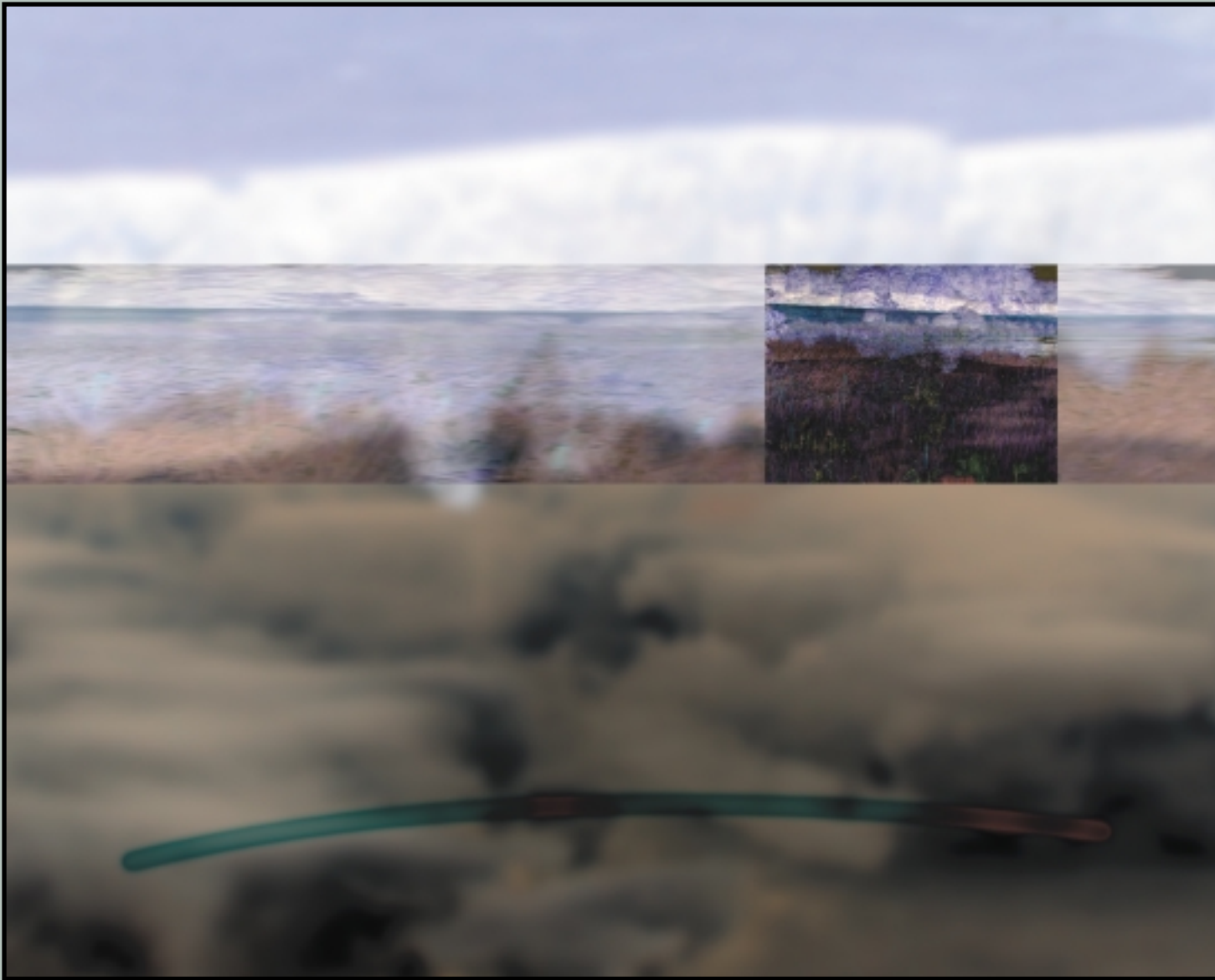


VOLUME 21 NUMBER 1 *JUNE 2002*

Bridgewater Review



BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE

Closet



Photographers Gary Stanton (cover image) and Mark Raila (inside front and back cover images) employ different techniques. Stanton's images originate as 35mm photographs which are digitized, composited (portions of several photographs are used to make one final image) and printed as gicleé prints. Raila's images are large format gelatin silver prints.

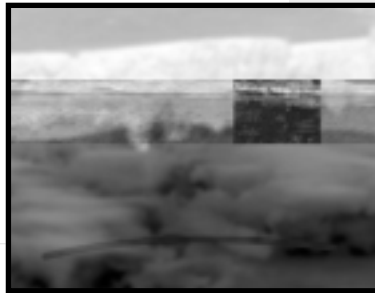
"I photograph nature, digitize my photographs and combine them to suggest meanings which are of nature yet may offer very different interpretations than they seem to a viewer. For example, the images comprising Low Tide are of the Green Mountains. Although there are no seashore images in the piece, my love of the seashore is reflected in the manner in which I select and work the images to composite the final piece. I add a personal contribution to each piece in the form of a drawn component in addition to the photography-based imagery."

—Gary Stanton
Visiting Lecturer in Art

"I make images of my home because I have no idea who I am. Perhaps by documenting the microcosm I have created around myself, I will be given some insight into what I want or need from life. It hasn't happened yet."

—Mark Raila
Instructor in Art

Bridgewater Review



ON THE COVER

Gary Stanton's *Low Tide* is a composite digital image created from three photographs taken during July 2001 in Bennington, Vermont.

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Working Together, Building on our Accomplishments

A message from Bridgewater's new President

by Dana Mohler-Faria



It was the morning of the Opening Breakfast in the fall of 1991. I had arrived at Bridgewater a month before as the newly appointed Vice President for Administration and Finance. As I finished speaking to the hundreds of faculty and staff and returned to my seat, a young faculty member approached me and asked, "Do you remember me?" Quite frankly, I didn't recognize this young woman. She continued, "if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be here today. You were instrumental in getting me started on my college education many years ago." I suddenly remembered who she was. She was a student I had recruited while I was a counselor in a program designed to help single parents who were receiving public assistance to continue their education. Since my last encounter with her, she had completed both undergraduate and graduate degrees and was now a professor at Bridgewater.

As I walked back to my office that morning, I realized precisely why I was engaged in public higher education: it is an enterprise focused on providing access to quality education which transforms the lives of those who might otherwise never get the opportunity to be full and complete partners in the larger society.

Last December, shortly after the Board of Trustees of Bridgewater State College nominated me to become the college's eleventh president, a reporter from a local newspaper called and asked me for a comment. "It certainly will be a challenge following Adrian Tinsley, who has been such an outstanding president," I responded, "but I know this college well, and I know its people well, and I know we will do good things together."

As every member of our community is aware, we at Bridgewater have experienced a period of success that is unmatched in the college's history.

New academic programs have been added, three new schools have been created, \$10 million dollars have been raised by our Foundation, 70 acres of land have been acquired, and more than \$70 million in construction funds will allow us to open four new buildings within the next nine months.

By any measure, this is an extraordinary record, and I consider myself fortunate to have spent the last ten years of my professional life working so closely with President Tinsley and with the members of this campus community during a time of so many remarkable achievements.

The next phase of growth and development will be our responsibility, and I am grateful to so many of Bridgewater's students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and friends who have contacted me to convey their confidence in my ability to lead us through this most exciting phase. As I prepare to assume the presidency of the college, I see in your expressions of goodwill my single most valuable asset—the talent and the commitment that these sentiments represent. I know also that the key to maintaining Bridgewater's extraordinary momentum lies in our ability to work as well together in the future as we have in the past.

Therefore, I would like to outline what I see as our major opportunities and challenges—both immediate and long-range—and I look forward to hearing from you to learn your thoughts and opinions on these issues.

I intend to concentrate my attention and energy on eight specific areas:

—*Focusing on excellence:* It is critically important for us as a community to begin defining excellence for ourselves and developing together the pathways that will help us achieve our goals. Your ideas are fundamental to this process, so among my initial tasks as president will be to develop ways for us to initiate this dialogue;

—*Building a stronger campus community:* Among Bridgewater's greatest strengths is the sense of cooperation and support that exists on our campus and in the community. How do we encourage more contact among the 10,000-plus people on our campus, and the more than 40,000 active alumni of the college? Similar to the effort to focus on excellence, I plan to seek new ways to expand opportunities for us to talk, share and plan together. Your suggestions are of course most welcome;

—*Expanding our work with international education:* Since 1872, Bridgewater has been involved with international education, and as advances in communication and technology bring our world closer, I believe it is important for us to expand our international program and support our students and faculty in their teaching and learning here and abroad, and to continue to attract students from countries across the globe to our campus;

—*Student/faculty research:* Under President Tinsley's leadership, and with the support of our faculty and staff and the wonderful generosity of alumni and friends, Bridgewater has been able to make substantial progress in providing new opportunities for our students and faculty to engage in high-level research projects. Supporting and expanding these opportunities will be among my highest priorities;

—*Professional development for faculty and staff:* It is of crucial importance for Bridgewater to continue to provide professional development opportunities to its faculty and staff so they may stay current with advances in their academic fields and professional activities, as well as to share the results of their work with the campus;

—*Teacher education:* Our first academic program and, today, still the field where the majority of our students pursue studies. This state and the nation need larger numbers of well-qualified teachers more than at any time in history. Bridgewater, the home of teacher education in America, has a nationally recognized strength in this area, and a singular responsibility to continue discovering ways to improve the educational process at every level of learning. Achieving new levels of excellence and innovation in teacher education will be a priority throughout my tenure as Bridgewater's president;

—*Connections to the region:* As the first president of Bridgewater in more than half a century who is a native of this region—I was born and raised in Wareham, Massachusetts and have spent my entire professional career in the public and community colleges of the Commonwealth—I appreciate the importance of Bridgewater's local ties and the value of those relationships to the col-

lege's future growth and prosperity. Since our founding in 1840, Bridgewater has been a close, working partner with the cities and towns of southeastern Massachusetts, now the state's fastest-growing region. I look forward to strengthening our ties and connections with the people, communities, and organizations throughout this part of the Commonwealth. As a public college, this is fundamental to our mission and has to be among our most urgent priorities;

—*Campus development:* As we work to improve support for scholarship and research, expand our technology resources, and increase outreach to the regional community, we will also remain focused on the next phase of physical development at Bridgewater. This includes our need to build a new science building, a fine and performing arts center, and a new classroom building. Fortunately, the college has land to grow, and we will make every effort to secure funding for these new facilities.

As I said to that local reporter who interviewed me just after my appointment as President of Bridgewater was announced, I'm about to assume an enormous responsibility. My preparation in Massachusetts public higher education over the past thirty years, my close ties to the region, and most importantly, my work here at Bridgewater over the past decade, have prepared me for this most important responsibility. The work we do at this institution has profound implications for our students and the greater community. We must provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities to each and every student at Bridgewater.

I have every confidence that beginning on July 1, 2002, we will shape a destiny that will match and, I trust, exceed our college's distinguished history. This is our greatest challenge, as well as our most important responsibility, and I am convinced that together we can indeed do great things.

—*Dana Mohler-Faria will be inaugurated in October, 2002.*

Chasing Solar Eclipses Around the World

by Martina B. Arndt



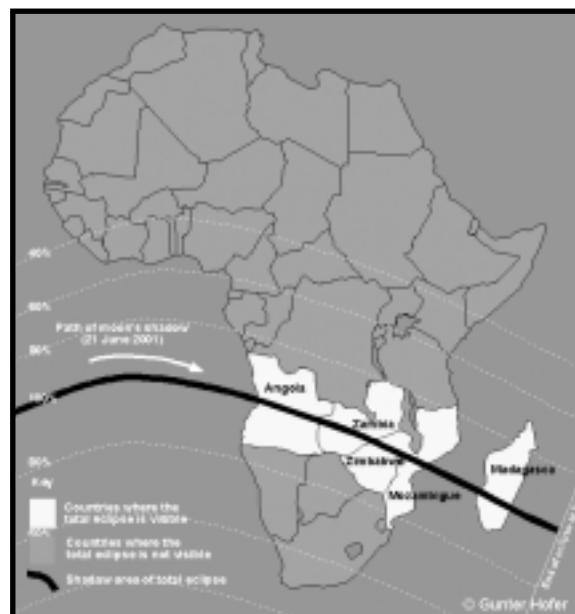
Solar eclipses are rare, beautiful, frustrating, and provide great excuses to explore places in the world you may not ordinarily go. The last time a total solar eclipse was visible from Massachusetts was off Cape Cod on March 7, 1970. Fortunately, the next eclipse visible from Massachusetts will be visible *everywhere* in the state—but you have to be around on May 1, 2079 to see it. I was a year old for the last one so I don't expect to see the next.

Perhaps you have been lucky enough to see a total eclipse. The probability is higher that you have seen a partial or annular eclipse of the Sun, or even a lunar eclipse. In fact, on Christmas Day 2000 there was a partial solar eclipse visible from many locations in New England. Ever the science enthusiast, I built a pinhole camera with an empty box, a piece of tinfoil, a pin, and lots of tape. I coerced (nearly) all of my family celebrating together in Maine to stand in the middle of the street with the box on their head so they could observe the moon "taking a bite out of the Sun." Thankfully my family is used to my idiosyncrasies and is very tolerant of my effervescent enthusiasm for events like this.

