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Mass Humanities

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Foundation News

Open House

The foundation's main office, newly located on the Historic Northampton campus, will have an open house on Friday, June 14th from 4 to 6pm. Come see our new digs, meet the staff and board members, enjoy appetizers and music. Please let us know if you are coming by calling 413-584-8440. Hope to see you here.

The Shepherd House, new home of the Foundation's main office



New Board Members

Joseph Hernandez Cruz is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Williams College, where he earned his Bachelor's Degree in 1991. He completed his graduate studies at the University of Arizona, receiving his PhD in Philosophy and Cognitive Science in 1999. Specializing in epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophical psychology, Joe is co-author (with John Pollock) of an epistemology textbook, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1999). Prior to joining the faculty at Williams, Joe taught at Hampshire College. He lives in Williamstown.



Janette Greenwood is Director of the Higgins School of Humanities and Associate Professor of History at Clark University in Worcester. Her special areas of interest include U.S. social history, African-American history, and the history of the American South. Janette earned her BA at Kenyon College, her MA at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and her PhD at the University of Virginia — all in history. She has written numerous articles and reviews and four books including *The Gilded Age: A History in Documents* and the award-winning *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White "Better Classes" in Charlotte North Carolina, 1850-1910*. Janette has been active in Foundation-funded projects in Central Massachusetts and as a public history consultant locally and nationally. She lives in Worcester.

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A Writer's Progress:

An Interview with Nobel Prize-Winning Portuguese Novelist José Saramago

By Anna Klobucka

José Saramago was born on November 16, 1922, the child of landless peasants in Azinhaga, Portugal, a small village northeast of Lisbon. His name would have been the same as his father's — José de Sousa — had not the registrar, on his own initiative, added the Sousa family nickname: Saramago, the name of a wild plant that poor people often harvested for food. This kind of historical accident, with its rich symbolic resonance, frequently anchors Saramago's own complex narratives. In his 1989 novel *The History of the Siege of Lisbon*, for example, a humble proof-reader rewrites both Portugal's national past and the story of his own life by willfully inserting a single word into a historical work he is editing. Multi-layered entanglements of fact and fiction, the weaving together of individual and collective perspectives, and a distinctive narrative voice adroit in conjuring both ironic detachment and emotional pathos: these are the hallmarks of the novels of José Saramago, the first Portuguese-language writer to be awarded, in 1998, the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Saramago's long journey toward literary accomplishment and fame was anything but straightforward. Although he debuted as a novelist at an early age — his *Terra do Pecado* [Land of Sin] was published in 1947 — he then abandoned for nearly thirty years the genre that was to bring him worldwide recognition. When in 1976 Saramago published his second novel, *Manual of Painting and Calligraphy*, it was subtitled "ensaio de romance," a label that can be translated as both "novel-essay" and "rehearsal for a novel." The latter meaning points to Saramago's notion of writing as an apprenticeship, a laborious process that must be faced with patience and humility.

Although both Saramago and his critics emphasize the formative importance and independent value of his earlier works, for a majority of his readers it was his 1982 historical novel *Baltasar and Blimunda* (entitled *Memorial do Convento* in Portuguese) that brought him critical acclaim and a wide readership. It is still perhaps the most widely read and studied of Saramago's novels. It was adapted for the stage by the Italian composer Azio Corghi as the opera *Blimunda*, which premiered in Milan in 1990. Saramago's unorthodox exploration of historical

scenarios, begun with his revisitation of the Portuguese eighteenth century in *Baltasar and Blimunda*, continued throughout the 1980s and beyond, from the 1930s Portugal of Salazar's dictatorship in *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis* (1984) to ancient Galilee in *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* (1991).

The official reaction to *The Gospel* — the Portuguese government vetoed its presentation for the European Literary Prize, claiming that it was offensive to Catholics — prompted Saramago and his wife, journalist Pilar del Río, to move to the Spanish island of Lanzarote in the Canaries, where they continue to reside. The 1990s also marked a change in Saramago's work: his novels *Blindness* (1995), *All the Names* (1997), and *A Caverna* [The Cave] (published in late 2000 and not yet available in English) are darkly philosophical parables that are peopled by frequently nameless characters and that unfold in an undefined but dystopian time and space. Their bleakness, however, is never absolute. They share with Saramago's earlier works an underlying affirmative belief in the dynamic, transformative potential of individual human activity, even as they also suggest an increasingly pessimistic vision of the future of the human race.

An unapologetic leftist and to this day a card-carrying Communist, Saramago has never shunned political involvement or controversy. For many decades, he staunchly defended the role of literature as public discourse and the responsibility of artists and intellectuals to take action in the public sphere. The scope of his engagement with the many causes that have attracted his interest and support has not diminished with age. For example, he contributed a foreword to *Our Word Is Our Weapon* by Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista National Liberation Front, the peasant movement in Chiapas, Mexico. If anything, Saramago's visibility as an international spokesperson for what he recently described as "the simple imperative of equal justice for all" has only increased in the years since his Nobel Prize.

Anna Klobucka is Associate Professor of Portuguese at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Last year, Klobucka edited *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 6: On Saramago* (Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, Uni-



José Saramago

Interview continued on page 4

Imagining Robert

by Hayley Wood

Robert Neugeboren opens the documentary *Imagining Robert* by telling a joke. Viewers may realize from his appearance and constant motion that he has a long-term mental illness, but his zeal to entertain and interact is undiminished by 38 years of life in and out of mental institutions. Filmmaker Larry Hott recalls his first visit with Robert: “He was performing. And I thought, what else do you want in a film but a performer? I was charmed and absolutely convinced that this documentary was going to work.”

Robert’s energy as a performer required an upbeat approach to the editing, the invisible artistry that flavors and organizes the piece. That is the work of Diane Garey. Hott credits her with the rhythm of the film, the innovative choice of music (bongos!), and a unique cutting technique. He observes, “The cutting is not standard cutting. It’s not very mellifluous, flowing cutting; it’s very sharp. When you’re in the halfway house and Robert’s bouncing off the walls having a bad day, the editing is bouncing off the walls as well. There’s a rhythm to it that fits Robert’s emotions.”

Hott and Garey of Florentine Films/Hott Productions have been working on *Imagining Robert*, a film based on the 1997 book by Jay Neugeboren, since 1999. The book and the film tell the story of two brothers: Jay, a writer, and Robert, who lives with severe mental illness. Florentine Films/Hott Productions recently received a major media production grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, having received a script development grant in 1999. Last year, in partnership with the Foundation, they received a grant from Americans for the Arts to take part in the Animating Democracy Initiative (ADI), a project devised to foster arts-based civic dialogues across the country. *Imagining Robert* is one of 32 diverse ADI projects. It is in distinguished company with organizations including the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, The Jewish Museum in New York, The Workers’ Theatre in Brooklyn, and the San Francisco Opera.

The film is now complete. The next challenge for Hott and the Foundation is to mount a series of public screenings and civic dialogues. Project work is now centered on creating events that will engage audiences in examining the ways in which mental illness affects families. These programming goals have informed both the content of the film and the outreach strategy. Hott observes, “Receiving the ADI grant spurred us to consider our audience. How many different groups can we reach? Since we hadn’t finished the film yet, another challenge was to work on the art in such a way that it does spark dialogue.”

A humanities theme that will stir audiences is that of family responsibility. The film asks viewers to consider societal treatment of the mentally ill and to examine the pressures placed on families by the shortcomings of state-managed care. Hott says, “It asks the question, ‘What is our responsibility to our family members?’ I think everybody who gets an average American education knows that our society doesn’t treat families the way other societies have . . . and it makes us question our own values.” Hott points out that Robert has experienced a broad array of treatments and therapies. He comments, “Robert did suffer the conditions that were portrayed in *Snake Pit* [a feature film made in the forties about conditions in mental hospitals], and right up until the nineties was having difficulty in state hospitals.”



Jay and Robert Neugeboren, circa 1948



Robert Neugeboren, 2001

Project Renewal, a halfway house in Manhattan where Robert currently lives, is portrayed as an enlightened facility. The narrative arc of the film charts Robert’s progress and challenges there. In contrast with Robert’s most confining and upsetting situations, this halfway house provides a full staff of people who deal with Robert as the complex person he is. Jay comments, “The staff insists on Robert’s responsibility. They have realistic expectations and are not condescending. When he has acted out, they have not written him off.”

