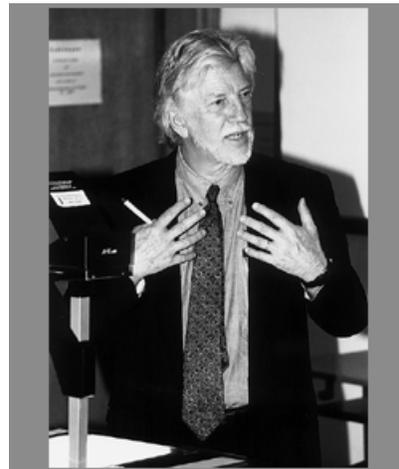


*Everett M. Rogers Award
For Achievement in
Entertainment Education
Colloquium*



The USC Annenberg School for Communication

September 28, 2005

USC ANNENBERG

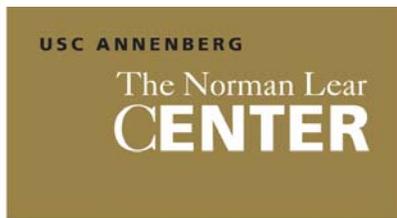
The Norman Lear

CENTERTAINMENT

Exploring Implications of the Convergence of Entertainment, Commerce, and Society

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Speaker

Dr. Arvind Singhal is a professor and presidential research scholar in the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University, where he teaches and conducts research in the areas of design and implementation of strategic communication campaigns, and entertainment-education communications.

He is the author/editor of eight books about the field of E-E strategy.

He received his Ph.D. degree from USC's Annenberg School for Communication where he has also previously taught. He is the winner of the first Everett M. Rogers Entertainment Education Award.

Everett M. Rogers Award In Education Entertainment Colloquium

Arvind Singhal: I think it was exactly 20 years and 30 days ago that I first arrived at the Annenberg School, that I first arrived in this room. Peter Clarke welcomed us here, and it was right there where David Poindexter is now sitting where I first said hello to Ev Rogers. So to be back in the same room, where the memories are so strong, is special.

It's always an honor for an alum to be invited back to one's *alma mater*. And if the alum is invited back for an honor, that is a double honor, it makes it extra special. And I guess if an alum is invited back for an honor, and that honor has the name of his/her mentor, such as Everett M. Rogers, well, it has tremendous, tremendous personal meaning! So thank you, USC, thank you, Norman Lear Center, thank you, all, for being in this room.

When Marty Kaplan called me at home and conveyed the special news, and then broached the issue of a colloquium, I instantly said, "Would it be okay if I talked about entertainment-education and social change, and my journey over the last 20 years in regards to these subjects? I'd want to do this with a sense of humility, and would also want to weave in some personal narratives about Ev Rogers, in whose name this award is instituted." Marty said "Yes," and hence, the title of this presentation, "Entertainment-Education and Social Change: A (Fun) Journey With Ev Rogers."

This is not just about a journey with Ev Rogers, but I do think that the word "fun" is important. I dug up a picture of Ev from Indonesia in front of a volcano: this picture was taken in 1971, which I think in some ways symbolizes the many journeys that Ev took all over the world, meeting thousands of people along the way; I was just one of them here at the Annenberg School. He's got his backpack; he's got his thermos; he's got his binoculars. He was asked, actually, not to

climb this volcano, and you can see it is simmering. But this was Ev Rogers, if he made up his mind to do something, he did it. This is the spirit in which we'd like to broach this colloquium.

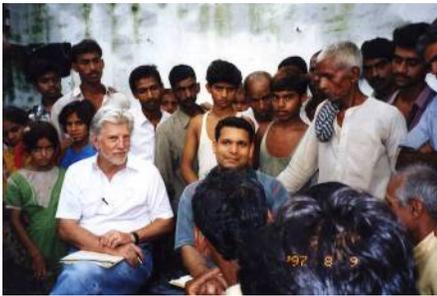
I've already said that it was 20 years ago that I first connected with Ev: it was the fall of 1985, I was taking a class with him, which was ANSC 582. Its title at that time was, "International Communication and National Development." There were about 50 of us in that class, and I think I was one of the few doctoral students. Mostly, there were M.A. students, and lots of students from other disciplines across the campus.