Eclipses have brought me to Mongolia (1997), Antigua (1998), and most recently to Africa (2001). Total solar eclipses are rare because the moon needs to be perfectly aligned with the Sun so that it blocks out most of the sunlight. This alignment occurs only once a year or so, and, in order to see the Sun fully eclipsed, you need to be situated in the moon's shadow, which is a very small area with respect to the size of the earth. The map on the right shows the path of the moon's shadow across southern Africa. Not only do you have to be in the right place, you have to be there at the right time, since eclipses only last between seconds to a few minutes. I was able to attend the 2001 eclipse in Africa with funding from two grants from Bridgewater's Center for the Advancement of Research and Teaching (CART). From our location in Zambia, the eclipse was visible for over 3 minutes.

Eclipse chasers are traditionally a motley crew. Cities in the path of total eclipses are often overrun with scientists, amateur astronomers, and interested tourists. Our group of eleven included five scientists and two engineers from the US and Europe, a filmmaker, two students, and a manager at a networking firm. Everyone came to help with the science, and everyone had the experience of a lifetime.

Eclipses are beautiful because with the bright Sun blocked out we get a glimpse of the tenuous, delicate structure of the Sun's upper atmosphere. The world that is in the path of the eclipse darkens and shadows fade—everything gets a cold hue to it. Animals often become quiet, and the weather seems to still. It's no wonder that people who do not understand eclipses think the world is coming to an end. One story from eclipse lore claims that in 1504, Christopher Columbus was marooned on the coast of Jamaica. To manipulate the locals, he arranged a meeting with them when he knew an eclipse was going to begin. He announced that unless they gave him what he wanted, God would show displeasure by taking away the Sun. Needless to



The path of the moon's shadow across southern Africa

say, when the eclipse started, Columbus got everything he asked for.

Eclipse chasing can also be incredibly frustrating. We work hard to find the right place; we struggle to be there at the right time—and often clouds, rain, or snow foil all plans. (Did I mention it snowed in Mongolia during the eclipse of 1997?) Not only do we depend on Mother Nature for this event, we have to have her permission to see it.

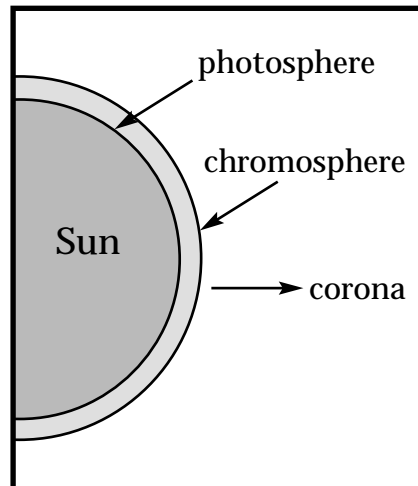
I don't enjoy chasing eclipses just for the experience—I also do it to learn more about the Sun. My research is in solar physics, a field I discovered while doing research in the time between undergraduate and graduate school. I worked with Dr. Shadia Habbal at the Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts for two years on projects in solar physics using data from the Skylab satellite. I still collaborate with Dr. Habbal—in fact she is the principal scientific investigator on all the eclipse expeditions.

Skylab images are beautiful, and I have to admit they drew me into the field. At some point I realized the significance of the fact that we have a star very, very close to us. How close? The light from the closest star we can see in the night sky takes a few years to reach us. The light from the Sun only takes 8 minutes. The Sun is the heart of the solar system. Without it we would not have life on Earth. Since the Sun is a star, it is completely different from the planets. It produces incredible amounts of energy and has no solid surface on which to stand. The “big ball of fire” is a plasma laboratory in the sky—a resource that provides incredible amounts of data. But we still don't understand everything about it. I study the Sun because I want to solve one or two small parts of the unsolved solar puzzles. So, before I tell you more about our trip to Africa, let me give you an overview of some of the science we were trying to do with this eclipse.

SOLAR ECLIPSE SCIENCE

The two aspects of the Sun we are trying to better understand are related to the Sun's atmosphere. More specifically, we are trying to determine the mechanisms behind coronal heating and the origin of the fast and slow solar wind.

The Sun has many layers and is made entirely of plasma (essentially charged particles such as electrons and protons.) The visible “surface” of the Sun is the *photosphere*. Above the photosphere the *chromosphere* and *corona* make up the Sun's upper atmosphere (shown above). The chromosphere is hot, but cooler than the photosphere, as might be expected. (Well, okay, maybe you



Schematic diagram of the Sun and its upper atmosphere

don't expect it. Here is an analogy—when your hand is close to a flame, the temperature decreases as you move your hand away.) However, the corona is many times hotter than both the chromosphere and photosphere, presenting a major enigma for solar physicists: what is the mechanism behind coronal heating?

Solar plasma escapes the Sun via the solar wind. These charged particles often interact with the earth, affecting orbiting satellites, disturbing power grids, and generating the beautiful northern lights (*aurora borealis*). The solar wind can be characterized by two speeds: fast (> 600 kilometers/second or 1,317,600 mph) and slow (~ 400 kilometers/second or 878,400 mph). The origin (e.g. location on the Sun) of these two types of winds is still unknown.

To begin solving enigmas like coronal heating and solar wind origin, one needs to test potential theories with data representing actual physical conditions on the Sun. It is especially important to determine physical conditions at the boundaries between the photosphere and upper atmospheric layers. Relevant physical parameters include local magnetic field strength, plasma density, and plasma temperature.

Unfortunately, the chromosphere and corona are very dim compared to the photosphere, in part because they are less dense. Therefore, we are not able to observe these layers unless the entire photosphere is blocked out. The best way to block the photosphere is with the moon during a total solar eclipse. Therefore, nature provides us with the optimal opportunity to observe the solar atmosphere close to the solar “surface” as well as the boundaries between atmospheric layers.

Eclipses can also help us expand our understanding in other scientific disciplines. For example, observations during the May 29, 1919 solar eclipse were used to confirm Einstein's general theory of relativity for the first time. In addition, Helium (from *Helios*, the Greek name for the Sun) was discovered during an eclipse in 1868 before it was found on Earth.

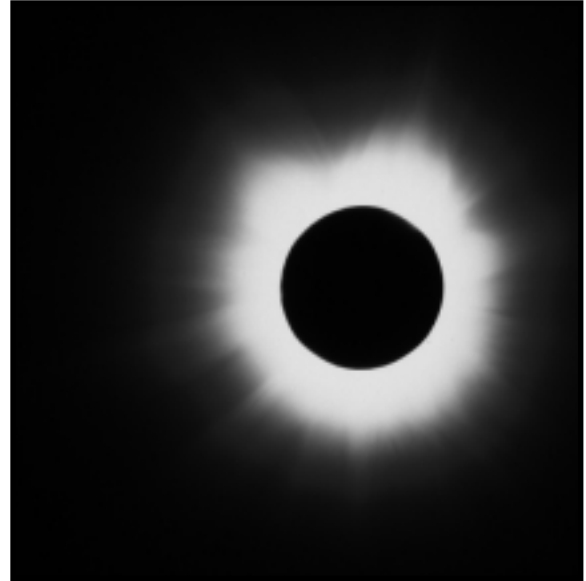
THE ECLIPSE IN AFRICA

After consulting weather maps, eclipse bulletins, and the level of political unrest in several countries, we decided to observe the eclipse from Zambia. So now the trick was to get there. Before we could leave, we needed visas and vaccinations. As a US citizen, I only needed a visa into Zambia even though we had plans to travel through Zimbabwe and Botswana. To visit these places, I needed vaccinations for hepatitis A and B, polio, typhoid, malaria, tetanus, diphtheria, measles, mumps, and rubella. I took many pills and became an expert at receiving shots.

All of our observing equipment had to be carried with us—cameras, computers, monitors, tripods, electric generators, a dewar for liquid nitrogen, tents—all in addition to our own personal luggage. We were able to bring the more delicate equipment onboard with us (something we will no longer be able to do after the events of September 11th). We had hundreds of pounds of equipment, and we had to lug it all ourselves. That's why we decided to call ourselves "The Solar Wind Sherpas."

To get to Zambia, we flew from Boston to London, from London to Johannesburg (Joberg to those in the know), and from Joberg to Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. We were met by Ken, our fearless tour guide, and Eddie, our talented cook. We strapped our equipment to the roofs of two trucks and packed ourselves inside. We hit one of the few roads and headed toward Kafue National Park, where our eclipse site was located. The roads were poorly kept—I liken it to a road of potholes surrounded by token pavement. We were visiting during Zambia's winter months, so the temperature was similar to early summer in New England—sometimes cool, sometimes blistering hot. The bugs were dormant, which was good for me since mosquitoes adore me.

One of our photographs



Away from the cities, folks live in clay houses with thatched roofs clustered in small communities. Most people walk or ride their bikes to get around. Everyone was incredibly friendly, waving at us as we drove by. The women were usually dressed in bright colored cloths, and were often spotted balancing 10-gallon drums of water on their heads as they walked.

We would eat lunch on the side of the road. Eddie was very good at pulling together meals out of cheese, bread, tomatoes, cucumbers, baked beans, and tuna. We stayed at a hotel in Lusaka for one evening and stayed at "Hippo Camp" for another. A couple of days after arriving in Lusaka, and a few adventures later (one of our trailer wheels bouncing by us as we were driving being one of them), we finally reached our camp. Some locals cut the camp out of the brush—though most of it was burned, since fire is more efficient than a sickle. We set up camp and prepared for the eclipse for six days. Most of this time was spent erecting special tents and a canopy to protect the equipment (and us) from the Sun. We balanced and aligned the tripods, got the computers connected, and practiced as a team to prepare for taking data during the 3.5-minute eclipse.

We worked during the daylight hours, and at night we feasted on great meals around the campfire. I looked forward to these gatherings—it was a great way to relax after our intense work. We spent this time getting to know each other, sharing stories of other eclipse trips, thinking about our friends and family who could not join us on the trip, and sharing our cultures. One of the more entertaining conversations was regarding *South Park*. Apparently, the television show is about one year behind the US on the South African stations. Ken and Eddie got a preview of the episodes to come.

After the eclipse,
wearing protective
glasses

At night, the hippos that were located 100 yards into the river that bordered our camp would become very active. Their guffawing entertained us as we sat in safety near our campfire, and in the morning we were often able to trace their evening activities by following their tracks close to camp. The night skies were beautiful—a sight not lost on the avid astronomers in the group. I was able to see stars and constellations I have never seen before—in part because the skies were so dark and in part because this was my first excursion below the earth's equator.

The day of the eclipse was full of anticipation and tension. The first hour or so before totality is spent getting into position, checking last minute notes, and quizzing each other—all while the moon appeared to take a bite out of the Sun. One person was assigned the job of announcing when totality started. At that moment all of the camera shutters started firing. These three-plus minutes during totality took intense concentration—it was dark, so we needed to recall all of our memorized exposure times as well as any filter and polarizer positions (it's kind of hard to see the exposure times on a camera in the dark). We needed to listen to our cameras to make sure our exposures were finished—and that was challenging with 8 camera shutters going off at the same time. I found it terribly stressful—this was what we had been preparing for since the last eclipse. But we did it! We got data from all our instruments, and afterward, we jumped up and down, hugged, and cried with relief. One of our photographs of the eclipse (facing page) is a white light image, and the halo around the dark moon is the corona. The filamentary structure visible in the corona is due to plasma interacting with the sun's magnetic field. Those structures that appear to extend far into space are magnetic field lines along which the solar wind travels. That evening by the campfire, we opened two bottles of champagne to celebrate.

The next morning, we packed up the camp and made our way back. Now that the eclipse was over we were able to be tourists for a couple of days—we saw Victoria Falls, the largest waterfall in the world. We also went on a game drive and saw wild animals in their natural habitat—elephants, giraffes, hippos, crocodiles, various hoofed animals, lions eating aforementioned hoofed animals, monkeys, beautiful birds, mongooses (it is not monegeese, come to find out) and lots of other animals.



The trip was a success. Not only were we able to get excellent data (Mother Nature was very accommodating), we had the adventure of a lifetime. Along the way we saw three different countries and were able to experience a new culture. I am trying my best to visit Africa again. Mother Nature is cooperating: on December 4th, 2002, there will be an eclipse visible from the southern half of Africa. I am doing all I can to go. As far as the data we have collected, we are slowly analyzing it and beginning to understand it. Perhaps we will be able to find the small piece that will help complete a solar puzzle.

—Martina B. Arndt is Assistant Professor of Physics

International Artist Exchanges in Former Yugoslavia

by Margaret Tittlemore



In the fall of 1999, I, with other members of the Mobius Artists Group in Boston, was invited to go to the Istrian region of Croatia. The project developed from an initial contact with Croatian artist Silvo Saric, who had been an Artslink fellow at Mobius the year before. Mobius is an arts organization with a 25 year history in Boston for experimental work in all media.

