

Curriculum Vitae

Eric Miller

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OBJECTIVES IN ACADEMIA

To complete my Ph.D. process in the Folklore Program, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, USA). Dissertation title: "*Ethnographic Videoconferencing, as Applied to Songs/Chants/Dances/Games of South Indian Children, and Language Learning.*" The dissertation has been submitted, and the oral defense is scheduled to occur via Philadelphia-Chennai videoconference on 21 June 2010.

To continue teaching at the Image College of Art, Animation, and Technology (ICAT), which is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. To help organise a Conference on the "Future of Digital Media", to be hosted by ICAT in 2011.

To continue developing the World Storytelling Institute.

To help develop a Videoconference Centre for Teaching and Learning, Performance, and Discussion.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Storytelling (Oral narrative): in conversation, performance, ritual, etc.
- Storytellers' visual accompaniments.
- Narrative as presented through various communication technologies.
- The history and nature of communication technologies (oral, literary, and electronic).
- Interactive telecommunication: Video-mediated communication:
Videoconferencing (regulatory, sociological, and design issues).
- Educational uses of technology.
- Instruction methodology for teaching written and spoken languages.
- Voice recognition, Transliteration, and Translation software.
- Tourism Studies, and Museum Studies (especially in relation to the Places of Kanngi Storytelling Tour, which involves Seafishing Communities, and Tribal Communities in Tamil Nadu).

COLLEGE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Image College of Art, Animation, and Technology (ICAT) (Chennai).

Assistant Professor of Story and Storytelling.

April 2008 - Present (April 2010).

Subjects taught: *Storytelling, Storywriting (Short Stories and Screenplays), Public Speaking, Art History, History of Communication Technology, Academic Writing and Research.*

New York University, School of Continuing and Professional Studies (NYC).

Instructor.

Spring 2002.

Course: *Storytelling.*

Fordham University, English Dept., Lincoln Center campus (Manhattan, NYC).

Adjunct Assistant Professor.

Fall 2001 - Spring 2002.

Courses: *Non-fiction Writing (twice), Introduction to Literature (twice).*

St. John's University, Division of Humanities, Staten Island campus (NYC).

Adjunct Assistant Professor.

Fall 1996 - Summer 1998.

Courses: *Public Speaking, Non-fiction Writing (twice), Introduction to Literature (twice), The Modern Short Story (twice), American Drama, The Folk Tale.*

University of Pennsylvania, School of Arts and Sciences (Philadelphia).

Teaching Assistant (for Prof. Roger Abrahams, *Folklore of the African Diaspora*), Spring 1999.

Teaching Assistant (for Prof. Franklin Southworth, *Male-Female Communication, East and West*), Fall 1998.

EDUCATION

Currently a Ph.D. candidate, Folklore Program, University of Pennsylvania.

My dissertation -- "Ethnographic Videoconferencing, as Applied to South Indian Children's Songs/Chants/Dances/Games, and Language Learning" -- discusses how aspects of children's verbal arts can be used to teach spoken language in videoconferences.

M.A., 1996. Gallatin School of Interdisciplinary Studies, New York University.

Self-designed course of study in "Storytelling in Physically-present and Electronically-mediated Contexts." My thesis, "Storytelling Accompanied by Visuals: Then and Now," surveyed types of visual accompaniments used by storytellers, and argued that this family can include electronic visual imagery on large screens.

B.A., 1984. Gallatin School of Interdisciplinary Studies, New York University.

(Initial studies at Swarthmore College, and Oberlin College.) Area of Concentration: Cultural History of Western Civilization.

COURSES OF STUDY

Ph.D. candidate, Folklore Program, University of Pennsylvania

Relevant courses include: 1) *Issues in Folklore Scholarship*, 2) *History of Folklore Studies*, 3) *Ways of Speaking*, 4) *Performance of Epic*, 5) *Festival/Pageant/Parade*, 6) *African Folklore*, 7) *Chinese Folk Performance*, 8) *Korean Shamanism*, 9) *Communicating Memory*, 10) *Media Ritual*, 11) *Public Space*, 12) *Fieldwork Methodology*.

