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Aloha,

Signs of Spring in Hawai‘i: blooming Heliconia and pink shower trees, hula hālau competing at Merrie Monarch, Pacific & Asian films screening at the Hawaii International Film Festival, and the Center for South Asian Studies Annual Spring Symposium! This April we welcomed participants for the symposium, “Borders and Mobility.”

This has been a full and engaging semester, including visits from scholars Kirin Narayan (Australian National University) and Richa Nagar (University of Minnesota), each of whom conducted workshops for graduate students and faculty and held well-attended public lectures.

In February, I attended a conference on Oceanic Modernism held in Suva, Fiji. While there, I visited the National Archives of Fiji and the Director, Opeta Alefaio, arranged for me to see the records of Indian indenture to Fiji from the first ship, Leonidas – a disturbing record of this colonial history. Shortly after we left, Hurricane Winston devastated the islands and there has been much activity on campus to raise awareness and funds for the victims of the hurricane.

Led by Jesse Knutson, Assistant Professor of Sanskrit, faculty and graduate students took a public stand by writing a letter against actions violating the academic freedom and free speech rights of academics and scholars at many institutions of higher education in India, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru University. Elsewhere, in Lahore, we grieve the deaths of women, children and men in the bombing at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park.

Locally, we celebrate the scholarly achievement of colleagues Vrinda Dalmiya and Ned Bertz, each of whom have forthcoming monographs featured in the newsletter. Professors Miriam “Mimi” Sharma (Asian Studies) and Lee Siegel (Religion) will retire this semester after teaching at the University for decades. Their vital contributions to South Asian Studies have been highlighted elsewhere in the newsletter, and we are grateful for their outstanding achievements and commitment to teaching and scholarship on South Asia.

At the Center there will be transitions, too. Our outstanding Coordinator, Akta Kaushal, will be taking her comprehensive exams in the Political Science Department soon and plans to travel for fieldwork in India. We wish her a fond farewell and every success as she continues her doctoral work.

In the Fall, my excellent colleague Sai Bhatawadekar will begin a three year appointment as the Director of the CSAS. Her connections across disciplines – philosophy, theatre, languages – and in the community will strengthen existing programs and relationships and develop new directions to enhance the profile of the Center. We welcome this change and are excited about the possibilities for South Asian Studies at UH-Mānoa in the future.

It has been an honor to serve as Interim Director this semester and to continue the remarkable work of the former Director, Monisha Dasgupta, who furthered the Center’s attempts to situate South Asian Studies in relation to Hawai‘i and the Pacific in an informed and respectful manner. I’ll return to the Library fully and say aloha to my colleague Karen Kadohiro-Lauer, who has managed the South Asia collection with interest and serious engagement by familiarizing herself with language and other area specific information.

A hui hou,

Monica Ghosh
‘LOOKING AHEAD’
An Interview with Monisha Das Gupta

Monisha Das Gupta served as the Director for the UH Center for South Asian from 2010-2015. Over the years, Dr. Das Gupta has worked tirelessly to enhance the resources, presence, and transdisciplinary collaborations for the Center. An inspiring and dedicated leader, we asked her some questions about her time as Director, as well as visions she has looking ahead for South Asian Studies at UH, as she steps down as the UH CSAS Director and begins a new chapter as Chair of the UH Ethnic Studies Department next fall.

UH Center for South Asian Studies? How do you feel the Center has transformed in the past six years of your directorship?

The most rewarding aspect of the years of my directorship has involved collaborations to make the center a welcoming space intellectually and politically for our faculty, students -- both graduate and undergraduate -- and community members. So, in many ways, I continued to build on the core mission of the center. We have always been a vibrant intellectual community for scholars. When I started my directorship, I wanted to work with students and make those who had an interest in South Asia feel that the center was a place they could turn to for resources as well as for community. The Study Abroad Delhi program, which we initiated during my time as director, offered me an opportunity to reach out to undergraduate students through class visits and our get-togethers.

Our cultural programming has been a key piece to involve our students and community members. They exposed students to a variety of cultural forms and expressions ranging from training students in the basic principles of bharatanatyam to the reading of a play about farmer suicides in India.

It was also important that our center provided a space for our community when Pakistan was hit by a flood and Nepal by an earthquake and in the aftermath of the Oak Creek shooting. These events provided the opportunity for us to come together, grieve together, reflect together and also figure out how to respond to such events. This role that the center was able to play is very important because our community is small and can often feel isolated.

Has being the director transformed your work?

Yes, it has indeed. My research specialty lies in looking at the South Asian migration and the diaspora. In that sense, I am not a South Asianist. The two fields have somewhat different intellectual investments and ask different sets of questions. In thinking about programming for the center, I had to stretch myself to engage with fields that were new and unfamiliar to me. When I started my directorship, I challenged myself to highlight the work of faculty, visiting scholars and students who were doing work way outside my area. I did not want the center’s events to reflect only my networks and specialization but use our events as a platform to showcase the wide ranging interests of our South Asia faculty and their ideas about the most interesting questions in their areas of expertise. This is how the symposia on urbanism and the senses and science and technology took shape. Our RWCLS also reflected the ways in which different disciplines approach South Asia. This process was very enriching for me.

How do you think you might carry forward some of the projects and ideas fostered during your directorship with the CSAS?

As a director, I got a clear sense that much work still needs to be done to convince administration and faculty to value South Asian studies as an integral part of the university’s commitment to Asia and the Pacific. We need to continuously work to raise the visibility of the region on our campus. We need to make sure that every discipline, especially in the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, public health, education, architecture and environmental sciences, attends to the region and its transformations. As a faculty member affiliated with the center, raising the profile of South Asia will remain a major task for me.
This is a year of great transitions at the UH Center for South Asian Studies. Along with bidding farewell to our long-time director, Monisha Das Gupta, we are also celebrating the retirement of Miriam (Mimi) Sharma – Professor in Asian Studies, member of the CSAS Executive Committee and previous Director of the Center. During my time as the Graduate Assistant for the Center, I have witnessed Mimi’s many faces – as a passionate teacher, as a curious learner, as a loving mother and grandmother, and as a paddler, focusing and challenging her mind and body to the best of her abilities. Mimi has been an anchor in supporting greater presence of and collaboration with South Asian studies at the university.