Jay was both a subject for the film and an artistic collaborator. Hott says, crediting Jay’s understanding of the process to the fact that he is a professional writer:

He makes his living as a storyteller. As we were filming I found out something else about him that made him a wonderful film subject; he understood what we needed for the film. He understood the medium of film, partly because he’s written screenplays, and partly because he was a writing teacher at UMass for 25 years. Writing is editing. He could edit his own statements on the fly, and that made him almost a co-director or co-writer in that he was involved in forming the ideas and words that went into the film.

As a brother who has been Robert’s primary caretaker since 1974 when their parents retired and moved to Florida, Neugeboren also has a significant amount of practical advice to offer those who are in similar situations. How can family members make sure that those for whom they are responsible receive compassionate, effective care? Neugeboren suggests that the first order of business is to use local networks (local National Alliance for the Mentally Ill groups are invaluable) to find a social worker who will take on the logistical responsibilities of caring for a client. In his case, having a dependable social worker who is in charge of Robert’s day-to-day needs has freed him to be a brother. It has also eased the tension felt by both brothers. However, Neugeboren warns, “There are no maps.”

Beyond providing concrete information and food for thought for a diverse group of audience members that will include police officers, lawyers, mental health professionals, legislators, and the general public, this project may influence public policy. Films that reach a mass audience through television broadcasts can raise the consciousness of thousands, removing stigma and adding dimension to the public perception of those who suffer mental illness and the difficulties they face. Hott points out, “Legislators who work on insurance coverage parity need a groundswell of support. They need to raise consciousness not only among the public but among their constituents within Congress to get legislation passed.” Here we have a unique opportunity to use the art of filmmaking to get people talking, to deepen our thinking, and to improve our community.

Imagining Robert

a film and dialogue series



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THE HUMANITIES...

Are what we do when we reflect upon our lives; when we ask fundamental questions of value, purpose and meaning. The MFH conducts and provides grant support for humanities projects designed to: foster critical inquiry; promote understanding of our diverse cultural heritage; and provide forums for the citizens of our state to engage actively in thoughtful public discourse about matters of individual choice and collective responsibility.

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, a private, nonprofit, educational organization, receives funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and from private sources.

East Meets West: The Commonwealth Forums Come to Western Massachusetts



The Commonwealth Forums, a quarterly series of public conversations sponsored jointly by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC), opened the year by taking its show on the road. The January 17th forum, the first ever held outside Boston, took place at Holyoke Community College. Entitled *East Meets West: Bridging the Politics, Economics and Histories of Eastern and Western Massachusetts*, the event drew an audience of around 150 state and municipal officials, academics, community activists, and interested members of the general public for a lively and stimulating morning of talk, as five panelists examined the subject from the perspectives of history, economics, policy planning, and state politics.

None of the participants is exclusively identified with either region. Moderator Don MacGillis edited the *Berkshire Eagle* before taking his present position as an editorial writer for the *Boston Globe*. David M. Bartley, President of Holyoke Community College, served several terms as Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Craig Moore, University Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, has done extensive consulting work in the eastern part of the state. The Honorable Shannon O’Brien, Treasurer of the Commonwealth, now a resident of Southeastern Massachusetts, grew up in Easthampton and served her political apprenticeship as State Representative from her home district. Jack Tager, Professor of History at UMass/Amherst, is the co-author of *A Concise History of Massachusetts* and co-editor of the *Historical Atlas of Massachusetts*.

The purpose of the discussion was to illuminate and transcend the antagonisms that often color relations between the regions and to explore the

question, “How can we change the political grammar to envision a more positive future?”

Professor Tager led off with a brisk survey of the history of east-west relations, illustrated by slides that traced the increasingly uneven distribution of population and wealth in the state over the past three centuries. Beginning in the colonial period, with the divergence of economic interests between the mercantile coast and the agrarian interior, and continuing through the industrial transformation of the state in the nineteenth century, the accelerating growth of urban centers, and finally the twentieth-century expansion of suburbs, the momentum of history has consistently favored the area east of Route 495. Addressing the predominantly Western Massachusetts-based audience, Tager summarized the political implications: “You should be ignored. All the people, money, and votes are there.”

With the humanities scholar on the panel having staked out his position as the voice of *realpolitik*, Professor Moore rose to describe the economic relationships that complicate the picture. He reminded listeners that the driving force in the New England economy is its network of rivers, which run north and south, creating regional economies that cross state lines but do not link the two sides of the state. Worcester and Providence, he noted, are linked, as are Connecticut Valley communities from Brattleboro to Hartford—and the Berkshires have stronger cultural ties to New York State than to Boston. To bring more investment to the western part of the state and draw on the marketing and development

expertise concentrated in the East, Moore argued that business leaders from the western counties must take a more active part in the “social networking” that takes place in Boston—becoming regular participants in organizations such as the Biotech Council and the Massachusetts Business Roundtable.

Against this background of history and economic geography, the discussion went on to touch on a number of specific areas in which east-west communication could be improved. Treasurer O’Brien advocated improved high-speed Internet access as one way of reducing the distance across the state, and MacGillis recalled Governor Weld’s talk of building a rail line down the median strip of the MassPike. Moore cautioned that there is “no replacement for face-to-face interaction” among business leaders, and decried the resistance of many westerners to traveling to Boston, contrasting it to the willingness of people in larger states to drive long distances. Tourism was mentioned as a potential economic engine in the western counties, but Moore asserted that a broader perspective would be more appropriate. Studies show that out-of-state tourists see New England as a single destination, he explained, suggesting that tourism should be promoted regionally rather than state by state. Finally, there was general agreement that Western Massachusetts residents should have access to more television channels, with better coverage of state issues. This interchange works both ways, Tager pointed out, observing, “There’s no reporter from the *Globe* or the *Herald* here.”

The conversation was in full swing, with audience members adding their voices in thoughtful comments and pointed questions, when the two hours came to an end. As the crowd drifted out of the hall, some continuing animated discussion in pairs and small groups, it was clear that the forum had achieved its purpose: stimulating an ongoing conversation among citizens, grounded in the complementary perspectives of the humanities and public policy. It had also demonstrated that working politicians and journalists can be reflective, and that scholars can be tough-minded about political and economic power.

Women’s History

After several years of planning and fundraising, a new work of art commissioned by the Foundation to honor the contributions of women was permanently installed in the State House in 1999. (For a virtual tour of HEAR US, go to www.mfh.org/special-projects/SWLP.) An interpretive brochure was made available to visitors to the building. Storyteller and actor Judith Black began performing “Meet Lucy Stone” in schools and community-based settings, and *Making the World Better: The Struggle for Equality in 19th Century America*, a curriculum unit designed for middle school students, was distributed free to teachers and home schoolers.

These events marked the culmination but not the end of the State House Women’s Leadership Project. MFH has continued its efforts to get the message of the Project out of the State House and into communities around the Commonwealth. A small amount of money remains to be granted to support projects that use history, literature, or other humanities disciplines to educate the public about women’s largely unrecognized contributions to the public life of Massachusetts. For more information, please contact Ellen Rothman in the Metro Boston office (617) 923-1678 or by e-mail at ekrothman@mfh.org.



Nine Notable Women of Boston, a mural created in 1980 by Ellen Lanyon. Photo courtesy of Michelle Jenney.