Conducted Ph.D. fieldwork in Tamil Nadu, south India (March '03 - Dec. '04): Studied various verbal arts -- especially children's songs/chants/games/dances -- among Kani tribal people of Tamil Nadu's Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli districts.

Facilitated four post-fieldwork Chennai-Philadelphia videoconferences (Oct. 2004 - May 2006):
For gathering data about language teaching-and-learning in videoconferences.

M.A., Gallatin School of Interdisciplinary Studies, New York University

Relevant courses include: 1) *The Study of Storytelling*, 2) *Training in Storytelling*, 3) *The Social Movement as Performance*, 4) *Social Issues in Telecommunications*.

M.A. fieldwork in Tamil Nadu, south India (July '88 - July '89; and Jan. '90 - Nov. '90): Studied and videotaped traditional storytelling techniques in folk and orthodox genres. Conducted a cross-media study of சிலப்பதிகாரம் (*Silappathikaram*, *Epic of the Anklet*), a central story of the Tamil people; collected data in the course of a 220-mile walk (from Poompuhar to Madurai) in the footsteps of Kannagi, the heroine of the story, and visited Muthuvan tribal people in the Nilgiri Mountains, near Valparai (Muthuvans believe that their tribe was founded by Kannagi approx. 1600 years ago).

B.A., Gallatin School of Interdisciplinary Studies, NYU
(following initial studies at Swarthmore and Oberlin Colleges)

Relevant courses include: 1) *Hebrew Scriptures*, 2) *New Testament*, 3) *History of Greece*, 4) *History of Rome*, 4) *Ancient Philosophy*, 6) *Greek Tragedy (in translation)*, 7) *Shakespeare 1590-1600*, 8) *Play and Games in Shakespeare's Plays*, 9) *Folk Tale, Myth, and Legend*, 10) *Theories of the Image*, 11) *Images of the Family in Literature*, 12) *Russian Novels (in translation)*, 13) *James Joyce's Ulysses*, 14) *Community and Social Life*, 15) *Introduction to Teaching*, 16) *Introduction to Linguistics*, and 17) *Renaissance to Postmodern Art*.

LANGUAGE ABILITIES

English: spoken (full); written (full).
French: spoken (basic); written (basic).
Tamil: spoken (basic); written (basic).

WORK EXPERIENCE IN ACADEMIA

University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia).

Fall 1999 - Spring 2001.
Research Assistant
to Prof. Roger Abrahams, Folklore Program.

Fall 1998 - Spring 2001.
Assistant
to Jay Treat, Director, Instructional Computing, School of Arts and Sciences.

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Co-founder/president, *Eric & Co. Video*, 1983-96.
Acted as director, cameraman, and editor, for documentation of performances and production of multimedia events. Offered video projection and videoconferencing services, with electronic painting, and titling in fonts of various languages.

Assistant to Laura Simms. 1985-8, 1995-6.
Laura Simms is an internationally-acclaimed storyteller and educator, and is a leader of the modern revival of storytelling the USA. My duties included managing mailing lists; assisting with publicity, advertisements, and grant applications; and giving feedback regarding manuscripts and performances. I acted as liaison for the *1995 Month of International Storytelling in New York*, assisting storytellers from England, France, Iran, Africa, and the USA.

Screenplay Writer for Lydia Joel Miller. 1987-8.
Lydia Joel Miller -- formerly Editor-in-chief of *Dance Magazine*, and Chair of the Dance Dept. of NYC's Performing Arts High School -- hired me to write a screenplay based on her research. Project title: *Catherine de Medici, Italian Queen of France, and the Beginnings of Ballet*.

ASSOCIATIONS

American Folklore Society (USA).

Conference on Religion in South Asia (USA).

National Storytelling Association (USA).

New York New Media Association (USA).

Folklore of South Indian Languages (India).

PUBLICATIONS

Full texts available at www.storytellingandvideoconferencing.com :

"Videoconference Interviews in the Folklore Classroom." In the Spring 2008 *Folklore and Education* E-Newsletter of the American Folklore Society.

"In Praise of Citizen Kannagi." In *The Hindu* (Chennai edition), Op-Ed Article, June 16, 2006, p. 13.

"Public Presentation of Folklore: Politics of Technology, Culture, and Discourse." In *Folklore as Discourse*, M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, ed., Chennai, National Folklore Support Centre, 2005, pp. 211-27.