Mimi began at UH as an Interim Director for Ethnic Studies in the late 70s, a time when the department was gaining strength through dedicated, student-led activism. As an advocate for the program and a witness to the struggles and achievements of the students and faculty during her time there, Mimi reflects: “That was my real education. It was a politicization for me into knowing what academia was all about.” The department’s transformative pedagogical politics exposed Mimi to the possibility of a “democratic decentralization… It challenged everything.” Afterwards, Mimi completed a postdoctoral degree at the New School, where she got an opportunity to explore her interests in political economy. She then returned to UH and started to teach in Sociology, later became assistant director in Liberal Studies, and eventually became tenured in Asian Studies. Mimi’s support for activism and political mobilization at UH involved dedicating much of her time and energy to her teaching and community responsibilities: “Sometimes I would go without seeing my children for days, because I would go out early in the morning and come home late at night. But, I really got my eyes opened.” Becoming aware of unequal power dynamics and relationships has always been important for Mimi, especially with teaching South Asia and working in Hawai‘i. “You have to be sensitive to that and to negotiate your own relationship and positionality,” she says.

On a restless day in the CSAS office, I decided to go through the Center’s old files and papers that have been sulking in swollen cabinets for years. As I started separating the old, now digitized, materials, I came across several pamphlets produced by the UH Center for South Asian Studies, one of which was of the first Rama Watamull Lecture Series hosted by the Center for RK Ramanujan. The lecture was from when Mimi Sharma was director. Always a learner, even with her teaching, Mimi has strived to bridge conversations and studies between disciplines, for instance with the innovative classes she began to teach on film, on gender, and on culture and colonialism in Asian
Studies, which have become vital courses for South Asian Studies at the university. When I asked Mimi about how she has seen the Center grow during her time at the university, I learned about the student-led initiative and drive that facilitated the growth of many of the Center’s activities, such as with our annual symposium, along with how the generous donations to Center and its funds have come into being, including the Sharma Memorial Scholarship set up by Mimi and her family as a tribute to Jagdish P. Sharma, Mimi’s husband, who was a beloved teacher in the UH History Department. The Scholarship has become an important resource for students in need of financial support for their studies relating to South Asia, and the Sharma family has articulated it as a way for them to give back to the University that has given them so much.

It seems that even with retirement, Mimi keeps treading through whatever comes next. A paddler for many years, Mimi was first introduced to paddling by a student, and it has become an exciting way to express and exercise her strengths. She says, “It’s always a student!… Being on the ocean and seeing what you can do. A lot of it is mental – zoning in, focusing. When you’re feeling tired, you have to know how to deal with that… it takes so many years of practice. You don’t think about how you’re tired, when it’s going to end. You think ‘ok, do the best you can.’” The CSAS has been so grateful for Mimi’s tireless spirit and the dedication to continued growth and learning that she carries with her amidst these transitions. As Dr. Das Gupta says: “To see a veteran like Mimi not lose heart, seize every opportunity to create a positive learning environment for our students, and constantly strive to make this place a vibrant intellectual community, has taught me the importance of devotion to the multifaceted work we do at the university… These untiring efforts in turn boosted the Center for South Asian Studies. As a former director, I have directly witnessed her deep investment in it. The enormous amount of labor she poured into it – whether it was on our yearly symposia, our various award committees, our students, whom she lovingly mentored and for whom she wrote countless recommendation letters – came out of the simple belief that South Asian Studies at UHM mattered and one could not understand Asia and the Pacific without understanding South Asia.’’
LEE SIEGEL: *namo namah*

By Jesse Knutson

The one-of-a-kind writer, scholar, teacher, *rasika*, and all-around beautiful human-being Lee Siegel retires after forty years of service to the department of Religion at UHM. Lee is famous for his dynamic, comedic, and occasionally truly dramatic teaching style, as much as for his more than twelve books, which span subtle scholarly investigation of classical South Asian culture—poetry, humor, eroticism, and magic, to name but a few of his areas of sustained inquiry—to experimental literary works that draw intensely on his scholarship and his experience as a scholar. His 1999 novel *Love in a Dead Language*—a work of comedic genius and a modern classic—has been translated into several foreign languages. Finally, his lyrical translation of an untranslatable alliterative and suggestive Sanskrit poem—Jayadeva’s 12th /13th—century *Gītagovinda*—stands as a monument to what wit and inventiveness can accomplish in making art from another world speak to this one. Lee is equally famous for his personal qualities: his symphonies of wit and humor, his candid and moving storytelling, as well as his endless well of supportiveness and camaraderie, especially vis-à-vis junior colleagues most in need of a good friend. Lee is generosity incarnate—emotional, intellectual, spiritual—and UHM still strives to deserve all that he has bestowed upon it.

Lee will continue living on island, writing and spending his days on the beach in Waimanalo with his partner Elizabeth. He will no doubt continue to share of himself, and interact with his many friends on the UHM faculty. His passion for the classroom may even lead him to do some emeritus teaching at some point, but we should probably let him enjoy retirement a little bit first.

