

**MANISHA SHARMA**

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST II

STUDENT INNOVATION CENTER

LECTURER, ENGLISH

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, AMES, IA

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## **EDUCATION**

**M.F.A. in Creative Writing (fiction)**, fully funded as an Alfred Knobler Scholar, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia (May 2009).

**Ph. D. English Literature**, Indian English Literature, Role of Language in transporting emotional experiences across linguistic boundaries, fully funded by a research scholarship, Jai Narain Vyas University, India (May 2005).

**M.A. English Literature**, British Literature, Graduated with distinction, Jai Narain Vyas University (August 1999).

**B.A. in English Literature**, History, and Philosophy, Jai Narain Vyas University (May 1997).

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## **CERTIFICATIONS**

**Yoga Teacher**, SVYASA Yoga University, Bengaluru, India. (2015).

**Preparing the Future Professoriate**, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (2008).

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## **WRITING RESIDENCIES**

**Writing Resident**, Vermont Studio Center (VSC) Johnson, Vermont, funded in part by a merit scholarship and work study (2017).

I was awarded a writing residency at VSC. Founded in 1984, the Vermont Studio Center is the “the largest international artists' and writers' residency program in the United States.”

**Poetry mentee**, AWP Writer to Writer Mentorship Program, College Park, Maryland (2016).

I was awarded a mentorship in poetry by the AWP. Established in 1967, the Association of Writers and Writing Programs “provides support, advocacy, resources, and community to nearly 50,000 writers, 550 college and university creative writing programs, and 150 writers’ conferences and centers.”

**General Contributor**, Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, Middlebury, Vermont (2010). I was awarded a residency at BLWC. Founded in 1926, The Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference brings together emerging writers to work “under

the notable guidance of writers, including MacArthur Fellows, U.S. poets laureate, and recipients of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award.

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## **PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

**Communications Specialist II**, Student Innovation Center, Iowa State University. (July 2021-Present).  
I am responsible for all communication, research needs for Innovation Programs at SICTR.

**Lecturer of English**, Iowa State University. (July 2021- May 2022).  
In Fall 2021, I taught two compressed sections of an English 250 course in composition and communication.

**Communications Specialist II**, College of Design (July 2021- September 2021).  
I worked on all aspects of stories about students and alumni from research, observation, interviews, drafts, to final drafts across genres and social media platforms.

**Adjunct Instructor of English**, Columbus State Community College, Columbus, OH. (2020).  
I have been teaching online courses in composition and writing at CSCC.

**Adjunct Lecturer of English**, New River Community College, Dublin, VA (2017-2021).  
I developed curriculum, and have been teaching in-person and online courses in writing, composition, literature.

**Creative Writing Instructor**, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA (2018)  
I developed and taught a graduate-level course in Interdisciplinary collaboration for social change.

**Adjunct Yoga Instructor**, New River Community College (2017-2021).  
I developed curriculum, and have been teaching in-person and online courses in yoga and meditation.

**Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies**,  
Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech (2011-2017).  
I developed curriculum and taught in-person and online courses in women's studies, women and creativity, and gender.

**Faculty Fellow** with the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT),  
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA (2011-2016).  
As a faculty fellow with ICAT, I brought interdisciplinary teams of students and faculty together to solve social issues related to gender imbalance in India.

**Affiliate Faculty** with the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention,  
Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech (2013-2014).

**Graduate Teaching Assistant** in Creative Writing, Writing & Rhetoric, Writing Center,  
Department of English, Virginia Tech (2006-2009).  
I developed and taught courses in composition, writing from research, and creative writing.

**Managing Co-Editor**, *The New River Journal of Digital Writing and New Media*, Virginia Tech (2008).

As the managing co-editor of a new media journal, I was involved with multiple aspects of producing a hybrid journal, from sending out calls for submission, reviewing submissions, designing the web issue, and final release.