The Trust for Mutual Understanding, a private philanthropic organization in New York, provided major funding for the project. Dedicated to promoting closer cooperation between the people of the United States, the former Soviet Union and other countries in Eastern and Central Europe, the Trust funds projects in which direct, professional interaction plays a major role. Grants are awarded for creative artistic collaborations in dance, theatre and music, as well as the visual arts.

Our project, entitled *Taking Liberty/Usvajanje Slobode*, would have two parts. The first half would be a cultural and artistic exchange with artists in the town of Pula, which dates back to the Roman empire, and the second would occur in Boston. Pula has a rich, multicultural history. We stayed as guests of the city in an Austro-Hungarian style hotel and walked by a very intact, two thousand-year-old Roman coliseum each evening to get there. All the streets had two signs, one in Croatian and the other in Italian, as a leftover from when this was once Italy! Our hosts took us up the coastline to Rovinj, Porec and Novigrad, with the group exhibiting and performing. I did a piece at Labin in a contemporary arts center that had been a former coal mine under the Communist regime. Large metal letters spelling out TITO still loomed on the roof. In *Free to Breathe/Slobodno Disanje*, a performance/drawing, I incorporated a rubbing of the tiled wall of the coal miners' shower stall into the finished piece.

One of the most amazing aspects of making and exhibiting work in Pula were the sites that were made available to us by the Director of Archeology. I was able to select an ancient 5th century remnant of a

Benedictine monastery for my second piece, *Crossing Over/Prekoracaj*, which was a combination of installation and storytelling. I collected personal anecdotes from American friends who had experience with the consequences of a "mixed" marriage. I felt these stories about people who had crossed a barrier of race, religion and/or class would resonate in Croatia. I was fortunate to collaborate with a Croatian artist, Robert Sosic, who became more than just a translator of the stories but a part of the performance. Each time a story was completed, I lifted a veil of white tulle from my head and let it drop to the ground. Then both of us trampled a barrier of 900 orange warning flags placed in a long row outside the ancient chapel. Our work was covered in the



Crossing Over, Part I

daily local press, and a color picture from *Crossing Over* appeared on the front page of the national newspaper.

The following spring, the Croatian artists came to Boston for the second half of the exchange. We hosted them in our homes and had a series of group dinners. The group chose sites that included traditional gallery spaces as well as alternative art locations in the Fort Point area to exhibit the work. I chose the Old Northern Avenue Bridge for a performance without words, *Crossing Over, Part Two/Prekoracaj, Drugi Dio*. I was able to collaborate with Robert Sosic again as well as with Ljiljana Vlacic for this piece. This time, the many layers of veils stayed on for my trip across the pedestrian passage way and were slowly dropped on the return. I am indebted to the Croatians for getting me across! This is what I wrote for the catalog description:

Like a clouded lens, the veils build up, slowly over time, blinding her. She cannot see the way. Friends come. One in front, one behind, leading her across. High above the surface of the water, the veils begin to drop. One by one, they fall to the ground. Facing the truth, she returns.

During the summer of 2001, I was a participant in a second exchange between artists in Croatia and the Mobius Artists Group, this time in the Dalmatian region south of Pula. The project, *Digging the Channel/Prokopavanje Kanala*, had as its focus the exploration of the similarities and differences between Zadar and Boston. Primarily Roman in its history and design, the "old city" of Zadar is connected by a bridge to the more modern mainland. During World War II, a channel that used to encircle the old city was filled in with debris from Allied bombing and paved over. Recently, the city of Zadar announced an intention to restore the channel for historical and ecological reasons. In Boston, the Fort Point Channel divides the central financial district from the artists' community, which is being threatened by development. This channel has become a boundary between art, public works and public life and will be the metaphor for the Boston phase.

In Zadar, I chose the paved channel as my site and made a series of drawings, entitled *Channel Markings/Oznacavanje kanala*, in blue chalk directly on the road. I drew Neolithic marks that symbolize "water," imitating those I found on pottery shards in the Archeological Museum of Zadar. I collaborated with Croatian artist Maya Semic, who acted as "trouble-shooter" for me as I drew in the street. She gave me Croatian language lessons and taught me Croatian poetry. I also made a series of drawings incorporating "found" marks such as graphiti with Neolithic ones.

The exchange in Zadar was much more complex than the previous one, and I am still processing it. Perhaps the fact that Zadar was heavily damaged from 1991 to 1995 and is still in recovery is part of the complexity. Zadar was "on the front line," and Pula was not. Many of the artists we met had lived in basement shelters for four years. I felt a palpable sadness in the city even though the tourist season was at its peak. One powerful insight after we returned and following the attacks of September 11 was that now we knew how the Croatians felt about being victims of war. For the second half of this exchange, the Croatian artists arrived in Boston in May of this year and presented a series of installations and performances focusing on the Fort Point Channel. Our work was displayed on the Congress Street and Summer Street bridges as well as on a barge in the Channel.

—Margaret Tittlemore is Visiting Lecturer in Art



Crossing Over, Part 2

Princes (and Princesses) of Rhode Island

by Suzanne Ramczyk



As a teacher of performance in the Theatre Arts program, I have always felt the need to keep my hand in the world of professional theatre in any way I can. Since the regular academic year allows me only brief stints as a consultant, writer of program notes, or panelist for a humanities “talk back” series, I am fortunate that sabbaticals allow a wider foray into the professional world. My sabbatical of 1992 with the American Repertory Theatre and my more recent one of 2001 with Trinity Repertory Theatre afforded rich, rewarding, and wide-ranging opportunities. I taught in the Conservatories’ MFA programs, functioned as assistant director to Alvin Epstein of the A.R.T., evaluated scripts for the literary offices, and embarked on one of my most interesting research projects yet. Little I knew of the journey ahead when early last January, Craig Watson, the Literary Director for Trinity Rep., asked me to assist with research for their forthcoming production of Peter Parnell’s adaptation of John Irving’s best-selling novel, *The Cider House Rules*.

Oskar Eustis and his company were mounting a stage version of Irving’s epic to be presented in two parts with a huge cast and small orchestra. *The Cider House Rules* traces the life of Homer Wells, who is raised in a Maine orphanage by the irascible yet humble and dedicated Dr. Larch. Set against the sweeping saga of American history, the play is a compelling tale of self-discovery, as Homer grows from boyhood to adulthood. There was much excitement centered on this project, which would culminate in the first fully-staged, East Coast production of this play that had previously received several “readings” and one performance in Seattle. Certainly Irving’s name (*The World According to Garp*) and also that of Peter Parnell (writer for *The West Wing*) would bring much notice to this production, as would the popularity of the Academy Award-winning screen adaptation. Additionally, many issues within the piece—orphans, adoption, and reproductive rights—offered prime material around which Trinity could host media and “forum” events. My assignment was to provide the production with background material that

focused on life in New England orphanages from the turn of the 19th century through the 1950s, as well as to conduct interviews with former alumni of Rhode Island orphanages and write a major article, all to be published in *The Trinity Reporter*.

Having decided to confine my research to Rhode Island orphanages, I spent many hours in the “Rhode Island Collection” at the Providence Public Library and in the offices of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families poring over historical documents and records that seemingly had not been opened since their ledgers were filled as early as the 1880s. There were also field trips to the site of the old Rhode Island State Farm and School (now part of Rhode Island College), and even to cemeteries and burial grounds. Interviews were fascinating and, sometimes, emotionally difficult. The journey became more than an academic project, evolving into something poignant that I shall not forget. I became witness to the abandonment or the forgetting of children whose threadbare stories filled the state records. I had to recognize that the state of Rhode Island (like many others) had engaged in the ugly practice of indenturing its children. I learned that the remains of young inmates were removed from the site of Rhode Island College and that several were seemingly “lost” in the process. Only now and then did life-affirming stories cut through the mostly bleak narratives. The following is an excerpt from my article, originally published in *The Trinity Reporter* in April, 2001.

From “A SHORT HISTORY OF SOME PRINCES (AND PRINCESSES) OF RHODE ISLAND”

Over his many years of service to St. Cloud’s Orphanage, Dr. Larch (in *The Cider House Rules*) was known to fling open the door to the boys’ dormitory and shout, “Good night—you Princes of Maine, you Kings of New England!” From a contemporary perspective, such noble appellations, bestowed perhaps to foster the boys’ sense of self-worth, might seem grimly ironic in view of the diverse quality of care received in Rhode Island institutions during the period of Larch’s tenure—the late nineteenth century until the 1940s. Despite the nurturing some children may have been afforded in both the private orphanages and the Rhode

Island State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children, it is difficult to imagine orphans receiving any treatment that could be construed as “royal.” However, the quality of care, which was largely dependent upon who was providing the care, ranged from what we might consider appalling today, to an attempt at providing real nurturing, education, and quite often—love.

The records of the State Home, from the time of its inception in 1884 through the 1920s, provide a startling lesson in Rhode Island history. First of all, no matter the nature or the origins of their life problems, the abused, the depressed, the true orphans, and the merely poor children were all treated the same. Often, entire sibling groups were deposited in the Home, only to be placed out to different families, with no guarantee of being returned to their natural parent(s). Further, the home was a “work farm,” requiring labor of most inmates. Most shockingly, record books from the 1880s through the first two decades of the twentieth century contain a column to register the children’s “indenturing.” Many children had up to six different placements. Throughout the 1920s, the “indenturing” column was not filled in, but accurate recordings of “allowances” paid to each child clearly substantiate the continuance of this practice. Boys were placed on farms where they performed labor in the orchards, worked with livestock or cleared land, and girls were destined for household work. There were also incidents of girls as young as fourteen years of age being adopted by single men, only to be married to these same men a year or two later.

This seemingly grim picture continues. Many children were returned (often several times) for being “willful” or “stubborn;” and although incidents of abuse are only sketchily recorded, one can surmise the presence of physical and sexual abuse that may have accompanied these indentured, non-loving placements. If returned too many times for “bad” behavior, the children were transferred to the reform schools: boys to Sockanossett

and girls to Oaklawn, both in Cranston. Finally, early in the era, it seems that placement was simply a task of “pick and choose.” Conceivably, people could arrive at the orphanage, state their needs, and take whomever they wanted. Certainly there must have been some true and even loving adoptions, but these are difficult to ferret out amidst the bleaker picture.

However, this picture must be viewed in the context of the times. The lifestyle and care of the children in the State Home represented a marked improvement from that which the inmates had previously experienced in their lives. The children were rarely true orphans, usually left by indigent or single parents, and had frequently been enduring lives of almost unimaginable hardship. Often they were refugees from the State Almshouse, where they lived with all types of indigent adults, as well as the ill and the insane. The State Home provided a safe and comfortable haven for these unfortunates. An article in *The Providence Journal* in 1890 praised the Home’s comfort, noted that the cottages were scrupulously clean, cited an abundance of food, and documented plenty of toys scattered about. Additionally, the State Home reflected the then contemporary view that work afforded a solution to dependency and oppression. Further, the state required that even indentured children receive two more years of schooling, clothing, and physical care.

For a much smaller number of children in private insti-



Saint Mary’s Orphanage

tutions, life in this same period could be quite good, without the threat of indenturing. In 1929, the superintendent of The Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island noted in his Annual Report that "...provision was made so that the boy and girl might prepare for life through social contacts, dramatics, art, music, outdoor and indoor sports, and many other activities." The children were required to work their own vegetable gardens, work that in all



likelihood was not comparable to indentured farm labor. St. Aloysius, which also required farm work of the 15,000 inmates under its care over the years, recorded the pride it took in the care provided 240 children and in the large number of sisters who taught them, sewed for them, fed them, and provided for all their physical and spiritual wants. In the 1920s, there were eight school grades, as well as instruction in carpentry, sewing, and music. In 1948, *The Providence Journal* reported that "...here 178 running, shouting, skylarking children find none of the opposition that greets so much of youth's exuberance."

One of the most successful of the "privates" is St. Mary's, still in operation today, though not as an orphanage. In 1889, the annual report noted that household work was required of the children but that great care was taken to apportion work according to the individual child's strength. The Annual Report of 1907 attested to the children's happiness, noting that "...[there is] much sorrow and regret manifested by the children when the time comes for them to leave St. Mary's, and the pleasure with which they return to visit their old friends, is sufficient proof of the happiness of their young days." The numerous subsequent reports thoroughly document this happiness; however, these reports are continually in counterpoint to the ongoing dissatisfaction with the orphanage's limited capacity.

Therein lies the shortcoming of the private institu-

tions: so few of the needy children could be admitted to share in the much-touted wholesome, happy lives. Every Annual Report published by St. Mary's attests to this discrepancy. For example, in 1909, 123 applications were made and 22 children admitted, and in 1920, 147 applied and 22 were admitted. St. Aloysius handled many more children over the years, but the great majority of indigent or needy children in Rhode Island went to the State Home. Further, all institutions shared a common deficiency. The histories of the private, as well as the public institutions, are replete with the ongoing "hue and cry" for the need for more resources of all kinds: monetary, physical, educational, and professional. Thus, the presence in Rhode Island of any of Dr. Larch's "royalty," may have been dependent on the resources available at any particular time. Further, although the degree of royalty achieved by some of the inmates in the institutions may have been higher in the "privates," Dr. Larch would surely have been able to find "princes," and even "kings," in both types of institution, when taking into account the lives so many of the children had left behind.