About two-thirds of the way into this class, there was an intriguing session that was entitled, "Soap Operas and Social Change." I think Ev launched the discussion by talking about *Simplemente María*. Some of you may have heard about this very popular telenovela in Peru broadcast during 1969 to 1971. Even though it was designed by Pantel, Pan-American Television, to make money, the soap opera accidentally helped boost admissions in literacy classes. It sold a lot of Singer sewing machines because María, the maid, the protagonist, was using a Singer sewing machine on the soap opera. The Singer Sewing Company, they're no fools – they bought advertising time on this program, and, well, you get the idea.

I distinctly remember distinctly how Ev told this story in class, this was the first time I'd heard of Miguel Sabido, a creative producer/director/writer at Televisa in Mexico, how he was inspired by the work that he had done himself at Televisa, and also by the effects that *Simplemente María* had had in Mexico in terms of spurring new enrollments in literacy classes. These both helped Sabido to hone his methodology for designing pro-social soap operas, and so on.

So this was a very heady session, soap operas and plots. Ev ended that class session, and this caught my eye, by talking about an Indian soap opera called *Hum Log*, which means literally "we people." I think Ev casually said that *Hum Log* was the first attempt to transfer the Mexican methodology developed by Miguel Sabido to another developing country, which happened through meetings with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in which David Pointdexter and Miguel Sabido participated.



Ev ended the class by showing a three-minute clip of *Hum Log*, and, in essence, said, "This is an illustration of entertainment-education." This was the first time I'd heard the term. I had heard of *Hum Log*, though: I was actually in India that summer when a *Hum Log* fever was raging in India, and it was very, very palpable. I remember my grandmother refused to have any conversations with us when the program was on: dinnertime conversations became more about why this character did this to this character, as opposed to the usual things that we would talk about.

So when Ev talked about *Hum Log* as an example of entertainment-education, I clearly had much to say. Ev had asked me if he could drop me off at home after class ended at 9:00 p.m., I said, "Sure." We talked some in the parking lot, and when we said good night, Ev's eyes lit up, and he winked, and he said, "Wouldn't it be fun to study *Hum Log*?" "Well," I said, "That would be terrific." Under my breath, I said to myself "Yes, that would be terrific, but how are we going to make it happen?"

I'll cut the long story short: six months later, we had a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to study the effects of *Hum Log*. The idea for

going to the Rockefeller Foundation first emerged around this table: I was sitting right where Sheila is sitting now in my fall, 1985 semester review; Peter, I think you were presiding. The semester reviews for doctoral students were a somewhat tense situation, at least for the student in question, because you were being reviewed in front of the entire faculty. I think I might have been doing a term paper on *Hum Log* in Ev's class. In the review, I mentioned that term paper, and the late Bill Hodge, who was a sociologist, said, "Arvind, you should apply to this Rockefeller Foundation's program on the status of women and fertility – they look for mass media initiatives." That's where it all started.

So we got a grant, and the *Hum Log* project, in essence, was on, the journey with Ev Rogers had begun. I know that during these times, we also met with David Poindexter. David had visited us here at the University of Southern California, and knew a great deal about what was happening in India.

I would just like to share some pictures with you. I think the *Hum Log* project was the first large-scale national project that examined the effects of an entertainment-education program. The program was broadcast in India for 1.5 years and 156 episodes, unbelievable ratings of up to 90%. Clearly, there was a *Hum Log* fever raging in India for those 18 months. There was a very popular actor by the name of Ashok Kumar (akin to Burt Lancaster) who provided an epilogue on every episode; in some ways, the epilogue was a summary of some of the modeled messages, and it ended almost always with a rhetorical question, "So what do you think about the action of this character?" And that little cue just led to so many conversations all over India; the press even covered this phenomenon. *Hum Log* was a very, very big event in the history of not just Indian television but, I'd say, in the history of India, in some ways. I remember it so distinctly.

