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HAND-HELD VISIONS

The Impossible Possibilities
of Community Media

DEEDEE HALLECK

With a foreword by JOHN DOWNING

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Dedicated to my grandchildren,
Sol Maria, Natalie, Tolan, Peter Vladimir,
Owen, Rowan, and Liam,
and my adopted grandchildren,
Jake, Ana, Niger, Senque, and Anaya.

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Plunk Your Magic Twanger: Community Control of Technology

January 1991

OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE, was a technical town. There was our technology and THEIR technology. Television was OUR technology. It was in Oak Ridge that I saw my first TV set in 1947. I was seven. The homemade set was in a neighbor's garage next to boxes of Christmas tree lights and broken bird feeders, surrounded by coils and wires, clutters of tubes and drips of solder. It wasn't a piece of furniture: it didn't have a wood-grained console. It was just a tube wired up to a box of junk. The image was pretty ghostly. It's hard to say whether the reception was poor because the connections were faulty or because the Tennessee hills were too high for the jerry-rigged antenna. About a dozen of us crowded into the space, peering at a circle of dancing snow. It was some guys boxing, but the image was so unclear you couldn't see who was who, even though one of the boxers was black and one was white. You couldn't tell the skin color through the snow.

It was the first time any of us had seen television. It was magic, but magic of the backyard variety—like the wire circles that are supposed to pop apart but only make it on the third try, the bottomless top hat whose plentiful lining is portentously bulging. The seams showed. It wasn't really magic: our neighbor soldered the wires together and tuned in. He had done it himself using an envelope full of clipped schematics from *Popular Science* magazine.

It was our technology. THEIRS was another matter. We knew where THEIR technology started: mysterious chain link fences circled hundreds of pine-wooded acres hiding laboratories and warehouses. My father had to wear a photo-ID badge to work and present it about five miles from where the actual lab was. Oak Ridge was where they processed the uranium for the first atomic bombs. THEIR technology was secret, grand, and important. Television? That's something in the garage for sharing with friends and neighbors.

In those early days the reception of television was active and communal: something homemade which was shared in a garage on the block. The mass marketing of industrial consoles and the industrialization of network programming soon changed that. Television became something made by THEM for our consumption. I think my early introduction to a funky homemade TV set made me want to bring TV production back to the garage. The first studio cameras were monsters with cables six inches in diameter. Today tiny handheld camcorders have finally brought TV production out of those airless studios to the neighborhoods: the playgrounds and garages, the town councils and the local dumps. Public access to equipment and cable channels has made it possible to share the technology of transmission, just as reception was shared in those early days. Although besieged by the cable corporations, fraught with bureaucratic requirements from the municipalities and burdened with the necessity of having to serve everyone from local narcissists to Nazis, public access has proven that communications can be democratic in the best sense of that overused, often misappropriated word. A thousand flow-ers have bloomed already—40,000 hours of original programming are transmitted monthly. Not all are peach blossoms. But the product was never the goal. It's the process, of course, but more than the process, it's the potential power that a popular diffuse medium could possibly unlock. Access is dangerous to the system because of that potential. If one counts the access studios, the media centers across the country, the number of camcorders, and the number of organized solidarity groups and environmental organizations, the potential is quite

astonishing.¹ The potential is for democratic communication. That potential is present in the United States: the potential to cut through the hypocrisy of our current information system.

There is a cynical hypocrisy in the hymns to capitalism that dominate the current information networks. We can see how our system is dependent on debt, a tottering stack of credit cards; how, despite the financial boom, our cities are full of misery and joblessness; how our waters and soil are contaminated, our factories rusty, our infrastructure rotting. The savings and loan scandal showed the corruption of our financial system. The machinations of the Gulf and Serbian warmongers cannot hide for long the pathetic state of our own economy and our own repressive state apparatus. There is a hunger for authentic media. How can we work together to help each other to create a television to change our world: a television that is human, responsive to important events, and utilizing the vast reserves of creativity that exist in this country? How can we create a television that is inclusive: that expresses the needs, hopes, and creativity of those now under-represented on existing channels?