—Suzanne Ramczyk is Professor
of Communication Studies and Theatre Arts

Cultural Commentary: Eating High off the Hog

by Garland Kimmer



In the 1860s, Matthew Arnold defined culture as “sweetness and light.” At the ripe old age of thirty-four, I’ve decided that it’s time to rethink that definition just a little bit. Real culture consists of the ready availability of three items that come just behind food, clothing, and shelter on my list for necessities of survival: barbecue, sweet tea, and Atlantic Coast Conference basketball. It all seemed so simple to be able to define culture in this way until about a year ago.

I’m new here. Okay, maybe not quite new anymore, but I’ve only been living here for the last two years. I came to Bridgewater State after living my whole life in North Carolina and really wasn’t sure what to expect. I knew that the property values would be higher, the temperatures lower, and the Red Sox would be mathematically eliminated from the pennant race by the time I started teaching my summer session class. Still, that’s not an awful lot to go on. It didn’t tell me anything about the food, drink, and the hoops that I’d be able to enjoy in this new part of the world.

It’s the same old story. I came up here, met my students, enjoyed my classes, tried to convince everyone around me that “y’all” was a much needed addition to the English language, and ate a lot of seafood. After a couple of months of this pattern, I started to notice a longing. No, make that a craving, for something that I just couldn’t seem to find anywhere. I needed my native cuisine and needed it badly. The only problem was that I didn’t live in North Carolina anymore, so finding native North Carolina cuisine was going to be an adventure unless I could click my heels together and say “there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home.” Needless to say, that didn’t work.

Let me digress for a second. As far as I can tell, North Carolina has made only one great contribution to world cuisine: BARBECUE. It’s heavenly. In fact, if it came in liquid form, it’d be the nectar of the gods. It also has to be served with bottomless glasses of sweetened iced tea. I make this other form of nectar at home, so my longing for tea just couldn’t compare to what I was experiencing for barbecue. They say that breaking the addiction to cigarettes is bad, but I can’t see any way the withdrawal pains from nicotine come near the sensations that I was experiencing last Fall.

If you’ve never eaten barbecue, then you’re missing out on a treat. The problem is that barbecue is one of those words that means something different in every part of the country. The Oxford English Dictionary, that wise repository of all that is good and useful in the English language, tells us that it’s both a noun and a verb, as in “to barbecue.” Real barbecue is not a verb. As a noun, it comes into the English language from a Haitian word describing a “framework of sticks set upon posts.” Somewhere along the line, this framework moved away from its use for sleeping and toward supporting meat that was to be cooked. In much of America, including New England, you can have “a barbecue” in the back yard or at the pool. Down south, barbecue does not have an “a” in front of it. It’s just “barbecue.”

Trying to describe barbecue is nigh upon impossible because there are all kinds of varieties that spread from North Carolina all the way to Texas, an area that one scholar in the field has labeled “the barbecue belt.” In Texas, barbecue means something completely different



The real thing
in West Newton

than it does in most of the South. Texans use beef brisket and beef ribs, with side dishes of beans and Texas toast, to go with the thick, spicy, tomato-based sauces. Memphis features pork (especially ribs) with a rich rub cooked over hickory and served with a thick, tangy tomato sauce. Kansas City style barbecue combines these traits, at least according to their promotional materials. These same materials, however, admit one important fact: that barbecue was born in the Carolinas. The brochure does not say that North Carolina has the best barbecue, but it's almost certainly written between the lines.

North Carolina does have the best barbecue. As in most of the civilized world, North Carolina barbecue refers only to pork. The best places only serve it off the shoulder, with a large plate of hushpuppies (small pieces of a cornmeal dough deep fried to golden perfection) and a glass of sweet tea. Even in North Carolina, though, we argue about the best kind of barbecue. There are two main versions of North Carolina barbecue: eastern and western. The line that traditionally divides the two styles is drawn right through the state capital in Raleigh. The eastern style is characterized by meat that is finely chopped or sliced and the sauce is peppery vinegar. Some of the best places in the eastern part of the state are Bullock's Barbecue in Durham and Wilber's Barbecue in Goldsboro, which also won the *Southern Living* magazine award for the best barbecue in the South. One other tidbit: they'll ship their sauce if you happen to live in Massachusetts.

Regardless of what *Southern Living* has to say, western North Carolina barbecue is the real deal. The pork shoulder is doused in a sauce rich with vinegar and tomatoes. The one spot that constitutes a pilgrimage for barbecue fans is Lexington, a scant 25 miles from where I grew up. Lexington is also known as "the barbecue capital of the world." In Lexington, October was officially declared "Barbecue Month" and the cycling event, the Parade of Pigs (also called the Tour de Pig). It's not the celebrations that make Lexington Barbecue special, however. It's the rest of the year when you can go into any of the dozens of barbecue joints and come away with a meal fit for a king. The best barbecue in world can be found at the aptly named Lexington Barbecue. When I was home over the summer, I even ran into one of my graduate school advisors who'd driven three hours just for dinner.

Back to my craving. You can already tell that I think too much about barbecue and have undoubtedly guessed that it was becoming such a frequent visitor in my dreams that I couldn't even watch Porky Pig on the Cartoon Network. I needed help and needed it bad. Fortunately, I chose to talk to someone about my addiction. Even more fortunately, I told my tale of woe to one of my colleagues, Mike Boyd of the English Department, who grew up in Texas. He sympathized and, rather than starting me on the road to wellness, suggested that he knew a place that just might solve my problem. Somehow in the midst of our discussions, I found out that Bill Smith, also of the English Department, was another displaced North Carolinian, and this modern-day triumvirate planned a trip for barbecue. No, it wasn't a road trip worthy of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, but we did go to West Newton, MA for barbecue. One of the owners had apparently encountered the phenomenon that is barbecue when he was in the military and brought it back with him to West Newton. That afternoon, I had North Carolina pulled pork and didn't even quibble that we "pick" the pig rather than "pull" it.

—Garland Kimmer is Assistant Professor of English

Becoming Ndebele: The Decorated Homes of Matabeleland

by Brenda Molife



I was born in Zambia and lived there until I was three, at which time my family moved to the United States, the country of my mother's birth. My father was born and raised in Zimbabwe, and a large number of our relatives still live there in the capitol city of Harare. In 1990, I went to visit these relatives, and a few days before I returned to the



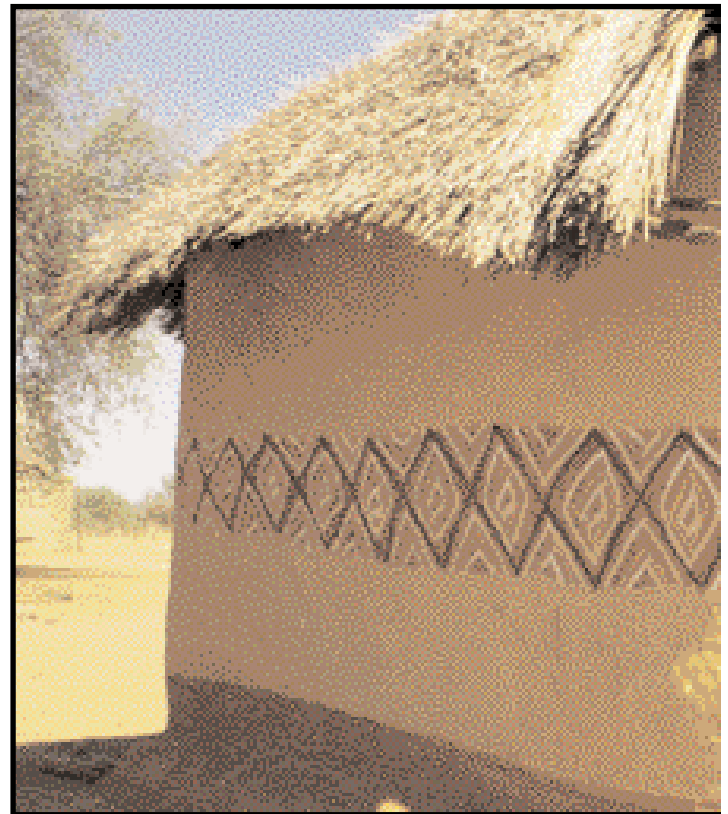
Left,
Band motif

States I decided to pay a trip to Victoria Falls. I rented a pick-up truck, loaded the cab with all my touristy gear, and began driving cross country. It was mid-December, the peak of Zimbabwe's rainy season, although a drought was in progress, and it had not rained for over a year. The parched earth was cracked and sandy brown. Withered plants dotted the landscape, their sparse leaves being nibbled by emaciated goats. By the time I neared my destination, five dreary hours later, the world seemed devoid of beauty. And then I saw a flower. It was painted on the side of a house. It was a remarkably striking thing to see in such a barren environment. Who had painted it, I wondered, and why?

In 1996, I returned to Zimbabwe with these and other questions in mind, and fifteen hundred miles, 500 photographs, two hundred interviews, and one flat tire later, I had obtained the answers.

Located in the southern half of Africa, Zimbabwe shares its borders with South Africa to the south, Botswana and Namibia to the west, Zambia to the north, and Mozambique to the east. Zimbabwe is approximately the size of Montana, and its geography is extremely diverse. You can find semi-arid conditions, savanna grasslands and mountainous regions all within a few hours' drive. The country is known for its stone ruins, most notably Great Zimbabwe, and for Victoria Falls. Throughout the land are several well-known game reserves, such as Hwange and Chipangali. Zimbabwe's population of approximately eleven million consists of several ethnic groups, including a small but economically powerful number of Europeans and Asians. Among the indigenous peoples are the Venda, Kalanga, and Tonga. However, the culturally and numerically dominant group is the Shona, who comprise 71% of the population and live in the east in what is called Mashonaland. The second largest ethnic group is the Ndebele. They make up 16% of the population and reside mainly in the west, which is called Matabeleland and is the home of the remarkable house painting tradition known as the Zimbabwe Ndebele mural.

Ndebele murals are painted almost exclusively by females, and a girl learns this art form from her mother. There is never a single moment when a girl begins to learn this tradition; rather, she is under instruction virtually from birth. It is not uncommon, for instance, to see two- and three-year-olds huddled quietly beneath a





Left, Step motif.

Directly below,

Plant motif.

Bottom,

Geometric motif.



mango tree, attentively watching their mother transform a dull brown house into a thing of beauty. You may, on any given day, see an eight-year-old helping stir a container of paint. Or you may encounter a ten-year-old sketching in the sand, practicing the designs she would have seen her mother paint countless times before. With this kind of on-going training, it is no wonder that, by the age of eleven, a girl will be a competent muralist. And in all probability, by the time she turns twelve, she will have been delegated the responsibility of decorating an entire compound.

A young girl just assuming this responsibility will often imitate her mother's designs, but it will not be long before she decides to test her own creative wings. When she has a new idea for a mural, she will sketch it for her mother, and only after it has been approved can its likeness be applied to a wall. In school, she is exposed to a wider range of design possibilities; many girls told me they got their ideas for designs from books and magazines they saw at school. Other girls credited their powers of imagination. But regardless of a girl's source of inspiration, and no matter what creative prowess she may possess, she will not have total freedom of expression until she marries and moves to her own home.

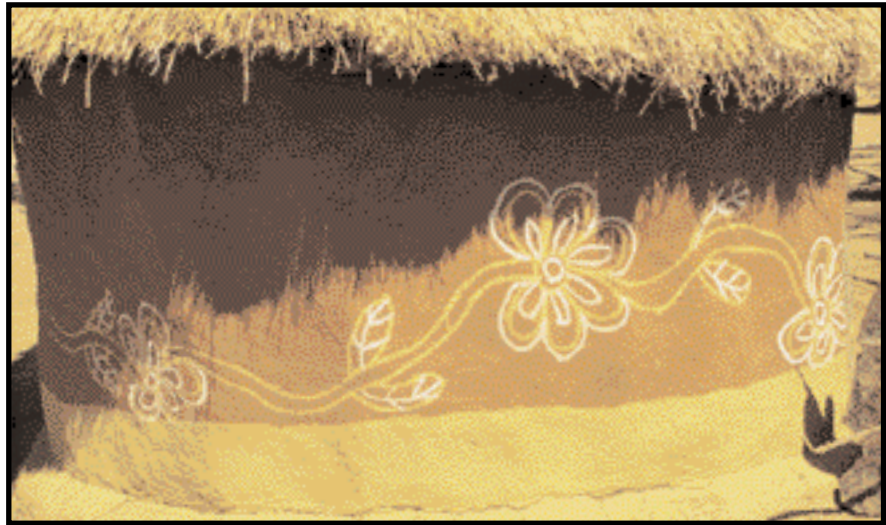
A muralist will often walk long distances in search of the desired soil color from which to make the paint. The soil's hues include red, orange, black, brown, rust, beige, and khaki. Near a small town called Gwanda, yellow soil can be obtained from an abandoned gold mine, and near the town of Lupane one can find the color pink just beneath the surface of the riverbed. Women also obtain reddish brown and white from the inner soil of ant hills.