Lee and I have often talked of the ‘discipline of pleasure’ at the heart of Sanskrit courtly culture, the way the work of art extended from the page of the poem to the challenging practices of day-to-day life. Lee embodies this discipline, the honing and disseminating of pleasure’s logic. I would even go so far as to say that Lee is a guru in this subtle alchemy of life into art and art back into life. He will be missed, but as in a good Sanskrit poem of ‘love-in-separation’ (*viraha*)—like the above-mentioned *Gītagovinda*—the companion who haunts you with absence is always right there in your heart, and thankfully also just down the road in Waimanalo.
Sai Bhatawadekar will be the new Director for the Center for South Asian Studies, starting this fall semester. She is currently working on her Templeton Foundation Grant project, which looks at Apophasis or the role of negation in approaching God (or any concept of the divine absolute) in 5 world religions. Sai continues to work on her "creative project, process, and performance based" language learning: in her beginning to advanced Hindi classes she and her students have written, directed, and performed plays and cross-cultural theatrical adaptations, made short films, written and recited poetry, and many such creative projects. This approach has expanded beyond the language classroom into Second Language Studies, cross-cultural studies, and also Peace Studies and has earned her a few keynote speeches and invited lectures, most notably in Dr. Maya Soetoro-Ng's "C"eeds of Peace initiative. Sai has explained this approach under the title "From Pedagogy to Positive Peace." Recently Sai participated as a singer in the Theater Department’s extraordinary production of Indonesian shadow puppetry show - Subali-Sugriwa: Battle of the Monkey Kings, a story based on the Indian epic Ramayana. Sai's Aaja Nachle Hawaii dance group is in full swing. It has really come to be recognized in Honolulu as the most authentic and enthusiastic Indian film and folk dance group. They offer free dance classes every week for the community and also choreograph, perform, offer workshops, and teach dance in many events small and big - from Honolulu Museum of Art and the Children's Justice Center to many international cultural events at University of Hawaii, Kapiolani Community College, Waldorf School, and other institutions.

Monisha Das Gupta has been using her sabbatical semester to return to Los Angeles to continue her fieldwork with organizers in the immigrant rights movement. Her introduction to the Los Angeles activist scene, when she started her fieldwork in 2009, was facilitated by Hamid Khan, who was the executive director of Artesia-based South Asia Network (SAN) for two decades. She recently had the privilege of collaborating with Hamid on writing about SAN’s pioneering social justice work with LA area’s low-income and marginalized South Asian communities. South Asia Network’s story will be part of a South Asian American Digital Archive project called Our Stories: An Introduction to South Asian America. This collection of short and accessible essays reflects the critical turn in South Asian American Studies for a high school-aged audience. SAADA invited her to edit the chapters on civic engagement. She has organized a roundtable on the project at the Association for Asian American Studies Annual Meeting to highlight the significance of this kind of public history that engages youth through a digital form. Monisha’s article, “Mexicans in Hawai’i and U.S. Settler Colonialism” appeared in Latino Studies 13 (4) and her book chapter, “Shadowed Lives: Invisibility and Visibility of Mexicans in Hawai’i” in an edited volume, Transpacific Americas: Encounters and Engagement with the Americas and South Pacific (Routledge: 2016).

Reece Jones returned in the fall from a sabbatical in Seville, Spain. His book, Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move will be published with Verso Press in September. In the past year he has given invited talks on his research on borders at the University of Tuebingen (Germany), Joseph Fourier University (France), Carleton University (Canada), Kyushu University (Japan), the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the School for Advanced Research (Santa Fe). His work was also recently featured in Time Magazine, The Economist, and other popular media outlets.
Ned Bertz, since last year’s newsletter, has been tenured and promoted! His book, *Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean*, was published in September 2015. He wrote a critical pedagogical essay on Amitav Ghosh that is under review, and gave presentations at the University of Hawai‘i and the University of Mumbai. He spent summer and winter breaks in Delhi, Gujarat, Bombay, Zanzibar, and Dar es Salaam conducting preliminary research on his next project, a history of Partition from various locations around the western Indian Ocean. [This involved glamorous events like sweating profusely while handling crumbling documents in dusty provincial archives across Saurashtra.] Ned hopes to carry on this research during his term as Resident Director of the UH study abroad program in Delhi for Monsoon Semester 2016, and in his subsequent sabbatical. Closer to home, his Bollywood film series has entered its fifteenth semester, with more than 135 movie screenings over the years.

Jesse Knutson has published four peer-reviewed articles since the last newsletter:

Priyam Das is an Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning. She studies water governance in the global South. Three overarching questions guide her research. First, what are the barriers to extending water and sanitation services to settlements that are outside formal planning and regulation frameworks and to what extent are they related to issues of governance? Second, how do the urban poor access such services and engage (or are engaged) in urban governance and planning with different actors – the state, civil society, and private entities – to address issues that affect their quality of life? Third, how do strategies deployed by different actors to improve access to basic services inform planning and policy? Drawing on an analysis of three community-managed urban water supply projects in Madhya Pradesh, India, her current research explores how the coproduction of water supply (re)shapes local level state-community relations and what this means for urban service delivery. Forthcoming publication: Das, Priyam. Uncharted waters: Navigating new configurations of urban service delivery in India. *Environment and Planning A*. Dr. Das teaches courses on the history of planning and contemporary planning practice, site planning, urban form, urban environmental problems, and research design. Prior to pursuing a doctoral degree, Dr. Das worked as an architect and landscape designer in India and the United States. She holds a bachelor’s degree in architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, a master’s degree in landscape architecture from Penn State, and a PhD in urban planning from UCLA.
Ashok Das researches institutional arrangements and approaches for ameliorating urban poverty in South and Southeast Asia. Community participation and empowerment, slum upgrading, decentralization and local governance, and civil society are some key themes/foci. He studies how in different contexts distinct institutions, their interrelationships, and other sociocultural factors influence planning and development outcomes. He has particularly explored the nature, measurement, and comparison of empowerment from participation in slum upgrading in India and Indonesia. His continuing research investigates community-managed integrated microfinance; recent pro-poor shelter innovations; and emergent local level disaster response and preparedness efforts in developing Asia. The globalization-induced and -related spatial transformation underway in emerging economies—manifest in unprecedented design vocabularies, city forms, social and cultural changes, and historic preservation endeavors—inspires impending inquiry. Dr. Das teaches courses on the principles and theories of planning, urban and regional planning and development in Asia, globalization and urban policy, and research design. Prior to coming to the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, he taught at the San Francisco State University. He holds a Ph.D. in Urban Planning from UCLA, M.Arch. and M.A. (Environmental Planning & Management) degrees from Kansas State University, and a B.Arch. from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, India.