Nine Notable Women

With support from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, *Nine Notable Women of Boston*, a mural commissioned by the Workingmen’s Cooperative Bank in 1980, has been rediscovered and hung in the lobby of the Johnson Building at the main branch of the Boston Public Library in Copley Square. Created by nationally known public artist Ellen Lanyon, the work commemorates the accomplishments of nine Boston women: Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643) champion of religious freedom; African-American poet Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784); Catholic missionary and social activist Sister Ann Alexis

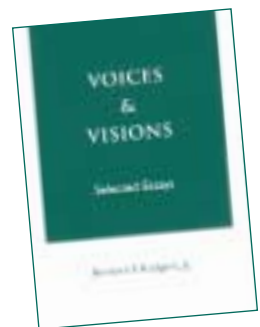
(1805–1875); abolitionist and suffragist Lucy Stone (1818–1893); Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910); MIT researcher Ellen Swallow Richards (1842–1921); social reformer Mary Morton Kehew (1859–1918); Helen Keller’s legendary teacher Anne Sullivan (1866–1936); and community activist Melnea Cass (1896–1978). A public celebration, featuring a slide talk by the artist, is scheduled for Sunday, March 24, 2002 at 2 PM in the Raab Lecture Hall. For more information, please call the Boston Public Library at 617-536-5400 or go to www.mfh.org/newsandevents/calendar/notable.html

Foundation News, continued

Yu-Lan Lin is Senior Program Director of World Languages for the Boston Public Schools, a position she has held since 1997. Prior to that she was World Languages Department Chairperson at the Muriel S. Snowden International School at Copley in Boston. Yu-Lan is active at the state, regional, and national levels in foreign language teacher associations and currently serves as President of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. She lives in Brookline.

Rhonda Cobham-Sander is Professor of English and Black Studies at Amherst College, where she has taught since 1986. A citizen of Trinidad & Tobago, and a Permanent Resident of the U.S. since 1988, Rhonda earned her BA in English Literature at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, and her PhD in Literature at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Prior to joining the faculty at Amherst, she studied and taught in Germany, first at the University of Bayreuth and then at Goethe University, Frankfurt. Rhonda has published widely in Caribbean and South American literature. She has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards including a National Humanities Center Fellowship, the New England Outstanding Black Scholars Award (1993), and a Bunting Fellowship. Rhonda lives in Amherst.

Voices and Visions



Former MFH Chairman **Bernard F. Rodgers, Jr.** has published *Voices and Visions: Selected Essays*, a collection of his essays and reviews published over the past twenty-five years in the *Berkshire Eagle*, *Chicago Review*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Magill's Literary Annual*, *The World & I*, and other journals and periodicals. The collection offers engaging discussions of a wide range of modern and contemporary American and European writers. Highlights include discussions of the posthumous reputations and publications of Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, and Ralph Ellison; analysis of the work of Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, E.L. Doctorow, John Updike, and Susan Sontag; and introductions to the work of Czeslaw Milosz, Milan Kundera, and Salman Rushdie. Bernie Rodgers was a member of the Foundation board from 1989 to 1995 and served as Chair from 1993 to 1995. He is Vice President and Dean of the College at Simon's Rock College of Bard in Great Barrington. (*Voices and Visions: Selected Essays*, University Press of America, January 2002.)

Interview, continued from page 1

versity of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Spring 2001), the only issue of a journal in English devoted entirely to Saramago's works. She interviewed Saramago by e-mail.

Anna Klobucka: You experienced an explosion of literary creativity, followed by national and international fame, when you were already in your sixties. How do you explain the unusual trajectory of your development as a novelist?

José Saramago: I do not know how to explain it, and I don't think anyone in a similar situation would be able to find and trace that line that leads, in a person's life, from nothing to something. When I was about 19 years old, and I was asked what I would like to be in the future, I answered that I would like to be a writer. I did not postpone for long trying to achieve that objective, since I published a novel—*Terra do Pecado*—when I was just 24 years old. But over the following twenty years or so I wrote little and published nothing. Paradoxically, by the time writing again became a regular activity for me, that old desire to be a writer was no longer so clear in my mind. I kept writing and publishing as a matter of simple habit, with no well-defined project to guide me. By 1974—the year of the revolution that ended nearly fifty years of dictatorship in Portugal—I had published only six books: that already remote and almost forgotten novel, two volumes of poetry, and three collections of newspaper articles and editorials. Two earlier books, *Manual of Painting and Calligraphy* and *Objecto Quase* [Almost an Object] were published in 1975.

In late 1975, I was dismissed, for political reasons, from the post of associate director of the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, which I had occupied for several months. I told myself then that if I really wanted to be a writer, now was the time to start. A few weeks later I found myself in the rural province of Alentejo, and that experience resulted in the novel *Levantado do Chão* [Raised from the Ground], published in 1980. I was finally beginning to believe I might have something to say that was worth saying. In 1982, when I was sixty years old, I published *Baltasar and Blimunda*. I ended up being the writer I had wanted to be, and when I'm asked how I got to this point, the only answer I find is this: "I do not just write, I write what I am." If there is a secret, perhaps that is it.

AK: In October 1998, you became the first Portuguese-language writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Beyond obvious practical consequences, has this distinction affected your identity as a writer or the psychological rhythm of your work, or your relationship with your readers?

JS: I am the same person I was before receiving the Nobel Prize. I work with the same regularity, I have not modified my habits, I have the same friends, and I have not moved away from my course, be it as a writer or as a citizen. The Nobel has not made me a different man, neither for better nor for worse.

AK: Having tried your hand as a writer in several different genres, from the 1980s on you have found your main literary home in the novel. At the same time, you have continued to write plays, from the 1979 *A Noite* [The Night] to the 1993 *In Nomine Dei*. You seem to have given up on poetry. How does Saramago the novelist differ from Saramago the playwright, Saramago the poet, and Saramago the essayist?

JS: I am a better writer as a novelist than as a poet, a playwright, or an essayist. But I would not be the novelist that I am (for what it's worth) without those other identities that also exist in me, however imperfectly. I have said on earlier occasions that in effect I am not a novelist, but rather a failed essayist who started to write novels because he didn't know how to write essays.

AK: The mainly historical novels you wrote in the 1980s, from *Baltasar and Blimunda* to *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* (published in 1991), form the first grand narrative cycle in your work. Many of your readers perceive a clear dividing line between these narratives and your subsequent works, the three allegorical novels from the 1990s: *Blindness*, *All the Names*, and *A Caverna*. How do you describe the balance of continuity and change in your writing in the last two decades?

JS: The first narrative cycle you mention includes also, as a starting point, *Levantado do Chão*, the novel in which I articulated for the first time the distinct "narrative voice" that from then on became the hallmark of my work. And in the novels of the second cycle there are clear echoes of my earlier volume of short stories, *Objecto Quase*. Furthermore, we must not forget my still earlier collections of newspaper columns, *Deste Mundo e do Outro* [From This World and the Other] (1971) and *A Bagagem do Viajante* [The Traveler's Baggage] (1973). In my view, everything I have written in later years is rooted in those texts. As for the definition of the "dividing line" that separates the two novel cycles, I explain it through the metaphor of a statue and a stone: up to and including *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, I was describing statues, insofar as a statue is the external surface of a stone; with *Blindness* and later novels, I have moved inside the stone, into that space where the stone does not know whether on the outside it is a statue or, for example, a doorsill.

“[In my earlier novels] I was describing statues, insofar as a statue is the external surface of a stone; with *BLINDNESS* and later novels, I have moved inside the stone, into that space where the stone does not know whether on the outside it is a statue or a doorsill.”

AK: If a person unfamiliar with your writing were to ask you: "I am very eager to read some of your work, where do you recommend that I should start?" what would you advise?

JS: I would recommend—surely against all expectations—from the post of associate director of the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, a travel book I published in 1981, between *Levantado do Chão* and *Baltasar and Blimunda*. The hypothetical reader who accepts this suggestion is likely to appreciate my recommendation.

AK: Some critics of your work have defined you as first and foremost a political moralist. What are the fundamental elements of social and political morality that you subscribe to as a writer, an intellectual and a human being?

JS: In *Objecto Quase* there is an epigraph from *The Holy Family* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: "If the human being is shaped by his circumstances, then it is necessary to shape those circumstances humanely." This contains all the wisdom I needed in order to become what it seems I am considered to be: a "political moralist."

AK: We have heard it said over and over in recent months: since September 11, the world as we knew it has changed forever. Do you agree?