A handful of women stated that they purchase acrylic white paint because they want a brighter white than what soil or ash can provide. But in a region of the world where the average yearly income is forty dollars, the overwhelming majority of women cannot afford such a luxury.

When a woman arrives at an area that contains the color soil she desires, she skims off the topsoil and fills her container with subsoil. Transporting the soil home is back-breaking work, as the filled containers often weigh fifty pounds or more. The women manage the load by balancing the containers on their heads, though some women are fortunate enough to make use of a mule and cart.

After soil and water have been mixed to a consistency of pea soup, debris is extracted. The first coat, or primer, is smeared onto the wall by hand. This act is similar in tactility to raking one's hand over rough sandpaper. The actual mural is painted by hand and with a homemade brush, such as a toothbrush or a small stick whose tip has been frayed.

The Ndebele generally paint their homes twice a year. Most women paint once in the dry season (roughly from April through October) and again in December. The artists want their homes to look especially presentable in December when family and friends visit to celebrate Christmas. Unfortunately, December is also when the rainy season is in full swing; anything decorated with soil-based paints during this time will be damaged within a few days. Since December's murals



Above,
Plant motif.
Right,
Animal motif.



will not be in pristine condition to bring in the new year, some women paint again in early January.

Murals are found on the exterior as well as the interior of homes. The kitchen is the most commonly decorated interior, as this is the place where family, friends, visitors, and neighbors often gather.

A skilled muralist can paint a single building, inside and out, in about a day. That time will vary, of course, depending upon the elaborateness of the designs and motifs.

Mrs. Dube, a seventy-six-year old artist, told me about three motifs that were common when she was a girl but which are now rare. They were what she called intaba (mountain or hill), isayobe (spider), and ilanga (sun).

Other oral sources described murals that were found only on the walls of kitchens but which are no longer painted. These included images of calabashes, baskets, wooden plates, clay pots and women pounding grain in mortars. I believe that these murals are no longer in use

because, as kitchen-related utensils and/or activities, their function was to distinguish the kitchen from other structures in the compound, all of which were circular. When the Ndebele began using Western-style furniture, such as bed frames and dressers, they changed the shape of the bedrooms to accommodate these rectangular forms. The kitchen is now generally the only remaining circular structure, and, as such, it need not be identified by a specific mural. This, of course, implies that the sole function of these murals was one of identification, and while I do not necessarily believe that to be true, I can think of only one other reason for their having become obsolete; they are simply no longer in vogue.

Today, the most popular motifs are what I call “band,” “step,” “geometric,” and “plant.” These motifs provide the platform from which women launch their artistic expressions, and the styles created range from the minimalist to the baroque.

The rainy season of 1996-97 was particularly brutal. Beginning in November, when the first raindrops fell, hardly a week passed during the subsequent four months that did not bring heavy precipitation. As a result, a great number of homes went unpainted during this time. Nevertheless, I met many women who painted in spite of the rain. These women paint so regularly in the face of so many obstacles, including drought, famine, and illness, that it was no surprise to learn that there was much more at work here than solely aesthetics.

One of the reasons why women paint murals is to garner respect. Artist Colina Ndlovu, for example, whose house you see decorated with the plant motif on page 17, said, “That’s the whole idea, because a beautiful home is respectable. If a woman has made her home beautiful, then she will be respected more.” Many other women gave similar responses, some saying that, when they were growing up, their mothers urged them to paint because that was a way of attracting the right kind of suitor. As muralist Jane Mhlapa explained, “A man who admires a woman’s hard work will make a better husband than one who doesn’t notice.” The desire for marriage in this culture is so great, however, that even if the “better man” does not materialize, then a “less than better man” will simply have to do.

Understanding the importance of marriage is crucial to understanding one of the prime motivations behind this art form. For instance, in the unlikely event that a woman does not marry, she will have to find employment in order to support herself, thereby abandoning her expected role of being occupied solely with household affairs. While that role has been loosened from the hinges of tradition in the urban areas, it remains firmly secure in the rural areas, where the murals are painted.

Once a woman is married, her motivation for painting will remain driven, in part, by social forces. Now she will paint, for instance, because her mother-in-law will expect it. What’s more, the painting competence of the new bride will play a role in the mother-in-law’s assessment of her son’s spouse. This is one reason why new wives who immigrate from communities that do not paint are eager to learn this tradition. In addition, the immigrant bride will be expected to assimilate into her new community by adopting the local customs, or, as artist Mongiwe Ncube put it, by “becoming Ndebele.”

“Becoming Ndebele” by painting murals is a phenomenon I first encountered in 1995. While surveying Matabeleland and the surrounding areas, I noted that there were murals among neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Kalanga and Nambya. Yet when I asked these muralists about their ethnicity, an interesting picture began to develop. A few of the women considered themselves Ndebele, and they did so despite their knowledge that both of their parents were of entirely different ethnic groups. In 1996-97, I heard similar sentiments expressed. One woman, Mrs. Nyoni, proudly stated, “When I was Shona and lived in Mashonaland, I did not paint. But now that I live here and paint my house, I am Ndebele.”

Along with the general desire for ethnic assimilation, there are important personal reasons for painting. One of these is the need to be recognized and appreciated. Women in this culture do not have a public arena in which to express themselves, and the murals allow women to present themselves to the world, that is to show their worth as wives, as mothers, as neighbors and/or as members of the community. For instance, a woman who is a good painter is, by extension, considered a good person, and here the word “good” does not necessarily mean “talented” but rather conscientious, careful, dutiful, and so forth. Also, a married woman believes that in showing she is taking good care of her

house, she is showing that she is taking good care of her family. This reasoning speaks volumes to these women's sense of pride, as well as to their insistence that their "voices" be heard and their actions seen.

The desire to uphold tradition was also a commonly cited reason for painting. Many women felt personally duty-bound to continue the artistic practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. There were some women, however, who felt no such obligation and who painted for a somewhat less noble purpose; they simply did not want other homes to look better than theirs. In other words, they were keeping up with the Joneses.

Nonetheless, despite all the reasons listed here for why Ndebele women paint, I saw a number of homes that were not painted. These unpainted homes were referred to as eye-sores, and the women who owned them were called such things as lazy and unkempt. I met a few of these stigmatized women, and they were visibly saddened and embarrassed by the state of their compounds. All of them, perhaps by way of apology, wanted me to know why they had not painted. Some women cited the heavy rains. A few complained about the incessant demands on a woman's time. And others spoke about AIDS, telling me how the disease is claiming scores of people, and that the survivors' lives have been tossed into despair and disarray. Who can paint, they asked, under such circumstances?

What do Ndebele men have to say about the murals? In a word: plenty. Men often tease men whose wives are not good painters, while men whose wives are known for spectacular designs jokingly boast that they have chosen superior women, which, the men add, is sound evidence of their own superiority. One man told me that he likes to talk about his wife's paintings to other men, not to tease them but rather to encourage them to send their wives to his wife to learn how to paint. Men also expressed negative sentiments about women who do not decorate their homes. Younger, single men often stated that they would never marry such a woman.

A few of the men I interviewed seemed to be genuine experts on the subject of mural painting. They knew where the best soils could be found, what colors were available in the area, how to mix the paints, and when was the best time to paint. They had learned these things as children while watching their mothers and grandmothers decorate. When I asked these men if they had ever painted murals, they insisted that they had not, and some expressed absolute horror at the mere suggestion.

Women, however, acknowledged that it would be acceptable if a man did decide to become a muralist, but for the first several months that I was in the field, I was told that no such man existed. And then, just weeks before my research was complete, a woman I was interviewing said that she knew of a man who painted. In fact, he lived just down the road. Unfortunately, the owner was not at home. Nor was he at home during any of my subsequent visits. When it was clear that I would never meet this male muralist, I settled for asking women in his community what they thought of him. While they disapproved of his lifestyle, namely the fact that he had married and divorced several times, they admired his decorations and the neatness of his home.

I came across only one other compound painted by a man. It was located just outside Matobo National Park, a game reserve that borders many Ndebele communities and is a favorite destination of foreign tourists. In 1995, I conducted several interviews in this area. At that time, the homes were decorated with band, step, plant and geometric motifs. When I visited in 1996-97, however, I noticed that some of the homes were painted with images of wildlife (animal motif on page 18). The primary subjects were elephants and giraffes, and they closely resembled those that men were carving from wood and selling from the park's gift shop. When I stopped at one of the homes to interview the women, I barely had time to sit before they had produced an astonishing array of items for sale. Knee-deep in bowls, beads and baskets, I explained that I was not there to purchase anything, but rather to speak with the woman who had painted the murals. I was informed that a man had painted the murals and that he was a wood carver employed by the gift shop. He had forgone the traditional motifs, the women explained, in favor of what he felt would be more appealing to tourists.

The long arm of tourism, however, can only reach so many. For the vast majority of artists with whom I spoke, the question was never how to make money from the murals, but rather how to make me feel at home while we discussed them. These women do not paint for profit; they paint because they are Ndebele. They paint because they are industrious. They paint because they are creative. They paint to attract the best possible suitors. And, perhaps most important, they paint because doing so gives them a voice, an outer platform on which to express so much inner pride.

—*Brenda Molife is Assistant Professor of Art*

Editor's notebook: Our E-Mails, Ourselves

by Barbara Apstein



In only a few years, e-mail has become enormously popular, almost completely replacing “snail-mail” for brief, personal communications. A convenient way to avoid “telephone tag” with people who are hard to reach by phone, e-mail is especially useful for contacting friends abroad, since it eliminates the need to calculate time differences and the cost of international phone calls. On September 11, with phone lines overwhelmed, e-mail was the quickest way to contact loved ones in New York and Washington.

Certain rules and restrictions regarding e-mail have evolved. We have learned that e-mail, especially in the office, is *not* private and that clicking “delete” does *not* remove that message from the computer’s innards. E-mails that strike the recipient as amusing or informative are temptingly easy to forward, occasionally creating embarrassment for the sender. One well-publicized instance concerned a young man who, on a slow day at the office, decided to update a few friends on his latest sexual adventures, only to discover that his e-mail message had been forwarded to hundreds of *their* friends.

On campus, e-mail is proving to be a convenient way for students and faculty to communicate outside class. Students can explain absences, ask questions about assignments, describe problems and send papers. A few weeks ago, having a free hour and a backlog of over 600 messages, I decided the time had come to clean my inbox. Most of the old messages—memos about issues long ago resolved, announcements of past meetings that I either did or did not attend—could be deleted instantly. Interspersed with these, however, were a number of electronic conversations and, scrolling through them, I realized that many of these exchanges would not have taken place, at least in the form they took, if e-mail did not exist.

Almost all the student e-mail correspondence I found fell into two categories, requests and excuses:

—I'm hoping that you would be so kind as to write a letter of recommendation for me...

—I was wondering if I could get a rough estimate of my grade so far...

—I've been home for a week with the flu...

—I finished writing my paper last night and when I went to print it this morning my printer ran out of ink. I tried to save the paper on a disc to print it on my friend's computer, but I have an iMac which is very different from any other computer...

—I know you have been expecting my essay. I know this sounds funny, but honest to God, my new puppy chewed the ac adapter cord to my computer and I can't even access the file. I think this is bad karma for the horrible semester I have given myself. I am trying to get a new adapter as soon as possible. Let me know if you want me to bother writing the paper or not...

These requests and excuses could, of course, have been communicated by phone or, eventually, in person. However, other messages would probably not have been sent without the existence of e-mail. Lisa, for example, hoped for a word of reassurance:

—I realized after handing in my paper that I had forgotten to put quotation marks around some of the dictionary definitions that I used. I'm hoping that this will not affect my grade too much...

Sometimes the sender wanted to avoid a face-to-face meeting. Sally, who had been absent from class for several weeks, wrote:

—I've been experiencing a great deal of stress lately. I know I've missed a lot of classes, but I've been keeping up with the reading and I'll have my paper ready to turn in on Monday.

If she had come to my office, I would probably have asked Sally about the causes of her absence and her stress. By e-mailing, she had, at least temporarily, dodged those questions. Sally hoped that, in the time it took me to read, reflect and respond to her message, I would decide to make an exception to my attendance policy.

Because time elapses between sending a message and receiving an answer, an e-mail conversation has a different dynamic from one conducted in person, particularly if some disagreement is involved. Verbal exchanges take place over a much shorter period of time, and the participants have no leisure to pause, reflect and consider. When arguments heat up quickly, participants tend to make statements and stake out positions from which

they cannot easily back down. Hostile body language and facial expressions, raised voices and the desire to create an effect can distract, inflame and intimidate.

