring Symposium of the Center for South Asian Studies took place on Thursday and Friday, April 15-16, 2004. This year's Symposium was titled "Neoliberalism in South Asia: Culture, Gender, and Labor." Among other questions, the gathering was meant to assess what localized responses have been generated by the rise of neoliberalism in the region.

Thanks to the generous support of the G.J. and Ellen Watumull Foundation and an additional \$5,000 grant from the Sidney Stern Memorial Trust, the Center was able to assemble one of the most diverse groups of keynote speakers and paper presenters in the Symposium's two decade

### THURSDAY, 4/15:

9-10:30 a.m.: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Dina Siddiqi** (Columbia University)

10:45-12:15: PANEL #1

Chair:

**Kazi Ashraf** (UH-Manoa)

Presenters:

**Anthony D'Costa** (Univ. of Washington):

"Transitioning to a New Regime of Capitalist Regulation: The Interplay of State, Labor, and Capital in West Bengal"

**Purnima Mankekar**: (Stanford):

"Love in the Era of Economic Liberalization"

**Kalindi Vohra** (UC Santa Cruz):

"The Limits of Capital: Others' Organs as the Last Commodity"

2-4 p.m.: Film screening: *My Son The Fanatic*  
Introduced by Vimal Dissanayke (UH-Manoa)

### FRIDAY, 4/16:

9-10:30 a.m.: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Akhil Gupta** (Stanford University)

10:45-11:45 a.m.: PANEL #2

Chair:

**S. Krishna** (UH-Manoa)

Presenters:

**S. Charusheela** (UH-Manoa):

"Competing Modernities: Neoliberal Reform and Women's Work in the Informal Sector"

**Ashwin Raj** (UH-Manoa):

"'Good' Governance: Nirvana in an age of Global Capitalism."

2-3:30 p.m.: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Paula Chakravartty** (U-MASS Amherst)

3:45-5 p.m.: PANEL #3

Chair:

**Monisha Das Gupta** (UH-Manoa)

Presenters:

**Robina Bhatti** (): "The Heart of Pakistan: Popular Culture in Lahore"

**Himanee Gupta** (UH-Manoa): "Cowpath Crossings: Stories of Two Indian Immigrant Doctors From Muncie"

**Pavitra Sundar** (University of Michigan):

"Mit Jaave Jo Takraave: Hindutva Ideology and the Warrior Citizen in Lagaan"

**Maneesha Lal** Cont. from Page 7 these?

syncretic vision, saying they should be teaching western medicine in some of the Ayurvedic medical schools. And of course Ayurvedic revitalization adopted a lot of institutional forms of western medicine.

But some of that work really didn't put these individuals and things into careful historical context—they didn't necessarily rely on historical archives. That's what historians are starting to do now, and it's really a growing, vibrant field—there are a lot of younger scholars who've gotten interested in India, there are a lot of edited collections that are coming out, so I think there's a lot of potential. But gender is still somewhat marginal, and the work of women is somewhat marginal.

**MDG:** So then did you come across osteomalacia by going through the archives?

**ML:** No, the way I came across it was that for one of the chapters in my book I wanted to focus on medical research—what was going on, what kinds of research they were doing. I looked through a lot of the files of *The Journal of the Association of Medical Women in India*. This was a journal that started in the early 20th century, and it published news of the profession and all kinds of things that they were fighting for.

**MG:** Where did you find

**ML:** There were paper copies in the library of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and now there are many of them at the Wellcome Institute, and then the National Library of Medicine in Delhi also has several copies. The archival record is very scattered: I've been working on three continents, using medical missionary archives, medical school archives and archives in libraries. It's been an enormous amount of work—a lot of detective work in piecing things together from different sources.

**MG:** Your project not only talks about the practice, but also about the research that's going on. ...

**ML:** Yes, and then also looking at the development of institutions. We don't even have a basic history of this: There are so many questions that are there, and there's not really scholarship to rely on. Now that's growing, and that's why my project is more possible now than it was before, because now there are some interpretations that one can argue with or build on or challenge. That really wasn't the case just 10 years ago. So it's really dynamic. And it's the same thing with the development of women and gender history—it's just exploded. It's just fascinating and really exciting.