JS: The world had already changed before September 11. The world has been going through a process of change over the last twenty or thirty years. A civilization ends, another one begins. It is not the first time that such a transformation has occurred, but in this case we happen to be its witnesses. Since September 11, however, something has indeed changed in the collective mentality of North Americans, who have lost the conviction that the United States are protected from any calamity save of the natural kind. They have discovered the fragility of life, that ominous fragility that the rest of the world either already experienced in the past or is experiencing now with terrible intensity. They have realized (at least I hope they have) their own fundamentalism, the kind that made them indifferent toward what happens in the outside world, that has produced the attitude of insolent haughtiness characteristic of the relationships Americans form with what is alien to them, with others. They have discovered fear. My own fear is that the only result of the material and psychological aggression they have suffered will be a compensatory reinforcement of their familiar insolence and

arrogance.

AK: In your work, contemplation of the past coexists with episodes of meditation about the future, in both a utopian and a dystopian mode. How do you imagine, twenty years from now, the new world order (or disorder)?

JS: I am not a prophet. The human being of the future will be different from us. I am not sure at all that he and I would be able to understand each other.

As for the new world order, for the time being it will continue to be an arrangement that is convenient to the United States and imposed by the United States. Tomorrow, the role of the world leader may belong to China, a China once and for all converted to capitalism, as the recent acceleration of steps it has taken in that direction leads one to believe. Then, the United States will once again experience fear.

AK: To conclude, a perhaps unavoidable question: Can you tell us something about your current projects in these early days of 2002, the eightieth year of your life and work?

JS: I am traveling less in order to be able to write more. I select my travel destinations according to their degree of usefulness [to my work]. I will publish the sixth volume of my diary *Cadernos de Lanzarote* [Lanzarote Notebooks], and I hope that next fall will see the publication of my new novel, *O Homem Duplicado* [The Duplicated Man]. About the latter, naturally, I will say no more. Except that it has nothing to do with cloning.

Understanding Islam

Reading and Discussion Program

In response to the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath, the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities has developed a new reading and discussion program entitled *Understanding Islam*.

The program was designed in consultation with several experts in Middle Eastern history and culture including Keith Lewinstein, who teaches in the history and religion departments at Smith College, and Mona Russell, who teaches Middle Eastern history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The series begins with the career of Muhammad and the revelation of the Qur'an. The themes in this first session—the model of the Prophet and the monotheist values that he taught—recur throughout the remainder of the series. Session 2 looks at Islam in two very different societies; Session 3 is devoted to an important work of literature; Session 4 focuses on

politics in modern Iran; and the fifth and final session examines the place of women in the household and in Islamic society as a whole.

According to MFH Executive Director David

Tebaldi, readers in this new program will acquire insights into the diversity of Islamic cultures, and a sympathetic yet critical understanding of the challenges facing the Muslim world in the twenty-first century.

Understanding Islam was successfully piloted earlier this year at the Middleborough Public

Library and will be available to other libraries beginning in early April. Interested libraries should contact the Foundation office in Northampton.

Scholars of the Middle East and of Islam are needed to serve as discussion leaders. Qualified individuals interested in serving in this capacity are encouraged to contact either Foundation office.



Selected Writings of José Saramago

by Ricardo Barreto

The writings of José Saramago came to my attention in 1998 just prior to my first trip to Portugal, the generous and most appropriate recommendation of a Brazilian friend whom I was scheduled to meet in Oporto for a summer vacation. The first book I read was *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*. With the trip originating and ending in Lisbon its description of the city enhanced my experience, although the intense July heat carried north from Africa and the intense sun were the antithesis of the dreary, wet winter climate described in the book. *Journey to Portugal* came later, a way to remember my visit to this country on the edge of Europe where the roads end and the sea begins, certainly a factor in the navigational exploits of the great sixteenth-century explorers. *The Stone Raft* followed, its humorous magical realism a contrast to the intense desperation of *Blindness*. Throughout all of these books the voice is distinct and I now recognize it with ease. It speaks with authority and beauty of life in the complex and difficult twentieth century, a fitting recipient of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Journey to Portugal Lisbon 1981; English translation 2001

A gentle, intelligent and comprehensive travel guide to Portugal where the geography and history of one of Europe's most isolated countries is the source for this heartfelt narrative. Covering the entire length and breadth of Portugal, this is a personal and touching account where an encounter with a waiter can color the journey as much as the description of a medieval castle and provide the flavor of the human experience itself. Speaking of his visit to Tomar, for example, he writes the following: "That evening, he had dinner at the Beira-Rio restaurant. He ate a magnificent, historic steak, with a taste that, having passed through all the subtleties of its sauce, had returned to the essential savour of meat, and stays forever in the palate's memory. And since good fortune never comes alone, the traveler was served by a serious-looking waiter who when he smiled had the happiest face in the world—and he smiled a lot. The city of Tomar should pin its highest award or commendation on this man's chest. In return, it would get one of his smiles, and would be amply rewarded."

The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis Lisbon 1984; English translation 1991

Lisbon, rain-drenched and chilly and far from the sunny location depicted in travel brochures, is the setting for this surreal ghost story. Ricardo Reis, a doctor and poet, returns in middle age to his native Portugal in 1936 after many years in Brazil. The historical moment is critical to the novel and the pressure of Spain careening towards civil war is itself a

ghostly presence. The insights of an insider turned outsider—the fate of any returning exile—are a rich opportunity to address the human condition as well as the changing social and political environment. One of the novel's key virtues is the clear sense of the complex social and historical moment it conveys to the reader through the contacts Ricardo Reis makes with both the living and dead—a hotel chambermaid with whom he has an affair or the ghost of a famous Portuguese poet whom he knew in his youth. Certainly the claustrophobic setting—Lisbon in the rain, and the dreary hotel where much of the action takes place—is steeped in dark foreboding.

The Stone Raft Lisbon 1986; English translation 1995

In this novel Saramago's sense of humor combines with issues of great substance as he traces the steps of five individuals who seem curiously and inexplicably linked to the separation of the Iberian Peninsula from the European continent. Splitting cleanly through the Pyrenees along the French border, the physical separation of the peninsula is a metaphor for other kinds of divisions. National and international reactions provide the backdrop for an exploration of the Portuguese and Spanish soul embodied by its five travelers. On this peninsula turned island, flocks of starlings follow one character; one feels the earth shake beneath him when no one else does; another draws lines in the sand impossible to erase; and another mysteriously throws a boulder into the ocean many times heavier than he normally would be able to lift. This is a lyrical epic suffused with human tenderness and universal insight very much in keeping with themes Saramago has developed throughout his career.

Blindness Lisbon 1995; English translation 1997

Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, *Blindness* has been cited as a prescient narrative dealing with chaos in the face of disaster. Certainly there is relevance in terms of the description of a society under siege, but beyond that the connections are strained. In this bleak novel whose first sentence is a reference to light, the inhabitants of an unnamed city all gradually succumb to an epidemic of "white blindness" which brings out the very worst human characteristics. Painfully, recent history proves Saramago's tale is no exaggeration. This is a novel about human nature, the irrational reaction of a population to the unknown, and the triumph of the human spirit in the face of total loss and disorientation. In it a small group of those first struck by the surreal blindness are followed from the moment sight is lost through the horrors inflicted by a society terrified of infection. The AIDS epidemic provides a more accurate source for the novel's central metaphor than the political, ideological and religious underpinnings of the recent terrorist attacks.

Humanities Calendar

All programs are open to the public free of charge unless otherwise noted.

Western Massachusetts

Commonwealth Journal

A weekly, half-hour radio program featuring interviews with scholars, writers, cultural workers and public officials examining current topics and issues of particular interest to Massachusetts listeners. Segments may be about summer theater programs in the Berkshires, the history of the Customs House in Boston, new Massachusetts welfare regulations, MCAS testing, or a recent Supreme Court ruling. *Commonwealth Journal* informs Massachusetts residents about what is happening in, around, and to their state; or addresses national and international issues from a Massachusetts perspective. The program is produced by WUMB Radio and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The host of *Commonwealth Journal* is Barbara Neely.

Greenfield: WGAM 1520AM—Sundays, noon
Northampton: WLXZ 99.3FM—Sundays, 5:30 am
Pittsfield: WUPE 95.9FM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Pittsfield: WUHN 1110AM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Sheffield: WBSL 91.7FM—Mondays, 8:30 am

Islamic Law and Culture

A lecture by Engin Akarli, Joukovsky Family Distinguished Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History at Brown University. Mr. Akarli serves on the editorial board of *Islamic Law and Society*, and is the author of *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1865-1920*.