There seems to be consensus around issues of children's programming. Action for Children's Television and other media reformers have raised consciousness about "programming/commercials" for children: the "My Little Pony" and "Ninja Turtles" shows that marketed toys as programming between ads for sugary cereals. These advertising/programs are not new. One of the programs I saw in those days in front of my neighbor's Oak Ridge TV (I can't call it a set—it was more like a pile of wires) was Buster Brown. "That's my dog Tigh, he lives in a shoe. . . . I'm Buster Brown, look for me in there too!" That show was the evolutionary ancestor of the current kids' stuff. The stars were the shoemaker's logo. With the constant repeating of the name Buster Brown, the program sold shoes for almost the entire half hour. But the favorite charac-

¹ The media activists working together with grassroots activists against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November 1999 proved just how strong that potential is. Five half-hour programs called "Showdown in Seattle: The Five Days That Shook the WTO," were produced by over 100 cameracorder activists for Deep Dish Television. See Part 9.

ter wasn't the overly cute Buster Brown. There was this naughty frog . . . who could plunk his magic twanger and turn the world upside down. And the TV show would do just that: when the twanger sound effect started, the camera would turn upside down!

Can we rethink the very basis of our television system? Can we start to think of television as an authentic public interest? We need a commercial- and corporate-free television, not a medium designed to make a profit from constructing needs in an already needy world.

When my father would leave for work at the lab in Oak Ridge, Lab Security would check him with a Geiger counter. He was never shown the readings. It was THEIR machine, and the check wasn't for his health. It was for THEIR research.²

A few years ago we had a Geigerfest in Woodstock, New York, my new hometown. Ed Sanders, poet, ex-Fug, and recent planning board member, organized it. It was a benefit concert and poetry reading to buy a Geiger counter for the town dump, so we can make sure that the trucks full of waste that use the dump aren't contaminating our groundwater. We raised almost a thousand dollars. It's our Geiger counter. We need to have our own measure of the contaminants in our workplace and homes.

America's Funniest Home Videos has been one of the most popular shows on television. The tapes that are chosen for national airing are steeped in the same sadism, misogyny, and contempt for the American working class that permeate the rest of television. The actual time given to the homemade tapes is, at most, seven minutes of each program. Most of the shows are endless "wrap-arounds": pathetic and patronizing as the "host" plods through pathetic "intros" and "outros" of the material. People watch, waiting not for the dopey host or the wide-angle close-ups of the guffawing crowd, but for those moments of fresh humor. They await a flash of recognition of humanity on a box that daily denies it. The public hum-

² Recent revelations from DOE documents have shown just how egregious and callous much of that research was. Oak Ridge is now admittedly one of the most heavily contaminated spots on earth.

gers for something more authentic, more in touch with the everyday lives of people. Independent producers in the United States have, by and large, expressed this authenticity. Can the independents unite with the access activists, with the community organizers, with the environmentalists, with the Peacemets, with the visual artists, with the performers, with the gays and the lesbians, with the homeless draft-age youth, with the jobless, with the media critics? Can we get together in TV land? Plunk your magic twanger and turn the world upside down!

Perpetual Shadows: Representing the Atomic Age

June 1998

MY OLD HOMETOWN, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was essentially a government reservation bent on atomic weapon construction. When my family first moved there in 1946, it was still a top secret town, though everyone knew the atomic bomb was developed in its barbed-wire-enclosed factories. In fact, Oak Ridge itself was encircled in yet more barbed wire. Until 1949 there were gates at each of end of the highway that passed through town where guards would study ID cards before they let you in or out.³ The atmosphere of secrecy and intrigue made it hard to gossip about the place when we went to visit our relatives back in St. Louis. I recall my parents being uncharacteristically vague about just where we lived in Tennessee. There was certainly no discussion of what it was my father did. He was a lowly research engineer working on metals, but as far as I knew he might have been Oppenheimer's assistant. We didn't want to know.

I got the feeling that neither of my parents liked the fact that Oak Ridge was about atomic weaponry—especially since the government had actually used the bomb on Japanese civilians. Oak Ridge knew too much. In that part of Tennessee there wasn't the celebratory end of the war hurrah that seemed to be prevalent at least in *Life* magazine's version of postwar America. However, as the months went by, Oak Ridgers began to be proud of their role in "ending the war." You could buy a pennant at the drug store with the name "Oak Ridge" sur-

³ "Open Sesame! Welcome to the Atomic City!" Headline on *The Oak Ridger*, March 18, 1949.