In e-mail discussions, none of these non-verbal dramatic gestures are possible. Voices cannot be raised, tables cannot be pounded, objects cannot be flung across the room.

A real-time argument that might be completed in three minutes, could, using e-mail, occupy several days. The minutes and hours that elapse while people read, compose, type, and send, the waiting time during which participants engage in other conversations and take part in other events, all serve to defuse anger.

A recent e-mail exchange between a father and son illustrates this cooling-off process and demonstrates the potential of e-mail for argument resolution. The son, aged 23, reported being involved in a minor traffic accident, the latest of several. As he explained it, the driver in front of him had moved to the left-hand side of the road and slowed down, as if he were planning to turn left. The son then began to pass on the right. At that point, the driver in front changed his mind and swerved to the right, hitting the son's car.

The father wanted to suggest that although neither driver was obviously at fault, the son might have acted more cautiously. Having had some experience in this kind of discussion, he began not with an accusation, but with a few suggestive questions.

—ORIGINAL MESSAGE—

From: Father
To: Son
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2002 4:30 PM

Why do you think you've been in more than your share of fender-benders? Just bad luck? Or could youthful impatience be a factor?

The son, defensive, claims that he was not at fault and that the father would have acted in the same way.



From: Son
To: Father
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2002 4:41 PM

Yes, bad luck. I've been in three accidents, I think, which is not very many especially considering two of them were clearly not my fault (and the other people admitted this). The one this morning was not my fault either. Let me ask you, what do you do when you see someone slowing down on the left side of the road when there is no light anywhere near? You pass them on the other side because you assume they are turning.

The father suggests alternative driving strategies and diplomatically admits that *he* has not always been a model driver.

From: Father
To: Son
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2002 4:59 PM

Re: the one this morning: would you do the same thing again, or would you wait behind him, perhaps emitting a gentle honk, to see exactly what he's trying to do? If he had no blinker on, why did you assume he was going to turn left?

I have driven impatiently too frequently myself, so I know what it's like to be on your way to work and have some jerk slowing you up, and then you do something, not stupid, but not wise either, just imprudent, and most times you get away with it, but sooner or later fate catches up with you, in the form of a scrape, or under other circumstances, a speeding ticket or worse. It's happened to me. Few accidents are completely accidental and unavoidable. You could have avoided the one this morning, as I could have avoided those in my past. I drive more cautiously now as I have become aware of the large numbers of incompetent drivers behind the wheel in other cars.

Dad's accusation is now explicit: the accident could have been avoided. The son becomes a bit more combative.

From: Son
To: Father
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2002 5:13 PM

I would still pass him; he had pretty much stopped on the left side of the road, leaving me plenty of room to go by him. I suppose I could have waited and honked, but I assure you that in the same situation you would have done the same thing...I disagree that most accidents are avoidable. You say there are all these incompetent drivers on the road but then say that most accidents are avoidable? What about being rear-ended? How do you avoid that?

From: Father
To: Son
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2002 5:44 PM

I agree that you can't always avoid being in an accident, especially being rear-ended, but you can decrease the risk by trying not to stop suddenly (which is often a consequence of going too fast and then having to slow down rapidly).

The son is annoyed; he realizes that the conversation has turned into a lecture.

From: Son
To: Father
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2002 9:48 AM

Thanks for explaining what stopping suddenly means. It's not your fault if you get rear-ended, that's the rule. The person behind you should be paying attention (hence the reason I have never rear-ended anyone).

Dad repeats his contention that the collision could have been prevented and the reminder that the son has had more than his share of accidents.

From: Father
To: Son
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2002 2:04 PM

It may be the rule that it's not your fault if you get rear-ended, but it's still nothing to look forward to. The strategy of defensive

driving is to assume that an accident is likely and do what you can to diminish the risk. For example, you could have waited to see what he was going to do.

At this point, if the argument were being conducted face-to-face, the son would have stormed out of the room, perhaps slamming the door on his way out. Or, if the scene of the discussion were his own room, he might have adopted the well-known strategy of turning up the volume on his sound system to drown out the father's words. However, when the argument is being conducted by e-mail, these gestures are obviously not available. True, the son could click on "delete." But this pathetically undramatic gesture is made even less tempting by the fact that there is no audience to witness it, no angry parent to be left sputtering in frustration. As a result, an alternative dynamic takes over: the desire to have the last word.

From: Son
To: Father
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2002 2:29 PM

You jerk, ...you are such a hypocrite. I've seen you drive and I would not call it defensive exactly. You would have done the same thing had you been in my situation.

The father sees that there's no point in continuing the argument.

From: Father
To: Son
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2002 4:04 PM

O.K. Cease-fire. Truce.

A few hours later, and the son is calmer.

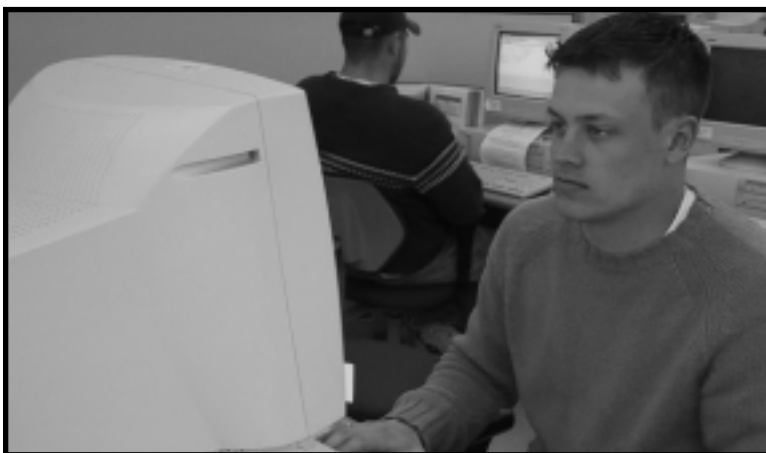
From: Son
To: Father
Sent: Tuesday, 26, 2002 7:19 PM

Don't get me wrong, I'm not upset or anything and I think you give a good perspective on it, but I'm not going to say you're right.

"I think you give a good perspective on it" must be regarded as a positive conclusion to this exchange, one which would have been unlikely had the participants been speaking.

Were Marshall McLuhan alive to witness the flowering of e-mail, he would no doubt be delighted to discover another form of communication in which the medium and the message are intertwined.

—Barbara Apstein is Professor of English and Editor of the Review



The Deadly Trypanosome:

Understanding the Parasite that causes Sleeping Sickness

by Patricia E. Mancini



African sleeping sickness. Tsetse fly. Trypanosomes. To some, these words may sound exotic, menacing or even humorous, but not to me. The biochemistry and physiology of African trypanosomes, and particularly *Trypanosoma brucei*, the protozoan agent of this deadly scourge, has been the main focus of my research life and thought for almost 25 years. My current work focuses on the mechanisms by which trypanosomes attach to and interact with host cells, and the potentially toxic molecules involved in such interactions. As a new faculty member at BSC, I'd like to introduce you to this organism and the disease it causes, and point out ways in which the study of these parasites by students can offer them valuable research experience.

Training in microbiology and biochemistry prepared me well for the study of trypanosomes, but lab-bench scientific studies are only one aspect of understanding this disease and the problems it causes throughout much of the African continent. Geography, colonial history, ethnic conflicts, and cultures of the region all influence the toll this disease takes.

HISTORY AND EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AFRICAN SLEEPING SICKNESS

African sleeping sickness in humans is caused by a protozoan, *Trypanosoma brucei*, and, throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa, is transmitted by the bite of the tsetse fly. Although mortality is relatively low in numbers compared to diseases caused by other infectious agents, it is sufficient for the disease to be a major health threat and concern. *Trypanosoma brucei*, the parent species, is found in antelopes and other game animals, but these native animals (and even some local breeds of domestic cattle) can tolerate the infection without showing symptoms. However, they may serve as reservoirs of infection for the trypanosome subspecies which attack humans. We do not know what makes the wild antelope population resistant, but assume that millions of years of co-evolution have allowed it to reach a stale-mate with the parasite.

Almost as important as the disease in humans is the disease in domestic animals which, by killing animals of European (i.e., non-native) stock, prevents cultivation of, or grazing on, millions of acres of fertile land in the "tsetse belt." Some *trypanosome* species affect cattle; others, horses and camels. Together these organisms make farming and ranching difficult in the most potentially productive area of the continent. A major protein deficiency in the African diet, caused by the inability to produce sufficient food for the population, might be averted if some of this land (in an area the size of the US) could be maintained for farming and grazing.

THE VECTOR

Tsetse fly is a general name for any of the eight species of the genus *Glossina* which may carry and transmit the parasite. The flies are generally divided into two broad groups—those which live in the riverine areas of the rain forests of West Africa and are associated with the chronic form of the disease caused by *T. brucei gambiense*, and the woodland tsetse flies, which inhabit drier grasslands and forests of the east coast of Africa and are vectors for the more acute, and more rapidly fatal, form of the disease caused by *T. brucei rhodesiense*. Indigenous peoples have known for centuries that the presence of the tsetse fly is associated with high incidence of disease. Regions which are endemic for the flies are also endemic for sleeping sickness, which is essentially 100% fatal if untreated. Traditionally, native herdsman have moved their cattle away from the rivers during the tsetse season, minimizing the effects of the disease. Colonial powers actually helped spread the disease across the continent by providing host animals in their horses and cattle, so what was once a contained, endemic problem soon became widespread throughout the continent.

PATHOLOGY OF THE DISEASE
AND CURRENT DRUG TREATMENTS

After the fly bites, trypanosomes enter the mammalian host, multiply in the skin, then migrate through the tissues to the bloodstream. Most of their life cycle in the mammalian host occurs in the blood and tissues, with rapid cell division leading to high parasite levels. This is the primary stage of the disease, when available drug treatments are most likely to be effective. It is also a time when the bite of another tsetse fly can transmit these parasites to the next host. However, the disease may progress to the secondary stage when the parasites migrate from the blood into the central nervous system, including the brain and cerebrospinal fluid. Early indicators may be mild episodes of disorientation which then progress to an increasingly altered sleep cycle resulting in long periods of "sleep" and eventually coma and death.

The drugs available to treat the primary infection have not changed in 100 years. Pentamidine and suramin, which kill the parasite, are still effective against the bloodstream forms (although some strains have become resistant) but have side effects. Melarsoprol, an arsenical which until recently was the only drug for treating cerebral involvement, is toxic enough on its own to account for a 5% fatality rate. The only drug recently developed (in the 1980's) to treat secondary stage disease, eflornithine, an inhibitor of an essential pathway of parasite metabolism, was discontinued by its manufacturer after a company merger. This points up a critical problem in the development of new treatments for the disease. Pharmaceutical companies are unwilling and/or unable to devote resources to research and development of new drugs because the disease strikes in areas where the infected individuals are unable to afford the price of medication. In addition, an effective distribution system may be unavailable even if the drug is donated free of charge by the manufacturer.

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Although the latest World Health Organization statistics record only about 40,000 reported cases, this is probably a gross under-representation. As many as half a million people may currently be infected, but most

cases go unreported and untreated because the rural populations which are most at risk may have minimal contacts with healthcare personnel. Also, infected individuals may seek treatment only at later stages of the disease or not at all. Many are children who die of trypanosomiasis without ever causing a blip on the surveillance radar.

Surveillance and screening of infected individuals in local areas have been successful strategies for control in the past, almost eradicating the disease in the half century prior to the 1970's. Unfortunately, surveillance as a control measure relies on successful administrative infrastructures and

economics because it is a labor-intensive activity. Surveillance teams must cover vast areas to diagnose the disease where infection rates are highest, must take blood samples from individuals in villages where, in some cases, 70% of the population may be infected, and finally, must arrange for contact with healthcare delivery systems which are often inadequate. Patients must be transported to hospitals where the drugs are generally administered intravenously. This removal of infected persons from a community has the public health effect of removing a reservoir of infection, and may help cut down on transmission but may be a "hard sell" to families of infected individuals. In the past, successful control strategies have also involved the labor-intensive collection and removal of the flies when they are active during the daylight hours. Broader strategies such as spraying insecticides or converting riverine areas and woodlands into farmland have also been effective. However, these are often threatening to the delicate ecological balance of an area and, in any case, also rely upon an administrative infrastructure and a robust economy.