Now, Ev was the principal investigator on the grant, but let me just say that he gave me a lot of responsibility on the project. He gave me the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do, of course, in consultation with him, and we collected data in three geographical sites. If I look back now, I

can't believe how we did it at that time; I was only 20-something then. I arrived in India, made contact with three organizations, one in Northern India, one in Western India, and one in Southern India, an area that I knew nothing about. We had joint agreements with these institutions. We trained staff; we designed questionnaires; we pre-tested them; we created scales to measure modeling; we created scales to measure para-social interaction. I mean this was a very, very heady time in some ways, and I thought of this as part of my training. But as I look back on it, Ev gave me a lot of responsibility for managing the India project. He trusted me, and I had to live up to that trust.



Ev loved to ride in Jeeps. I don't know if this is something that you know, but he loved to be in the field, and he loved to be in Jeeps. So this is a picture of us traveling to a village in the state of Uttar Pradesh. And that arm that you see outside that Jeep is Ev's. And here's Ev. That's a closer shot. And these are some images of our research team.

I wonder, Mike, Dr. Cody, if you could recognize this other person in the photo.

Michael Cody: I recognize Bill Brown, yes.

Arvind Singhal: Bill Brown was a doctoral student in communication arts and sciences. Ev had a wonderful ability to include people in research projects, and Bill was an integral team member on the *Hum Log* research project. He traveled to India with us, and eventually wrote his dissertation on the *Hum Log* research project, with Mike Cody as his chair. I have fond memories of Mike Cody and Bill Brown sitting in my apartment. This must have been spring, 1986, at Bel Air Apartments on

29th Street. I was a poor graduate student living in grad student housing. And we would be having hot lentil soup, and watching episodes of *Hum Log*, and trying to come up with some kind of content analysis schemata to see if we could analyze its 156 episodes.

Now, *Hum Log* was a rather important event in my life, and in hindsight, it was somewhat important in terms of pushing the research agenda for entertainment-education. But it had many limitations: we arrived in the field late. The Rockefeller Foundation gave us the money after the program had ended, so the best we could do was a *post hoc* evaluation. Nevertheless, we were able to procure all the 156 scripts of *Hum Log*. We also learned that Doordarshan Indian Television had received about half a million viewer letters about this program.

There's a funny story from India in 1987 about how Ev sniffed the data. We had heard that the Doordarshan had received half a million letters, but we couldn't find any of these letters. We went to this office, and they said, "Well, indeed, there were bags and bags of these letters, but we don't know where they are. Ask so and so." Then we went to this person, and they said, "Well, yes, indeed, there were bags and bags of letters, but we don't know where they are." And, finally, we ended at the home of the scriptwriter of *Hum Log*, Manohar Shyam Joshi, and just when our conversation was ending, we said that we heard there were lots of letters, and perhaps the scriptwriter got some of them. And he said, "Yeah, yeah, and if you would walk with me to my terrace, I may have some of them there."

Now, this didn't sound very good, although we were happy that he was leading us to data. Ev, of course, leaped out, as you can imagine, and charged up the terrace. In a corner, there were two sacks, which had close to 20,000 viewer letters about *Hum Log*: the sacks had lasted through two seasons of monsoons! Rats and rodents had done their job! You can imagine. We loaded these two sacks in my little Maruti Suzuki car, and brought them to my parents' home in New Delhi. But my mother refused to let me enter with them! Ev was dying to dig his hands in these letters, so my mom said, "OK, you can come to the basement." So we sat in the basement of my house in



New Delhi with my mother, as you can see here: in this picture, she's very puzzled what this U.S. university professor would want to do with these dirty, smelly letters. But there were 20,000 of them, and we took a sample of those and analyzed them.

Anyway, *Hum Log* had some limitations: it was a *post hoc* evaluation, but it was a fun project. We did so many things with it! And many of the instruments that we developed helped serve other projects well in later years.