## Faculty News

**Kazi K. Ashraf** (School of Architecture) presented a paper, "Taking Place: The Notion of Landscape in Kahn's Architecture," at the symposium *Engaging Louis I. Kahn: A Legacy for the Future*, Yale University, 2004. He also presented a paper, "Where Is Architecture," at the ARCASIA (Architects Regional Council Asia) Seminar *Globalization and Asian Architecture*, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2003, and a paper, "Sundarnagar: The City in Cinematic and Architectural Imagination," at the 32nd Annual Conference on South Asia, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2003. In addition, he produced a web profile on the city of Dhaka for the Architecture League of New York's web project, [www.worldviewcities.org](http://www.worldviewcities.org); served as a juror for the AIA Honolulu Design Award, 2004; continues as member of the Advisory Committee for Shangri La, The Doris Duke House, and the Islamic World Arts Initiative; and continues to write a column, "On Cities," for the Dhaka-based English daily, *The Daily Star*. His current publication and research projects include completing the manuscript of a forthcoming book, *The Last Hut: A Study in Asceticism and Architecture*, and working with Jyoti Puri, Simmons College,

Boston, on a project on "The Idea of Hometown."

**Monica Ghosh** (South Asia Librarian, Hamilton Library; outgoing CSAS Director) presented a paper titled "What's Eaten You?: Transposing Colonial Anxieties on Tigers" on February 12, 2004, in a talk sponsored by the UH-Manoa Department of English and co-sponsored by the Centers for South Asian Studies and Pacific Island Studies (SHAPS-UHM). From March 4-7, 2004 she attended the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in San Diego.

During fall 2003, **Gregory G. Maskarinec** (Department of Family Practice and Community Health, John A. Burns School of Medicine) was an invited scholar in the "Milieux, Sociétés et Cultures en Himalaya" Division of France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). There he worked toward completing his next volume of *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts* (to be published by Harvard University Press in 2004). He was simultaneously guest professor of Anthropology at the University of Paris X (Nanterre), where he presented a series of lectures on Himalayan culture, language, medicine and religion. He was also an invited participant of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme's project "Les archives audiovisuelles de la

recherche en sciences humaines et sociales," in which parts of his audio-visual field collections from Nepal will be archived. A series of "conversations" with Dr. Maskarinec regarding his Nepal research, which were filmed last fall at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, are web-posted at: <http://e-semiotics.msh-paris.fr/opales/colloques/colconv/entretien/introduction.asp?idcol=161> The site includes clips from Dr. Maskarinec's films of Nepalese shamans.

**Jaishree Odin** co-edited with Peter Manicas a collection of essays, *Globalization and Higher Education* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004). The volume includes an essay by her on "New Technologies and the Reconstitution of the University." Jaishree's recent publications include: "Lalla and the Kashmiri Shaiva Tradition" in *The Valley of Kashmir: The Making and Unmaking of a Composite Culture*, Eds. T.N. Madan and Aparna Rao (Berghan Books Pub, forthcoming); "A Lotus in the Mud: Relevance of Lalla's Verses" in *Manushi* (October 2003); "Embodiment and Narrative Performance" in *Women, Art, and Technology* (MIT Press, 2003); and a book review, "Does E-Moderating an Active Classroom Make?" In *On the Horizon* (2003). She received a Sloan Foundation Award

## Faculty News

\$4,600 in Summer 2004 to develop online course materials for IS 331 Science and Culture (to be offered in Spring 2005) focusing on cultural studies of science, including the intersections of science, gender, and the environment.

During his sabbatical (Fall 2003), **Lee Siegel** (Religion Department) was a resident fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation's Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, Italy. He was one of thirty-three featured authors at the Internationales Literaturfestival in Berlin, and was a speaker and panelist at the South Asian Literary and Theater Arts Festival in Washington, D.C. He lectured on and performed traditional Indian street magic at the Academie de Magie in Paris and at Williams College in Massachusetts. His essay on Hawai'i was published by Nation Books in John Leonard's *These United States: Original Essays by Leading American Writers on Their States Within the Union. L'Amour dans une langue morte*, a French translation of his novel *Love in a Dead Language*, was published by Editions Philippe Picquier in Paris. And his novel, *Love and Other Games of Chance*, was issued in paperback by Penguin Books in January.

**Crossings, cont. from Page 5**

embedded in daily life.