Dr. Mancini
with students

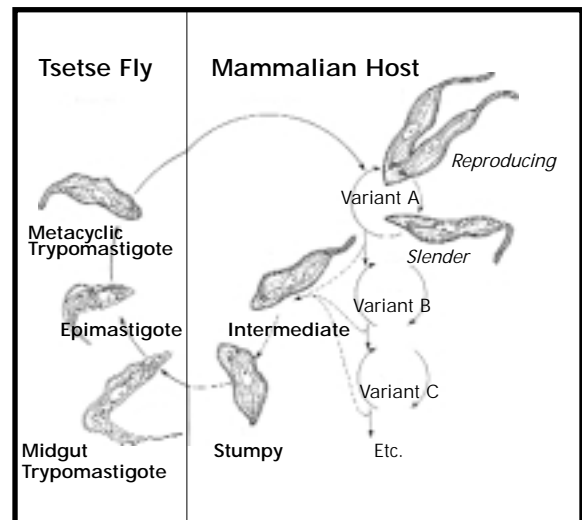
THE GEOPOLITICS AND DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISEASE

In the past 40 years the legacy of colonial rule has resulted in economic and political changes, ethnic unrest, civil wars, population migrations due to famine and other non-biological events which have subjected the population in sub-Saharan Africa to reduced levels of surveillance, minimal treatment, and subsequent dramatic increases in the incidence and mortality of sleeping sickness. The boundaries of countries which are affected by these problems, including (but not limited to) the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Uganda and Angola, can be superimposed upon recent data recording epidemic resurgence of this disease. Even countries with stable political and economic structure are at risk of increased incidence due to the thousands of refugees who may carry the disease across national borders. Few countries are equipped to deal with the magnitude of such a problem.

HOW UNDERGRADUATES BENEFIT FROM RESEARCH ON MICROBIAL SYSTEMS

Laboratory research with trypanosomes provides a meaningful experience for undergraduate students for several reasons. Trypanosomes offer a system for study very similar to that of other biological systems: non-infectious laboratory strains of the parasites can now be studied using all the methods of modern biochemistry and molecular biology to grow and manipulate trypanosomes, and these methods are applicable to research on other organisms. Students entering the job market directly after college will be well prepared with “hands-on” experience for jobs in biotechnology or pharmaceutical companies, or in academic research, hospital and/or government labs. And some undergraduate research is almost always a prerequisite for admission to good graduate and professional programs. Admissions committees are impressed by the level of technical expertise and commitment exemplified by students who do “bench level” research. Additionally, the ability to think logically in order to design, execute, analyze and write up experiments is useful for many future scientific or nonscientific endeavors. Studies on trypanosomes overlap with research in genetics, cell and molecular biology, immunology and biochemistry currently being undertaken in the Biology and

The life cycle of the African trypanosome in the mammalian host and in the tsetse fly host. Shown are the various morphological forms seen in each, as well as the phenomenon of antigenic variation (altered surface proteins) seen in the mammalian host. Figure courtesy of Dr. James E. Strickler © 1980. Modified with permission.



Chemistry departments at BSC. This promotes a level of camaraderie here among undergraduate researchers which is useful when they enter the professional world.

But there is a more important reason for doing research on any parasite agent of diseases which afflict primarily developing countries. Microorganisms have always affected the course of human society—consider the effects of plague, typhus, typhoid, dysentery, and tetanus during wars, or cholera epidemics in cities and rural areas, or the Irish potato famine, which brought so many individuals to the United States during the mid-19th century. Students at BSC studying trypanosomes learn valuable lessons in public health. Increased awareness of public health and environmental issues both locally and worldwide helps them understand the interplay between individual actions within the society and the spread of microorganisms and disease, as well as the effect that microorganisms have on the course of a soci-

ety's progress as a whole. Ultimately the control and eventual eradication of African sleeping sickness and its companion diseases, malaria, hookworm, leishmaniasis, schistosomiasis, and more, will depend both on the science and on the social factors which influence how individuals in a community or a country interact with one another and with the disease agent.

WHAT TO DO? STRATEGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PARASITE AS A MEANS OF COMBATING THE DISEASE

Understanding the parasite's physiology and biochemistry (in other words, "know thine enemy"), can help researchers to develop a rational approach to prevention or therapy. Trypanosomes have so far evaded most attempts to control and understand them. Through millions of years of co-evolution with their mammalian hosts, the parasites which survive rely on "immunoconfusion" and "immunoevasion," mechanisms which allow them to be overlooked by the immune system. In addition, the metabolism of the parasite closely mimics the metabolism of its mammalian hosts, another survival advantage, so drugs for treating the disease have a very narrow window of effectiveness for eradicating the parasite without causing damage to the patient.

In order to develop new and effective drugs, we will have to find an Achilles' Heel in the parasite, i.e., a metabolic variation found only in the parasite and not in the host, which might be exploited for drug therapy without damage to the host physiology. A thorough knowledge of the parasite's physiology and biochemistry is one way to find this difference, but even this straightforward approach has been hampered for many years by the inability to study the parasite effectively. Once removed from the host animal, the trypanosome is a fragile creature, difficult to keep alive in the lab. In recent years there have been advances in the ability to culture the parasite and to study its genes and their expression or activation using molecular biological techniques in addition to traditional biochemical and immunological methods. This has allowed us to produce sufficient quantities of this organism or its protein components to examine their functions more carefully, a first step in designing specific drugs to block those functions and kill the parasite. However, we still have few clues as to how the parasite actually kills its host. Is its simple presence in large numbers sufficient to interfere with the host's own metabolism? Does it produce

toxic substances that directly kill host cells, damaging functions of critical organs? Does it actively inhibit certain components of the immune system? How does it migrate through tissues to the small capillaries of the bloodstream, and from there to the brain? These are some of the questions which need to be addressed by studying the biochemistry of the trypanosome's components and how they work.

Any projects undertaken by BSC students must be safe, and there are now culture systems which use a form of the parasite which is non-infectious for humans. These allow growth of sufficient numbers of cells for students to study their interactions with mammalian or insect cells in culture. Special dyes can now be used to stain different physiological states of parasite or host to assess adherence or production of toxic substances. In addition, students can learn how to clone and detect specific parasite genes and produce their proteins in the lab to help in identifying novel drugs to inhibit well known proteins, or to find unique proteins as novel drug targets in the parasite. Newer purification methods allow both isolation of the proteins and identification of their functions, providing many potential projects for student focus. In the past ten years, several types of cell surface enzymes, receptor molecules, adhesion proteins, stress-related proteins and other important molecules have been identified in trypanosomes as potential targets. Unraveling the components of the parasite provides enough work for many students to participate in helping us to understand and control this disease.

—*Patricia E. Mancini is Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences*

Misguided Censorship: Book Reviews

the perks of being a wallflower

Stephen Chbosky

Warriors Don't Cry

Melba Pattilo Beals

Not in Front of the Children:
'Indecency,' Censorship and
the Innocence of Youth

Marjorie Heins

by Charles F. Angell

This review originated from news reports I recently heard that some Massachusetts school districts, bowing to parental complaints, had removed books from their reading lists. Last summer, after a complaint from one parent that *the perks of being a wallflower* contained "absolutely gross" language and subject matter, the Newton North principal removed the novel from the school's summer reading list. Just this past December the Grafton school superintendent suspended use of Melba Pattilo Beals' *Warriors Don't Cry* because it included an account of the then twelve year old Beals' pursuit and near sexual assault by a white male. As a literature and writing teacher, I had over the years heard of pressures brought to bear on schools by parents, religious groups, and various guardians of public morality to remove reading matter from school curricula that for whatever reasons the groups deemed inappropriate for the nation's classrooms. Usually novels like Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* or D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* provided the favorite targets. Massachusetts has in the past proved relatively immune from these forays, though a few years ago a local teacher ran afoul of school authorities for showing high schoolers the film version of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* which admittedly contains a pretty explicit sex scene. Some while back Randolph parents protested including on a summer reading list Joyce Carol Oates' *Foxfire*, one parent going so far as to say, according to the *Boston Globe* report, that the book had



so upset her daughter that she transferred to the South Shore Christian Academy. (That's upset.) These parental complaints sufficiently piqued my curiosity to decide for myself whether I, as a teacher, would have reservations about assigning middle and high school students the controversial books. (A caveat: I have never taught in the public schools and am privy only through conversation with teachers to the difficulties they face when assigning reading material to their students.)

Chbosky's *the perks of being a wallflower*, an epistolary novel, finds the letter writer Charlie disclosing his numerous problems to an unnamed 'friend,' presumably the reader. Charlie's reclusiveness and stand-offishness owes, the reader is led initially to believe, to his position as the youngest child in a household where his older brother attends Penn State on a football scholarship and his older sister maintains her intimate relationship with an abusive boyfriend. Mom is loving but not a presence; Dad is loving but not articulate. (He starts to cry during the final episode of *Mash*, goes to the kitchen with Charlie, and makes him promise not to tell anyone.) The novel opens with Charlie distraught about a classmate's suicide. We learn also that Charlie had a favorite Aunt Helen who lived with the family "the last few years of her life because something

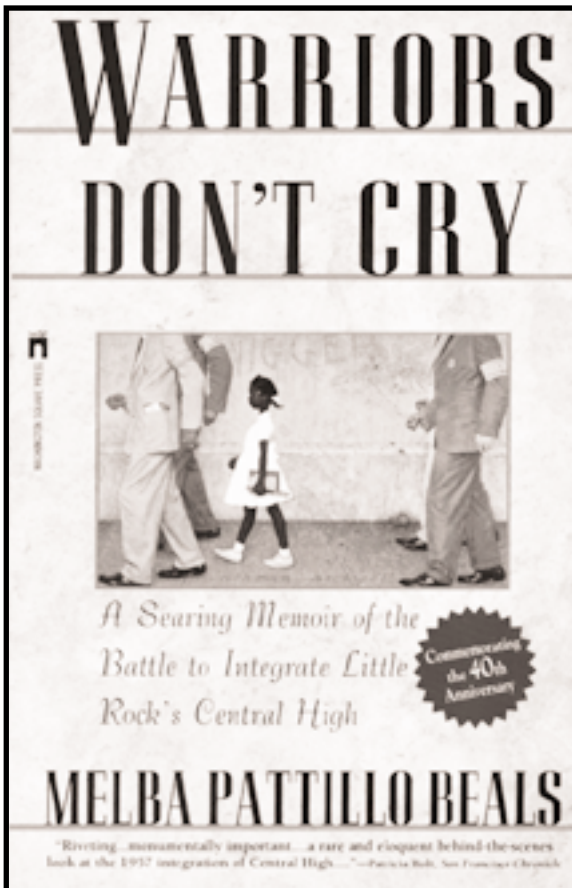
very bad happened to her.” The aunt had perished in an automobile accident, traumatizing Charlie, who’s too young to understand her loss. Charlie moves through his freshman year of high school, makes friends with older adolescents whom he admires, learns about alcohol and drugs, finds out that some friends are gay, discovers masturbation, receives adulation for his poetry, and generally encounters the confusions and conflicts common to adolescence. However, after pulling away from an admired older girlfriend (Sam) who desires intimacy with him, Charlie has a dream in which he realizes his beloved Aunt Helen had molested him some years before. He goes catatonic and must be hospitalized. The novel concludes with Charlie recovering and promising to begin his sophomore year unafraid and ready to participate.

Charlie’s confusions and perplexities will resonate with young readers. While I wouldn’t elevate Chbosky’s novel to the level of Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*, as the cover hype does (I’d reserve that honor for Russell Banks’ *Rule of the Bone*), I would argue that *the perks of being a wallflower* contains no material that adolescents

haven’t on their own encountered in films, TV shows, the internet, or recordings. Despite the edgy subject matter and the profane language, more accessible but less blatant than Shakespeare’s sexual *double entendres*, I can’t see myself forbidding late middle and high school students reading the novel. Discussing the novel’s subject matter in a classroom environment seems preferable to more haphazard and informal encounters with the novel’s topics. Indeed, innovative teachers would certainly seize upon the novel’s epistolary form to ask their students to compose responses to Charlie’s letters and, through written articulation, to interact with the novel. Like Charlie, contemporary American students are immersed in what one critic has labeled ‘trash culture.’ Like most American teenagers, Charlie attempts— with a favorite English teacher’s guidance—to sort through the trash and use essay writing to discover some meaning in it. Had I been the Newton school administrator, whatever personal reservations about the novel’s appropriateness I might harbor, I would have defended assigning Chbosky’s *the perks of being a wallflower* and relied upon my instructor’s good judgment to use the novel as a model for student encounters with their cultural litter.

I have no reservation about students reading Melba Pattillo Beals’ *Warriors Don’t Cry*. Her memoir should be required reading along with Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative of a Slave* and Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” both standards in the language arts curriculum. Beals narrates the events surrounding the integration of Little Rock’s Central High School in 1957. Her account of the sexual assault which so upset the complaining parent (her son didn’t “have any place to put this [material] emotionally”) occupies less than two pages of a 312 page memoir that contains prejudice, racism, hatred, and violence so virulent that every decent reader should be not only upset but ashamed and outraged that any American, let alone children, could have suffered such treatment.