The Uses of Community Media: A Global Survey

Presentation to the MacBride Round Table, October 1997

IN THE EARLY work of critical theorists like Lippman, Horkeimer, Adorno, and Schiller media audiences were seen as passive—vulnerable to the engineering of “mind managers.” Dallas Smythe described television audiences as a commodity of exchange between advertising agencies and program administrators. Sometimes called “Nielsen families” after the measurement company, the passive audience’s only value was as a sum of numbers for calculating fees for the thirty and sixty second spots. There is sometimes confusion over the term “global village.” Video enthusiasts of the seventies appropriated Marshall McLuhan’s term for their rambunctious activities with portapaks, but McLuhan’s villagers were consumers of media, not makers. Chomsky and Herman do a persuasive job of showing the mechanisms of mass media in manufacturing consent from passive viewers. As the years pass, actions on Wall Street only confirm what were sometimes called conspiracy theories of the totality of corporate media. The more channels, the more the content remains the same and the more eyeballs are harvested. The audiences grow larger, swelling to the massive communal sigh at mega-media events like the funeral of Princess Di.

Recent forays in audience studies and reception theory have championed a more active role on the part of mass media audiences, sometimes seen as cultural arbitrators through program selection and as differentiating viewers who decode resistant messages in mass media fare. But it is still mass

media made for mass audiences. The viewer may actively sodden an entire box of Kleenex watching Di’s cortege, but she is first and foremost passively receiving messages which are made for her, organized and produced in locations apart from her own daily life.

There is another type of electronic visual media which is being made in this world, in a mode of production distinctly different from the mass media model. This is the work created by community media groups and independent producers who have appropriated consumer video equipment. While much of the use of small-format video is documenting family birthdays or graduations in affluent neighborhoods, there are a growing number of people who put together video programs to record community events and to share information and history with others in locations that range from Bangladesh to Brazil. The efforts of community media makers are often ridiculed or dismissed variously as “a flash in the pan” or “a drop in the bucket.” They are belittled as pathetic when measured against the power and ubiquity of mass culture. The assumption is always that these local community efforts are in direct competition with the Goliaths, the moguls. When audience size is measured there is, of course, no comparison. Even setting aside the power of well-aimed slingshots, the scope and power of the vertically and horizontally integrated transnational media business is without match in world history. The notion that community groups with a few camcorders, radio mikes, and web sites would effectively challenge these structures is absurd. But the very notion of this sort of wrestling match is not consistent with the goals and practice of most community media. This is media not bent on entertainment or amassing viewer numbers, though on occasion this can be the result. In the alternative media world there is a different operational framework—the relationship between makers and watchers is not at all the same. In fact, the term “watchers” is not descriptive of that relationship. “Users” or “user-participants” is perhaps more appropriate. This is work created to educate, to communicate, and to empower local citizens. It is made by community media groups and independent producers with

low-cost and widely available consumer equipment on every continent, in almost every type of situation.¹

Community media is often part of a larger process of community activities that can include environmental organizing, alternative health care, community self-defense, labor union mobilization, and hundreds of other activist projects. Video, radio, and Internet activities are integrated into the organizing. A widely recognized example is the web site created in conjunction with the defense of the London Greenpeace activists who were sued by the McDonald's Corporation for passing out brochures alleging that Big Macs were bad for everything from service labor to children's health. The web site (www.mcspotlight.org), the videos, and the radio tapes were coordinated to produce an effective campaign that ultimately "won" the case in the court of public opinion, although the civil judge's decision was more ambiguous.

Community media is often treated as historically insignificant, but many groups are actively building an authentic "public sphere" in their communities and deserve serious consideration not only in academic study, but in public service funding and infrastructure assistance as well. They also deserve to be considered as legitimate providers of important global information and accorded recognition in the official discussions of international telecommunications at the International Telecommunication Union and UNESCO.