"The Asian Century of Folklore Scholarship: Reflections on the Chennai Conference." Editorial in *Indian Folklife* (the Newsletter of India's National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai) Vol. 3, No. 2, (March 2004), pp. 3-6.

"Cultivating a Forest Language: Development Ideas for Kani Tribal People of Tamil Nadu's Kanniyakumari District," co-authored with Velmurugan Kani. In the *Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Kanniyakumari Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Nagarcoil, 2004.

"The Public Sphere, Folklore, and Interactive Telecommunication in Rural India." In *Folklore, the Public Sphere, and Civil Society*, Molly Kaushal and M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, eds., New Delhi and Chennai: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, and National Folklore Support Centre, 2004, pp. 303-12.

"Book Review: *Changing Tribal Life: A Socio-Philosophical Perspective*." In *Indian Folklore Research Journal* (Chennai), Vol. 1, No. 3 (2003): 113-118.

"Child's Play, Language Teaching and Learning, and Videoconferencing." In *Madhyam: Issues in Culture, Communication, and Development* (Bangalore), Vol. 18, No. 2 (Oct. 2003): 13-19.

"New Millennium Telling: The 1996 *Storytelling for the New Millennium Conference*." In *Storytelling Magazine* (Jonesborough, Tennessee, USA), July '96, p. 16.

"Amiga Multimedia Computers in South India." In the *Newsletter of the New York Amiga Users Group*: Jan. '96 (Part I), March '96 (Part II).

"Tamil Nadu's சிலப்பதிகாரம் (*Silappathikaram, Epic of the Anklet*): Ancient Story and Modern Identity." Self-published booklet, Madras/Chennai, 1991.

PAPERS/TALKS

“Storytelling and Place: The Sea-Fishing Communities of Chennai.” February 11, 2009. Conference on Regionalism and Nationalism in Literature, University of Madras, English Dept, Chennai.

“Nature and Language: A Discussion of Nature-related Proverbs of Kani (Tribal) People of the Kanyakumari District.” July 28, 2005. Co-presenters: Velmurugan Kani, and Rajammal Kani. At the Dept. of Tamil Language, University of Madras; co-sponsored by the Association of British Scholars, Chennai Section.

“Chennai and Videoconferencing.” Aug. 21, 2003. International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (annual conference), Chennai.

“Videoconferencing and the Teaching of Tamil Language and Verbal Arts.” Sept. 27, 2002. International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (annual conference), San Francisco, California (USA)

“The Performance Tradition of Villupattu in Rural and Urban Contexts.” Aug, 16, 2000. Dept. of Tamil Literature, University of Madras (Tamil Nadu, south India).

“Storytelling in Different Cultures.” Aug. 10, 2000. Dept. of Indian Music, School of Fine and Performing Arts, University of Madras.

“The In-Performance Identification Process.” Oct. 27, 2000. American Folklore Society, Columbus, Ohio (annual conference).

“Videoconferencing for Folklorists.” Oct. 21, 1999. American Folklore Society, Memphis, Tennessee (annual conference).

VIDEOCONFERENCES

I served as an organiser-director of the following videoconferences:

1) Children’s Songs/Chants/Dances/Games, and Methods of Teaching and Learning Spoken Tamil Language. Between children (and others) in Chennai, India; and Philadelphia, USA.

Technology: ISDN lines; with simultaneous Internet audio-video webcast.

- a) Segment in the annual Megaconference Jr. May 18, 2006. Children at a site in Northern Ireland also participated.
- b) Segment in the annual Megaconference. Dec. 1, 2005.
- c) Oct. 15, 2005.
- d) Oct. 16, 2004.

2) “Graduate Student Videoconference Series, 2001-2: Videoconferencing with Indigenous Peoples.”

Technology: ISDN lines; with simultaneous Internet audio-video webcast.

- a) Old and New Forms of Storytelling. March 1, 2002. Between Warlpiri (Aboriginal) artist members of the Tanami Network in Yuendumu (near Alice Springs), Australia; and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, USA).