**Instructor of English as a Second Language**, Virginia Tech Institute of Language and Culture (2009-2010).

**Lecturer of Freshman English**, Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur, India (2000-2002).

**Teacher of English Language, Literature**, Delhi Public School (Middle-High), Jodhpur, India 1999-2002).

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## AWARDS & GRANTS

**Finalist**, 2021 Iron Horse Literary Chapbook Contest, (2021).

**Shortlisted, Laureate Prize**, Harbor Editions, (2021).

**Long listed, 2021 Commonwealth Short Story Prize** (2021). The Commonwealth Short Story Prize, Commonwealth Foundation. Now in its 12th year, the Commonwealth Short Story Prize is awarded by the Commonwealth Foundation, an intergovernmental organization, to the best fiction written by citizens of five commonwealth regions, countries that were former colonies of Britain.

**CARES Act Course Development Grant**, New River Community College, \$ 1500.

**Finalist, Cream City Review Summer Fiction Contest**, (2020). Started in 1975, The Cream City Review is a leading literary journal published by the creative writing department of the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Winner, **Causeway Lit Poetry Contest**, (2020). Causeway Lit is an online literary journal published by Fairfield University's graduate students in the Masters of Fine Arts program in creative writing.

Semifinalist, 7th Annual Jack Grapes Poetry Award, **The Cultural Weekly**, LA (2019).

Semifinalist, **American Short(er) Fiction**, (2019). Founded in 1991 at the University of Texas Press, American Short Fiction "quickly gained a national reputation for first-rate fiction."

"Gendered Arrangements: Vanishing," An Interdisciplinary Poetry Project, **Autodesk**, \$ 10,000 (2015).

Creative consultation, social issues in humanities courses. **Griffith University**, Brisbane, AU \$550 (2015).

TedX, Virginia Tech, Shortlisted (2014, 2015).

"Gendered Arrangements," **Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology, Virginia Tech**, \$3,000.00 (2013).

The Greenbelt Review Prize for Fiction "Aunty Lakshmi" **Greenbelt Review** (2009) Judged by MacArthur fellow, writer Yuin Li, I won first prize in Greenbelt Review's fiction prize.

**Best New American Voices Nomination** for "Godhara" (2008.)

Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, The Best New American Voices series published the work of emerging writers of fiction.

(First Runner-up) **Virginia Tech Fiction Prize**, “Godhara” (2008). Judged blind by an external writer, the Virginia Tech Fiction prize was given to the best short story written by graduates of the MFA program in creative writing at Virginia Tech.

**Shortlisted**, TedX, Virginia Tech. (2014-2015). My presentation on simplifying the issue of gender imbalance and the missing girls from the Indian population was shortlisted twice by TedX.

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## **PUBLICATIONS**

### *Poetry*

**Yearbook of Indian Poetry in English 2021** “I Had a Boy” (*forthcoming*).

**Literary Mama**, “I had a Boy,” (Spring 2021).

**Arts & Letters**, “The Vanishing Girls...” , “Discerning Sex Selection,” (Spring 2021 print).

**The Madison Review**, “Advice,” (2020).

**The Fourth River** (Spring 2020).

**Causeway Lit** (Spring 2020).

**Choice Words Anthology** (Spring 2020 print).

**The Arkansas Review**, (Winter 2019).

**Puerto Del Sol** featured poem of the week (December 2017).

**The Aerogram** (2017).

**TAB: The journal of poetics & poetry**, (January 2017 print).

**The Saturday Poetry Series, in As it Ought to Be** (2016).

**New Asian Writing** (2016).

**The Bombay Review** (2016).

**Meduim.com**, re-published on National Poetry Month, (2017).

**Silhouette** 31.1. Pages 6, 43 (2007).

### *Fiction*

**The Greenbelt Review** (2009)

**Superficial Flesh** “Godhara”, 3.2 (2008)

### *Creative Nonfiction*

**The Huffington Post** “Maneka Gandhi’s Baseless Marital Rape Theory...”, (2011)

**The Common** , (2007)

**Pinnacle Living Mountain Homes Southern Style**, (2007)

### *Book Reviews*

**The Common** *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese”, (2015)

### **Peer Reviewed Journal Articles**

“Understanding perspectives on sex-selection in India: an intersectional study” **The Lancet**. (2014).

What’s Next: “Blurred Images, Better Futures” By Suzie Boss **Stanford Social Innovation Review**. Featured research, (2014).