EXAMPLES

There are useful models all over the world. One of the sequences from a group in Guatemala is a procession of coffins through a small rural town, bringing exhumed remains to the

¹ See Alain Ambrosi and Nancy Thede, eds., *Video: The Changing World* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990), which reports on various international projects in community media. Two recent publications provide useful information on community media: see Clemencia Rodriguez, *Fissures in the Mosaic: An International Study of Citizens' Media* (New York: Hampton Press, 2000), and Alfonso Gannucio Dargron, *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change* (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 2001).

research rooms where they will be identified. This is not the casket of Princess Di, which took over television not so long ago. *La Verdad Baja la Tierra*, like Di's televised funeral shared by so many of the world's peoples, is about death. The bodies in this case, however, are not those of fallen royalty, but those of peasants who were massacred during the eighties in Guatemala, victims of the genocide that ravaged Central America, funded for the most part by counter-insurgency funds from the United States. This tape is not for entertainment, though it obviously has a purpose to testify and persuade. The video is made by *Comunicarte*, a group originally called the Forensic Video Collective, because their first important task was to video the exhumations of the bodies from several massacre sites—for identification of the relatives, some of whom could not (either for reasons of distance or fear) travel to the sites of exhumation. For Guatemalans who live in continuing fear and intimidation, the tape also has a specific purpose: to look at this terrible history in the face, in a effort to move forward, to confront this horror in the bright light of the video image. The fact that the tape can be made at all proclaims a new-found courage. In the past, circulation of these images would need to have been clandestine. The tapes of *Comunicarte* are used by local organizing groups and religious organizations and are not intended for a mass audience, but for the very specific needs of those profoundly concerned with this situation.

Several groups in Brazil and the Dominican Republic are working in their communities with projections in the streets and town squares. *TV Maxambomba* and *TV Machepa* are lively, entertaining production groups which mix commedia dell'arte theater with pop culture political video (see Section 7, "Community Media in Brazil"). In Asia many groups have perfected the use of videocassette sales for alternative diffusion. In much of Asia there is lively commerce on the streets of pirated U.S. films on tape, much as in the United States and the United Kingdom there are audiocassette "mixes" sold at flea markets and in rock concert parking lots. Utilizing this tradition, several video activist groups have set up similar sidewalk stands which display and sell their productions at street corner prices. One group that did this quite effectively

in the eighties was the environmental collective *Green Team* in Taiwan. This activist group of environmental radicals used video to expose toxic waste dumps in Taipei and radioactive residue polluting indigenous land on offshore islands. Documentation of their theatrical guerrilla demonstrations served to popularize environmental actions, much the way that Greenpeace's guerrilla theater tactics and "photo ops" have done in the United States and Europe. On one occasion the *Green Team* took aim at the national television network itself with a raucous demonstration in which protesters hurled their old TV sets at the TV headquarters. They were mad as hell, and they weren't going to take it any more. Broadcasting officials started in dismay at the mountain of shattered tubes and circuitry at their doorstep.

Independents in Mexico are also using creative distribution of alternative video. Cassette sales have boomed in Mexico in the wake of the Zapatista rebellion. Several groups such as Canal 6 de Julio put out monthly news bulletins on tapes which are available at bookstores and magazine racks for the same price as *Vanidades*.

A community tape which was distributed to practically mass media numbers of viewers was *Matanza en Aguas Blancas*, which is about an incident in which the Mexican army assassinated sixteen peasants on their way to demonstrations in the state of Guerrero. The tape was made from off-air news which used footage made by an army cameraman. The images were broadcast shortly after the incident in one of those curious openings that one can occasionally find on otherwise carefully controlled networks. The story was quickly censored off the airwaves, but Canal 6 reproduced it and amplified it for cassette distribution, surrounding the original "Rodney King"-type surveillance footage of the massacre with a larger discussion of the situation in Guerrero and interviews with peasants who survived. The tape became an expose of both the initial incident and the way in which the official Mexican television leaves out contextualizing information about violent incidents and sweeps brutal actions of the Mexican Army under the rug.

One of the tapes about the Zapatistas, *Viaje al Centro de la*

Selva, a lyrical report on the first Zapatista *encuentro* in the midst of the Lacondan jungle, is reported to have sold over a million copies. One of the makers, Javier Floriaga, however, spent eighteen months in jail for his collaboration with the rebels. As alternative video becomes effective in regional struggles, makers become targets of right-wing attacks. In Colombia recently, two workers with CINEP (the Center for Research and Popular Education), a Jesuit research organization in Bogota, were brutally murdered by a seven-member death squad, with U.S.-supplied armaments so prevalent in Colombia, and indeed the rest of Latin America, under the aegis of the "drug war." Mario Calderon and Elsa Alvarado were working on a video about the land struggles of a group of indigenous people near the Panamanian border, land wanted by transnationals for mining development. They were killed by the death squad in their home in Bogota, in a scene reminiscent of the purges in El Salvador and Guatemala. CINEP has vowed to continue the work begun by the martyrs despite this brutal slaying.