Jan Brunson received funding from the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado to conduct quick-response disaster research on the topic of maternal and child health in post-earthquake Nepal. At the end of October 2015, on the 6-month anniversary of the 2015 Nepal earthquakes, she conducted in-depth interviews in a community along the border of Kathmandu and Nuwakot districts to address the concern that the impacts of disasters on the health of women and children persist months if not years after the event. She discovered that in this particular area, so-called "temporary" shelters of corrugated galvanized iron were, in fact, likely to be permanent — at least for a few years. In other news, Dr. Brunson is pleased to announce the release of her book based on a decade of research with women in Nepal, Planning Families in Nepal: Global and Local Projects of Reproduction, from Rutgers University Press.
S. Shankar was appointed 2016 Scholar-in-Residence of the Center for Critical Race Studies of the University of Houston-Downtown. As part of this appointment, he delivered a public lecture entitled “‘Broke People (What’s Up With That)’: Poverty, Race, and the Public Humanities,” participated in a panel entitled “The Artistry of Social Change,” conducted workshops, and met with student organizations. His novel “Ghost in the Tamarind” was accepted for publication by the University of Hawaii Press and will appear in 2017. In the last year, Shankar had two critical essays accepted for publication—“Literatures of the World: An Inquiry” will appear in PMLA in 2016; and “The Languages of Love: An Essay on Translation and Affect” in Comparative Literature in 2017. He is also preparing a co-edited special issue of the journal Biography on “Caste and Life Writing” that will appear in 2017. And he continues to blog regularly on his website www.sshankar.net.

S. Krishna published the following academic articles over the last 12 months: “Postcolonialism and International Political Sociology,” in Xavier Guillaume, Pinar Bilgin and Mark Salter, eds., Handbook of International Political Sociology (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming, 2016); “Queering the Pitch: race, class, gender and sexuality in the Indo-Australian cricketing encounter,” Postcolonial Studies, 2015; “Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Destitution: race, law and the limits of human security,” Alternatives 40: 2 (2015); “China is China, not the Non-West: David Kang and the Problem of Eurocentrism,” forthcoming in the Harvard Journal of Asian Studies; “Number Fetish: middle class India’s obsession with the GDP,” Globalizations (Vol. 12, No. 6, December 2015, pp: 859-871); “Notes on the Dramatic Career of a Concept: the Middle Class, Democracy and the Anthropocene,” Alternatives 40, 1 (2015): 1-12 (a special issue on the global middle class edited by him and featuring essays by 4 UH graduate students, including the CSAS Coordinator Akta Kaushal). His main other accomplishment has been the selection of his workshop “Genealogies of Financialization: Reframing Sovereignty in Asia, 1600-Present” by the Inter-Asia Consortium of the Social Science Research Council, NY. The workshop took place in Seoul, South Korea, from April 26-30, 2016. The Inter-Asia workshops are run by a consortium of universities that include Yale University, National University of Singapore, Hong Kong University, University of Goettingen, and Seoul National University in addition to the SSRC. In April, 2016, Krishna also gave an invited talk on the Aadhaar biometric identity number at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. In addition, Krishna has published a number of op-eds on contemporary Indian politics and public affairs in Indian newspapers, news magazines and blogsites including The Hindu, Kafila, The Wire, and the Economic and Political Weekly. He writes a regular monthly column on cricket for its premier website www.espncricinfo.com and in March 2016 he published an essay titled “Cricket in Paradise” at The Cricket Monthly, also from ESPN.

Marc Jason Gilbert, Chair in World History at Hawaii Pacific University, is currently completing research on a book-length project, “South Asia and the Origins of the First Indochina War.”
Akta Kaushal is a PhD student in Political Science at UH Mānoa. She will be leaving her position as Coordinator of the Center for South Asian Studies after this academic year. Akta is a recipient of the Jagdish P. Sharma Scholarship for the 2016-2017 academic year. She has also been awarded the J. Watumull Scholarship for Study in India to pursue her research on Punjabi migration this summer.

Rajiv Mohabir is a PhD Candidate in the English Department at UH Mānoa. Winner of the 2015 AWP Intro Journal Award and the 2014 Intro Prize in Poetry by Four Way Books The Taxidermist’s Cut (Spring 2016), Rajiv Mohabir received fellowships from Voices of Our Nation’s Artist foundation, Kundiman, The Home School (where he was the Kundiman Fellow), and the American Institute of Indian Studies language program. His second manuscript The Cowherd’s Son won the 2015 Kundiman Prize. He was also awarded a 2015 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant for his translation of Lalbihari Sharma’s Holi Songs of Demerara, published originally in 1916. Winner of the 2014 Academy of American Poet’s Prize for the University of Hawai‘i, his poetry and translations are internationally published or forthcoming in Guernica, The Collagist, The Journal, Prairie Schooner, Crab Orchard Review, Drunken Boat, small axe, The Asian American Literary Review, Anti-, Great River Review, PANK, and Aufgabe. Winner of the inaugural chapbook prize by Ghostbird Press for Acoustic Trauma, he is the author of three other multilingual chapbooks: A Veil You’ll Cast Aside, na mash me bone, and na bad-eye me. Rajiv holds a BA from the University of Florida in religious studies and an MSEd in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Long Island University, Brooklyn when he was a New York City Teaching Fellow. He received his MFA in poetry and literary translation from at Queens College, CUNY where he was Editor in Chief of Ozone Park Literary Journal.