“... The [Lingering](#) Problem of Female Infanticide” **The Socjournal , A New Media Journal of Sociology and Society**. Over 232,233 views as of Sept. 15, 2016. (2013).

“Gendered Arrangements: India” Change Observer: **Design Observer**. Featured article. (2013).

### **Book Chapters**

Sharma, Manisha and Kim Cunio, “The Vanishing: Artistic Research as Activism,” Book Chapter Proposal, *Women in the Creative Arts*, Submitted to Oxford University Press. (2018).

Sharma, Manisha, “...The Lingering Problem of Female Infanticide” *At Issues: Gender Politics*, Greenhaven Publishing, Cengage. (2017).

Sharma, Manisha, “Children’s Literature in India: Genres, Reading, Education and the Demands of the Digital Age.” *The Anthology on Literature for Children: A Reader*. Eds. Sharad Rajimwale and Kalpana Purohit, New Delhi, India: Sarup Books & Publishers. (2011).

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## **PUBLICATIONS ABOUT MY WORK**

**Lit Hub** “What It Means to Anthologize the Literature of Abortion,” Finch, Annie, Manisha Sharma, et al. 6 May 2022

<https://lithub.com/what-it-means-to-anthologize-the-literature-of-abortion/>

**Women’s Review of Books** “Write to Life,” Catharine R. Stimpson

May 2020

<https://www.wcwonline.org/Women-s-Review-of-Books-May/June-2020/write-to-life?highlight=WyjJaG9pY2UiLCJjaG9pY2UncyIsIndvcmRzIiwY2hvaWNlIHdvcmRzIl0=>

**Los Angeles Review of Books** “The 20-Year Project: On “Choice Words: Writers on Abortion,”  
Jones, Ellen. May 2020  
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-20-year-project-on-choice-words-writers-on-abortion/>

**Black Earth Institute** “HEARTBREAK, HEROISM, LOVE, A Review of “Choice Words: Writers on Abortion,” an anthology edited by Annie Finch”, Ann Priest, Kimberly, July 2020  
<https://blackearthinstitute.org/heartbreak-heroism-love-a-review-of-choice-words-writers-on-abortion-an-anthology-edited-by-annie-finch/>

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### Digital Scholarship, Invited Radio Interview

Earshot, **ABC Radio**, Australia, with Kim Cunio, Producer Gretchen Miller, Sydney, AU (conducted 2015)  
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/foeticide-of-girls-in-india/6657292>

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### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA** - Participant in The Fellows Program, Open Documentary Lab, Comparative Media Studies Program. (2017).

The Open documentary lab is a program that “brings together storytellers, technologists, and scholars together to explore new documentary forms with a particular focus on collaborative, interactive, and immersive storytelling” (<http://opendoclab.mit.edu/about-3/>). I participated in their weekly presentations, discussions with experts in innovative storytelling from around the world and connected with them.

### PROJECTS

*(Ethnographic research led to a manuscript of poems. With interdisciplinary collaboration, a sound-art installation was created. This led to a 3D animation, a set of infographics, and recently a VR experience. Throughout my goal has been to create awareness of social issues in an engaging manner, using technology.)*

**The Vanishing Immersive Virtual Reality Experience**, (2019).

Collaborators: Sharma, Manisha, Faculty Advisor: Dr. Dough Bowman, Students: Jean-Marc Cassier, Tara Laughlin, Amanda Lee, Virginia Tech.

**The Issue:** The Vanishing is a manuscript of poems based on ethnographic research I conducted in India. It addresses the issue of missing girls in India. 7-10 million girls were eliminated in India even before they were born, leading to the worst global gender imbalance India has faced since 1960. Far fewer girls than boys are born in the country today. Research estimates that every day 400,000 girls are not born in India. The misuse of an innovative life-saving technology, ultrasound is used to illegally terminate a pregnancy when the fetus is the undesired female. How do you create awareness about such an issue?

**The Solution:** a VR experience. Three of Dr. Dough Bowman’s (Virginia Tech) students read the entire manuscript and listened to the audio from an installation of the Vanishing. They picked 11 poems and created a world around them, a world the audience could immerse in as they heard sounds, saw images, and experience the plight of 7-10 million missing girls.