The stories I tell are gleaned from stories that were told to me last fall, as I did dissertation fieldwork. The larger project explores the relationship between the growing popularity over the past two decades of a Hindu nationalist political movement in India and the establishment since the mid-1960s of an affluent, mostly immigrant Indian community in the United States. However, while this transnational political movement is an important aspect of this project, looking at it empirically is not the intent. Rather, I am more interested in viewing the truth claims that have arisen about that relationship discursively and in examining how they may or may not intersect with memories and other stories that emerge through conversations with immigrant Indians and their descendants.

Thus, the project might be defined as a narrative about narratives. It looks at narrative as a device that, like discourse, conveys meaning and at stories that, like sedimented forms of knowledge, construct truths that are situated, contingent, and contestable.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, I invite you to read the stories I tell as, Michel de Certeau suggests, providing a "decorative container of a narrativity for everyday practices"<sup>6</sup> that interrelate with and/or contest larger discourses about post-colonial migration and transnational capital flows. Doing so would recognize an interviewing of narrativity — the telling of stories — and discourse — the process through which truths are constructed.

The stories I share both here and in the larger project are set in a small-town famous for being all-

American, somewhat pastoral, and resolutely typical: Muncie.

I know this town well. It is where I grew up. My own cowpath through life took me there at age three, when my family became the first Indian family in Muncie, arriving there in 1966. Although I have not lived in Muncie since 1981, it has loomed large in my imaginary for decades, at least partly because it is the only place where I can stake some sort of claim to roots.

Yet, roots or routes, as the work of James Clifford, Paul Carter, Paul Gilroy among many others suggests, are complex affairs. Where you're from ain't necessarily where you're at; what's rooted-ness to some is routed-ness to others. All of us who grew up — as young immigrant adults — with the community and those of us who grew up — as Muncie-raised South Asians — in the community knew the Indians always were here, in our own imaginaries, at least. Yet, that here was a little like that hollow in the old schoolyard oak tree: a secret protected from dominant view.

Saleem and Malati are two of approximately forty participants in the project. Both, as noted, came to Muncie from the north-central Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, traversing the immigration route via the relatively affluent path of medicine. Saleem, arriving in 1983, is Muncie's sole plastic surgeon. Malati, arriving in 1994, has been pursuing a degree in counseling; her husband, Ravi, is a kidney specialist. Both Saleem and Malati have raised children in the United States to adult age: Saleem's eldest daughter is a sophomore in college; Malati's eldest son is getting ready to start medical school. In many

Continued on Page 14

**Crossing, continued from Page 13**

ways, one might regard the political and economic circumstances that routed these two families to Muncie as similar. However, their recountings of that experience differ quite markedly.

For Saleem, the "cowpath" to America was a path away from intellectual frustration. Once he arrived, he never looked back. Going back would have meant a practice in a remote place, where the only medications available for dispensation were vitamin pills and treatments for diarrhea. For Malati, the cowpath was a journey marked by loneliness and displacement. "We did it the hard way," says Malati, ruefully, as she recalls how her husband's around-the-clock residency requirements once prompted her three-year-old son to ask, "Mom, what does Dad look like?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Saleem boarded a plane bound for Boston in early 1977. It was either January 6 or 7. Every seat on the aircraft was filled. With Indian doctors.

All were bound for America. And all were racing against time. The third-category immigration preference that the United States had granted to foreign physicians between 1965 and 1976 was ending; the American economy no longer had a need for that kind of labor. Saleem had been told by a visa officer at the embassy in Delhi that he needed to be in the United States by January 9. Otherwise, it would be too late.

"It was an Alitalia flight. We had a layover in Rome; they told us that the Boston airport was closed because of a snowstorm. I panicked."

Malati also recalls arriving in America amid a snowstorm. "We flew to Detroit. It was a horrible, black night. The plane wasn't given permission to land. We thought, 'Oh God, what are we letting ourselves in for?'"

\* \* \* \* \*

In Saleem's story, every crisis turns into an opportunity. The last-minute approval of his visa gets him into America, just in time. A delay that preceded it forced him to finish his medical degree, allowing him to spend the next several months in America looking for a hospital where he could do his training in general surgery. By contrast, Malati's story resounds with difficulty. In Detroit, her husband did a fourth residency – following years of grueling, on-demand service in Kanpur, New Delhi, and then in England. From there, it was several more years of service in rural Kentucky, then Lexington, and finally the lure of secure employment, in Muncie.