Anjoli Roy is a creative writer, editor, instructor, and PhD candidate in the English Department at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. After graduating with a BA from NYU, she worked as an editor for a small nonprofit book and journal publisher. She came to UH Mānoa to pursue her MA in English and creative writing in fall 2008. After graduation, she returned to New York, where she worked as a grant-writer for an anti-trafficking organization working to end the commercial sexual exploitation and domestic traffic of girls and young women. She entered UH Mānoa's PhD program in English and creative writing in fall 2012. Anjoli’s creative writing has appeared in online literary journals and print publications, including most recently Frontier Psychiatrist, Kore Press’s Poem of the Week, Kweli, Middle Planet, River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative, Slink Chunk Press, and Spiral Orb. She also has pieces forthcoming in Dāmfino and Demeter Press’s anthology Borderlands & Crossroads: Writing the Motherland. For more information about her work, visit her website at www.anjoliroy.com.
Lisa Widdison is a PhD student in philosophy at UH Mānoa. She received the Watumull Scholarship in 2015 for study in India, allowing her to travel in Maharashtra and study Sanskrit in Pune. Her interests include Sanskrit literature, aesthetics, metaphysics and epistemology. Lisa is in the process of formulating a dissertation which will incorporate Indian philosophies of the mind and emotions. She is currently a teaching assistant in ethics.

Kathryn Metzker is a second year master’s student in the department of Geography at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and an East West Center Graduate Degree Fellow. Her background is in environmental science and anthropology, getting a BA at the University of Miami. Her interest in research drove her to study sustainability efforts in India at a human-trafficking rehabilitation center in 2011. The next year, she expanded her studies on human-environment interactions in the Galapagos, conducting research projects on sustainable farming, the local social and environmental impacts of ecotourism, and the need for a potable water system on Isabela Island. In 2013, she continued her sustainability and ecology studies researching the impact of climate change on treeline ecosystems at the University of Alaska Anchorage on a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates grant. Social science research she has conducted includes studying urban gardening projects in Miami and later ethnographic research on indigenous Panamanian art culminating in the curation of an exhibit at the Lowe Art Museum in Miami. For her current thesis research, she is studying place-based methods for the rehabilitation of survivors of human trafficking and the commercial sex trade in rural and urban India. With funding support from the J. Watumull Fellowship for the Study of India, she returned to the rehabilitation center in rural Bihar she had visited in 2011, and then conducted a comparative study with an urban rehabilitation center in the city of Mumbai. After studying Hindi for two years, she was awarded a Critical Language Scholarship to take part in the Jaipur Hindi Study Program in Summer 2015, which she completed immediately prior to beginning her research in August. She will graduate in Summer 2016.

Irmak Yazici is a PhD Candidate and Fulbright alumna at the Department of Political Science at UH Mānoa. She has a Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Philosophy and another Master’s degree in Asian Studies from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Her research focuses on the disputes over blasphemy and secularism in India and Turkey and seeks answers to the questions of what the limits of free speech should be with regard to democracy and why or how these countries fit secular thinking into their non-Western traditions.
Thanks to a generous scholarship from the Watumull family, I was able to spend two months in the Indian state of Maharashtra, with the purpose of studying Sanskrit at the American Institute of India Studies location at Deccan College, Pune.

One of the most endearing aspects of my stay in Pune was life in the home of my host family, who treated me like an adopted daughter while at the same time introducing me to the customs of the regional culture, and sharing vast amounts of information about the country as a whole. The talks we had at the dinner table, sometimes with the diverse array of friends and family, stay with me. In their kindness, I was given a tour of a Mogul garden, Hindu temples, and cultural park themed on educational exhibits of village life in India. I was also fortunate that my host family knew the scholarly heritage of Pune, as well as its culinary heritage. It made for an enjoyable stay, and an enriched the experience. I feel grateful for their care, and assisting me with the logistics of life in Pune (an expanding metropolis, the second largest city in Maharashtra, and home to an array of institutions). The city is known for its academic heritage, Sanskrit scholars, and the historical Deccan College, where Sanskrit classes were held. The location of my accommodations also allowed me to attend festivities, a lecture, and a class at the Iyengar Institute on International Yoga day. It was a delightful event which seemed all the more charming during a heavy monsoon shower.

The highlight of my time in Pune was my acquaintance with the Sanskrit community. Their passion for the language helped me to bridge my understanding of Indian philosophy with the contemporary cultural interest in Buddhism and Hinduism. I was able to read a philosophical text with a patient scholar of Indian philosophy and in Sanskrit. She helped me to gain confidence in my ability, and encouraged me to return to Pune for further Sanskrit readings. She assured me that there are many young people interested in Sanskrit literature; the tradition is a living one.

At the end of my stay in Maharashtra, I was fortunate to travel to three UNESCO world heritage sights featuring rock-cut caves, some of which housed monastic communities in antiquity. The caves are home to remarkable architectural features, carvings, and paintings that provide paradigm examples of classical Indian art and its progression. Of particular significance are those of Ajanta and Ellora, near the city of Araungabad. Ajanta is known for Buddhist cave monuments from the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., which were expanded during the Gupta period. Many of the caves contain exquisite paintings which depict the lives of the Buddha. Fragmented today, at one time they covered entire walls and ceilings. Of interest to comparative studies in philosophy and aesthetics are the various styles of architecture in the caves, some bearing resemblances to Greek columns, and pointing to a possible trade route of ideas. Although it is clear that classical Indian art held a distinct style which entertained many guests, its progression forged a path as unique but as communicable as the Buddha’s. India’s tradition of pluralism and debate in philosophical views supports the possibility that the debate and exchange of thought it fostered is rooted deep in antiquity.

