

Recasting and Healing the Bodies of the Bhopal Gas Leak
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This summer, I had the opportunity to conduct research on the Bhopal Gas Leak of 1984. My research originally started with the exploration of the medical discourses around the gas leak and how medical narratives, addressing toxicity in victims' bodies, intersect with the historical narratives of the gas leak. In addition, I was interested in understanding the plural conceptions of the body that emerged from the gas leak where the body became intertwined with soil, food, and the chemical ecosystems that it was ingesting and existing in.

As I started my research, I found two major themes: impact of pesticide production toxicity on the environment as well as toxicity of methyl isocyanate gas (MIC) on human bodies. The gas leak's notoriety as the worst man-made disaster at the time attracted worldwide attention as questions about ethics of the operation of chemical industries emerged/ The ethics of the industries that were once associated solely with progress were being called into question. Despite the sensational publicity the leak received, there were gaps in the documentation of and scientific data for the environmental and bodily toxicity that resulted from the gas leak. One of the major sources I used for my research was an extensive database composed of Bhopal Court Documents, from the University of Wisconsin Law School Digital Repository. Interestingly, I found that legal documents surrounding Union Carbide's culpability was more readily available than those about the medical effects from the toxicity to bodies. The gaps in scientific and medical knowledge about how exactly MIC gas interacted with human bodies allowed for the negation of responsibility from Union Carbide. The collusion of the corporation with supposed medical opinion led to the defects of the body, derived from toxicity, to be negated and underplayed. Therefore, my focus sharpened as I wanted to foreground the voices of Bhopal citizens and their experience of viscerally experiencing the chaos of the leak and involuntary undergoing bodily toxicity.

Lastly, gender emerged as a category of analysis for how industry transformed bodies into sites of contestation. A crucial source in probing the women's voice and understanding the social positioning of women was Suroopa Mukerjee's *Surviving Bhopal*. Her use of oral testimonials from women who experience the gas leak highlighted how the story of an event can be told in countless ways. However, the dominant narrative of the gas leak was one driven without the centering of survivors and had become a story about "unfortunate" mismanagement of American industry in India. Therefore, in gathering materials and sources for my website, I aimed to construct a counter narrative where brown bodies can be recast and rearticulated as bodies that underwent trauma and need healing and rehabilitation.