**Process:** I met with the team of students once a week for the entire semester. The link is an Mp4 file. An APK file is available on request:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vcZvqu7AeAHPo4LSm77Rfle4k6GhRhjW/view?usp=drivesdk>

### ***The Vanishing, Poetry, Sound & Art Installation* (2014-2016)**

Collaborators: Sharma, Manisha, Dr. Kim Cunio, Senior Lecturer, Australian National University, & Akshay Sharma, Chair, Industrial Design, Virginia Tech, Dr. Gautham Dayal, Professor, Srishti School of Art and Design, Bengaluru, India.

Brisbane, Sydney, AU      Virginia Tech, USA      Jaipur, Bengaluru, India

**The Issue:** More than 7 million girls were not born in India due to female feticide, the practice of prenatal sex determination followed by selective abortion of female fetuses. A preference for sons over daughters, research says, is one of the major reasons behind the age-old neglect of the female offspring that has taken various forms from female infanticide in the 1800s to female feticide at present.

**The Project Rationale:** The Vanishing is an interdisciplinary, collaborative art-sound installation that aims to create awareness about the issue of female feticide. By means of data-driven storytelling, recorded poems, physical artifacts, and arduino-based sensing and playback mechanism, this project proposes to explore the impact which a fusion of writing, music, art, design and technology may have on its spectators.

**The Installation:** Imagine stepping into a dimly-lit installation space and seeing in front of you a larger-than-life mannequin, dressed in an Indian sari, seated on the floor, her face covered with a veil. As the audience member/visitor sits on a stool/chair in front of the mannequin, one of the pressure sensors is activated and music-blended recorded narratives are played. When the visitor gets up from the seat, the narrative abruptly stops playing.

**Snippets of the project audio:** <http://www.manisha-sharma.com/the-vanishing.html>

**The Collaborative Research:** Growing up in India I was aware of a preference for boys, and its impact on the girl child. The Vanishing is a multi-layered project. Studying available literature made me more confused than ever before. The research was confusing, complicated, and would make sense only to fellow scholars, sitting in their ivory towers. It certainly would not make sense to the people it affects the most, Indians, or to any general person.

In 2014, I took a year off to conduct unstructured interviews in 6 states of India with the aim to understand the level of awareness among people about female feticide. Based on insights from the data, the **first layer** of the Vanishing is in the form of 50 short poems that I wrote; they talk about the potential of vanished girls from multiple perspectives. How different the world would have been if these girls were alive? Then I met, Dr. Kim Cunio, an Australian music composer and my first collaborator who contributed the **second layer**. Supported by an Autodesk industry grant, Kim came to India, and we recorded women and girls reading the poems. Kim composed the recordings with layers of music, sounds of India, street sounds, conversations, natural sounds, instruments, and vocals. The **third layer** was contributed by Akshay Sharma, an Industrial Design faculty at Virginia Tech, who collaborated by designing a female mannequin that represented the vanished Indian women and girls. Finally, Dr. Gautham Dayal, a Computer Science professor at Srishti School of Art and Design in Bengaluru, India, contributed to the **fourth layer** by programming an arduino-based sensing and playback mechanism that gave the audience an agency in controlling the stories they could hear by embedding audio into the floor at installation sites.

### ***Gendered Arrangements Information Enhanced Animation*, 2014.**

Collaborators: Dr. Simone Paterson, Former Associate Professor, School of Visual Arts, Virginia Tech, Emylee Esteban, a student in the School of Visual Arts at Virginia Tech.

Gendered Arrangements is a 3D infograph (information-enhanced animation) to simplify and explain the complex problem of sex ratio imbalance at birth in India and its global effects. The project builds on the successful completion of a short animation and static digital posters developed through an Institute for Creative Arts and Technology at Virginia Tech (ICAT) startup grant. Gendered Arrangement is a research-led practice of

making visual, highly charged information and research data that seeks to enhance our understanding of sex-selection and to raise new questions.

Link: Gendered Arrangements: 3D Animation

***Gendered Arrangements Information Graphics***, 2013.

Collaborators: 2 undergraduate students, Michele Gailhac, Hannah Tushara, Industrial Design, Virginia Tech

Link: Infographs

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## **INVITED SPEAKER, PRESENTATIONS, INSTALLATIONS, DISCUSSIONS**

Yoga and Meditation for Writers, Instructor, AWP Conference, (2021, 2022).