Difficulty is what she insists creates character. "We really struggled," she recalls. "We reached ... this stage in life the hard way. It probably gave us better values. Not to take anything for granted is one of them."

\* \* \* \* \*

Scholarship on memory suggests that what one chooses to remember and what one chooses to forget is a highly selective yet uneven process. Keya Ganguly's work on immigrant memories further argues that this selectivity contains a gendered component.<sup>7</sup> In making this point, Ganguly argues that the construction of self emerges almost inherently through a gendered positioning of the self within power relationships, and that these relationships, once defined, continue to energize the constitution of self in narrative. In this light, let's look at how Malati and Saleem each remember their first encounters with Muncie.

Saleem did his homework. He completed his general surgery training at a hospital in Eastern Pennsylvania. From there, he went to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to do a special residency in

plastic surgery. He arrived in Muncie in 1983.

"I wanted to practice in a medium-sized town, a place with good opportunity.

I bought a *Reader's Digest* almanac to find out the population of various places. I found out there was a university here; a hospital. I compared values and Muncie came out as the best place to practice plastic surgery. University, medium sized town, large single hospital, so many surgeons but no plastic surgeons.

"I decided, 'that's the place I'm going to go.' But I had not seen Muncie."

He drove from Chattanooga, took the exit off Interstate 69 to Highway 32. The road was narrow; all rural, nothing. "I'm driving," he says. "It's barren. It's April, the leaves haven't yet started coming. It looked very depressing."

The quality of the hospital, the presence of a four-year research university, and the willingness – albeit a grudging willingness – to grant the foreign plastic surgeon hospital privileges convinced Saleem to follow through with his plan. He moved to the city with his wife, and opened an office. His wife sat in the front, and he filled the file cabinets with folders, empty folders, in order to appear professional. Slowly, he built a practice.

"I didn't know a single soul," he says. "I just opened my shop."

Malati recalls driving with Ravi into the city. They were going down McGalliard Avenue, a major thoroughfare, when they spotted a billboard. "Suddenly, we saw, 'Gupta Hobby Center.' And I said, 'Gupta-jji is here? And we were both like, 'Yes! There's someone called Gupta. Must be an Indian.'"

The existence of a Gupta-jji made Malati feel as if she could make Muncie her home. "It's a fact of the

human race that you do need someone of your own background eventually," she says. "Trust me; that's how it goes."

"We were like, 'Oh, so there's at least one; someone called Gupta here.' And then we were staying at a hotel. It was like so derelict. No one arranged big gatherings. The hospital didn't know that we would want to ... now, it is so different. The moment Ravi hears in the hospital that there's someone with Indian roots, he goes all out to call up the community and say, 'Come. Come to our house; we'll all eat together. There's a new person.' Just to make them feel at home, to give them a real taste of the Indian part of the community. Otherwise, why do you pick Muncie, if you don't know that there's anyone of your own kind here?"

That need for community runs strong in Malati's story. Saleem, however, downplays it. "Indian community? I didn't even think of it; I didn't have family. I didn't even think that much about money. I just wanted to do surgery on my own; to be my own boss."

\* \* \* \* \*

This paper, presented initially at a Center for South Asian Studies symposium at the University of Hawai'i, explains very little. But through the use of talk-story it hopefully shows quite a bit, about how themes of neoliberalism, late capitalism, gendered memories and transnational flows enact themselves in individuals who were, from early adolescent memory, always already transnational.

I wish to conclude with one final story, drawn from interviews with two other research participants. One of them, a 60-year-old immigrant whom I'll call Kamal proposed in mid-November that I ask my interviewees the following question: How many times have you been invited to dinner at the home of a non-Indian

for a completely non-work related matter?

Approximately five months after my interview with Kamal, I posed that question to Ravi, the 51-year-old husband of Malati.

"The answer to that question," Ravi said, "is once in our own neighborhood. Once or twice every year because of some neighborhood gatherings. In ten years, I can count two other instances, where someone has called us out of an interest in friendship. In both cases, these people had traveled a lot, were familiar with India ...

... Maybe it's because we don't eat meat. Maybe that makes it more difficult."