I can happily say that by the late-1980s, my sense was that we, at the Annenberg School, had become very prominent on the world entertainment-education map. Clearly, now, we are the leaders now, but at that time, there were few institutions doing what we were doing – The Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs was working in this area; PCI clearly was launching new initiatives all over the globe. Several publications did come out of the *Hum Log* project in journals: I know Brown and Cody had a piece in *HCR, Human Communication Research*. Ev and I wrote several articles; one of them was an article in *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies*, which got very big circulation. Also, there was a chapter in the Rice-Atkin *Public Communication Campaigns* book, which came out in 1989. Ev and I kept a stack of these articles photocopied with us. There was a time when we were sending out two or three of these almost on a weekly basis, so let's say that there was a lot of diffusion of the *Hum Log* study as it went on.

And there were many graduates here at USC who pursued entertainment- education because of the work we did, I've written a few names there. Some of these names may ring a few bells for you;

many of them went to work for Johns Hopkins – Patricia Poppe, Tom Valente, Mrudula Amin – and the many who worked with John Snow International, and so on, and so forth.

I'm going to fast forward a bit. Now, I've finished my Ph.D. I've moved to Ohio University. Ev, I believe, also wrapped up his work here at USC, and spent the year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, and then moved on to the University of New Mexico. But Ev and I kept in very close touch. In 1992, Ev launched the Tanzania *Twende na Wakati* radio project, once again a PCI-initiated E-E program, where we were able to overcome some of the problems with the *Hum Log* research design because the evaluation of the Tanzanian radio project was a field experiment, and one could do pre-post treatment control kinds of assessment in Tanzania.

In 1996/1997, India broadcast a radio soap opera called *Tinka Tinka Sukh*, which means "Happiness lies in small things." Once again, I'm pointing to David Pointdexter because PCI, Population Communications International, had a role in getting the soap opera under way. The team at All India Radio was trained in the Sabido methodology. The program had 104 episodes; it had about 4% listenership. Doesn't sound like a very high number, but if it's 4% of 600 million people, the population of North India, it does translate to tens of millions of people. We had a field experiment design to study *Tinka Tinka Sukh* but ended up – and this was a lesson that I've carried with me – with very few number of listeners in the treatment group. And so, really, you couldn't do very much with that data.

But just out of the blue, All India Radio received a rather unusual letter by a listener of *Tinka Tinka Sukh*, I brought a copy of that letter for you: it is not an ordinary letter. As you can see, it has to be wrapped and rolled and the poster letter looks like this from the front. It was written by a community – I can't even say a person – the community of Lutsaan, a village in northern India, in beautiful colored ink, and, at the back, it was signed by 184 people. Now, I had never seen a letter like this before, and Ev hadn't either, though he had been around a little longer than I.

In essence, this letter said that listening to this *Tinka Tinka Sukh* program had changed many social practices in this village. This didn't happen overnight. For instance, the letter said, "We, the listeners, have come together and decided that we were going to educate all our girl children. Previously, they were not going to school, but now we have decided together that we are going to educate each and every one." They said, "We have collectively decided that we are not going to give or take dowry," a social practice that is rampant in India, a practice in which the bride's family typically gives money to the groom's family, and so on, and so forth. Can you imagine that Ev and I took one look at this letter, and that Ev once again had that gleam in his eye, and with that wink, said, "Wouldn't it be fun to study this community?"

And it was a lot of fun to study that community! This was really the first community-based investigation of the effects of an entertainment-education program. We were there in the field for about a year, so it was not just a question of what effect does E-E have, but what are the processes through which these effects happened in this little community? And you can say, "Well, this is one community, and this is one special letter, and that's all right." But indeed, it did give us a flavor of how people at the grassroots really engaged with this program.



In 1997, when we visited Lutsaan village, we met Lali, a 7-year-old who used to stay at home; the reason was, of course, that she had to take care of her siblings – her two elder brothers used to attend the village school. But given what was happening in Lutsaan, the conversations, the dialogues, the community coming together, six months later, Lali was in school sitting in the front row. At that time, our field investigators noted that the ratio of girls to boys in this village school

was 40 to 60. About a year before, we'd looked at enrollment charts, 10 to 90 –10% girls and 90% boys.