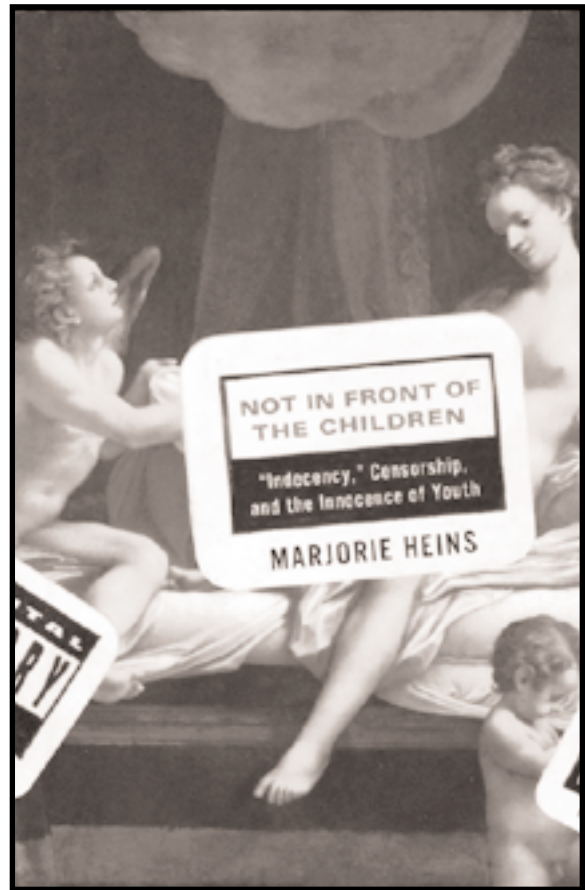
The media in our ‘trash culture’ manufactures the hero of the moment; *Warriors Don’t Cry* demonstrates what courage and a large measure of heroism are truly made of. Beals and her eight student companions face an entire city’s anger and hatred when they make the walk up the steps of Central High. Physical and emotional assault awaits them. The intensity of the hatred shocks even Beals who, despite growing up in Jim Crow Little Rock, had never imagined the people she lived among



could turn so hideously against their black neighbors. Once enrolled in and attending Central High, Beals and her friends must endure harassment, insult, indifference, taunting, epithets, the full spectrum of abuse that white teenagers might direct at black. "I arrived one day to find a doll that resembled me," Beals writes, "with a rope around her neck, hanging from the [homeroom] door frame. Another time, someone had provided genuine urine to spray in my seat and on my clothing." Yet in the course of this turmoil, she finds sympathetic responses among the many reporters sent to cover the school integration and resolves that one day she will become a journalist, a goal she eventually achieves. Reflecting on her integration experience, Beals comments that "when I watch news footage of the day we entered school guarded by the 101st soldiers, I am moved by the enormity of that experience. I believe that was a moment when the whole nation took one giant step forward. Once President Eisenhower made that kind of commitment to uphold the law, there was no turning back."

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has virtually since its publication in 1960 been featured in public school curricula. While the novel confronts southern small town prejudice and racism, Lee's story about an altruistic white lawyer defending a black man unjustly accused of rape ultimately presents a picture of basically decent, though perhaps misguided, people trying to do the right thing. Beals' memoir compels us to acknowledge that too many people had no desire or intention to do the right thing. An altruistic white attorney ignoring ostracism and defending a black man, atoning perhaps for the ghost of Emmet Till, assuages us; brutish white men threatening black girls with sexual assault disconcerts us. Our classrooms need more, not less, discomfort of the kind *Warriors Don't Cry* embodies.

How decency groups, legislatures, the law, and sometimes the courts have endeavored to keep controversy and discomfort from young minds forms the core of Marjorie Heins' *Not in Front of the Children: 'Indecency,' Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth*, a study that Heins' sister and *Bridgewater Review* editor Barbara Apstein serendipitously called to my attention. In her book, Heins addresses the conviction that youth must be protected from the intellectual and emotional harm exposure to 'indecent' and 'patently offensive' material might cause. As she observes, the history of censorship is "essentially a legal history"; *Not in Front of the Children* thoroughly documents the legal history of censorship in the United States from colonial times to present internet times, relates this history to its English common law antecedents, and compares how other societies treat matters considered indecent or offensive here. Heins argues that using censorship to safeguard young minds in effect lowers all debate, discussion,



and understanding to juvenile, even puerile, levels. In her concluding chapter, Heins observes that "censorship is an avoidance technique that addresses adult anxieties and satisfies symbolic concerns, but ultimately does nothing to resolve social problems or affirmatively help adolescents cope with their environments and impulses or navigate the dense and insistent media barrage that surrounds them." My point is that our classrooms provide an appropriate forum for responsible engagement with controversial materials and issues. I, of course, concede to individual parents the right to ask school officials that their child not be required to read or view a work they deem inappropriate. However, for school committees and administrators or teachers to concede to demands that no student be allowed the opportunity to read or view material an individual parent or particular community group deems inappropriate and to remove the material from the curriculum ought never to become the policy or stance of schools at any level devoted to academic inquiry. Whatever her hesitations and misgivings about the historical events that enmeshed her, Melba Pattilo Beals conceded nothing, knowing instinctively (in the words of Edmund Burke) that "the concessions of the weak are the concessions of fear."

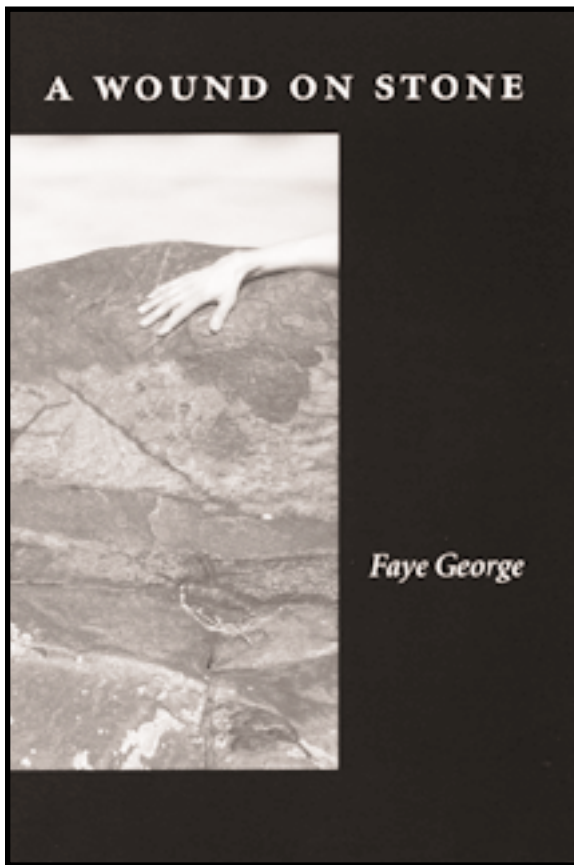
—Charles F. Angell is Professor of English

Poetry Review

A Wound on Stone

Faye George

by Phil Tabakow



In *The Necessary Angel*, his book of essays “intended to disclose definitions of poetry,” Wallace Stevens says that “a poem is a particular of life thought of for so long that one’s thought has become an inseparable part of it or a particular of life so intensely felt that the feeling has entered into it.” From the description in “Slugs and Opossums” of the garden slug of her book’s title, which “pours/ all its viscous flesh/upon the path it takes:/a wound on stone,” to the speaker of “The Sudden Tug of the Familiar,” who tells us that “The smooth plane of the coverlet/ defines my bed. It is single. /Naked as a needle I slide in, /sleep the sleep of a nun,” Faye George’s poems enact these particulars of thought and feeling with a singular precision and sculptural grace.

Notice both the structural tension of the lines and the incisive particularity of the details in the following stanzas of “What She looked Out Upon,” a meditation on aging and loneliness.

what she looked out upon
through the small grille
of the kitchen window
was the exhausted clothesline

strung across the yard,
its soft and sagging middle
a hammocked emptiness
that crossed her eyes’ rest

as a thin shadow
of the depression
she looked in upon
thinking of what was to come:

These are the poems of a true New Englander; everything inessential has been pared away to reveal the underlying structure of hope and despair that holds the world together. A life of sorts has been coaxed and prodded from the thin soil of possibilities—but always contingently and always in a landscape where even our personal fates are dependent upon the vagaries of terrain and weather, both metaphorical and actual, as in “The Long Train,” printed in full on the following page:

This dream each has of being
on the long train that takes us
to the country of our fate

may fold in the circuit
of a blown tire
cast into bramble and sumac,

may crumble to furrows
plowed but never planted—
or planted

and the seed dried up,
rains come too soon,
a sudden late

and unforgiving frost—
this dream that rides
in ragweed and wild asters.

The persistence of life formed (or deformed) by an inhospitable environment is also the subject of "Birds Do Carry Seeds," where the narrator assures us that

There are explanations

for the way that living things
will turn against the order
and strive unnaturally

to grow from rock
in cracks and shallow pans
of earth between the ribs,

will put out roots and thrive,
contorted, strained,
yet stubbornly survive.

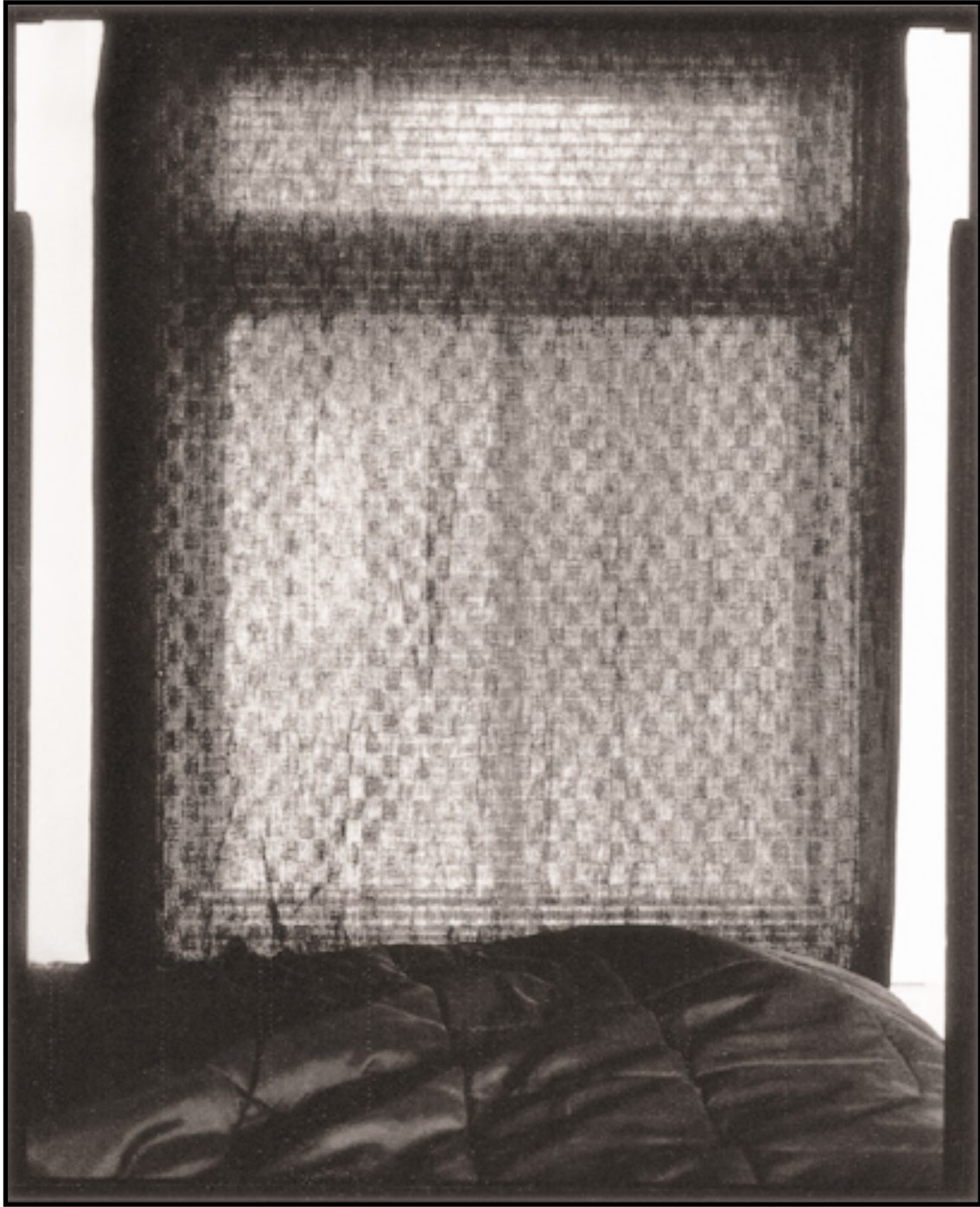
That dogged determination to survive and make connections amidst the landscapes of a fallen world constitutes the major theme of this book, as best exemplified, perhaps, in "On The Grounds of the Plymouth County Hospital" where, trespassing "at the home for the chronically ill, browsing/in the shadow of that house without/ hope," the two lovers

...pause
kiss

and watch the moss fatten, listen to the wind snuffle
in the barren apple, troubling the crippled
sassafras with its passing
caress.

The poems in *A Wound on Stone* are both beautifully crafted and emotionally satisfying. Faye George's poems neither force transcendence nor negate the possibility of epiphany. Compressed, concise, compassionate, and intensely realized, they show us, once again, how memorable poems can be wrought out of the most difficult and recalcitrant of materials.

—Phil Tabakow is Professor of English



Bedroom Window