When: Friday, April 12, 2002, 7:00 pm
Where: Lecture Center, Simon's Rock College of Bard, Great Barrington
Phone: (413) 528-7488

The U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

A lecture by writer and filmmaker Tariq Ali. The author of over a dozen books on world history and politics, five novels and scripts for both stage and screen, Mr. Ali is an editor of the *New Left Review*. His most recent book is *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*.

When: Friday, April 19, 2002, 7:00 pm
Where: Lecture Center, Simon's Rock College of Bard, Great Barrington
Phone: (413) 528-7488

Imaging Robert

The premiere of the Florentine Films/Hott Productions documentary by Lawrence Hott and Diane Garey based on the book by Jay Neugeboren. The one-hour film tells the story of two brothers, one who has suffered mental illness for thirty-eight years, the other, a prize-

winning novelist who has been his brother's primary caretaker for nearly three decades. The screening will be followed by discussion with the filmmakers and Jay and Robert Neugeboren.
When: Sunday, April 28, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Wright Hall, Smith College, Northampton
Phone: (413) 584-8440

The Massachusetts Review Radio Program

A new radio program celebrating the cultural life of the Pioneer Valley Region. The program will feature half-hour interviews with local writers, artists, and thinkers. Four pilot interviews will air on WMUA 91.1 FM.
When: Program schedule TBA.
Where: WMUA 91.1FM
Phone: (413) 545-2876

Project 2050

Youth-created theater pieces focusing on the social issues accompanying the 2050 demographic shift, when people of color are expected to become the majority in the United States.
When: Saturday, July 13, 2002, 8:00 pm
Where: The Experimental Theater, Amherst College
Phone: (413) 545-1972
Cost: \$15 general public; \$8 low income and seniors; \$5 students

Changing Prospects: The View from Mount Holyoke

An exhibition that will examine the historical significance of Mount Holyoke. A selection of paintings, photographs and other historical documents will convey the story of Mount Holyoke as a travel destination, an inspiration for artists, and a cultural icon over two centuries.

When: Tuesday, September 3-Sunday, December 8, 2002
Where: Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley
Phone: (413) 538-2245

Central Massachusetts

Commonwealth Journal

A weekly, half-hour radio program featuring interviews with scholars, writers, cultural workers and public officials examining current topics and issues of particular interest to Massachusetts listeners. Segments may be about summer theater programs in the Berkshires, the history of the Customs House in Boston, new Massachusetts welfare regulations, MCAS testing, or a recent Supreme Court ruling. *Commonwealth Journal* informs Massachusetts residents about what is happening in, around, and to their state; or addresses national and international issues from a Massachusetts perspective. The program is produced by WUMB Radio and the Massachu-

setts Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The host of *Commonwealth Journal* is Barbara Neely.
Fitchburg: WEIM 1280AM—Sundays, 11:30 pm
Marlborough: WSRO 1470AM—Sundays, 2:30 pm
Worcester: WAAF 107.3FM—Sundays, 5:30 am
Worcester: WBPR 91.9FM—Sundays, 7:00 pm

Ends of Civilization: Taking Stock on the Eve of the Millennium

A reading and discussion series developed for the millennium by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Each of the five books offers a critical assessment of a major area of human inquiry, endeavor, or concern and asks: "Where do we go from here?" The status of politics and government, science, education, the environment, and social relations in America are examined by journalists, scholars, and cultural critics, and fundamental questions are raised about the nature and possibility of further progress in these critically important areas.

When: Alternate Mondays, March 4-April 29, 2002, 7:00-9:00 pm
(4th session meets on Wednesday, April 17, 2002, 7:00-9:00 pm)
Where: Thayer Memorial Library, Lancaster
Phone: (978) 368-8928
When: Alternate Thursdays, April 4-May 30, 2002, 6:30-8:00 pm
Where: Leicester Public Library, Leicester
Phone: (508) 892-7020
When: Alternate Tuesdays, September 17-November 12, 2002, 7:00-9:00 pm
Where: Berlin Public Library, Berlin
Phone: (978) 838-2812

Sogni d'Oro—Dreams of Gold

A mixed-media presentation based on oral histories from the Italian-Americans of Fitchburg and Leominster.
When: Saturday, May 11, 2002, 8:00 pm
Where: Kent Recital Hall, Fitchburg State College
Phone: (978) 665-3347 (Weston Box Office, M-F 12:30 pm-3:30 pm)

Northeast Massachusetts

Ends of Civilization: Taking Stock on the Eve of the Millennium

A reading and discussion series developed for the millennium by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Each of the five books offers a critical assessment of a major area of human inquiry, endeavor, or concern and asks: "Where do we go from here?" The status of politics and government, science, education, the environment, and social relations in America are examined by journalists, scholars,

and cultural critics, and fundamental questions are raised about the nature and possibility of further progress in these critically important areas.

When: Alternate Tuesdays, April 2-May 28, 2002, 7:00-9:00 pm
Where: Gleason Public Library, Carlisle
Phone: (978) 369-4898

Dickens and America: Lowell Public Performances

Public performances by Gerald Dickens, great-grandson of Charles Dickens, who visited Lowell in 1842. These performances, combining history, literature, and biography in a unique one-man show format, will take place to commemorate the 160th anniversary of Charles Dickens's Lowell visit.

When: *The Republic of My Imagination* about Dickens' 1842 trip to America: Thursday, April 4, 2002, 7:30 pm
Mr. Dickens Is Coming! about Charles Dickens' life and works: Saturday, April 6, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Durgin Hall, University of Massachusetts Lowell
Phone: (978) 934-4444 (box office) www.jackprises.com
Cost: \$8.50 general public, \$5 seniors and students, Free for children age 10-18 (not recommended for children under 10).

Greater Boston

The Trial of Anthony Burns

A play commissioned by the James D. St. Clair Court Education Project as part of their ongoing *Arts and the Law* series. Designed for student audiences, the drama commemorates the 1854 trial of fugitive slave Anthony Burns, an historical event that challenged America's justice system and fueled the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts.

When: Tuesdays: March 26, April 2, April 9, May 7, May 21, and June 4, 2002, 10:30 am
Where: John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse, Boston
Phone: (617) 748-4185 (Contact: Beth Dunakin)

Commonwealth Journal

A weekly, half-hour radio program featuring interviews with scholars, writers, cultural workers and public officials examining current topics and issues of particular interest to Massachusetts listeners. Segments may be about summer theater programs in the Berkshires, the history of the Customs House in Boston, new Massachusetts welfare regulations, MCAS testing, or a recent Supreme Court ruling. *Commonwealth*

Journal informs Massachusetts residents about what is happening in, around, and to their state; or addresses national and international issues from a Massachusetts perspective. The program is produced by WUMB Radio and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The host of *Commonwealth Journal* is Barbara Neely.

Boston: WUMB 91.9FM—Sundays, 7:00 pm
Boston/Framingham: WBIX 1060AM—Sundays, 6:00 am
Cambridge: WRCA 1330AM—Saturdays 6:00 am; Mondays, 5:00 am
Framingham: WSRO 1470AM—Sundays, 2:30 pm
Norfolk: WDIS 1170AM—Saturday, 10:00 am

European Mediterranean Cuisine: Contact, Exchange and Integration

Two evening seminars that will explore the roots of European Mediterranean cuisine and the transformation it underwent during the medieval and early modern periods. Lectures and cooking demonstrations will focus on the rich cultural and agricultural exchanges that took place during these historical periods.
When: Monday, April 8, 2002, 6:00 pm
Monday, April 22, 2002, 6:00 pm
Where: Fuller Building, 808 Commonwealth Ave, Boston University Campus
Cost: \$10 (includes food tasting)

Downside Up

Screening of an hour-long documentary that examines the ways in which North Adams, a former mill town, has become a living laboratory of the post-industrial economy at work with the opening of the Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art (MASS MoCA) in May 1999.
When: Thursday, April 11, 2002, 6:00 pm
Saturday, April 13, 2002, 2:45 pm
Where: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Phone: (617) 369-3770
Cost: \$8 general public; \$7 members, students, seniors