The images of Kayapo Indians of Brazil in full ceremonial headdress armed with video cameras² have become the clichéd icons of the use of new technologies by native peoples. Native groups have used video effectively for more than twenty years. Of all the groups around the world making local media, the networks of exchanges that have been promoted by indigenous peoples have been the most successful. At the time that the mass media were celebrating the quincentennial of Columbus, indigenous communities were active in denouncing the colonialization and exploitation that the so-called "discovery" initiated. Radio and video programs were widely exchanged among native groups and provided a clear picture of the unity of indigenous peoples on this issue and on current land rights struggles that are still going on. Deep Dish TV coordinated a seventeen-hour series of native voices speaking about the quincentennial called "Rock the Boat."³ The native

² Terence Turner, "Defiant Images: The Kayapo Appropriation of Video," *Anthropology Today* 9, no. 6 (1992).

³ This series was coordinated by Cynthia Lopez and curated by native filmmaker Beverly Singer of Deep Dish.

point of view was heard on a scale scarcely imagined before the advent of video and audio cassettes. The anti-quintessential campaign in general was so successful that department stores in the United States who for years used to have "Columbus Day" sales advertised in local newspapers and on television have stopped the practice. *The Wall Street Journal* noted that nowadays the name of Columbus has too negative a connotation.

Although video made by community groups is most often shown in closed-circuit exhibition, and usually not produced specifically for TV transmission, the obvious benefits from program exchange and diffusion have made the issue of TV access a focus for many groups. The search for channel space and cooperative television administrations has become a challenge to local and state broadcasters. Occasionally video groups will garner space on cultural or educational channels, as is the case in Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico. During the peace negotiations in El Salvador, the right to acquire commercial time on national television was a major demand of the FMLN, the rebel liberation front. A few small local stations in Japan have begun to introduce public space for community members. The evangelical Christian organizations have been very energetic in finding space for their messages against abortion, birth control, and lesbian and gay relationships. They have garnered time not only on leased channels in the United States, but by purchasing channel time in many other countries.⁴

Radio has also been important within indigenous communities for communication and empowerment. Native radio stations have a substantial infrastructure in Canada, Australia, and many parts of Latin America. One videotape that celebrates the kinds of exchanges this programming can do is *Radio Novelas*, made with a group of Canadian Cree Indians. It traces a trip made by Cree radio producers to Bolivia, where indigenous tin miners have effectively used radio to promote their rights for decades.

⁴ See Steve Bruce, *Pray TV: Televangelism in America* (London: Routledge, 1990).

As global commercial networks reach to more and more corners, there is a danger that traditional public communication spaces—the cafe, the market, the club, and the public square—will be replaced by corporate supermarkets and the reception of messages from far away, eliminating local discourse. Public access can be a local forum for grassroots expression and active participation. In some communities the public access center becomes a hub of community activity, serving as a way of bringing people together. The diffusion over cable of programs interesting to very specific groups becomes a way for people in those groups to find each other. This is especially apparent in the use of access by ethnic or national groups, who often do not know that there are others from their country or region, but find them through weekly telecasts on the local channels.

The activity of making programs can be, in itself, a beginning step in civic engagement. People who take advantage of public access often increase their interest in civic issues. A study by John Higgins, a professor at San Francisco University, shows that those people who became involved in the public access channel in Columbus, Ohio, were very likely to take more initiative in civic activity in their town after having spent time at the access center.⁵

For those who live in areas that do not have cable television, or for those who may not be able to afford it even though it passes by their door, there are other ways in which media regulation could provide benefits. Since most forms of commercial program distribution are sent via satellites which use the public resource of global orbits, the use of these orbits could be "taxed" and the funds used to promote local media production and distribution in ways that are appropriate for local needs. The work of grassroots producers such as Brazil's *TV Maxambomba* of screening development and health videos on the streets is a model which can be replicated in many countries. In South Africa community radio producers have been very active in local program production in remote villages and

⁵ John Higgins, paper presented at the MacBride Round Table Meeting, Boulder, 1997.

have developed wind-up radios which enable even the poorest citizens without electricity to receive the broadcasts. Poor communities, both in remote rural locations and in urban slums, have very basic information needs which are not met by the programming made by global marketers.