So we posed this question: How come Lali now attends school? That was the driving question behind this community-based study. The answers that we got after this detailed community investigation, which were published in the *Journal of Communication* was when you have an engaging air cover, or entertainment-education, and ground-based facilitation, much could happen. There were a couple of people on the ground who facilitated group listening. There was a village postman who was a respected opinion leader, and loved listening to radio. There was a village tailor whose shop was right smack in the center of the village, and since he was a tailor, he couldn't watch television, but he could listen to radio. And he was an avid radio listener. And these folks helped facilitate the group listening sessions.

Over a period of time, when community conversations began to happen because of the strong identification between the plot of the radio soap and their own conditions, then the Lalis began to go to school. And though it sounds very commonsensical, it was a rather revealing insight for us: once again, Ev had that gleam in his eye, and with a wink, his remark was, "Wouldn't it be fun to apply these learnings to other entertainment-education projects, not just in terms of studying them, but in terms of designing them?" And then with another twinkle, and another wink, and he said, "Wouldn't it be fun to begin our entertainment-education book with this community case study?"



In 1997, a few weeks after the Lutsaan study, we were in Costa Rica, and Corrine pulled out her laptop, and Ev became the table. We thumped out our *Entertainment-Education* book outline; the book came

out in 1999. The second entertainment-education conference had happened at Ohio University; the first one had happened here at USC. Vicki Beck and I first met at the entertainment-education conference in Athens, Ohio. By this time, there were hundreds of projects on entertainment-education worldwide.

Fast-forward to 2001. The opportunity to apply these learnings to another entertainment-education project came in the year 2001. When PCI – I think, David, you had left by that time.

David Poindexter: I had left.

Arvind Singhal: PCI was planning a radio soap opera in India's Bihar state. Now, Bihar is India's poorest state – it has a population of 100 million people, with the lowest indicators: infant mortality, the highest rates are there; maternal mortality, the highest rates are there; female literacy, the lowest rates, and so on. Bihar is India's challenged state, I lived in Bihar for three years, and loved the state, but...

PCI was thinking of launching a project in Bihar. They asked me if I was interested in designing a research evaluation for it, and I said, "Well, I'm interested in research, but I'm far more interested in the actual design of the project. So if you will include me in the design of the project, I'd be very interested in working with you."

In trying to apply the learnings from *Tinka*, we found an organization working in Bihar, an organization called Janani, which, means, "A caring mother," you can see here that their logo is of a caring mother. It's an organization that works in the realm of maternal and child health, reproductive health. This was a fabulous organization that we found in Bihar. We were interested in finding a ground-based partner.

This organization had a network of 25,000 rural healthcare providers in 25,000 villages of Bihar. What Janani did was it took the rural medical practitioner – and there are rural medical practitioners in every Indian village. They're not trained MDs, but 90% of all health care contacts

happens with these rural health practitioners. They're opinion leaders, they're very respected. They know how to put IVs in, they know how to give injections, they dispense medications. They are actually called "Doctor" or "Mrs. Doctor," if it's the spouse.

Janani trained these rural health providers in a crash course in reproductive health, not just the man but the woman or spouse, too, because they know that women in India will normally not go to the man for reproductive health issues, they go to the doctor's spouse. So there's an important gender component in Janani's work, and then it brands and franchises their rural health clinic, which existed anyway.



So, Janani came, they painted the clinic with red and yellow, with a nice, little butterfly insignia, which is appropriate because these are butterfly doctors, they don't sit in a clinic. Then what they did was make them vendors of various reproductive health services. So these 25,000 rural health practitioners, who previously did not dispense condoms, pregnancy dipsticks, vitamin A tablets, etc., etc., now begin to carry them. They become private vendors, which Janani was doing that in Bihar.