In Ellora, I was able to explore temples and caves devoted to both Shiva and the Buddha. The temples bear witness to the ancient Hindu tradition which continues to flourish amid a fertile landscape dotted with diverse villages and farms growing cotton and corn, among other produce. As I travelled by road, the rural environment spread out upon a fertile plain where pilgrims walked and sang. I felt that this was a side of Maharashtra I needed to see, partly because I felt that knowing...
both the urban and the rural of Hawaii is important in knowing Hawaii, the same should be true for a visitor in India. I needed to see which flowers are the same and which are different, which crops are cultivated, and which are mass produced, first hand. While this is only one state in India with which to compare, the most efficient task of sharing is the one I am capable of. I left with a desire to return, see more, and continue my studies.

At the end of my journey, I was also fortunate to experience the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai, and to see the caves devoted to Shiva, on nearby Elephanta Island (otherwise known as the Island of Gharapuri). Named for a large stone elephant found on the island, the caves are also a repository of Indian art. Although I felt that this was the one place which most reminded me of my own island home, I was acutely aware that I had found a unique island, and another way of understanding the discipline I set out to grasp. The sight of Gharapuri had given me a perspective on all of its images: the three aspects of Shiva as the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer, representations of Nataraja, Yogishvara, Andhakasuravadha, Ardhanarishwara, Kalyanasundaramurti, Gangadharamurti, and Ravanaanugraharamurti, all of which inspired reverence. However, most of all, I was touched by the island’s namesake, for these creatures which have become associated with intelligence and wisdom are loved so much in Maharashtra, and I found my self taken by their status all the more because they are also very emotional creatures. At home, we sometimes think of philosophy as a discipline involving a love of wisdom, etymologically derived from its Greek root, but we often confine it to reason alone. However, in Maharashtra I found that my own search for wisdom is inherently emotional, and is kept alive for me unapologetically with feelings, in spite of the setbacks and obstacles I experience. I began to see this search for understanding in philosophy is an expression of the faith we share in the possibility of wisdom. The picture of wisdom itself we debate, but to do so we must have a vision or a view, which in Sanskrit is known as darsana.

The J. Watumull Scholarship for the Study of India provides support for University of Hawai`i undergraduate or graduate students who want to study in India.

The 2015-2016 Recipients

• Lisa Widdison is a PhD student in philosophy at UH Mānoa. She received the Watumull Scholarship in 2015 for study in India, allowing her to travel in Maharashtra and study Sanskrit in Pune.
• Jeffrey Chang is continuing for a second semester at the UHM Study Abroad program at Ambedkar University in New Delhi, India.
• Abbey Seitz is a Master’s student in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. She is going to India this summer to do fieldwork on women in the cities of Bangalore and Mumbai.

The 2016-2017 Recipients

• Akta Kaushal is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science. Akta plans to do archival work and interviews this fall in India, for her research on migration from Punjab, with the purpose of exploring community knowledge production and preservation.
• Jacie Toguchi is an undergraduate student in History, who is planning to use the scholarship to cover the costs to participate in the Study Abroad Program in New Delhi, India at Ambedkar University.
• Natalie Hanson is a graduate student (MA) in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. The scholarship will fund her fieldwork to examine the impact of climate change on major coastal cities in India -- namely Kolkatta, Chennai, and Mumbai -- and how communities are managing and preparing for these changes locally.
Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean: Transnational Histories of Race and Urban Space in Tanzania

By Ned Bertz

(Associate Professor, Department of History)

Published by University of Hawai’i Press

The vibrant Swahili coast port city of Dar es Salaam—literally, the “Haven of Peace”—hosts a population reflecting a legacy of long relations with the Arabian Peninsula and a diaspora emanating in waves from the Indian subcontinent. By the 1960s, after decades of European imperial intrusions, Tanzanian nationalist forces had peacefully dismantled the last British colonial structures of racial segregation and put in place an official philosophy of nonracial nationalism. Yet today, more than five decades after independence, race is still a prominent and publicly contested subject in Dar es Salaam. What makes this issue so dizzyingly elusive—for government bureaucrats and ordinary people alike—is East Africa’s location on the Indian Ocean, a historic crossroads of diverse peoples possessing varied ideas about how to reconcile human difference, social belonging, and place of origin.

Based on a range of archival, oral, and newspaper sources from Tanzania and India, this book explores the history of cross-cultural encounters that shaped regional ideas of diaspora and nationhood from the earliest days of colonial Tanganyika—when Indian settlement began to expand dramatically—to present-day Tanzania, a nation always under construction. The book focuses primarily on two prominent city spaces, schools and cinemas: the one a site of education, the other a site of leisure; one typically a programmatic entity of government, the other usually a bastion of commercial enterprise. Nonetheless, the forces shaping schools and cinemas as they developed into busy centers of urban social interaction were surprisingly similar: the state, community organizations, nationalist movements, economic change, and the transnational winds of Indian Ocean culture and capital. Whether in the form of institutional apparatuses like networks of Indian teacher importation and curricula adoption, or through the market predominance of the Indian film industry, schools and cinemas in East Africa historically were influenced by actions and ideas from around the Indian Ocean.

Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean argues that an Indian Ocean–wide perspective enables an examination of the transnational production of ideas about race against a backdrop of changing relationships and claims of belonging as new notions of nationhood and diaspora emerged. It bridges an academic divide, because historians often either focus on the Indian diaspora in isolation or write it out of the story of African nation building. Further, in contrast to the swell of publications on global Indian or South Asian diasporas that highlight longings for and contacts with the “homeland,” the book also demonstrates that much of the creative production of diasporic Indian identities formed in East Africa was a result of local (albeit cosmopolitan) encounters across cities like Dar es Salaam.
Caring to Know: Comparative Care Ethics, Feminist Epistemology, and the Mahabharata

By Vrinda Dalmiya
(Professor, Department of Philosophy)

Published by Oxford University Press

As a venture in the emerging field of comparative feminist philosophy, this work goes against the current trend of considering ‘caring’ and ‘knowing’ as independent of each other. It argues for what can be called a care-based epistemology modeled on the now-familiar care ethics. Using critical insights from the Mahabharata, the book proposes that knowing and caring can be fruitfully theorized ‘together’, while keeping the argument firmly rooted in mainstream Anglo-Western virtue epistemology. What emerges is a feminist epistemology that uses the methods of creative comparative philosophy to come up with a concept of ‘relational humility’ as the fulcrum of a new theory of knowing. On the one hand, the epistemic and ethical paradigms given in the Mahabharata are interrogated though the political lens of contemporary feminist theory. On the other, the scope of traditional care ethics and virtue epistemology is broadened through a dialogue with an epic’s narrative meditations on living well and knowing well in a very different context. Such a cross-cultural exploration gives us a robust conception of a ‘good knower’ who is both an ethical agent as well as ready to make interventions in various forms of epistemic injustices.
The Taxidermist’s Cut

By Rajiv Mohabir
(PhD Candidate, Department of English)

Winner of the 2014 Four Way Books Intro Prize in Poetry & the 2015 AWP Intro Journal Award

*The Taxidermist’s Cut* inhabits the experience of a queer brown youth awakening sexually in a racist, anti-immigrant matrix. As an Indo-Caribbean, the queer-countried speaker is illegible as an “Indian” as well as an “American.” Haunted by his migration narrative, the speaker must survive a palimpsest of violence: violences enacted upon him both by himself and others. This is a collection of twisted love stories-as-slits that exposes the meat and bone of trauma and relief. Mohabir draws from source texts such as animal tracking guides and taxidermy manuals to highlight themes of discovery, preservation, and survival on all fronts.

from “Cover Scent,” from *The Taxidermist’s Cut:*

He lies naked with another boy in a clearing of palmettos and sand pines.

They touch each other with rabbit skin gloves.

Today: the odium of salt and pheromones.
To erase himself he rubs the ashes

on his arms and chest. Outside an Eastern Cottontail hides three kits.…. 

“In his excellent debut, Mohabir exposes desire and inner turmoil through the measured incantations of a queer, Indian-American voice that refuses the burdens of a homophobic and racist world. He eloquently describes how the brown body survives, clinging vigilantly to longing, lust, and love: "I mean to say/ I am still—this trembling breath of a comma, this coincidental object of your want." This finely detailed and chiseled work recalls the precision hinted at in the book's title: "Pick up the razor./ It sounds like erasure." In many ways these poems evoke a queer Larry Levis; narrative poems take strange and unexpected turns: "the man opposite you will blaze/ in your throat when his denim// and leather are a nest/calling birds to their weaving." Sensual and rhythmic, Mohabir's observational gifts evoke the strange and intimate: "your nail beds are filled with fresh soil, hair ripped/ out by the roots, and semen." In between these twists and turns are masterful strokes of what W.E.B. DuBois would have described as the double consciousness of the minoritarian subject. Mohabir illuminates his own wounds, and as the reader watches him dresses and stitches those wounds, "A queer flutter knocks about your ribs."

-- Review by Publisher’s Weekly
Aruna Vasudev

Aruna Vasudev from New Delhi was a recipient of the Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series for visit this past fall. For over four decades Dr. Vasudev has been involved in promoting Asian cinema as an author, film festival director, journal publisher, filmmaker and jury member at international film festivals. She is the Founding President of NETPAC, the Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema; Founding Editor of Cinemaya, the Asian Film Journal, Founder of Cinefan Film Festival, and has written several books on Indian, Japanese and Asian films including “The New Indian Cinema”. She has a PhD from the University of Paris.

In cooperation with CSAS, the UHM’s Academy of Creative Media, the Hawaii International Film Festival and NETPAC/USA (Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema/USA), Dr. Vasudev visited Oahu from November 18 to 28, 2015. On November 20th she gave the Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture public talk at the Honolulu Museum of Arts’ Doris Duke Theatre on South Asian cinema, with a focus on India. Asian film critics and authors, Zakir Raju and Wimal Dissanayake, responded to her analysis, adding comments from their extensive knowledge about Bangladesh and Sri Lanka cinema. An informal opportunity for CSAS students and faculty to meet Aruna Vasudev was provided on Nov 23 at the East West Center’s John Burns Hall, when she was interviewed by Dr. Wimal Dissanayake about the influence of film criticism and film festivals on South Asian cinema and about her remarkable life. In addition to the two official RWCLS events, Dr. Vasudev gave the keynote address during the 25th anniversary of NETPAC’s symposium. During the Hawaii International Film Festival’s closing award ceremony, she was given the Festival’s “Vision in Film” award in recognition of her extensive influence on Asian cinema. For more information, please see [http://www.netpac-usa.org/netpac25/guests/](http://www.netpac-usa.org/netpac25/guests/) and [http://www.netpac-usa.org/netpac25/events/](http://www.netpac-usa.org/netpac25/events/).

Kirin Narayan

The Ethnic Studies Department, the Anthropology Department, and the UHM Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS) hosted Dr. Kirin Narayan at the end of January as a part of the CSAS’s Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series (RWCLS). She hosted a workshop, titled “Alive in the Writing: Practices for Ethnography,” on Tuesday, January 26th, 2016. Participants were introduced to some practical tools for writing ethnography. Alternating discussion, writing from prompts, and reading aloud, they explored techniques for writing expressively and vividly about places, people, voices and stories. Kirin’s energetic and creative methods and inspiring discussion allowed for the participants to explore dynamic relations between border-crossings and writing, ethnography, and theory with other literary genres. Her lecture on Thursday, January 28th, 2016 was on “Culture at Hand: Vishwakarma and the Infrastructure of Creativity in India.” The talk carried the audience both into Kirin’s personal stories and journeying into this research, as well as into the intricate practices, images, and kinship ties of the deity Vishwakarma, "Universe Maker" (traditionally associated with subaltern artisan castes and now more recently with machinists, tool-wielding workers, and designers specializing in manufacture).
Richa Nagar