Embedded in Ravi's response is a deep sense of personal alienation, and loneliness that, unlike the gendered differences one might encounter between Malati and Saleem, seems to converge with his wife's sense of uprootedness. For Saleem – a Muslim from Faizabad, the sister city to Ayodhya – imagining India as home comes with a growing insecurity for the safety of himself and his wife, and, more significantly for the numerous members of his extended family who still reside in his home town, a community made increasingly volatile by the growing politicization of Hindu-Muslim tensions. Ravi – a Hindu from Kanpur – thinks of home in much more nostalgic terms. Even his Indian friends in Muncie, he says, are not the same as his friends at home. That loneliness seems to play out against a backdrop where he has come to realize that an immigrant is measured in terms of use-value. That, in turn, magnifies a sense of dehumanization that appears to intensify with the acceleration of capital flows.

Recall Jeffrey Eugenides words: "People stopped being human in 1913. That was the year Henry Ford ... made his workers adopt the speed of

the assembly line."

In a seemingly parallel script, Ravi states: "The worth of an immigrant rests only in what he can do to improve the life of a local person. That's really all that we're worth. As long as I am useful to the hospital, I am a good doctor. If I grow older, if I am no longer able to carry out my tasks, they won't care. They'll just find someone else."

At first, the workers rebelled. Then, they learned to adapt.

"I know a doctor, an Egyptian," says Ravi. "When he falls into these moods, he buys himself cars to comfort himself."

What do you do? I asked.

Ravi responded: Work. "I work; it's my way of not having to think about these things that we're talking about."

1 Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex* (New York: Picador, 2002), 95.

2 Abraham Verghese, "The Cowpath to America," *New Yorker*, 73:17 (1997), 74.

3 Niti Bhan, "Community Profile: Indian Americans," *Asians in America Project*.

4 See, for instance, Mark Rupert's discussions of Fordism in *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

5 Donna Haraway, *Modest Witness@Second Millennium: Female Man Meets OncoMouse* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 230.

6 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 70.

7 Keya Ganguly, "Migrant Identities: Personal Memory and the Construction of Selfhood," *Cultural Studies* 6:1 (1992), 27-50



**SOUTH ASIA NEWS STAFF**

**Monica Ghosh**

CSAS Director

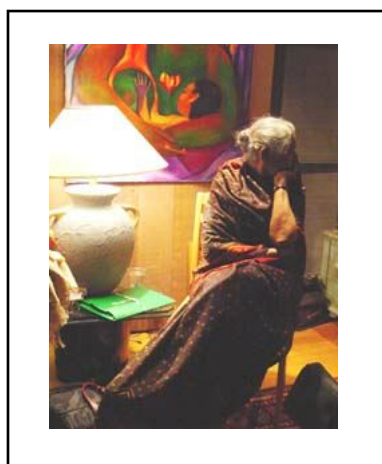
**Stu Dawrs**

CSAS Coordinator

Contributions of articles, book reviews and commentaries are welcome. Please send them to us at [csas@hawaii.edu](mailto:csas@hawaii.edu)

We also thank those who have supported the Center with monetary contributions in recent years. These funds provide a flexible resource to supplement our (rapidly declining) university operating budget and permits us to augment our South Asia activities.

Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and can be made payable to University of Hawai'i Foundation Account No. 130910, c/o Center for South Asian Studies, Moore 411, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI, 96822 USA.



**K**amla Mankekar is a well-known journalist and feminist activist. A pioneer in her field—she was one of the first two women working for an English-language newspaper in India—she eventually rose to the rank of editor of the magazine section of the *Times of India*, and subsequently

served in a number of important civic institutions, including a last stint as the Head of the Delhi Commission for Women. She is currently writing her memoirs, which talk about growing up and living in what is now Pakistan, going to school in Lahore and coming to Delhi around the time of Partition. In addition, the book will cover her work as a journalist interviewing such luminaries as Che Guevara, Martha Graham, and Eleanor Roosevelt, and interacted closely with some of the leading politicians in India.

On Saturday, April 17, as part of this year's CSAS Spring Symposium, Kamla Mankekar read from her memoirs during a private reception in her honor. For more on this year's Symposium Please see page 10.

**Center for South Asian Studies**

**School of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Studies**

**Moore Hall 213**

**1890 East-West Road**

**University of Hawai'i-Manoa**

**Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96822 USA**