We found this organization, and we worked with them to create a sort of a synergy. We had an air cover, the *Taru* project, the *Taru* radio soap opera. *Taru* is named after the protagonist, a social worker who works in a rural health clinic. And through the network of Janani rural health providers, we promoted the program extensively. This is a slide of pre-broadcast orchestrating. We are priming the ground in advance. Pre-broadcast orchestration was done on air, as also pre-program publicity, and on the ground through folk performances. We promoted the idea of group listening, knowing how important group listening was based



on our community case study of *Tinka*. There were 800 wall hoardings that came up all over the state of Bihar, which, in essence, said, "Listen to *Taru*," and Janani decided to sponsor the program. They came on board completely because they could see that the on-air component was going to tremendously affect their on-the-ground component. Of course, we now had a ground-based partner to work with, the people who were in charge of looking after the on-air entertainment-education aspect.

I'll just say this – *Taru's* listenership in Bihar was 10% of all households, and you've got to add a "Wow" after that, you know? "Wow, how did this happen?" The listenership to *Tinka Sukh* six years ago had only been only 4%, and in these last six years, Dr. Rao will tell you, television had rapidly made inroads into all parts of India, including Bihar. So 10% of all households is a wow. Clearly, the ground-based orchestration had much to do with it.

I'll just end very quickly with another fun fact, if that's okay.

There were various components to the *Taru* research project, I want to focus on participatory methods; this was something new that we tried with the *Taru* project. Research was carried out by the Centre for Media Studies, Dr. Rao's organization. So how did we include participatory methods in the evaluation of Peru?

Ev and I were having a conversation – Mike was part of it – about editing a book, because at this point, there were so many entertainment-education projects. We had edited a special issue of the journal *Communication Theory*, thanks to Mike Cody, when he was editor. We had many wonderful articles. We couldn't include them all,

so we said perhaps the time was right for an edited volume, 22 chapters, and I remember having a conversation with Ev in which we said that we needed to include something on participatory theater, including something on Augusto Boal's work with The Theater of the Oppressed.

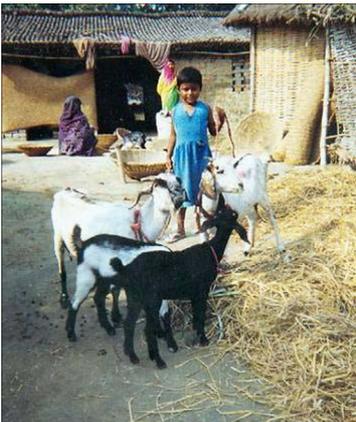
And Ev said, "Well, tell me more." And I told him a story which is in Augusto Boal's book: it's the story of Paulo Freire – does that name ring a bell? – who was doing work in Peru, he was into literacy and into dialogue. They would come into a community and ask the question, "What is exploitation?" But they said, "We don't want the answer in words, we want the answer in images." So they handed out these disposable cameras, and people went out, and you can imagine what they did: some people took pictures of this, and some people took pictures of that, and then they all came back to a community center. These pictures were developed, and then they were shown to the community – you can imagine what the pictures were. Somebody took a picture of the local policeman, who, in essence, was extorting money. Somebody took a picture of the local grocer, who would lend you bread and milk at a high rate of credit, and so on. There were lots of these kinds of pictures, but there was some commonality in the pictures that children had taken. Many of these pictures were of a nail on a wall. And so you can imagine the adults sort of pooh-poohed this – "A nail on a wall? Ha, is a nail exploiting the wall? Oh, yeah, okay."

The children were very excited about this, and so the community said, "Well, tell us more." There was a space for children to talk, and they began to say, "Well, you know, we work as shoeshine boys. We have heavy shoeboxes. And every day, we have to go up and down the slopes with our heavy shoeboxes of polish and brushes, and it breaks our little backs carrying these shoeboxes down and up every single day. So we rent," – yeah, the word is "rent" – "we rent a nail on the wall off a local trader, and he charges us two *soles*," which is one-third the amount of money that they made for working about 12 hours a day. And to them, that represented exploitation.