Creative writer, feminist scholar, and activist Richa Nagar (Professor in the college of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota) was hosted this Spring by the UH Political Science department as a part of the Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series. In co-sponsorship with the Departments of Geography and Women’s Studies, she led a workshop on Thursday, March 10, 2016 exploring the ethics of translation and storytelling through what she calls 'radical vulnerability.' Participants discussed how the stories that constitute and inform their writing, pedagogy, and activism are entangled in the everyday lives, locations, and relationships through which knowledge is created and nurtured. They engaged in sharing and retelling exercises meditating on how the process of becoming vulnerable can allow for re-imagining avenues for collective organizing, laboring, and dreaming. Richa talk was on Friday March 11th, 2016, titled "Coauthoring Feminisms Across Scholarship & Activism: After Muddying the Waters." The talk was a moving reflection on years of activism, organizing, and struggles for justice. Through a poetic narration of stories, histories, relationships and encounters, Richa discussed the labor and politics of coauthorship, translation, and genre blending in research and writing that cross multiple (and often difficult) borders. Faculty, students, and community members were incredibly enriched by Richa’s visit, which wouldn’t have been possible with out the generous support of the Rama Watumull Collaborative Lecture Series and the UH Center for South Asian Studies.

Other Events:

CSAS Co-sponsored Workshop with Anita Shanmuganathan Vallabh

‘Intersection of Yoga and Naatya’

On Friday February 26, Anita Shanmuganathan Vallabh offered a Bharatanatyam and Yoga Dance Lecture Demonstration and Workshop in the Department of Theatre and Dance Studio. The dance technique workshop and lecture demo presentation delivered a dynamic public lecture and an intensive movement workshop for students in the discipline and department. Anita introduced yoga practices in Bharatanatyam training, research in South Asian studies, and gave a presentation of the developing ideas around finding new ways to theorize embodiment, performance, and experience in relation to culture through the arts. The workshop consisted of a warm-up and stretch section and basic techniques of movement. The presentation took place during our scheduled graduate level course DANCE 654: Performance Theories Asia: Yoga and the Dancing Body and included faculty, students, and dancers from the local community. The event was co-sponsored by CSAS and the Department of Theatre and Dance. Anita was warmly welcomed and the students hope she will return to offer more workshops in the future!
Generously supported and funded by the GJ & Ellen Watumull Foundation and The Dai Ho Chun Lecture Series

Keynote Speakers:

Jason Cons, Thursday April 7th, 9:00-10:15am, Hamilton Library 401
- Title: “Climatic Territories: Technologies of Resilience and Emplacement in the India-Bangladesh Borderlands”

Vazira Zamindar, Thursday April 7th, 1:30-2:45pm, Hamilton Library 401
- Title: “Black Margins: The Minority in Question”

Kazim Ali, April 7th, 7:00-8:00pm, Kuykendall 410
- Title: “Border-crossing and The Undocumented Divine: Genres, Genders, Geographies”
(This keynote is cosponsored and funded by the Dai Ho Chun Lecture Series)

Harsha Walia, April 8th, 9:00-10:15am, Hamilton Library 401
- Title: “Mobilizing Against Borders: Alliances and Responsibilities”

Thursday April 7th

8:45am-9:00am - Welcome Remarks by Monica Ghosh, Hamilton Library 401

9:00am-10:15am - Keynote: Jason Cons, Hamilton Library 401
- Introduction: Reece Jones, Associate Professor, UH Geography Department

10:30am-12:15pm – Panel: Negotiating Borderland Identity and Belonging, Hamilton Library 401
- Chair: Ned Bertz, Associate Professor, UH History Department
- Md Azmeary Ferdoush, UH PhD Student, Geography
- Dharitri Narzary Chakravartty, Assistant Professor in History, School of Liberal Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi
- Title: Notion of marginality and identity in the borderlands of lower Assam
- M. Azizul Islam Rasel, Lecturer at the University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh
- Nandita Sharma, Associate Professor, UH Sociology Department
- Ananya Chakraborty, Research Scholar at the TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) in Mumbai (via skype)
3:00pm-4:30pm - Panel: “The Impossibilities of Authenticity: Translating Practices of Bordering and Migration”, Hamilton Library 401

- **Chair:** Sankaran Krishna, Professor, UH Political Science Department

- **Participants:**
  - Sarah Jamal, PhD Candidate, Aberystwyth University, International Politics
  - Akta Kaushal, PhD Student, Political Science, University Hawai’i at Mānoa
  - Riddhi Shah, PhD Student, Political Science Program, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa
  - Tana Trivedi, Lecturer, Ahmedabad University
  - Daniel Majchrowicz, Assistant Professor of South Asian Literature and Culture, Northwestern University

- **Discussant:** Rajiv Mohabir, PhD Student, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa

Friday April 8th

9-10:15am - **Keynote:** Harsha Walia, Hamilton Library 401

- **Introduction:** Jesse Knutson, Professor, UH Indo-Pacific Languages & Literatures Department

1030-12:15pm - **Panel:** "Mobility and Migration in and beyond South Asia", Hamilton Library 401

- **Chair:** Jussi Laine, Executive Secretary and Treasurer, Association of Borderlands Studies, Researcher, University of Eastern Finland

- **Participants:**
  - Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman, PhD Candidate, Social Sciences & Humanities, IIT Guwahati
  - James (Jimmy) Weir
  - Andrea Wright, Visiting Scholar, Institute for South Asia Studies, UC Berkeley
  - Marta Zorko (Asst. Prof. University of Zagreb, Croatia in Political Science) &
  - Marijan Crnjak (Course Asst., University of Zagreb, Croatia in Political Science)
Please visit the UH CSAS at www.hawaii.edu/csas

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