Community media deserves funds and space for local production and infrastructure for global exchange. Internet diffusion is an obvious possibility, but satellite TV transmission is more immediately possible given the current state of the technical infrastructure. The value of this sort of exchange is on many levels: creating communities of interest across borders, exchanging information that has global relevance, providing models for popular organizing, and providing inspiration for creative production. These exchanges can provide information about specific problems that are replicated from community to community, often faced in total isolation. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and activist groups need to be able to share information and to witness the documentation of local problems and solutions across borders and regions.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

Videazimut, an international organization with offices in Montreal and São Paulo, is a service and advocacy organization for grassroots community producers, such as those who participate with Paper Tiger and Deep Dish. The membership comes from many countries and includes producers, teachers, technicians, workers organizations, and community activists, united in the interest of utilizing new technology for basic human needs. Vidéazimut has sponsored several international symposia, including one on development and new technology in Delhi (see "Report from Delhi" in this section) and one on community television in São Paulo. The goals of the organization are to promote the use of community media through training, exchange of information, and representation in international forums. It also can provide information about the dangers faced by alternative media makers and can be a base

of support against abuses such as the murder of the CINEP producers.

More research in this area is needed. Community media is often treated as historically insignificant by communications academics, but many groups are actively building an authentic "public sphere" in their communities and deserve serious consideration not only in academic study, but also in public service funding and infrastructure assistance. Community media organizations deserve to be considered as legitimate providers of important global information, on the forefront of useful experiments in communication development. Grassroots pioneers who utilize electronic tools in humane and imaginative ways need to be accorded recognition in the official discussions of global telecommunications at forums such as the ITU and UNESCO.

Community media makers cannot rival Murdoch's Star TV, but they should have the right to exchange (and gain subsidies for) video and radio projects via satellite and the Internet. The successes of public access in the United States, Germany, Australia, and other countries have proved that "taxing" the profits of the telecommunications infrastructure can provide revenues to initiate and support a public interest communication system. Perhaps similar regulations on a global scale could take a proportion of the profits from global commercial networks to support public interest media exchange. We have the technology to set up a way to share and collaborate around issues and ideas. We are beginning to understand how effective the Internet can be for this sort of exchange. A global community media network could address specific areas of interest and concern.

As the gulf between rich and poor widens throughout the world, having access to tools of mobilization and information becomes more crucial in the struggle for justice and equity. Authentic democratic communication is a threat to the status quo. The rhetoric of democracy and free flow of information can be a straitjacket or a springboard to promote the real possibilities of participatory empowerment. The media are essential in that process.

The idea is not to create a mass audience to weep for prin-

cesses, but to tax the mass media corporations that exploit those tears. Those corporations utilize resources that are the provenance of all peoples on earth: the airwaves and geostationary satellite paths, and moreover our eyes and hearts, the access to which is now so readily available to commercial and governmental entities.

Report from Delhi: The Front Lines of Cultural Survival

March 1994

In February 1994 I traveled to India to attend the New Delhi Symposium on New Technologies and the Democratization of Audiovisual Communication. The meeting brought together 400 producers, distributors, researchers, teachers, and activists from twenty-five countries.

THE AIR IN Delhi is yellow: not the acrid greenish yellow of a bad day in L.A., but a soft brown, almost golden yellow. They say it is from the burning of dung in small stoves. From the airport we drove through streets lined with people: people huddled over the dung stoves, people hanging out newly dyed cloths to dry, people peddling sewing machines in roadside open-air tailor shops, people getting their hair cut sitting in improvised outdoor barbershops. From reports by other travelers, I had expected the lazy cows that meandered through the intersections, but not the energetic monkeys that perched on roofs, fences, and even stop signs, swinging down now and then to grab a snack from their communal keepers. The cows and the monkeys seem to belong to everyone: food scraps are generously shared, and of course the dung is tidily gathered to be dried for fuel.

The symposium was held at an Islamic University, Jamia Hamdard, in an enclosed compound just outside the main center of New Delhi. The university is quite religious, and the mornings begin with prayers that echo from all corners of the compound as the Muslim students greet the dawn. Conference attendees were warned that alcohol is strictly forbidden. My