Loaded Gun: The Search for Emily

Screening of a short documentary about a filmmaker's search for an actress to play Emily Dickinson in his film. *Loaded Gun* takes a playful look at Dickinson's fame and is designed to appeal to a wide audience.
When: Wednesday, April 24, 2002, 6:00 pm
Saturday, April 27, 2002, 2:30 pm
Where: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Phone: (617) 369-3770
Cost: \$8 general public; \$7 members, students, seniors

Ends of Civilization: Taking Stock on the Eve of the Millennium

A reading and discussion series developed for the millennium by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Each of the five books offers a critical assessment of a major area of human inquiry, endeavor, or concern and asks: "Where do we go from here?" The status of politics and government, science, education, the environment, and social relations in America are examined by journalists, scholars, and cultural critics, and fundamental questions are raised about the nature and possibility of

further progress in these critically important areas.
When: Alternate Wednesdays, May 1-June 26, 2002, 7:30-9:30 pm
Where: Goodnow Library, Sudbury
Phone: (978) 443-1035

Neighborhood Partnership Initiative (NPI)

Co-sponsored by MYTOWN and The Bostonian Society, NPI will assist three neighborhood-based organizations in the creation of youth-led projects that use public history to increase citizen awareness and participation. NPI staff will host a city-wide public presentation of completed work.
Phone: (617) 536-8696 (Contact Al Vega for information about presentations)

Slavery on Trial: The Inspiring Ordeal of Anthony Burns

An exhibit on the life of fugitive slave Anthony Burns and the historical period that gave rise to the Fugitive Slave Act and the rise of abolitionism in Massachusetts. Historical artifacts and educational material tell the story of Boston in the 1850s and the case of Anthony Burns.
When: September 2002
Where: John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse, Boston
Phone: (617) 748-4185

Southeast Massachusetts

Commonwealth Journal

A weekly, half-hour radio program featuring interviews with scholars, writers, cultural workers and public officials examining current topics and issues of particular interest to Massachusetts listeners. Segments may be about summer theater programs in the Berkshires, the history of the Customs House in Boston, new Massachusetts welfare regulations, MCAS testing, or a recent Supreme Court ruling. *Commonwealth Journal* informs Massachusetts residents about what is happening in, around, and to their state; or addresses national and international issues from a Massachusetts perspective. The program is produced by WUMB Radio and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The host of *Commonwealth Journal* is Barbara Neely.

Cape Cod: WTWV 101.1FM, WDTV 93.5FM—Sundays, 5:00 am
Falmouth: WFPB 91.9FM—Sundays, 7:00 pm
Hyannis: WQRC 99.9FM—Call station for details
New Bedford/Fairhaven: WBSM 1420AM—Sundays 7:00 pm
N. Dartmouth: WSMU-FM 91.1FM—Mondays, 8:30 am
Orleans: WFPB 1170AM—Sundays, 7:00 pm
Plymouth: WPLM 1390AM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Plymouth: WPLM 99.1FM—Sundays, 6:30 am
Provincetown: WOMR 92.1FM—Alternate Mondays, 4:30 pm

Ends of Civilization: Taking Stock on the Eve of the Millennium

A reading and discussion series developed for the millennium by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Each of the five books offers a critical assessment of a major area of

human inquiry, endeavor, or concern and asks: "Where do we go from here?" The status of politics and government, science, education, the environment, and social relations in America are examined by journalists, scholars, and cultural critics, and fundamental questions are raised about the nature and possibility of further progress in these critically important areas.
When: Alternate Tuesdays, March 5-April 30, 2002, 6:30-8:30 pm
Where: Snow Library, Orleans
Phone: (508) 240-3760
When: Alternate Thursdays, March 7-May 2, 2002, 7:00-9:00 pm
Where: Sharon Public Library, Sharon
Phone: (781) 784-1578

Documenting Underdocumented Populations & Communities

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin and the Massachusetts Historical Records Advisory Board are co-sponsoring The Fifth Annual Community Forum on Historical Records. The forum will present a program to foster a dialogue among scholars, archivists, historians, genealogists, librarians, educators and citizens to promote the adequate identification, and preservation of and access to, Massachusetts' unique heritage, with a concentration on populations and communities that are currently underdocumented and underrepresented. The plenary speaker is Thomas O'Connor, Professor of History, Emeritus at Boston College.
When: Friday, June 7, 2002
Where: Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater
Phone: (617) 727-2816 x257 (Contact: Bill Milhomme)

Web : www.state.ma.us/ese/arc/arcaac/aacintro.htm

Gosnold's Hope: Exploration and Enduring Legacy

A four-part lecture series, part of a larger observance commemorating the 400th anniversary of the landing of English explorer Bartholomew Gosnold (1571-1607) in the Buzzards Bay region. Lectures focus on the historical relationship between the Native communities of the Buzzards Bay region and the Europeans who explored and settled there.

Wampanoag History

When: Thursday, April 25, 2002, 7:00 pm
Where: Museum Theater, New Bedford Whaling Museum
(508) 997-0046 x140
When: Thursday, July 11, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Union Methodist Church, Cuttyhunk
Phone: (508) 984-4611
When: Monday, August 5, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Grange Hall, West Tisbury
Phone: (508) 627-4441
Cost: \$8 per lecture members; \$10 per lecture non-members
When: Tuesday, September 10, 2002, 2:00 pm
Where: Falmouth Public Library
Phone: Falmouth: (508) 548-4857; Woods Hole: (508) 548-7270

Colonial New England History

When: Thursday, May 2, 2002, 8:00 pm
Where: Museum Theater, New Bedford Whaling Museum
(508) 997-0046 x140
When: Thursday, August 8, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Union Methodist Church, Cuttyhunk
Phone: (508) 984-4611
When: Monday, August 26, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Grange Hall, West Tisbury
Phone: (508) 627-4441
Cost: \$8 per lecture members; \$10 per lecture non-members
When: Saturday, September 14, 2002, 2:00 pm
Where: Falmouth Public Library
Phone: Falmouth: (508) 548-4857; Woods Hole: (508) 548-7270

Musical Narrative of Maritime New England

When: Saturday, May 11, 2002, 2:00 pm
Where: Museum Theater, New Bedford Whaling Museum
(508) 997-0046 x140
When: Sunday, July 21, 2002, 1:00 pm
Where: Union Methodist Church, Cuttyhunk
Phone: (508) 984-4611
When: Sunday, August 11, 2002, 4:00 pm
Where: Grange Hall, West Tisbury
Phone: (508) 627-4441
Cost: \$8 per lecture members; \$10 per lecture non-members
When: Sunday, September 22, 2002, 3:00 pm
Where: Falmouth Academy
Phone: Falmouth: (508) 548-4857; Woods Hole: (508) 548-7270

Ecoloy

When: Thursday, May 16, 2002, 8:00 pm
Where: Museum Theater, New Bedford Whaling Museum
(508) 997-0046 x140
When: Saturday, August 17, 2002, 2:00 pm
Where: Union Methodist Church, Cuttyhunk
Phone: (508) 984-4611
When: Monday, August 19, 2002, 7:30 pm
Where: Grange Hall, West Tisbury
Phone: (508) 627-4441
Cost: \$8 per lecture members; \$10 per lecture non-members
When: Saturday, September 28, 2002, 2:00 pm
Where: Falmouth Public Library
Phone: Falmouth: (508) 548-4857; Woods Hole: (508) 548-7270

Statewide

Cambodian Humanities Internet Curriculum

On-line curriculum materials that use Cambodian traditional arts to promote understanding of Khmer culture in schools and communities across the state.
When: June 2002
Web: www.cambodianmasters.org



Promises Premieres in Paradise City

Six hundred people turned out on Sunday, February 18, at the historic Academy of Music in Northampton for the Western Massachusetts premiere of *Promises*, a remarkable film that looks at the Middle East conflict through the lives of seven Palestinian and Israeli children all living in and around Jerusalem. The critically acclaimed feature-length documentary has been nominated for an Academy Award.

The children, four Israelis—including a pair of identical twins—and three Palestinians, are all between the ages of 9 and 13, an age group that

rarely has the opportunity to speak for itself. Less self-conscious than teenagers and less politic than adults, they speak directly from their hearts and are both reflections of their cultures and voices for future generations of Israelis and Palestinians.