AWP Mentorship Chat, Youtube. (2021).

ICAT Playdate, *The Vanishing* Project, ICAT, Virginia Tech. (2016).

*The Vanishing*, Art Installation, *Brisbane, Sydney, Australia; Jaipur, India.* (2015).

Art Week, Queensland Conservatorium Research Center, Griffith University, Australia. (2015).

Attended by approx. 500 people

*The Vanishing* - A Social Issue, Community event, A discussion on Social Issues, City-Fringe Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia (2015).

Attended by 100 people

Meet the Makers, *The Vanishing*: Tech talk and immersive listen of the project followed by a Q & A , Queensland Conservatorium Research Center, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. (2015).

Women's Forum, Queensland Conservatorium Research Center, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. (2015).

Invited Speaker, "Law Mantra' on 'Female Foeticide: A Challenge to Indian Society' Law College, Rajasthan University, Jaipur, India. (2015).

Invited Speaker, Message, a Non-Governmental Organization, International Women's Day, Jaipur. "Perspectives on female foeticide" (2015).

"Selective Elimination of Female Fetuses." Panel Presentation with Sonya Davey, Hindu American Seva Charities, White House Office of Public Engagement, White House, Washington DC. The conference was presided by the only Indian American congressman, Ami Bera. The fourth annual conference focused on transforming ourselves, our communities and our country.

Invited Speaker, Through Feminist Eyes Speaker Series, Women's Center, WGS, Virginia Tech, Robeson Hall. Guest Scholar. (2012).

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## **COURSES TAKEN**

STS: 6614 Origins of Innovation, Matt Wiznioski, Historian of Innovation, Virginia Tech

ENGL: 5764 New Media Creative Writing

ENGL: 5994 Research and Thesis

GRAD: 5104 Preparing Future Professoriate

ENGL: 5034 Practicum

ENGL: 5054 Composition Pedagogy

ENGL: 5114 Contemporary Pedagogy

ENGL: 5004 GTA Training Workshop

ENGL: 5754 Forma and Theory of Drama

ENGL: 5744 Form and Theory of Poetry

ENGL: 5734 Form and Theory of Fiction

ENGL 6704 Fiction Workshop

ENGL: 6714 Poetry Workshop

ENGL: 6724 Playwriting Workshop

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## **COURSES TAUGHT (2006-present)**

*(Composition, British, American, and World literature, Fundamentals of English, Creative Writing) I have taught the courses below multiple times since 2006.*

ENGL 250: Written, Oral, Visual, and Electronic Composition (Iowa State University)  
*I taught two compressed sections of the course (2021).*

ENGL 252- Introduction to World Literature II (New River Community College) (2017-2021).

ENGL 1100- Composition 1 (Columbus State Community College, New River Community College.) (2020-2021).

ENGL 0199- Fundamentals of English (Columbus State Community College) (2020).

ENGL 112 College Composition II (New River Community College) (2020).

GCRWT 6002: Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Social Change (Lesley University) (2018)

ENGL 1105: Introduction to College Composition (Virginia Tech.) (2007-2008).

ENGL 1106: Writing from Research (Virginia Tech.) (2009).

ENGL 2744: Introduction to Creative Writing. (2009).

ENGL 244: Survey of English Literature II. (2019).

ENGL 241: Survey of American Literature II. (2018).

WGS Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies. (2011-2016).

WGS Women and Creativity (2011-2016).

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## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Association of Writers and Writing Programs, member (2006-present)

Contributing Editor, Aerogram Magazine (2017- 2020).

Writing Coach, NuVu Innovation Studio, Cambridge, MA (2016 - 2017).

Presider and Moderator, Human Rights Forum, Virginia Tech (2014, 2017).

Scholarship Reviewer, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Virginia Tech. (2013).

Manuscript Reviewer, Sociological Compass. (2013).

Reader, Los Angeles Review. (2008).

Managing Co-Editor, *The New River Journal of Digital Writing and New Media*. (2008).

13 May 2022