This story, of course, appealed to me when I read this book, and I was thinking hard about how we could use this in our own work because what Freire was saying is, "Can we hand over the means of producing knowledge to the people, as opposed to the going with a pre-coded survey? Let's hand over the means of production, and let them, through their own voices – voices that are

typically silent, or marginalized, or overlooked, or rejected, or pooh-pooed – express themselves, and then that locale becomes a site for community discussion."

So we applied this idea, and you can imagine what Ev said: "Wouldn't it be fun to apply this method to studying E-E programs?" And so in the *Taru* project in Bihar, we introduced an element called "Shooting Back," participatory photography. We handed out 12 simple disposable cameras. They yielded 150 pictures. Let's just take one or two of them: a very poignant narrative accompanied this first picture – the life of a girl child in a rural area of Bihar. As you can see, she's taking the goats out for grazing, and she then will pick up firewood, etc., etc. The second picture suggests that, "Girls can do anything." Now, many of these were women who had listened to *Taru* said, "Well, if boys can do this, we can do this." So here they are riding a bicycle. Riding a bicycle for a woman in the Indian village context, Dr. Rao will tell you, especially in North India, is not an easy thing to do. But many of these women felt empowered to do so with this project.



I'm going to skip a few of these, and just end by discussing the application of participatory methods to entertainment-education: we began to realize the importance of giving voice to the muted, to people whom you ordinarily wouldn't go out and survey, people who live on the outside, on the peripheries, the low-caste people, for instance. These participatory projects go beyond texto-centrism: we are going beyond the notion that we only value text, we only value what is written down. As Dwight Conquergood would say, "The dominant notion is if it's not legible, it's not legitimate." And we wanted to question that there are other ways of expressing, there are other ways of knowing.

Clearly, then, these pictures, these photographs, in conjunction with all the other methods that we use, for instance, the surveys and all that, become sites of community discussion, decision-making, and action. What really appealed to me about these methods, as we've included them more in entertainment-education research, is that they really are of the intersection of theory, method and praxis: it's hard to say where one ends and the other begins because they embody participatory theory. They are a method, in some ways, and also, its praxis.



In the Peruvian Amazon, a region where I've begun to do some work, and which is a place where we are planning to spend my next sabbatical year, I have fallen in love with this organization called Minga Peru, which works in the Amazonian area of Peru, a region where nobody wants to go, as everybody wants to be on the coast or up in the Andean hills, Machu Picchu. Nobody wants to be in the jungle.

Minga has a radio program. There happen to be no roads in the Amazonas, there's only water. But if you have radio, you can reach out to communities on a minute-by-minute basis. So Minga produces a program called *Bienvenida Salud* – there's an article actually on *Bienvenida Salud* in the special issue of *Communication Theory* on entertainment-education. And they use participatory methods in the design of the program. Let me talk briefly about that, and then I'll talk about how we worked with Minga to create some participatory evaluation procedures.

What Minga does is it has – let's call it a contract – a contract with ferry companies that stipulates that if a listener of *Bienvenida Salud*, which is broadcast thrice a week – and there already have been 1,000 episodes because it's been broadcast over the last four or five years – if a listener

of *Bienvenida Salud* writes a letter, often it's on the bark of a tree written with stone colors, and these letters are sewn letters are often written on fabric and are sewn, then these ferry companies would ship it for free – because there's no postal service in the Amazon – to the headquarters of Minga, which are based in Iquitos.

Minga is an organization that really studies its letters. It gets about 30 or 35 letters a month, which doesn't sound like very much, but the Amazonas only has 1 million people, which doesn't sound like very much either; Peru has 35 million people, and the 1 million is a minority. But anyway, these voices are important: Minga reads these letters very carefully, and if there is the notion of producer as listener, and listener as producer, Minga exemplifies that. It's the narratives, and the concerns that these letters embody, which then form the basis of an on-going plot that is featured in *Bienvenida Salud*. So that's one way in which they incorporate participatory methods. And once again, the means of production are with the people; they encourage the listeners to write-in their problem, to write-in their narrative, and they make for good drama because they are people's real-life narratives.