Over the course of four years, filmmaker B.Z. Goldberg, an American Jew who grew up in Jerusalem and covered the *Intifada* as a journalist, was welcomed into the daily lives of these children and their families. The children offer dramatic, emotional and sometimes hilarious insights into what it is like to grow up in a holy city wracked by violence.

Though they live only 20 minutes apart, the seven children exist in completely separate worlds; the physical, historical, and emotional obstacles between them run deep. Some of the children are captured by the region's hatreds; others seem able to transcend them. The ability to communicate in a way that breaks through prejudices is surely a prerequisite for peace in the region. And yet hardly anyone is having such conversations.

The filmmaker was able to confront and overcome these obstacles, partially and momentarily, by bringing the Israeli twins together with the Palestinian children for a day. But the prospects for future dialogue among these children or others living in

the region range from uncertain to impossible. (For more information about the film, go to www.promisesproject.org.)

Goldberg, who lives in California, was scheduled to appear in Northampton to engage in conversation with the audience after the screening, but he was abruptly called to Israel to appear in a piece about the film produced for 60 *Minutes*. Project director Bob Cilman, of the Northampton Arts Council, cleverly arranged a telephone hook-up with Goldberg in Jerusalem. Cilman ran the phone line through the theater's sound system, and it worked beautifully. Everyone in the theater could hear Goldberg, and he could hear them, just as if he were physically present. The questions and comments from the audience, including several from the many children who attended, were deftly and sensitively handled by the filmmaker.

The afternoon program began with a music and dance performance by the Sultana Ensemble, a group of Israeli, Palestinian, Arab and Jewish American performers based in New York City, and was co-sponsored by the MFH and the UMass Office of Jewish Affairs.



Premiere of Downside Up at Mass MOCA

by Kristin O'Connell

On February 7th Nancy Kelly's *Downside Up*, an hour-long documentary that examines the impact of Mass MoCA on the economy and culture of North Adams, premiered at Mass MoCA. The Foundation awarded the project \$10,000 for script development and \$25,000 for production. It also received major funding from the Independent Television Service (ITVS).

The screening was to begin at 8 o'clock in the Hunter Center, the auditorium in the museum complex. The museum parking lot was nearly full when Hayley and I drove in at 7:30, and the 700-seat hall was filling up quickly. Everywhere people were talking, laughing, greeting friends; the atmosphere was charged with excitement and elation, as though everyone in town had been looking forward to this evening. We were struck by the crowd's diversity of age, class, and style, which seemed to represent a cross-section of the New North Adams: artists transplanted from New York, retired factory work-

ers, college students, dark-suited business executives, beaming local officials, middle-class couples. We made our way to our seats high in the center section, feeling caught up in the infectious mood of celebratory anticipation.

When most of the audience was seated, a representative of the museum rose to welcome everyone and introduce the mayor, who then introduced the filmmaker, a daughter of North Adams. Clearly touched and delighted by the turnout and the audience's warm applause, Nancy spoke briefly about the making of the film and thanked by name the representatives of the organizations that had helped fund the film. Each of us rose and acknowledged the cheers of the audience.

The film is handsome, crisply edited, and informed by both wit and a spirit of respect and affection for the city's people. It tells the story of the city's economic fall and (tentative) rise through the voices of participants—the mayor, the director of the museum, artists, business owners, and members of Nancy's family. The unifying voice is Nancy's own, as narrator, interviewer, and sometime on-screen protagonist; the inquiry into what has happened in North Adams is presented as a personal investigation. The decision to frame the story in this way, rather than employing a more convention-

al style with academics as on-camera commentators, makes the film more lively and engaging than many documentaries. What is lost is the explicit analysis of historical context and public policy issues that would be possible with the other approach. It's a good trade-off. The humanities themes identified in the proposal—the history of deindustrialization, the role of the post-industrial economy, the nature of contemporary art in society, and class divisions in America—are addressed with varying degrees of directness and depth, but they are all present, and the film should work well as a stimulus to discussion of these topics. Equally important is that it presents a complex story of economic and cultural change in a vivid, concrete way, giving weight and dignity to the perspectives of working-class people as well as those with more privileged backgrounds.



Recent Grants

Greater Boston Area

\$25,000 to the James St. Clair Court Public Education Project in Boston to support performances at the John J. Moakley Federal Courthouse of an original play based on the 1854 trial of fugitive slave Anthony Burns, an event that convulsed Boston and galvanized the anti-slavery movement.

Boston Public School students at the U.S. Courthouse in Boston pay rapt attention to actors as they perform *The Trial of Anthony Burns* in Courtroom 22.



\$24,420 to the Children's Museum in Boston to develop teaching materials on the Wampanoag people of Massachusetts.

Children using a museum kit (includes objects and artifacts) similar to the one that will be developed for the Wampanoag project. Photo courtesy of the Children's Museum



\$15,000 to the Cantata Singers in Boston for outreach and programming in conjunction with a performance of the newly commissioned choral work *Slavery Documents 2*, in which composer T. J. Anderson sets to music texts from the debate over slavery before and during the Civil War.

\$10,000 to the Somerville Historical Society for planning of an exhibit, oral history project, lecture series, and book about 14 movie theaters that used to anchor Somerville's neighborhoods, only one of which survives today.

The Ball Square Theatre on upper Broadway in Somerville, which was built by the Locatelli family in the early 1920s. The photograph, courtesy of the Theatre Historical Society of America, was taken by an unknown MGM photographer in 1941.



\$4,175 to Boston History Collaborative in Boston to underwrite the participation of 113 children from urban elementary schools in Boston by Sea, a tour of Boston harbor incorporating a multimedia, interactive presentation of the harbor's history.

Boston by Sea brings alive the rich culture of Boston's maritime tradition. Photo courtesy of Kindra Clineff, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.]



\$2,495 to the Massachusetts College of Art Foundation in Boston for a series of four lecture-discussions on various artists' ways of using their work to effect social change.

\$1,740 to the Boston University Institute for Medieval History in Boston for two evening lectures, accompanied by cooking demonstrations, that will explore the origins and development of European cuisine.

\$1,250 to the Center for World Languages and Cultures, University of Massachusetts/Boston for a one-day workshop for employees of social service agencies on the historical, cultural, and linguistic background of the Haitian immigrant community.

\$20,000 to the Center for Independent Documentary in Norfolk and filmmaker Julie Mallozzi of Cambridge for production of *Monkey Dance*, a video documentary focusing on three Cambodian-American teenagers living in Lowell and examining the competing cultural influences they face as they move into adulthood.

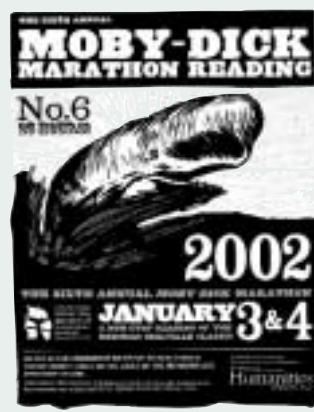
\$2,500 to the Friends of the Dwight-Derby House in Medfield for a Scholar in Residence project: "Tangible History: Building and Life at the Dwight-Derby House, 1651-2001," with scholar Electa Trisch.

Southeastern Massachusetts, the Cape and Islands

\$1,500 to the Eventide Arts Festival in Dennis for a performance at the Dennis Union Church of an imagined dialogue between Anna Howard Shaw, minister of the church from 1878 to 1885, and the abolitionist leader Harriet Tubman.

\$14,705 to the Cuttyhunk Historical Society in Harvard for a series of lectures on the cultural and natural history of the Buzzards Bay area, to be held at five locations around the Bay in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the landing of explorer Bartholomew Gosnold on Cuttyhunk Island.

Gosnold 400 poster



Poster for the Moby-Dick Marathon. Courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum

\$2,563 to the New Bedford Whaling Museum to allow the museum to do expanded promotion of its annual 25-hour nonstop reading of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* and to support an introductory lecture and a printed information handout for those who attend.

Northeastern Massachusetts

\$622 to the American Textile History Museum in Lowell to underwrite the costs of conducting taped interviews with a veteran machinist whose career in the Lowell mills spanned most of the twentieth century.