- b) Discussion Regarding Domestic Violence. April 15, 2002.
Between Aboriginal women members of the Women's Justice Network (a social work organisation) in Brisbane, Australia; and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, USA).
- 3) Demonstration and Discussion of Virtual Performance. April 20, 2001.
Between graduate students at the Dept. of Performance Studies Dept., New York University (NYC); and at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia).
Technology: ISDN lines; with simultaneous Internet audio-video webcast.
- 4) Nine Songs, a Story, and a Little Talk. April 20, 21, and 26, 1999.
Between myself at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia); and a colleague in NYC. I was at a different location on the Penn campus for each of the three events. We demonstrated and discussed video-mediated singing and storytelling.
Technology: Videophones (made by 8x8, inc.), over regular telephone lines.
- 5) A Reading of, and Discussion about, Alice Walker's Short Story, *Everyday Use*. June 14, 1998.
I was teaching a course, *The Modern Short Story*, on St. John's University's Staten Island (NYC) campus. A guest scholar in Manhattan (NYC) co-taught the class via videoconference.
Technology: Videophones, over regular telephone lines.
- 6) Two Suriname Tales. April 29, 1998.
Between myself at the Folklore Dept. of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and a colleague in NYC. We demonstrated and discussed video-mediated storytelling.
Technology: Videophones, over regular telephone lines.
- 7) YouthCaN (Youth in Communications and Networking) Annual Multi-site Meetings. Sponsored by New York City's American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), and New York University's School of Education.
- a) April 23, 1998. Between Students at the AMNH in NYC, and Students in Troy, Alabama. A skit was performed (regarding environmental concerns) with actors and audiences in both locations. A student artist at the Alabama site created the NYC stage background during the event (the electronic painting from Alabama was projected onto the back of the stage at the NYC site).
Technology: Videophones, over regular telephone lines.
- b) May 15, 1997. Between Students at the AMNH in NYC, and Students in Austin, Texas.
Technology: ISDN lines.
- 8) Use of Electronic Technology in the Theatre Classroom. April 14, 1997.
Guest lecture-demonstration by Dr. Stephen Schrum, Dept. of Educational Theatre, Penn. State U. (Hazleton). Dr. Schrum was on St. John's University's Staten Island campus; acting as his assistant, I conversed with him from St. John's University's Queens campus.
Technology: ISDN lines.

9) *A Videoconference about Cassandra.*” Nov. 23, 1996.

Cassandra was a heroine in the period of ancient Greece. Between members of New York University’s Interactive Performance Group, and students at York University (Toronto, Canada).

Technology: ISDN lines.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

I was born in midtown Manhattan, New York City, USA, where I was raised by my parents: Edwin Miller (Entertainment Editor of *Seventeen Magazine* from ’46 to ’88); and Lydia Joel Miller (Editor-in-chief of *Dance Magazine* from ’56 to ’70; and Chair of the Dance Dept. of Performing Arts High School from ’72 to ’84).

I am married to a Tamil woman, Magdalene Jeyarathnam (founder-director of Chennai’s Center for Counselling), and we have a daughter. My wife and I are planning to live in Chennai only. I have regular employment capability in India.

References available upon request.

Note: Regarding Folklore Studies

The Folklore Department/Program of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) has been a world center of Folklore Studies for over 40 years.

At the University of Pennsylvania, Folklore has been a separate department than Anthropology. However, conceptually-speaking, Folklore is a section within Cultural Anthropology. Folklore Studies focuses on community members’ traditional and conventional methods of performance, communication, and production; and on their beliefs.

Folklore Studies is inter-disciplinary. It is a combination of **Anthropology** (the study of culture systems); **Sociology**; **Communication**; **Literature** (the study of texts, especially of spoken and written stories); and other disciplines.

The discipline of Folklore has a long history of looking at processes of collaboration, interactivity, and audience participation within groups. Thus, its approach has much to offer to the study and design of electronically-mediated experiences such as 1) **Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, MMORPGs** (a genre of online computer role-playing games in which large numbers of players interact with one another in virtual worlds); 2) **Computer-Assisted Collaborative Work**; and 3) **Videoconferencing** for numerous applications.

Folklore Studies’ emphasis on the multi-sensory nature of experience, and on story, make it especially useful when considering the **Multimedia Aspects of Amusement/Adventure/Theme Parks**; and **Immersive and Group Digital Experiences** in general.