We worked with Minga earlier this year. Anuja, my wife, and I were in the Amazonas rainforest this spring break, and we engaged in a little participatory exercise. We had a few hours with some avid listeners of *Bienvenida Salud*, and we didn't have any disposable cameras to give out, but we had some crayons, and we had some paper, and we posed the question, "How has my life changed in the last four or five years since I've come in contact with Minga's activities and *Bienvenida Salud*, this radio program?" And you couldn't provide an answer orally, but you could sketch it out.

I'd like to share one sketch done by Emira, a 21-year-old, who believe it or not, used to row a boat for three hours to get to school one way. She was so inspired by the *Bienvenida Salud* that she said, "Well, I'm going to study, so I'm going to row my boat three hours to do so." Six hours of rowing just to get to school! And Emira drew this picture.

Anuja knows a little Spanish – **Antes** is before and **ahora** is now. So the question was, "How has my life changed?" In community discussion, Emira appeared in front of the others, and talked about these two images. I wonder if we can all try to guess what Emira said: That was her life before. This is her life today. What differences do we see?

Audience Participant #1: She's smiling now.

Arvind Singhal: "I'm happy. I'm smiling now. It's a better state of mind, my psychological health."

Audience Participant #1: Her arms are by her sides.

Arvind Singhal: "I'm more open to the world." You're writing her narrative, aren't you? "I'm more open to the world. I'm more accepting. Now, I'm not shy. I'm not only internally looking at myself, but I'm open to the world." What else?

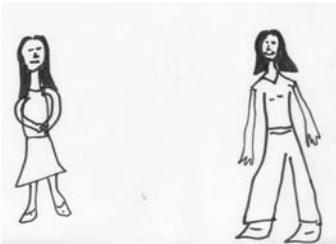
Audience Participant #1: "I'm wearing pants."

Arvind Singhal: "I'm wearing pants." She talked about this at great length. It was important to her because **Bienvenida Salud** promotes the notion of being proud about your femininity because there's very low self-esteem among women in the Amazonas. It's a very patriarchal, highly male-entrenched system, and so here she's saying, "I'm wearing pants. I'm proud of my body." She even did a little of this – a tug at her breasts, saying, "I am very proud of who I am, my body."

What else do you see? Three or four other things that she said? Her hair. It's styled now. "I take care of myself." What else?

Antes

Ahora



Audience Participant #1: She's taller.

Arvind Singhal: That's because she wears heels now. "I wear stylish shoes. No more flip-flops." And so on. That's what she looked like when she presented this case.

So once again, if you ask in a survey, "How has this changed your life?" you'd get some response. My sense is that a response to a survey would be very different than what Emira provided with her sketch. But what were we doing in the Amazon? We were just handing over a crayon, we were handing them the means of production.

I want to thank you all so much for coming. There are so many people in the audience whom I want to acknowledge personally. Dr. Bhaskara Rao, whom I mentioned, and who is the chairman of Centre for Media Studies, New Delhi, has been a dear friend of Ev Rogers for many years. It was Ev who introduced me to Dr. Rao about 20 years ago. We've had a long-standing relationship with the Centre for Media Studies, so I'm delighted that he's been here for this lecture.



I'm also delighted that David Poindexter has been here today. We first met about 20 years ago. Clearly, much of the work that PCI was doing all over the world greatly influenced my own scholarship. So I'm personally delighted that you've been here in this room.

I'm, of course, especially delighted that those two beautiful women wearing those gorgeous Indian saris have been here tonight. Anuja and I lived in Los Angeles for many years, and with her is Shakti, her mother. It is her first visit to L.A.

Twenty years ago, when I was, let's say, courting her daughter, I, in the spirit of impressing her, said that I study at the Annenberg School for Communication, which is the best communication school in the world, and I think that did the job. And I'm really delighted that she's been out here in person to see it today.

Thank you again so much for coming! It's been fun!