Central Massachusetts

\$3,875 to the Clark University Teachers Center for Global Studies in Worcester to train high school teachers to offer a year-long curriculum unit on contemporary world issues, which will culminate in a State House forum involving students, teachers, and legislators.

\$2,500 to the Harvard Historical Society in Harvard for a Scholar in Residence project: "Captured in Clothes: The Legacy of Mary Olney Abbot," with scholar Deborah Saville.



Two of Mary Olney Abbot's dresses in a Harvard Historical Society exhibit in 1952. Photo courtesy of the Harvard Historical Society.

\$936 to the Friends of the Winchendon Public Library for Family Affairs, a five-part book discussion series.

\$400 to the Friends of the Leominster Public Library for Autobiography: Writing and Memory, a four-part book discussion series.

Western Massachusetts

\$25,000 to Florentine Films in Haydenville for production of *Imagining Robert: My Brother, Madness and Survival*, a documentary film that examines the social and personal dimensions of chronic mental illness by focusing on the relationship between Robert Neugeboren, who has suffered from mental illness throughout his adult life, and his brother Jay, a prizewinning novelist and Robert's primary caretaker.

\$10,000 to Friends of WFCR in Amherst, to develop scripts for six to 12 short radio features exploring the 1704 Attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts and drawing on recent historical research to illuminate the complexity of the event.

\$2,000 to Massachusetts Review in Amherst to create two to four pilot programs in a proposed series of radio interviews with Western Massachusetts artists and scholars.

\$5,000 to the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in South Hadley for an exhibition of paintings, prints, and objects exploring the historical significance of Mount Holyoke, the highest peak in the Holyoke Range, as a cultural icon.

\$2,500 to the Northampton Arts Council for screening and discussion of an award-winning documentary film exploring the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the experiences of seven Palestinian and Israeli children who live in and around Jerusalem.



Colonel John Ashley House, built 1735 in Sheffield, MA. Photo courtesy of the Trustees of Reservations.

\$2,500 to the Colonel John Ashley House (The Trustees of Reservations) in Sheffield for a Scholar in Residence project: "Colonel John Ashley and his Web of Commerce, 1735-1802," with scholar Myron Stachiw.

\$2,500 to Historic Northampton for initial development of an exhibition and educational web site that will use the story of Mary Parsons, a Northampton woman accused of witchcraft, as a lens for examining the social structure and cultural values of a seventeenth-century Massachusetts community.

\$1,085 to the Emily Williston Memorial Library in Easthampton for *Autobiography: Writing and Memory*, a four-part book discussion series.

Outside Massachusetts

\$20,000 to the Coruway Film Institute in Portsmouth, NH, and film maker William Rogers for production of *Boys Home: The History of Fernald State School*, a one-hour television documentary on the nation's oldest institution for people with developmental disabilities.

Photograph courtesy of The Massachusetts Archive.



\$10,000 to the New York Foundation for the Arts and filmmaker Peter Miller to develop a script for a feature-length documentary film about the Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti and the controversy surrounding their trial and execution for the 1920 murder of two Massachusetts men.

Demonstration on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, March 1925. Photo courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.



- I have a friend who should know about the Foundation. Please add her/his name to your mailing list.
- Please send me Grant Guidelines (for Major and Small Grants).
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Grant Categories

New guidelines and applications for the following grant programs are available by returning the response form above, telephoning the Foundation, or by downloading materials from our web site.

Northampton: (413) 584-8440/ Metro Boston: (617) 923-1678/ www.mfh.org

You must be a nonprofit organization, or have a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, to qualify for support.

Small Grants

These grants are awarded for up to \$5,000. Application deadlines are the first of every month except August. Draft proposals are due two weeks before deadline. Notification is within three weeks.

Major Grants

These grants are awarded for amounts over \$5,000 and up to \$15,000 outright (up to \$25,000 challenge). Application deadlines are April 1 and October 1; draft deadlines are four weeks in advance of the application deadline. K-12 major proposals are due January 15; draft deadline is four weeks in advance.

Reading & Discussion Programs

These grants are awarded for up to \$1,000 for first-time applicants. A catalogue of program themes and a directory of experienced discussion leaders are available from the Foundation.

Scholar in Residence Program

This collaborative program with the Bay State Historical League enables scholars to conduct original research that advances the interpretation and presentation of history in historical societies, museums, historical commissions, and libraries. Grants provide stipends of \$2,000 to scholars and up to \$500 to host organizations to defray administrative costs. Application deadlines in 2001-2002 are November 15 and April 15. Call BSHL at (781) 899-3920 for application forms.

Research Inventory Grants

Small historical organizations may apply for a Research Inventory Grant (maximum of \$1,000) to support the costs of conducting inventory projects designed with specific research questions in mind. There are five deadlines per year (January 1, March 1, May 1, July 1, and September 1). This is a collaborative program administered by the Bay State Historical League. Call BSHL at (781) 899-3920 for application forms.

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Nobelist José Saramago to Headline April Events at Kennedy Library

Nobel Laureate José Saramago, in his first Boston public appearance, will top the bill at a forum showcasing the depth and breadth of contemporary Portuguese literature on Friday, April 19, from 1 pm to 5 pm, at the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, Columbia Point.

Jointly sponsored by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and the Kennedy Library, *A Tribute to José Saramago: Contemporary Literature from the Portuguese-speaking World* will be free and open to the public.

A reception honoring Saramago will follow from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Tickets to the reception are available for a \$500, \$250, or \$100 contribution to the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities.

The only writer in Portuguese ever to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1998), Saramago ranks as Portugal's leading literary figure. The freethinking novelist laces his use of magical realism with biting political commentary. In addition to novels, Saramago has published poetry and theatrical works. Among his best-known novels are *Baltazar and Blimunda*, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, *All the Names*, and *Blindness*. First published in 1995, *Blindness* is a fable about a European met-

ropolis afflicted by a mysterious plague, a timely theme in the wake of September 11th and anthrax attacks. Saramago's works have been translated into more than 25 languages.

“A Tribute to Saramago” will also feature distinguished writers representing other areas of the Portuguese-speaking world including:

- **Frank Gaspar**, author of the bestseller *Leaving Pico*, a novel about growing up Portuguese-American in Provincetown.
- **Germano Almeida**, a noted Cape Verdean novelist whose work *O Testamento do Senhor Napumoceno da Silva Araujo* was the basis for a critically acclaimed film.
- **Silviano Santiago**, one of Brazil's most popular novelists and editor of *The Space In-Between: Essays on Latin American Culture*.

For more information about the symposium and reception, please contact Amy Hoffman, MFH Development Officer, (617) 923-1678. Checks for tickets should be made out to the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, 66 Bridge Street, Northampton, MA 01060.



Statewide Cultural Conference Planned for 2003

Last October, in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities convened a group of cultural leaders from across the Commonwealth to share their experiences and discuss the challenges confronting the cultural community in Massachusetts. One outcome of that session was a clear consensus that cultural advocates need to get together more often—to grapple with common issues and exchange ideas.

The MCC has begun to outline a plan for a statewide cultural conference designed primarily for leaders of cultural institutions and local cultural councils. The conference will take place March 24-25, 2003. It will include sessions on issues of importance to the cultural community and will feature engaging speakers and opportunities for both structured and informal networking. The biennial Commonwealth Awards will be presented during a luncheon at the conference.

The MCC is still very early in the planning stage and is soliciting ideas from the field regarding the theme of the conference, topics that might be of particular interest, and potential speakers. Your suggestions are welcome. Some examples might include:

- Key issues facing the cultural community, such as audience development, the costs and benefits of collaborations, finding and funding cultural facilities, increasing the visibility of the cultural community, and the like.
- Current state of the art in various management disciplines, such as strategic planning, branding, new communications technologies, etc.
- Success stories showcasing initiatives or projects that have had a positive impact on communities while bringing visibility and vitality to cultural organizations.

Tell us if these topics are of interest, or propose your own. You can send your suggestions to Monica Wielt at the MCC, either via regular mail at 10 St. James Street, Boston, MA 02166 or e-mail to monica.wielt@art.state.ma.us.

